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# REPORT ON THE STATE OF INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

PROJECT #MYWORK  
- ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



REPORT ON THE STATE OF INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN  
EMPLOYMENT

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## Acronyms

<b>BiH</b>	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>
<b>CRPD</b>	<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>
<b>CSO</b>	<i>Civil society organization</i>
<b>DPO/DPOs</b>	<i>Disabled people's organization/organizations</i>
<b>EU</b>	<i>European Union</i>
<b>FBiH</b>	<i>Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>
<b>PIN</b>	<i>People in Need</i>
<b>PwD</b>	<i>People with disabilities / Person with disability</i>
<b>RS</b>	<i>Republika Srpska</i>
<b>FVR FBiH</b>	<i>Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities n Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>
<b>FVR RS</b>	<i>Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Republika Srpska</i>

## 1. Summary

The situation in the field of employment of persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their involvement in employment processes seem to be proportional to the efforts that our society has invested in understanding this issue and resolving it. The fact is that employment, especially of a sensitive but not homogeneous social group, is a complex issue that goes far beyond the simple interaction between supply and demand in the labor market. In proportion to its complexity, employment includes the process of education, socialization, community support services, attitudes and prejudices in society. However, its successful resolution has perhaps the greatest impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families. Therefore, without tackling this issue, it cannot approach the principles promoted, in relation to persons with disabilities, by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to the implementation of which Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed. Analyzing the topic of employment from the perspective of people with disabilities, organizations of people with disabilities (DPOs), different types of employers and representatives of institutions, we tried to find key points to start working to solve the problem of unemployment and related poverty and social exclusion of people with disabilities. The impression is that society has not decided to solve this issue as a part of the problem of unemployment of all citizens, systematically and continuously, but that this issue has been pushed to the margins of social processes. Employment of persons with disabilities is not seen as an investment in the economic empowerment of both the economy and the citizens, but more as a social giving, an unprofitable process that does not give satisfactory effects.

Nevertheless, it seems that all actors in the process recognize the need for fundamental change, and an initiative is needed on the part of all actors to start a serious and certainly not an easy reform. Based on the analysis of the current situation, here we give recommendations for courses of action and actions that can be taken immediately. The recommendations are formed on the basis of the analysis of data collected during the research conducted for the purposes of this Report and include actions that will create preconditions for the implementation of systemic changes.

It is also important to expand the efforts on the emphasis on change in awareness and the way workers with disabilities are perceived. In addition, the need for mutual cooperation, networking and exchange of information stands out.

Recommendations for systemic changes, i.e. changes in legislation are given in the additional document *Recommendation for systemic changes report*.

## 2. Introduction

The *Report on the State of Inclusion of PwD in Employment* (“Report on the state of inclusion”) results from research conducted in the period from November 2020 to March 2021. It includes the findings obtained from the analysis of data collected from various actors in the process of employment of persons with disabilities. The research was conducted within the project "My Work - Economic Opportunities for People with Disabilities", led by People in Need in cooperation with partners Nešto Više, ProReha and Sumero.

In addition to the analysis of the law and relevant literature reviewed and presented in a separate document, the research included over 135 persons with disabilities who completed a questionnaire created for this survey, 39 DPOs (different levels of activity), 7 employers and interviews with representatives of the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities from both BiH entities.

The analysis of the collected data are presented in separate chapters of this document, and at the end of the report, the findings and recommendations.

It is noticeable that different actors recognize similar problems in the process of employment of persons with disabilities, as well as that employers, as one of the most important actors, so far, have been the least involved in this process. There are also to be noticed a large difference in the level of information and knowledge about rights and opportunities as well as a significant degree of discouragement of persons with disabilities to take action in order to find employment. We believe that this is the result of long-term social exclusion, learned helplessness, but also the unavailability of clear, transparent and accessible information and support.

### 3. Background of the Study Area and Statement of the Problem

Based on the Report on social inclusion<sup>1</sup>, persons with disabilities are recognized as the most vulnerable, marginalized and excluded group in society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In our society, persons with disabilities still face the impossibility of exercising their basic human rights and fulfilling basic vital needs.

The right to work, guaranteed by the highest law acts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (constitutions, legislations and laws) as well as international conventions that Bosnia and Herzegovina obliged, seems like an area that – in the past 20 years – we have not made significant progress in. At the same time, numerous analyses show that this particular right is the key factor in progress toward social inclusion and improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities. The issues of employment and revenue generation show the fact that persons with disabilities are social group faced with the worst poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Almost 2/3 of the total number of adult persons with disabilities lives under or close to the official poverty line.<sup>2</sup> But besides that, we have to acknowledge that the right to work has a significant social and psychological function in a person's life, besides economic importance. Employment and work present important roles in a person's life because of their impact on social interaction, a person's time schedule, identity and self-respect, and sometimes even self-actualization. (Jahoda, 1982., in Kozjak, 2018.) Employment is the main avenue of inclusion of persons with disabilities in all life's streams, their full and real integration.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the enormous significance of employment issue for the overall improvement of the status of persons with disabilities, this topic is the usual object of focus in DPOs. Still, despite that fact, it looks like in the past 20 years, no significant progress has been made in that field. The employment of persons with disabilities is a very complex issue that requests long-term systematic solutions and based on positive practices. We consider that complexity and stratification of this issue, mixed with the engagement of numerous actors, were the reasons for poor progress in past years. Because of that, single-sided involvement, mostly on the side of DPOs, did not bring significant progress in practice, despite the fact that those actions were well-created, aimed and implemented with a high degree of motivation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has institutional mechanisms that define the employment of persons with disabilities that rely on the entity Laws on Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities and for this purpose Funds for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and

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<sup>1</sup> Report of social inclusion for 2017.; Council of ministers directorate for economic planning Bosnia and Herzegovina

<sup>2</sup> Report of social inclusion for 2017.; Council of ministers directorate for economic planning Bosnia and Herzegovina

<sup>3</sup> Report on the State of Disability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Working Group of Representatives of Member Organizations of the Network of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2012.

Employment of Persons with Disabilities. However, it looks like the mechanisms do not deliver satisfactory results. Employers in Republika Srpska in 2018 have one employed person with disabilities on every 32 employees, which represents just a half value of the minimal quota stated by the law. In a three-year cycle of observation, employment of persons with disabilities was in a declining trend.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that employment is intertwined with the problem of education, accessibility, prejudice, social isolation and that there is no simple answer to this problem. Also, we have to enlighten this problem if we want to address poverty issues and severe social exclusion.

## 4. Methodology

Three main research goals of *the Research on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Employment* were: 1. to investigate how existing policies, financial incentives, vocational rehabilitation programs and training provided by the state benefit people with disabilities to find employment and; 2. to investigate what are the real needs of PwD in the recruitment process, and what are the obstacles they face; 3. to assess the motivation and interest of employers in the employment of PwD and the obstacles they face.

The focus of the project, within the research conducted, is on the following municipalities: Banja Luka, Bihać, Brčko, Mostar, Sarajevo, Trebinje, Vitez, Zenica. Essential for the research methodology is that the selected municipalities cover larger administrative and economic centres in Republika Srpska, Brčko District, different parts of Federation of BiH, to get a broader overview of the situation regarding the topic in BiH coming from larger cities. In addition, to consider the municipalities that do not have all the privileges of large administrative and economic centres, and thus take a significantly different perspective, smaller municipalities are also analyzed to make a comparison.

To achieve the set goals of the research, we developed a research methodology that included 2 basic phases of data collection:

1. Desk analysis of the existing legal framework and literature and
2. Empirical research - a collection of quantitative and qualitative data from representatives of entity Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, persons with disabilities individually, employers and DPOs.

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<sup>4</sup> Glavna služba za reviziju javnog sektora Republike Srpske; Profesionalna rehabilitacija i zapošljavanje lica sa invaliditetom (eng. Main Audit Office of the RS; Performance Audit Report Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities) Banja Luka, 2019.

Phase 1 of the research on the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwD) in employment and assessment of current legislation included review and desk research of the laws related to professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities in both entities and other relevant regulations in this area. Results of this research are presented in the “*Recommendation for systemic changes report*” and both reports are interconnected and give a complete picture of the situation in the field of employment of PwD.

To collect empirical data from the field, for the requirement of the empirical part of the research (phase 2 of methodology), research methods of a semi-structured interview, open questionnaire and online survey for collecting individual experiences of persons with disabilities were used.

For institutional representatives set of questions for interviews are developed. The interviews were conducted online with representatives of the entity's Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD (RS and FBiH). We analyzed in depth the data obtained from the Funds in search of significant patterns or inconsistencies. Set of the questions addressed the expertise, experiences and relevant data about effects of existing policies, financial incentives, vocational rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state and the analysis of the benefit for people with disabilities to find employment and for employers to hire PwD from the perspective of the institutional representatives. Through the interviews and official data from Funds, we received data on how many people have benefited from the Funds and state mechanisms in employment, but also from the perspective of the institutional representatives what are the real needs of PwD in the recruitment process, and what are the obstacles they face. From the perspective of the Funds interest of employers in the employment of PwD and the obstacles they face, especially related to existing policies, financial incentives. The interview also included the set of questions related to the planning and implementation of activities aimed at removing barriers identified from previous researches; such are: overcoming discrimination in the labor market, proactive cooperation with NGOs, but also employers, coordination of activities and methodical collection of the data from the field, databases, and activities created according to data from the field.

