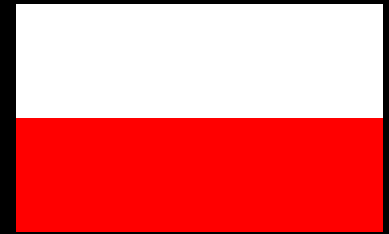


**The factors hindering and promoting
the work participation of young
disabled people in Poland:
an empirical study**

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Poland



- Poland signed The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007, ratified it on Sept 6th 2012
- disability = permanent or temporary inability to fulfil social roles (especially work) due to permanent or long-lasting impairment

The Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, 1997

Situation of disabled people in Poland

- disability rate:
 - 14.3% (2002, National Census),
 - 21.5% (2009 EUROSTAT),
 - 12.2% (2011, National Census)
- Young disabled people (aged 18-29):
 - 46,757
 - 4.7% of disabled people in Poland
 - 3.1% of the population aged 18-29

Employment of disabled people

“(...) this means in particular the right of disabled people to (...) work in the open labour market in accordance with the qualifications, education and abilities and to receive career counselling, and if the disability and medical condition requires it - the right to work in conditions adjusted to the needs of disabled people”

The Charter of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (1997)

Employment of disabled people

- Before 1989 – “Polish model of rehabilitation”, system of cooperatives
- 1991, Act on Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities – the beginning of forming a new system of employment support for disabled people

Employment of disabled people

- *quota-levy system* - all employers with 25 or more employees have to meet a quota of 6%
 - if they do not, they have to pay the levy to the National Rehabilitation Fund
 - if they do, they are entitled to subsidies from the National Rehabilitation Fund

In both public and private sectors more than a half (55% in April 2014) of employers do not meet the quota

Employment of disabled people

- Disabled workers are employed in the open labour market (40%) and in sheltered enterprises (60%)
- There are 1,416 sheltered enterprises – however, more people with significant degree of disability are employed in the open labour market! (6.2% vs 8.4%)
- Over 50% of workplaces for disabled people are subsidised by National Rehabilitation Fund

Economic activity indicators for working age people

| Year | Activity rate | | Employment rate | | Unemployment rate | |
|-------------|---------------|------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | D | N-D | D | N-D | D | N-D |
| 2003 | 23.7 | 75.2 | 19.1 | 60.0 | 19.2 | 20.1 |
| 2004 | 23.4 | 74.9 | 18.1 | 60.4 | 22.6 | 19.3 |
| 2005 | 23.9 | 74.9 | 18.6 | 61.4 | 21.9 | 18.0 |
| 2006 | 22.1 | 74.2 | 18.2 | 63.3 | 17.3 | 14.6 |
| 2007 | 22.6 | 74.0 | 19.4 | 66.8 | 14.1 | 9.6 |
| 2008 | 23.9 | 74.7 | 20.8 | 69.4 | 13.1 | 7.0 |
| 2009 | 24.6 | 75.3 | 21.4 | 69.1 | 12.8 | 8.2 |
| 2010 | 25.7 | 76.0 | 21.8 | 68.7 | 15.3 | 9.6 |
| 2011 | 26.3 | 76.4 | 22.2 | 69.0 | 15.5 | 9.7 |
| 2012 | 27.5 | 77.1 | 23.0 | 69.3 | 16.2 | 10.1 |
| 2013 | 27.3 | 77.7 | 22.4 | 69.7 | 17.9 | 10.3 |

Situation of young disabled people in the labour market – National Census 2011

| | non-disabled people 18-29 | disabled people 18-29 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| activity rate | 63.2% | 38.1% |
| employment rate | 50.1% | 25.4% |
| unemployment rate | 20.8% | 33.2% |

Women – better educated, less active than men

**The study on the situation of young disabled
people in the labour market in the
Podkarpackie region**

The study on the situation of young disabled people in the labour market in the Podkarpackie region

- a survey conducted on the group of 259 young disabled people
- 24 in-depth interviews with the representatives of:
 - institutions involved in employment policy and education
 - NGOs
 - employers of disabled youth

Factors hindering/promoting the work participation of YDP

1. the potential of the local labour market
2. effectiveness of legal regulations and employment policies,
3. the role of institutions
4. educational opportunities and vocational training,
5. qualifications of YDP
6. the attitudes of employers,
7. the role of family support