Data from persons with disabilities regarding their employment experience, needs and obstacles, gained through an online survey which was created specifically for this research. This survey questionnaire is distributed in cooperation with the Project partners, DPOs and through social networks. This phase included collecting data about the experiences of PwD employed on the open labor market, but also data related to PwD employed through other employment models regulated by law (protective workshops, special companies for employment PwD). Our goal was to get data related to the experiences, knowledge, combination of circumstances and characteristics of the process of employment of persons with disabilities in BiH from their perspective. Set of question also inquire into the level of information of PwD on the existence of incentives, opportunities, assistance and generally competent institutions, e.g. Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD. The

questions focused on attitudes, opinions, and experiences in all phases of the employment process: from the job research process to workplace experiences. These data have analyzed using SPSS Statistics Software an attempt to detect possible patterns based on the analysis of differences by gender, level of education, place of residence, type of disability and other elements of socio-demographic information and differences that prove relevant. Aware of the complexity of some questions, to allow better understanding and full participation, we recommended that people with intellectual disabilities fill in the questionnaire with the support of an assistant.

The position, attitudes and specific perspective of employers as well as their experiences in employing people with disabilities, the level of information on benefits prescribed by the state they have, has been collected through semi-structured interviews with different employers. Open-ended questions were used, allowing for a discussion with the interviewee rather than a straightforward question and answer format. The interviewees were selected and contacted in cooperation with the Project partners. The selected interview partners represented both employers from the open labor market; and employers of PwD under special conditions (support for the employment of PwD). Employers from the open labor market were selected based on three different criteria so that we have the representatives of each group within the criteria: local firms and large corporations; public and private sector; enterprises/organizations from large and small administrative and economic areas. The sets of questions are developed with the goal to assess employers' interest in recruiting PwD and the obstacles they face from employers' perspectives. A special question that often arises for employers in the context of employment of PwD are flexible working conditions, and the set of questions refers to information on whether the employer is willing to provide flexible working conditions for employees. Interviews were conducted with a guarantee of anonymity in order to avoid socially desirable answers and to ensure as honest answers as possible from the employers.

We estimated that DPOs are a highly valuable source of information for this research. Information that they have are often based on the experience of their beneficiaries or members, and they can indicate some practice or problem which are not visible from the perspective of “official” data. We approached them with an open-ended questionnaire that gives them the opportunity to share specific data and point out problems from their specific perspective and following a relevant system of their own. This phase included collecting data about the possibilities and associated circumstances of PwD employed on the open labor market, and PwD employed through other employment models regulated by law (protective workshops, special companies for employment of PwD). Through the perspective of DPOs, which are very important actors in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, we got a broader overview of the characteristics of the process of employment of persons with disabilities in BiH. Furthermore, through the specific questions, we tried to come up with more specific topics such are: how existing policies, financial incentives, vocational rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state

benefit people with disabilities to find employment; what are the real needs of PwD in the recruitment process, what are the obstacles they face; possibilities for the cooperation with the institutional representatives; support and openness of the employers; legislation problems and especially the discussion about the legal institute of deprivation of legal capacity (guardianship) in the context of employment and independent living of PwD.

## 5. Presentation of Findings and Analysis

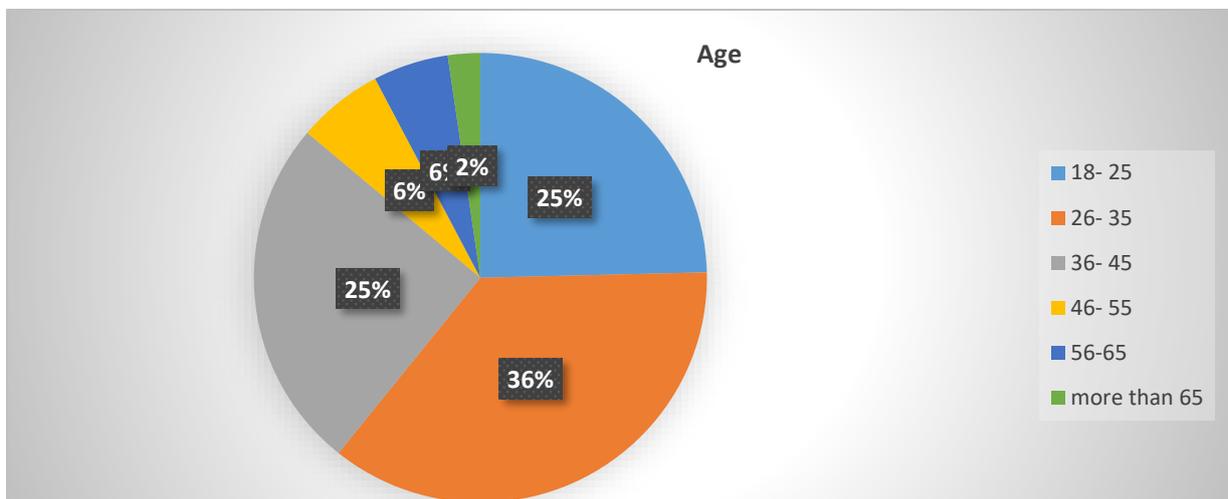
The analysis of data and findings collected through desk research and the empirical phase of the research are presented in the following chapters, organized according to the actors from whom the data were collected. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the employment situation of persons with disabilities, we presented and analyzed quantitative as well as qualitative. Further in this document, an analysis of all collected data is presented and based on that, conclusions and recommendations for action are given.

### 5.1. Results of Analysis of Data in Research Concerning Individuals – PwD

Data from persons with disabilities regarding their employment experience, needs and obstacles, was gained through an online survey created specifically for this research. The survey questionnaire was distributed in cooperation with the Project partners, DPOs and through social networks. The goal was to get data related to the experiences, knowledge, circumstances and characteristics of the process of employment of persons with disabilities in BH from their perspective by collecting data about the experiences of PwD employed on the open labor market, but also data related to PwD employed through other employment models regulated by law (protective workshops, special companies for employment PwD). Set of questions also inquire into the level of information of PwD on the existence of incentives, opportunities, assistance and generally competent institutions, e.g. Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The questions focus on attitudes, opinions, experiences in all phases of the employment process: from the job research process, job application, to workplace experiences. The goal was to detect possible patterns based on the analysis of differences by gender, level of education, place of residence, type of disability and other elements of socio-demographic information and differences that prove relevant. Aware of the complexity of some questions, in order to allow better understanding and full participation, it was recommended that people with intellectual disabilities fill in the questionnaire with the support of an assistant. Assistance was also offered by the researchers as well as the possibility of completing the questionnaire in another form of document that was subsequently entered into the forms by the researchers.

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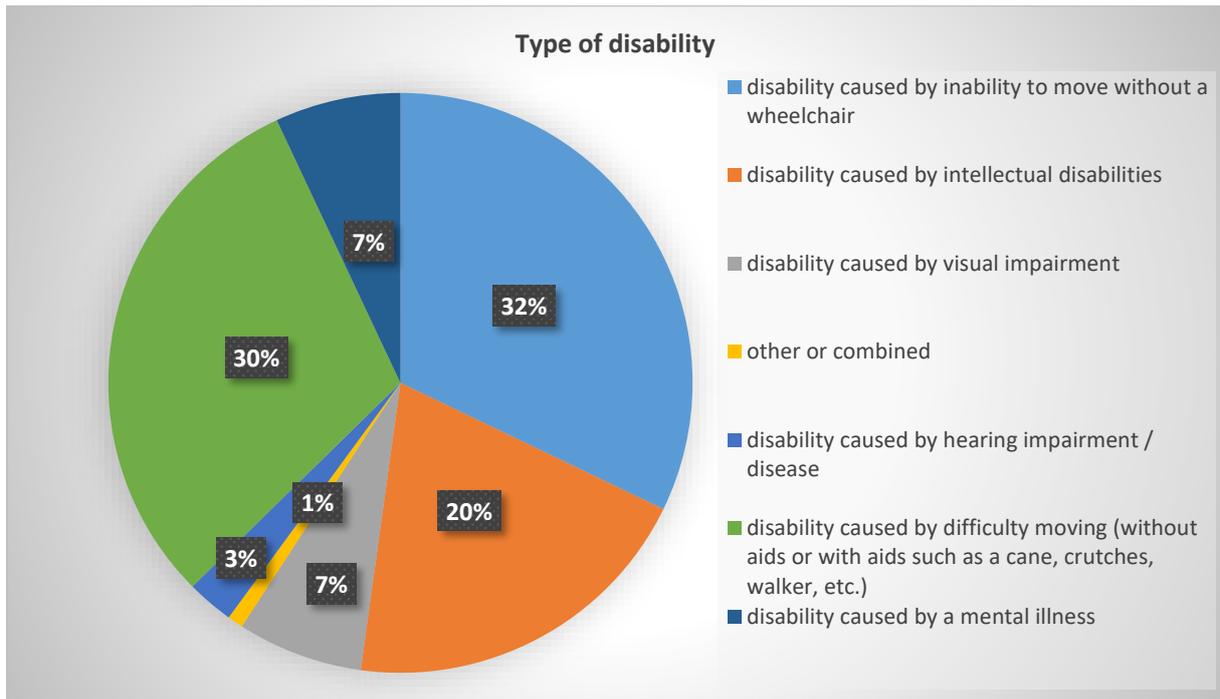
It was gained a total number of 135 responses to the questionnaire. Of the total number of our samples, the responses of men and women were equally distributed. The highest percentage of respondents achieved a secondary education level (68%), followed by university or college (22%), and at least in our sample, we have of those with only primary education level. Most respondents are between 26 and 35 years old (36%). There is also a large percentage of respondents between 36 and 45 years of age (25%), as well as respondents between 18 and 25 (25%). There are fewer respondents over the age of 45 in our sample, both from 46 to 55 (6%) as well as 56 to 65 are 6%, and more than 65 just 2%. This can be explained by the fact that the questionnaire was distributed online, which was the only solution in the new situation caused by the pandemic. What we can conclude is that the questionnaire was answered predominantly by the middle-aged and younger population, secondary education level, equally men and women, and with that in mind further analyze the data obtained and draw the conclusions. (see chart No. 1.)



*Chart No. 1.*

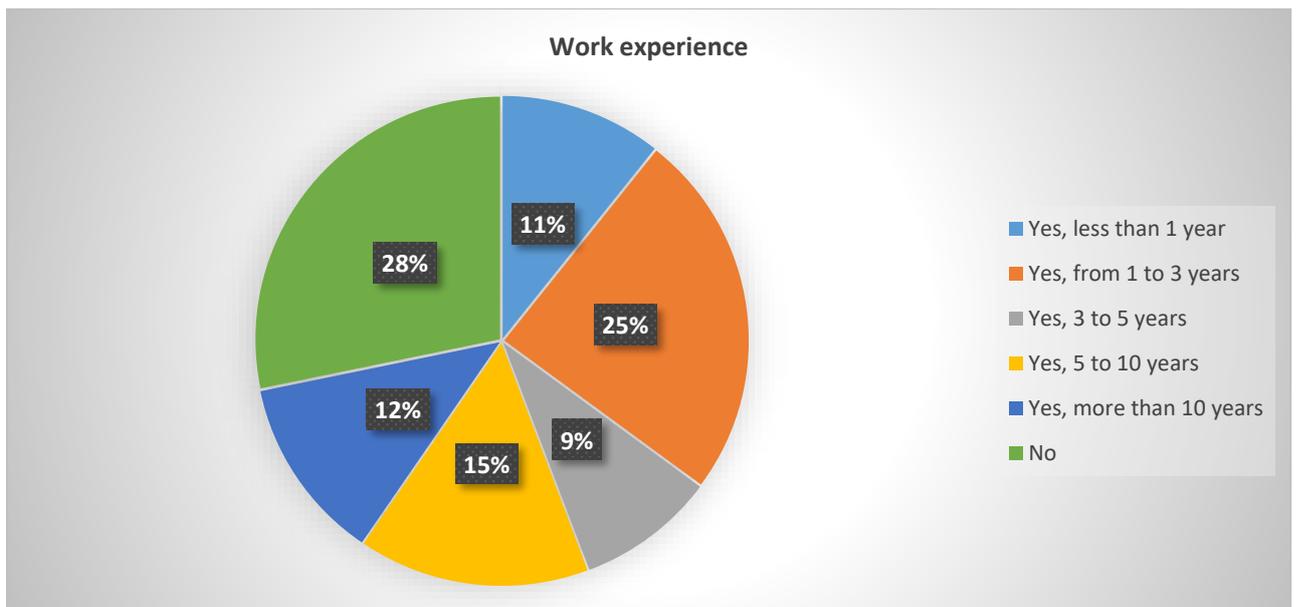
In our sample, there are 32% of respondents with the disability caused by the inability to move without a wheelchair, 30% disability caused by difficulty moving (without aids or with aids such as a cane, crutches, walker, etc.), 20% disability caused by intellectual disabilities and that are three largest groups of respondents in our sample. Other groups are: disability caused by visual impairment 7%, by mental illness 7%, hearing impairment 3% and other or combined 2%. (See chart No. 2.)

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*Chart No. 2.*

Data regarding employment status and work experience in our sample reflects the generally unfavourable situation for persons with disabilities in the labor market. The largest percentage of respondents have no work experience at all, and that is 28% in our sample, less than one year of work experience 11% of respondents, from 1 to 3 years 25%, from 3 to 5 years 9%. A total number of more than 5 years of work experience in our sample is 27%: that is 15% of respondents from 5 to 10 and 12% more than 10 years. (See chart No. 3.)



*Chart No. 3.*

## REPORT ON THE STATE OF INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

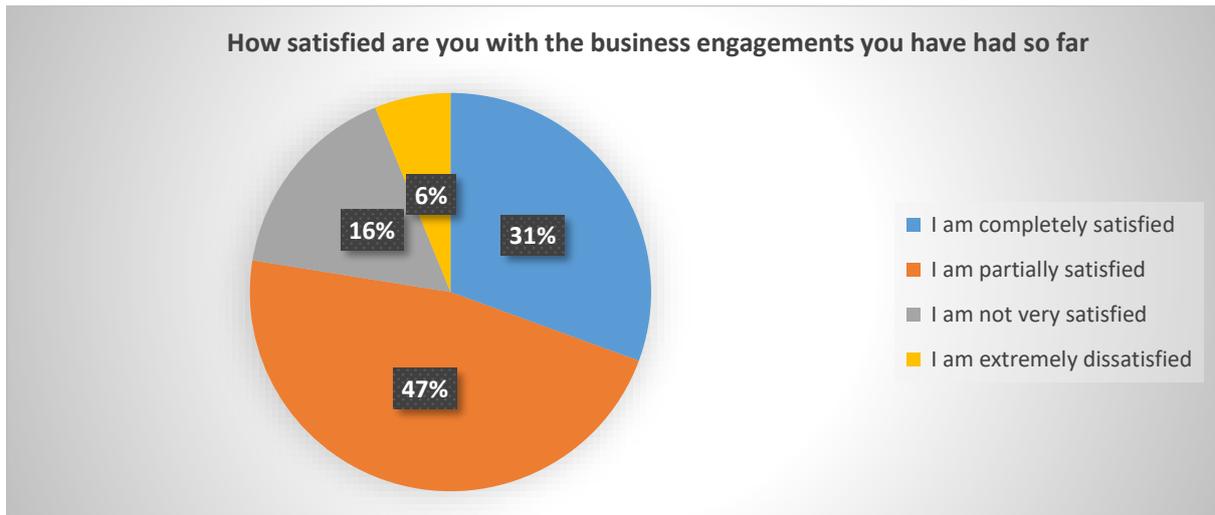


*Chart No. 4.*

A large number of respondents are currently unemployed, and that is 65% of the total number of respondents, whereby 19% declared that they are unemployed and not looking for a job, and 46% that they are unemployed and looking for a job. Currently working but not permanently employed (under occasional employment contracts) are 9%. Permanently employed full time in our sample 19%, part-time or another form of part-time work 2%. Retired are 5% of respondents. (See chart No. 4.)

Gender does not affect the employment status in our sample and is approximately equally distributed in number per group. Type of disability affects employment status responses; that is, people with intellectual disabilities are most often out of work (total 87%) and currently looking for a job (61%), and therefore least often in any type of employment (total 13%). No significant discrepancies can be observed for other groups. People living in rural areas are more often unemployed than people from cities or living in the city suburbs, and people living in cities or city suburbs are more often employed but also in employment without permanent employment status under occasional employment contracts (most often among persons living in the cities).

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*Chart No. 5.*

On the other hand, respondents who do have some work experience are mostly satisfied with the business engagement they have had so far (total 78%), that is those partially satisfied 47% or completely satisfied 31% with the business engagements they have had. Not very satisfied (16%) or extremely dissatisfied (6%) with a total of 22% of respondents. So, when they get a job opportunity, it is mostly rated as a positive experience. (See chart No. 5.)

The attitudes of people with disabilities towards conditions and opportunities at the labor market show that people with disabilities are quite discouraged and demoralized. As the biggest problem, they recognize general prejudices in society that affect both the self-confidence and motivation of a person, as well as the attitudes and practices of employers. Respondents rated very high also the lack of opportunities to attend courses and improve competencies required by the labor market and unfavourable working conditions as a problem. The problem of education and insufficient opportunities for education and training, as well as insufficient assistance, are also often emphasized in addition to the previously mentioned. (See table No. 1.)