1. Potential of the local labour market

- Podkarpacie is traditionally classified as a disadvantaged area, with low economic potential and a high unemployment rate.
- the labour market of Podkarpacie does not create many employment opportunities for young people



1. Potential of the local labour market

- job offers for disabled people – mainly sheltered employment for unqualified workers
- economic crisis:
 - „For a moment there was a breath of spring in the air as there was almost nobody available in the labour market, so they started hiring disabled people. But then the crisis came and disabled workers were the first to lay off” (Respondent 22)

2. Legal regulations and employment policies

- the vocational integration system of people with disabilities in Poland is still not well developed
- the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities has been changed more than 60 times (!) since 1997

2. Legal regulations and employment policies

- YDP are often unaware of their rights – **78%** said that they did not know any legal acts or regulations that would concern disabled people's rights
- *benefit trap* – rules concerning disability pensions and other benefits provide disincentives to employment

3. The role of institutions

- too many public institutions are responsible in the process of supporting YDP in employment → they conduct fragmentary tasks
- 69% of the respondents could not indicate any institutions/ organisations which support disabled people in employment
- none of the institutions declared they offer support targeted at YDP
- Exception: "Junior", internships for disabled graduates, managed by jobcentres – not very popular

4. Level of education of YDP

| people aged 18-29 | general population | disabled people |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|
| higher | 25.7% | 10.7% |
| post-secondary and secondary | 45.7% | 33.2% |
| basic vocational | 12.9% | 18.3% |
| lower secondary and primary | 7.5% | 32.4% |
| primary uncompleted and with no education | 0.2% | 5.4% |