In your opinion, what are the main causes of high unemployment and unfavorable position on the labor market of persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina?	Mean (min 1 max 5)
PwD face great prejudices in society, which affects the lack of self-confidence and active commitment of people with disabilities themselves in search of work.	3.9
People with disabilities have less chances and opportunities to progress compared to the general population	3.9
PwD face major prejudices in society which also affect discriminatory attitudes and practices of employers and in employment decisions	3.8
Lack of opportunities to attend additional courses and improve competencies required by the labor market for people with disabilities	3.8

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People with disabilities are at a disadvantage in work organizations due to unfavorable working conditions	3.8
Employers do not have enough support or motivation to employ PwD, because the state has not paid enough attention to the issue of motivation and support for employers	3.7
Jobs and working hours are not sufficiently adapted for people with disabilities	3.5
PwD are difficult to employ because they do not have enough work experience	3.5
People with disabilities are more exposed to discrimination and mobbing in the workplace than the general population	3.5
The main reason is that PwD have lower performance than non-disabled people	2.5

*Table No. 1*

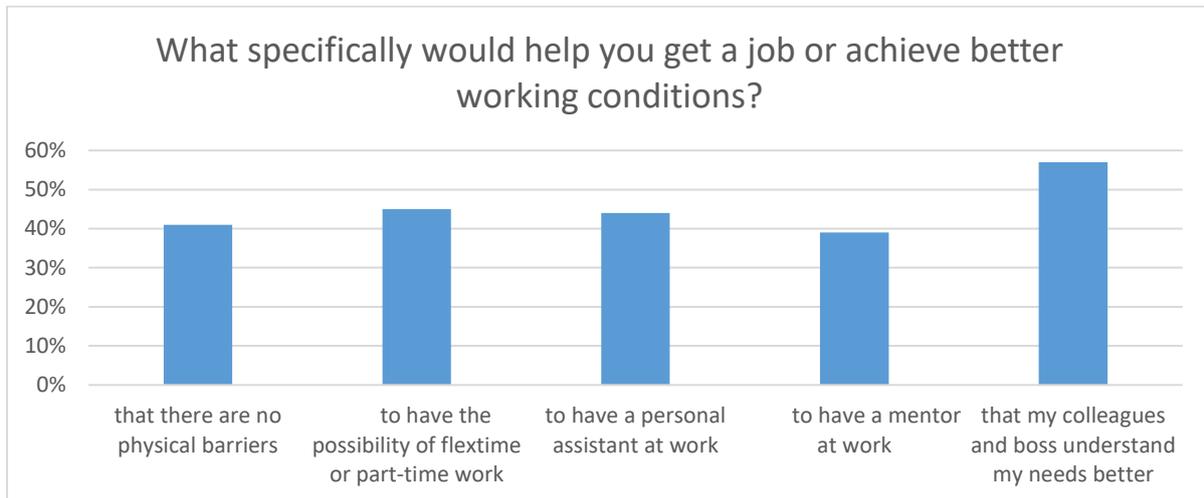
Respondents who declared currently unemployed or in a situation where they have been unemployed for a long time were asked to assess the main reasons for the unemployment situation in their particular case. As the biggest problem rated in our sample is the problem of inadequacy of the workplace where it is impossible for PwD to perform work tasks. Then follows the problem of the inadequacy of working hours and inflexibility (e.g. when it comes to opening the possibility for the option of part-time work from home, flextime working hours or similar), inadequacy of work tasks, as well as difficulties in getting to work because there is no infrastructure that would enable this in their local community. (see table No.2.)

If you are currently unemployed or in a situation where you have been unemployed for a long time, what are the main reasons for the unemployment situation in your particular case? (1 does not apply to me at all, and 5 fully agrees / fully refers to me)	Mean
The biggest problem is the inadequacy of the workplace, where it is impossible for PwD to perform work tasks	3.3
The biggest problem is the inadequacy of work tasks	3.1
Difficulties in getting to work, it is physically impossible for me to go to work because there is no infrastructure that would enable this in my local community	3.1
The biggest problem is the inadequacy of working hours and inflexibility (e.g. when it comes to opening the possibility for the option of part-time work from home, flextime working hours or similar)	3
Prejudices of others	3
No one is looking for my profession	2.8
I am not actively looking for a job	2.4
I do not have enough knowledge and skills for quality work	2.3
I have no obstacles	1.3

*Table No. 2.*

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When asked “What specifically would help you get a job or achieve better working conditions?”, the respondents in the largest percentage answer “that my colleagues and boss understand my needs better” (57%) and “to have the possibility of flextime or part-time work”(45%). A significant percentage of respondents also mark the answers “to have a personal assistant at work” (44%), “that there are no physical barriers” (41%), “to have a mentor at work” (39%). (see chart No. 6.)

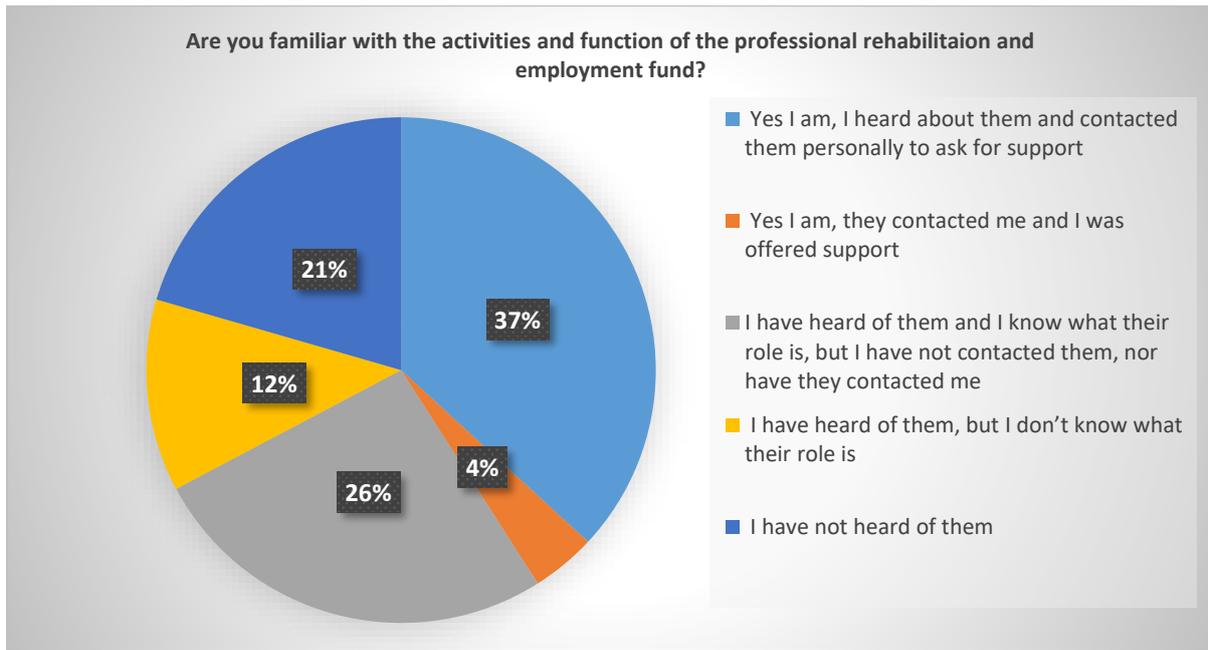


*Chart No. 6.*

In addition to the offered answers that respondents had the opportunity to mark in the questionnaire, the respondents also mentioned as a solution or help to get a job or achieve better working conditions: organized transport from home to the workplace because some people cannot take driving tests or have the possibility to use public transport, emphasizing the problem of people living in the countryside; additional education and training opportunities.

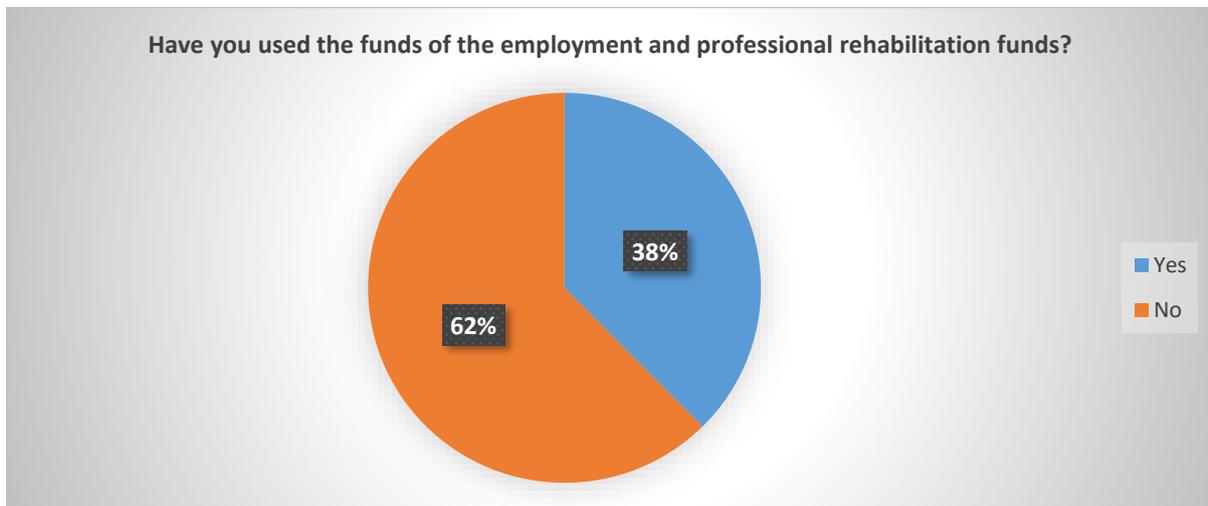
As previous data collected showed, assistance and support is not sufficiently developed and acts more as a passive aid instrument without adequate proactive action. PwD in 21% answer that they are not familiar with the activities and function of the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, 12% answer that “they have heard of them, but don’t know what their role is”, and 26% that they “have heard of them and I know what their role is, but I have not contacted them, nor have they contacted me”, that means that in our sample 59% of PwD had no contact at all with Professional rehabilitation and employment funds. Just 4% of PwD answered, “Yes I am, they contacted me and I was offered support,” and on the other side 37% “Yes I am, I heard about them and contacted them personally to ask for support”. Here we can conclude that it is necessary to make more adequate and systematic organized actions to inform about the existence, activities and function of the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. Greater awareness and information about the activities and rights that the Funds should regulate would enable possibly a better corrective of Fund’s work. (See chart No. 7.)

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**Chart No. 7.**

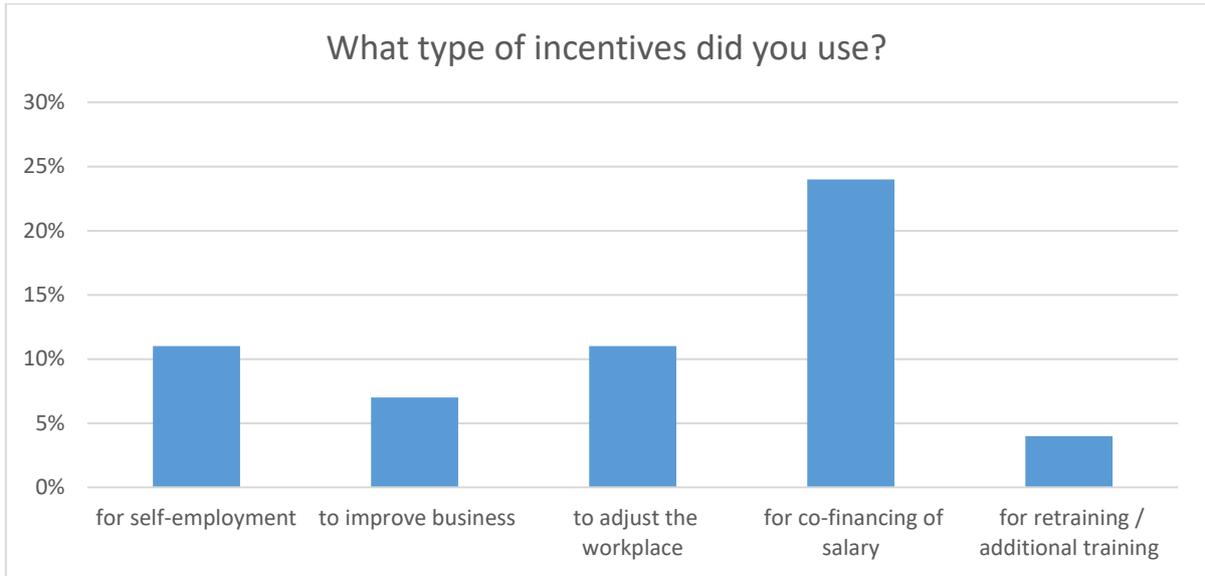
Accordingly, a higher percentage of people did not use the support and employment assistance of the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities: 62% answer No and 38% Yes. (See chart No. 8.)



**Chart No. 8.**

Mostly in our sample, respondents used or are currently using incentives for co-financing of salary and that is in our sample 24%, then follows for self-employment 11%, to adjust the workplace 11%, to improve business 7%, for retraining / additional training 4%. (See chart No. 9.)

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**Chart No. 9.**

As we noticed in the answers we received, the respondents often complain about malversations in practice; we tried to get data on how long the respondents stayed in the workplace after receiving incentives. We will list below in the table data about how long respondents stayed in the workplace after receiving the incentives, but only for incentives used by PwD that are in our sample more than 5 percent, and the total number presented in the table are just for the answers given for both questions we are comparing, because not all those who answered that they have used incentives also answered the question of how long they stayed in the workplace after receiving the incentives and as a result the total number given to both questions is somewhat smaller but may indicate possible conclusions and trends. When using incentives to adjust the workplace, respondents in our sample were able to keep their job mostly more than 3 years. When using incentives for self-employment, respondents tends to keep their job or from 1 to 2 years or more than 3 years, and those answers are almost equally distributed. PwD using incentives for co-financing of salary in our sample mostly were able to keep their job from 1 to 2 years. (See table No.3.)

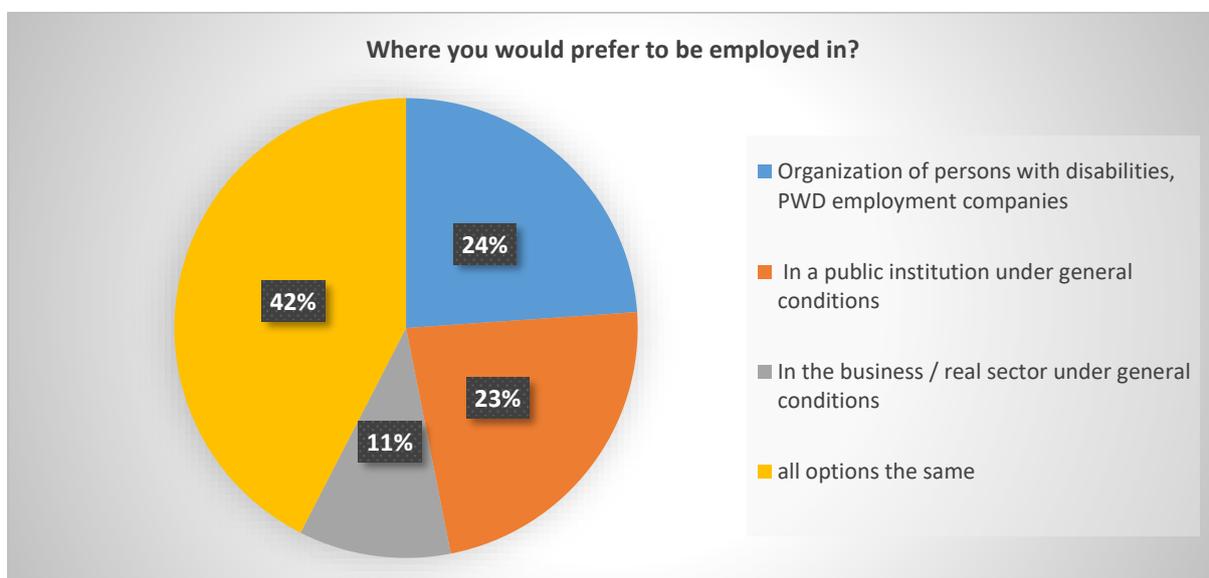
	less than 1 year	from 1 to 2 years	from 2 to 3 years	more than 3 years
for self-employment	1	6	2	5
to improve business	0	1	1	4
to adjust the workplace	1	3	2	7
for co-financing of salary	3	13	7	6

**Table No. 3.**

## REPORT ON THE STATE OF INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

Cooperation with the employment bureaus /services is also very low and respondents who have answered this question answer in 87% that they have never received a call from the employment service, in 11% that they sometimes get a call from the employment service, and just in 2% that they often get a call from the employment service.

Respondents mostly answer to the question “Where you would prefer to be employed in” that “all the options are the same” to them (42%), and then follows with almost the same percent DPOs (24%) and public institution under general conditions (23%), and the lowest percentage of responses (11%) is in the business/ real sector under general conditions. When clarifying their answers, they state that the public sector is safer in terms of job preservation, greater opportunity to provide more flexible working conditions, greater rights and less exploitation. In DPOs because they want to improve the rights of PwD and because they would feel safe and accepted in DPOs. (See chart No. 10.)