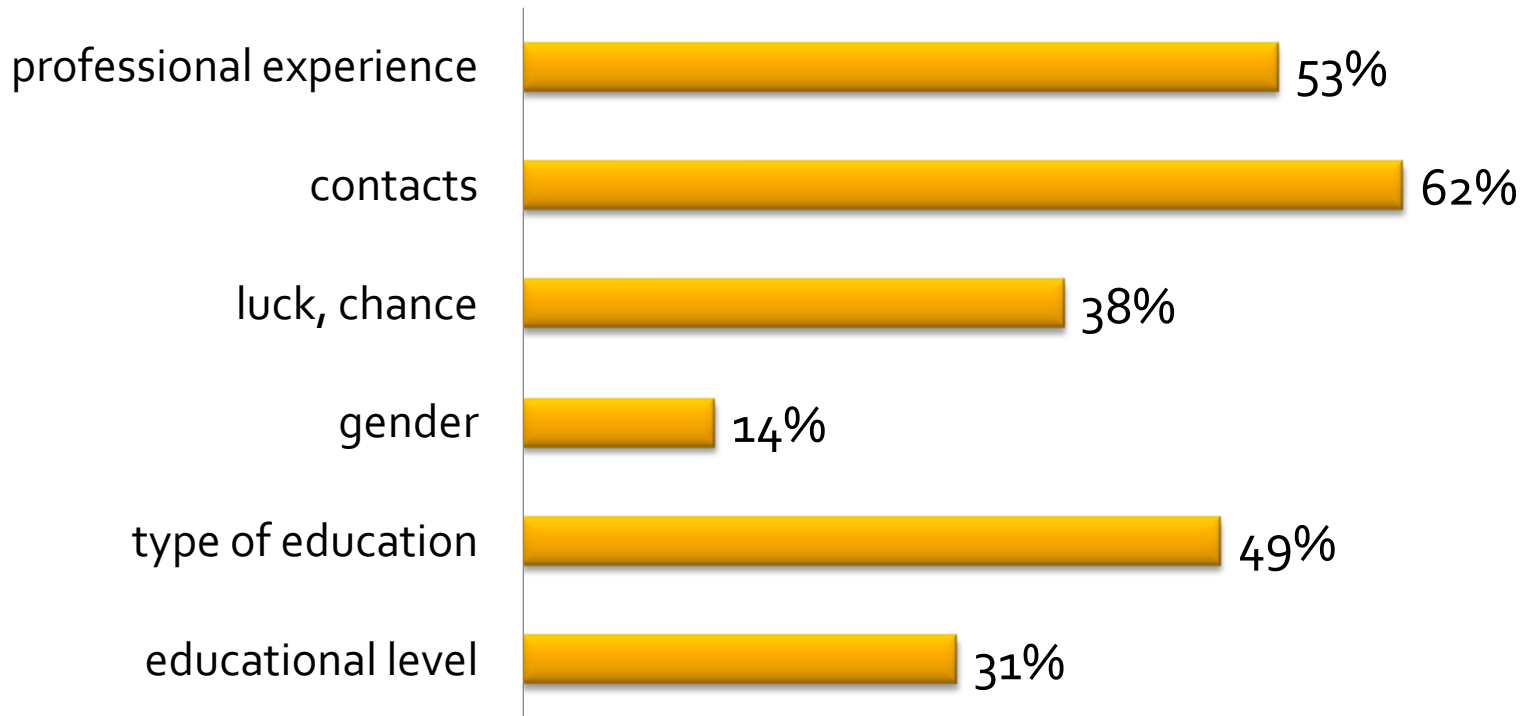
4. Educational opportunities

- higher education is a factor strengthening the chances of YDP in the labour market, although it does not guarantee employment
 - “The higher level of education the better, however, if you look at job offers it looks terrifying” (Respondent 2)
- problem of those with severe disabilities – job offers concerning sheltered employment are usually for people with low qualifications
- support for university students – „Student II”

5. Qualifications of YDP

- qualifications of YDP are often inadequate, educational opportunities are not compatible with the needs of the labour market
- limited choice of educational paths – YDP often learn the jobs they do not like or are unlikely to perform in the future due to their disability

Which of the following influences your chances for employment most?



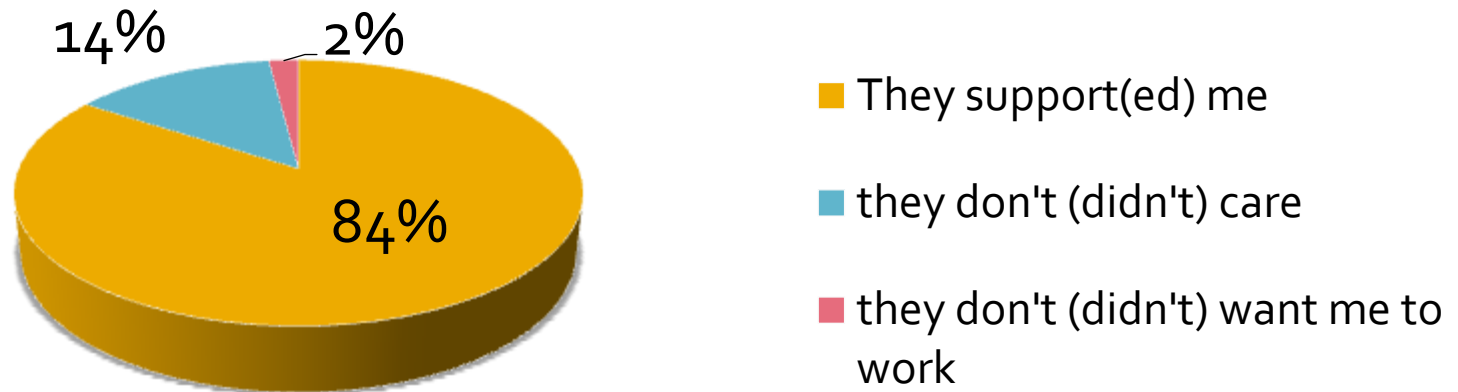
6. Attitudes of employers

- employers are afraid of employing DP as they do not know much about disability
- even the subsidies are not convincing enough – bureaucracy, changing regulations
 - “They don’t want this money and don’t want these problems” (Respondent 4)
- some employers make use of subsidies not paying attention to the needs of DP:
 - “It’d be best if it was a healthy person with minor degree of disability and with rich experience” (Respondent 20)

7. Family support

- The role of family in the lives and choices of YDP is significant

What is/was your family's attitude to your work?



7. Family support

- parents: protective vs overprotective
"...there are sometimes YDP who would like to start work, but their parents, their mums prevent them, because "You won't manage", "You are ill"..." (Respondent 20)
- disability as a source of income for the family



Summary

- The system of support for disabled people has to be more stable and integrated
- There is a need of support and policies targeted at YDP
- Schools should cooperate more closely with the labour market
- There is still a need for social integration

Thank you for your attention!

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