*Chart No. 10.*

To the question “What exactly do you do in the job search process”, respondents most often mark the answer “I ask friends and acquaintances if they know about job offers” and “I look for job ads and offers over the Internet or I search for job ads in newspapers, on the radio”. Least often respondents mark “I personally contact various employers”. “I do nothing about looking for a job” answered 18 respondents in our sample, of whom three are retired. Rest of them stated in more detail why and what are the reasons for doing nothing about looking for a job and when we analyze these answers we can notice disappointment and lack of self-confidence by some respondents: “I know in advance that no one will hire me.” Other reasons given are the problems of inconsistency of dominant patterns and requirements of paid work with the specific life situation in which the person finds himself: “Because I can only work from home because of the severity of my disability”. The respondents mentioned the problem of general corruption and malversations in the PwD employment system as a problem “It is necessary to monitor

the work of DPOs where they employ PwD and they do not even have office space, and it turns out to be fictitious employment.”

The problem of insufficient support during education and professional development is also emphasized here but also in answering other questions: “I do not do anything because I am not able to get additional education on my own. For two reasons: financial burden on parents; physical burden on parents, because I cannot do activities or go to school on my own, etc.” The same problem is most often emphasized when answering the question “Do you want to share something else with us, related to employment opportunities and practices for people with disabilities?”, as they point out that a greater focus needs to be placed on education and professional development, understood at all times and in all phases as an integral part of the employment process. In addition, it is mentioned by independent trades owners the problem of insufficient support in product placement and the problem of invoice collection which jeopardizes the businesses.

The general conclusion is that persons with disabilities are not sufficiently informed about the activities carried out for the purpose of employment and professional rehabilitation of PwD, and related to this they do not have enough confidence in the system what makes them demotivated, but also due to discrimination in society there is a lack of self-confidence and independent initiatives. In addition to all the above, PwD often emphasize the problem of insufficient investment in education, trainings, (online) courses, as well as enabling and opening for flexible working conditions.

## **5.2. Analysis of the Answers to the Questionnaire for DPOs**

As highly valuable source of information about employment of persons with disabilities, we have asked DPOs about their opinion and practice in field of employment, often based on the experience of their beneficiaries or members. We approached them with an open-ended questionnaire that gives the opportunity to share specific, wider explanations and data and point out problems from their specific perspective.

Through the questions we tried to reach more specific topics such are: how existing policies, financial incentives, vocational rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state benefit people with disabilities to find employment; what are the real needs of PwD in the recruitment process, what are the obstacles they face; possibilities for the cooperation with the institutional representatives; support and openness of the employers; legislation problems and especially the discussion about the legal institute of deprivation of legal capacity (guardianship) in the context of employment and independent living of PwD.

## REPORT ON THE STATE OF INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

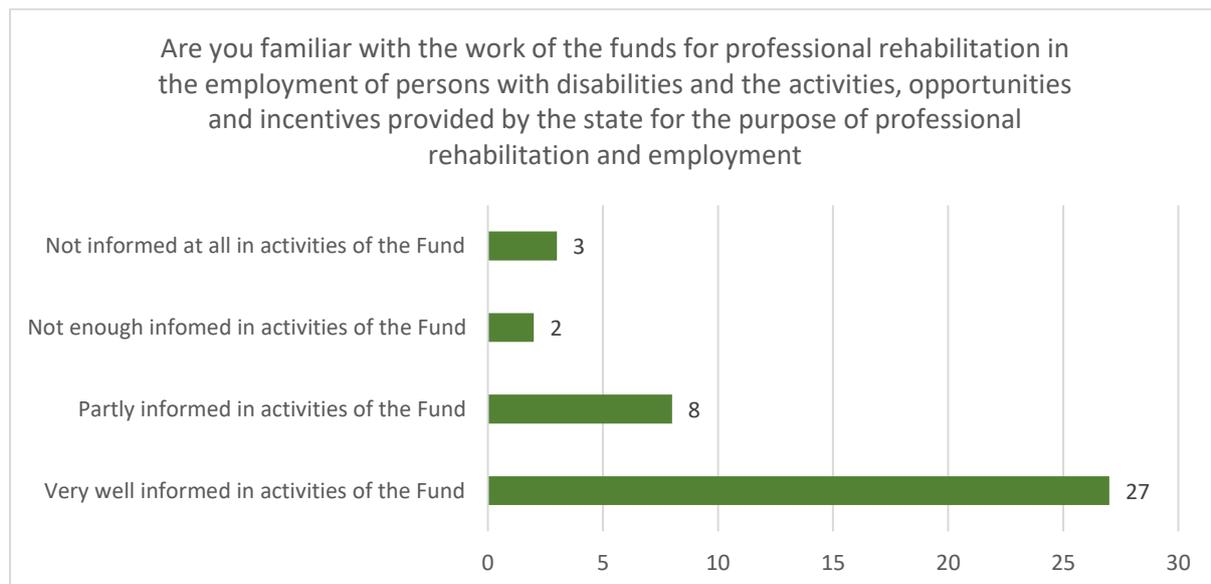
Answers to the open questionnaire, designed for research needs, have been given by 39 DPOs from Goražde, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Brčko, Prijedor, Tuzla, Trebinje, Zavidovići, Mostar, Rudo, Bijeljina, Cazin, Bužim, Kozarska Dubica, Kneževo, Zenica, Foča, Jajce and Bihać. Among the DPOs that gave their answers to this questionnaire are organizations that conduct their works on whole Bosnia and Herzegovina territory, two Associations from RS (operating on entity level) and one professional association which have “work with persons with disabilities” in its main aims and activities (Association of social pedagogics of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Analysis of the answers from DPOs shows that most of organizations have clearly defined but criticizing attitude toward institutionalized activities for encouraging employment of PwD in both entities. There is notable difference in range and precision of the answers which can be accredited to different level of development of organizations that gave answers, to their experience and capacities.

Nevertheless, vast majority of them, 27 in total (67%) declares that they are familiar with work of entity Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD which are, shown from analysis of legislations, leading entity structures and, probably, the only response of the state to the problem of employment of PwD.

Brčko District must be excluded from this statement, having in mind that, opposed to entities, Brčko does not have defined institution that deals with any kind of support to PwD employment. (see chart No. 11.)

“...in Brčko District, as for our knowledge, none of stated exists, because there is no Fund for professional rehabilitation and employment of PwD.” (Association of parents and children with disabilities, Brčko)



*Chart No. 11.*

At suggestion to give general grade to usability of existing policies, financial subventions, processes of professional rehabilitation and educations that State enables, organizations gave criticizing opinions toward policies and activities aimed toward employment of PwD.

General feeling is that existing policies of co-founding of taxes contributions and stimulation of newly employed PwD are recognized as a good thing, but insufficient for significant influence on state of employment of PwD in BiH. Associations do recognize value of financial aid that Funds are offering and generally appreciate their usefulness if they are users of stated aid, for employment in Disabled people's associations.

“Statistics showing increased number of employed PwD and increased number of companies specialized for PwD employment indicates that policy for employment of PwD goes in right direction, employment in DPOs on local level was impossible until now, but thankfully to the Funds in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina all DPOs that we contacted on local level have two or more employed PwD.”  
(Association of Dystrophics Cazin)

However, for employment in the open labor market, more serious social inclusion and economic empowerment of PwD, the current institutional measures to support employment do not provide an answer.

“The existing policies for the employment of PwD provided by the state are not sufficiently developed, adequate and are not implemented in practice, which is indicated by the number of unemployed persons with disabilities in our country.” (ProReha)

“There is a whole spectrum of various incentives, projects, public calls that do not specifically refer to PwD, but do not exclude them either. However, there is no systemically more permanent solution to the issue of PwD unemployment. Projects, calls, co-financing, which in most cases last a year, after which temporary employees return to the records of the employment office, are not the solution to the problem. Also, greater supervision of financiers over the real engagement in the workplace of persons with disabilities employed through projects and public calls is needed.” (Sumero, Sarajevo)

“If we talk about policies and strategic actions, strategic documents are always flat and give insufficiently enforceable recommendations for improving the position in any area, especially having in mind the ten-year period for which the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in RS was adopted. Financial incentives are insufficient, i.e. employers are not sufficiently supported to employ a person with a disability. Moreover, they are not sufficiently sanctioned for not employing a person with a disability (this is especially true for the public sector, although the fees paid by the private sector for not employing PwD are very low). Support of 2,000-4,000 KM of financial incentive for employment of PwD with the obligation of the employer to provide a job for at least two years is not stimulating enough, and funds of 5,000 KM are not stimulating enough for PwD to decide to start an independent business.”  
(Association of Youth with Disabilities Infopart, Banja Luka)

“For the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, these policies hardly recognize their needs. Given that 90% of people with intellectual disabilities are not able to establish employment in a formal sense, in order to make a living from their work, it is clear that the role of the Fund (benefits, support, education and rehabilitation as services offered by Fund) provides this population with almost nothing. The only form of support was in the form of 5-6 packages of support for economic empowerment of families in which these persons live (procurement of equipment, machinery, etc. to strengthen family estates). So, as in many other areas, this population is discriminated against in terms of the right to work, even within people with disabilities themselves.” (Savez udruženja za pomoć mentalno nedovoljno razvijenim licima Republike Srpske (MeNeRaLi) / Alliance of Organizations for Assistance to Mentally Underdeveloped Persons of Republika Srpska)

The almost unanimous position of the DPOs is that there are no other forms of support, that the existing programs are insufficiently developed and do not enable the sustainability of employment.

“Existing policies benefit only certain persons with disabilities, who remain uneducated to work, and when funding from the Fund ceases, PwD is unemployed again, because it is very difficult to achieve sustainability.” (Association for Support of Persons with Intellectual and Combined Disabilities "Sunce" Mostar)

“It is necessary to expand the support program for the employment of PwD, especially in the part of a support for keeping the person employed for as long as possible.” (Association of Dystrophic Patients Bužim)

With the exception of one answer, we find a uniform position of the Associations in the answer to the question of whether employment measures created by institutions are aligned with the real needs of persons with disabilities. Associations believe that the incentive system was not created in response to real needs, but is partly an inherited framework from the former state (which, it should be borne in mind, had a socialist system and ceased to exist 30 years ago), and partly "ad hoc" solutions created in an attempt to adapt to the new European<sup>5</sup> disability approaches, without real reform and a basis in the form of a database.

In addition, the DPOs point out that existing ways of stimulating employment leave the possibility of abuse by employers to the detriment of people with disabilities, but often with their participation through consent to not actually work during employment.

“I am of the opinion that it is partly beneficial, but for the most part that it is still corrupt and in other ways set up for people who are lazy or have nothing to do with these rights.” (Association of Persons with Disabilities Amputirci Bužim)

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<sup>5</sup> Framed in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which BiH is a signatory

“As the main obstacles faced by people with disabilities in relation to existing policies and financial incentives offered by the state in order to employ people with disabilities, most often cited are prejudices of employers, non-recognition of people with disabilities in the labor market by other institutions, employment services, educational institutions, insufficiently good education, impossibility to choose an occupation, but also unsatisfactory programs of prof. rehabilitation, formal-legal obstacles for individualized approach to work engagement of persons with intellectual disabilities and the lack of community support services (personal assistance).

... There is no staff in the employment services that recognizes the specifics that accompany disability, and thus no mediator as the right link between employers and people with disabilities.” (Association of Youth with Disabilities Infopart)

“They do not have qualifications, in fact they do not have enough choices when studying, they only have a couple of educational profiles as a choice for study.” (Association for Support of Persons with Intellectual and Combined Disabilities "Sunce" Mostar)

“People with disabilities are trained for certain types of jobs on the basis of offered occupations in regular or special schools, but in most cases PwD cannot really practice these occupations or are not sought as in demand in the labor market. We have a user who ended up as a shoemaker according to a special plan and program, but in the territory of our municipality that profile is not required, and due to his handicap, he cannot independently perform the mentioned activity.” (Association for help to youth and children with disabilities "Tračak nade" Foča)

“We started a protective workshop for the production of ecological didactic material, but we encountered an obstacle because our legislation does not know the category of protective workshops, but only the form of company and we are not competitive in the market because we have a non-competitive workforce and no benefits especially when it comes to taxes. Considering that through the workshop we engaged but not employed people with intellectual difficulties, we cannot count on the benefits of the Fund.” (Udruženje za pomoć mentalno nedovoljno razvijenim licima Banja Luka (UMNRL Banja Luka) / Association for assistance to mentally underdeveloped persons, Banja Luka)

Asked to define the real needs of PwD in employment, most of the 35 answers to this question can be grouped into identifying the need for support services and social inclusion, more adequate vocational training and skills acquisition needed by the labor market, including a more individual approach to different types of disabilities,

“The real need of PwD in employment is support services, primarily personal assistance. Due to the lack of support services, many people are not able to get a job.” (Bosnian Doctors for Disabled)

“Adapting the education system to the specific needs of each group of PwD, both formal and non-formal, thus making education accessible to their needs. Education is the first condition for employment under both general and special conditions. E.g. the group of the deaf and hard of hearing is completely marginalized here because in a large number of cases every form of education and

training is not adapted to their needs. Therefore, I cannot even qualify for better jobs.” (Sarafon d.o.o. for employment of persons with disabilities)

The SUMERO Association from Sarajevo draws attention to one important thing when it comes to the needs of people with disabilities in the process of looking for a job and keeping it.

“People with disabilities are not active job seekers, there is a lack of quality connections with employers as well as guidance based on the identification of opportunities and needs.

“Programs to reduce the effects of long-term unemployment are also lacking. In practice, this means that even when a person has the opportunity to work, he/she is not adequately prepared, lacks work habits and ethics, people have a great challenge to adapt to the sudden change from static to active life, lacks a support for people at that stage. The result is that people with disabilities find it difficult to keep their jobs for long periods of time.” (SUMERO, Sarajevo)

“Not all policies are based on the needs and conditions of persons with sensory and physical disabilities, the specificity of their disability is not recognized in employment policies. A very small number of these people, only 5% of them, are able to do the simplest jobs and are able to fulfill their daily work obligations and thus live at least from the minimum wage. But at least 40% of them could be animated for shorter work obligations, simpler tasks, slower ... but with their participation they would be socially included and visible in the community.” (Savez udruženja za pomoć mentalno nedovoljno razvijenim licima Republike Srpske (MeNeRaLi) / Alliance of Organizations for Assistance to Mentally Underdeveloped Persons of Republika Srpska)

DPOs recognize the Funds, Ministries and DPOs as key factors in activities of joint action in order to achieve employment goals, but a smaller number recognize the role of employment services, employers' associations, development agencies. They emphasize the need for joint or at least coordinated action with DPOs, in order to reduce the cacophony of individual voices with different levels of knowledge and interests.

According to the responses of DPOs, there are no memoranda of cooperation or any form of official cooperation of the Funds for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD with DPOs. Most associations cooperate with the Fund only through the use of employment funds, and the Alliance of the Blind RS states that their member was a member of the Board of the Fund in RS for two terms, and thus had the opportunity to represent the views of the PwD movement.

“No, the cooperation is reduced to applying for programs, but in terms of designing the activities of the organization, they state the lack of interest from the Fund. There are no signed memoranda of cooperation or any other form of formalized official cooperation or involvement of the DPOs.”

“I could not say that we have any cooperation with the Fund. Three years ago, we implemented a project in which we planned for the representatives of the Fund to perform together with us at

meetings with young people with disabilities and representatives of the Employment Bureau, as well as employers, and then we received a negative response from them. When we addressed the Fund for a meeting only with them, we held a meeting at the Fund's headquarters in Prijedor, and at the meeting we learned that they do not have the capacity to implement some of their legal obligations: support for vocational rehabilitation, promotion of work potentials of persons with disabilities, contacts with employers, influence on representatives of the public sector to submit data on employed persons with disabilities, etc. We got the impression that the Fund only performs the financial role of granting financial incentives and refunds of contributions for employees with disabilities.” (Association of Youth with Disabilities Infopart)

The Association of Youth with Disabilities "Infopart" emphasizes the good practice of establishing cooperation with employment offices in five municipalities of RS, which was initiated by the Association as well as good cooperation with the Development Agency Banja Luka with which they have signed a memorandum “and cooperation in the field of employment is reflected in the fact that they have provided and will continue to provide assistance in establishing direct contact and holding meetings with employers from the private sector.”

All associations that responded to the open questionnaire believe that the pandemic adversely affected the employment of people with disabilities by stopping the already modest activities in this field, endangering potential employers and further isolating people with disabilities.

The views of DPOs that we see through the analysis of the answers to the question "Do you think that the issue of employment of people with intellectual disabilities should be advocated in a special way in relation to people with physical and sensory disabilities?" show that most DPOs believe that the issue of employment of people with intellectual disabilities should be advocated in a special way. It can be seen from the answer that this coincides with the already stated position on greater individualization of measures to encourage employment, and in relation to the real needs of the beneficiaries of these measures.

However, we note that some non-advocacy organizations state that they do not know how to address this issue.

On the opposite side is the position of 8 organizations from our sample that it is important to approach the issue of advocacy from a "cross disability" perspective, advocating the needs of all together and thus moving away from the outdated model of disability approach that focuses on diagnoses, so-called medical model.

DPOs give preference to the model of employment in the open labor market, seeing in this the possibility of social integration. However, it is certainly important to keep additional employment

models under special conditions and work occupations, in order to leave room for employment opportunities for as many people with disabilities as possible.

“I think that it is better for the entire society to employ people with disabilities in the open labor market and not in companies for the employment of people with disabilities, occupational workshops or work centers. Only in this way can the true inclusion into the society be achieved.” (Bosnian Doctors for Disabled - BDFD)

“The advantage of employment under general conditions (which is still a percentage lower than employment under special conditions) is in the fact that then you can progress, educate for better jobs. However, people with disabilities who are employed in state-owned enterprises and institutions are rare, and if they exist, they are low-paid, often marginal jobs such as courier, maintenance, cleaning and the like. Although positive legal regulations impose the obligation to employ PwD everywhere, including in public institutions, this rarely happens in practice. Employment under special conditions has both advantages and disadvantages. It depends on the legal form of registration of the business subject. It is not good that only PwD are employed in such a subject because it is ghettoization, there is no possibility of progress in terms of working career. These are often non-competitive companies on the market and are therefore unstable, so they need help in the form of co-financing.” (Udruženje za pomoć mentalno nedovoljno razvijenim licima Banja Luka (UMNRL Banja Luka) / Association for assistance to mentally underdeveloped persons, Banja Luka)

The attitude of the DPOs in BiH about the institute of deprivation of legal capacity is undoubtedly negative, with more or less knowledge of the legal implications on which this institute relies and the processes that must be regulated in the possibility of suspending this institute. The representatives of the organizations present the most dilemmas regarding finding a model for the protection of persons to whom this measure was imposed, in terms of achieving social benefits.

“Deprivation of legal capacity of adults, which is most present in those with severe intellectual disabilities, and placing them under guardianship, regardless of whether they are covered by some form of institutional or extra-institutional protection, completely deprives them of the ability to control their own lives.” (Sumero, Sarajevo)

"Sumero" points out the importance of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH to start drafting a Special Report on the Situation of the Rights of Persons with Intellectual and Mental Disabilities based on the fact that the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg Hadžimejlić and others found that the rights of persons deprived of legal capacity and placed in social protection institutions had been violated.

At the end of the questionnaire, DPOs were asked to assess the degree of agreement with the offered statements that describe the possible reasons for the high unemployment of persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With a score of 1, they rated attitudes that they do not agree are the cause of

unemployment, and with a score of 5, they rated attitudes that they strongly believe are the cause of the current employment situation of PwD.

The highest average score was given to the attitudes “PwD face great prejudices in society which affects the lack of self-confidence and active commitment of people with disabilities in search of work” and “PwD face high prejudices in society which affect both discriminatory attitudes and practices of employers and in employment decisions”.

The following are the statements, ranked as follows, from more to less probable causes of unemployment, according to the assessment of the axis organizations:

- Lack of opportunities to attend additional courses and improve competencies required by the labor market for people with disabilities;
- Working places and working hours are not sufficiently adapted for people with disabilities;
- Employers do not have enough support or motivation to employ PwD, because the state has not paid enough attention to the issue of motivation and support for employers;
- People with disabilities are more exposed to discrimination and mobbing in the workplace than the general population;
- People with disabilities have less chances and opportunities to progress compared to the general population;
- People with disabilities are at a disadvantage in work organizations due to unfavorable working conditions;
- PwD are difficult to employ because they do not have enough work experience;

The main reason is that PwD have a lower performance than non-disabled people.

The positions of DPOs clearly show that several basic directions have already been differentiated regarding the reform of the system of incentives for employment of persons with disabilities, but also that the DPOs also play a more significant role in this process than institutions recognize.

DPOs often have the role of both employer and advocate for change, but the community generally recognizes them both as a resource to hire and to isolate people with disabilities from the regular labor market, and this is the issue which needs to be adequately addressed. The analysis of the answers reveals that, in matters of employment, there are not so many discrepancies between different organizations, but the differences in the knowledge of the functioning of the system are noticeable. However, it seems that the harmonization of requirements related to the improvement of employment of persons with disabilities is very certain, if we ensure that this voice is heard by decision makers, and that the issue of employment of persons with disabilities is important enough to be placed on the political agenda.

### 5.3. Results of Analysis of Data in Research Concerning Employers

In order to acquire a representative sample of data collected through open-ended interviews with employers, the goal was to approach interviewee speaking on behalf of: companies with large business structure and offices in the entire BiH; firms and private trades from smaller towns; public institutions; and employer of PwD under special conditions (support for the employment of PwD). To ensure spontaneous and honest answers we have guaranteed anonymity, and in the analysis we will not provide information that may indicate the interviewee and the companies on whose behalf they are responding. In our sample we obtained a response from two companies with large business structure and offices in the entire BiH, two public institutions whereby one is from a larger and the other from a smaller city in BiH, two employer of PwD under special conditions where one is from FBiH and one from RS and three local companies.

In all listed employers in our sample who employ under general conditions, when we compare the approximate total number of employees versus the number of employed persons with disabilities within the company, there are very few persons with disabilities employed and not even close to the prescribed quota of employment of PwD. In our sample, within the companies that stated that they have employees who are persons with disabilities, according to the answers, no special adjustment was needed for any of them.

Accordingly, although these companies have some experience of working and employment of people with disabilities, these are people who can fully adapt to the current existing working conditions in the company. This information is problematic and worrying when we take into account that most companies in BiH do not even have access ramps for wheelchairs as a minimum. In such settings, it is also problematic that employers generally do not have enough information about all the opportunities and incentives offered by the state, but they also do not have confidence that any workplace adjustments will be completed within the satisfactory time dictated by the market. It is also important to note that open labor market employers very often mention the problem of workplace adjustment what they associate with waiting and linking this to possible problems that the fast pace of the labor market can create.

“I wonder how, for example, a person who uses a wheelchair can even get to reach our HR service office. You just mentioned that from the Funds, it is possible to apply for adjustment of workplace, somehow **it's all upside down for me**. This raises the question: how is possible for the person to come to the job interview at all, not only in our company... . This is necessary in order to reach that step of adjusting the workplace at all isn't it? And how long does it take to adjust? Personally, I am very sceptical about how much we would and whether we would wait for that at all, especially at the moment when it is necessary

to start working. The company is within such a system where you avoid waiting, if you wait you can have serious problems that distort business and competitiveness in the market.”

Employees who employ under general conditions according to the answers in our sample are not familiar with the possibilities and benefits of incentives, existing policies, financial incentives, active professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state in order to benefit people with disabilities to find employment. One interviewee from public institution stated as partially familiar and one from the local business, but those who assessed that they are partially or fully aware their information level and knowledge about opportunities, benefits and policies is very limited. They could not offer reasoned assessment of what needs to be improved and what has proven to be useful for the business sector when talking about possibilities and benefits of incentives, existing policies, financial incentives, active professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state in order to benefit people with disabilities in the employment process. All further argumentation with employers who believe that they are informed took place at the level of everyday assumptions.

Any of the employees who employ under general conditions in our sample have not used the opportunities and benefits of incentives, existing policies, financial incentives, professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state in order to benefit people with disabilities to find employment or other benefits from the Employment and Rehabilitation Funds and state employment mechanisms.

Employer of PwD under special conditions (support for the employment of PwD) due to the specific organization of the business are well informed about the benefits of incentives, existing policies, financial incentives, professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state in order to benefit people with disabilities to find employment. They themselves recognized the problem of insufficient information about benefits and existing policies in general, but also among employers who employ PwD, so they initiated information activities where representatives of the funds were also invited. The problem of networking, support and collaboration between companies registered to employ people with disabilities is emphasised.

“The Fund doesn't even have valid register and information, it doesn't keep records of how many such companies there are. We requested and could not obtain this information from the Fund. And we believe that we should form a Network of employers who employ under special conditions, so that we can exchange information and jointly represent our interests. It is necessary to organize ourselves.”

Current employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the open labor market in their local community employers mostly assess as very low. As main barriers to employing people with disabilities in the local community in which they operate employers highlight: prejudices, bad public image, insufficient inclusion in the community, inadequate education, insufficient information on benefits and

incentives, insufficient transparency of the fund's work, poor starting positions in the recruitment process for PwD in general.

“Due to general corruption, people are discouraged. They do not have enough information about the role of the Fund, and the Fund is completely non-transparent in its work. That is why there is a lot of abuse and they are constantly going to change the law to prevent abuse, and thus reduce the possibilities. Abuses should be prevented by increased control, not by reducing the scope of benefits or rights.”

“I just said that in general, this step of employment, coming to the interview, assessment of working conditions during the selection seems to me to be very unfavorable for people with disabilities.”

Such a general condition of low employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the open labor market in BiH allegedly gives an argument to prioritise employer of PwD under special conditions (support for the employment of PwD), but this poses the question how is the full inclusion possible if we neglect activities of promoting the access of PwD to the open labor market. The main challenge seems to be to deal with the current disadvantage and find a balance between protection and opening up opportunities.

“That is why it is important to ensure the survival of companies for the employment of people with disabilities. Because such companies were founded from DPOs, they also enable the survival of organizations important for the fighting for the rights of the PwD.”

To the question “What would motivate you and other employers to hire people with disabilities or more people with disabilities and how to adequately stimulate interest” employers answer: to inform us in a timely manner, to offer staff training, more control, higher finance allocations for workplace adjustments, financial incentives, proactive offers and incentives to provide basic settings (access ramps, elevators, appropriate software, etc.) to reduce differences in starting positions when selecting candidates, more active and proactive cooperation with the Funds and transparency of their work, more proactive action at the local level. Beside above-mentioned employer of PwD under special conditions mention the problems of debts incurred by public institutions where companies have to pay taxes even though invoices have not been paid, which disrupts their business, and also in other context highlight often the problem of the lack of the control.

“Also, we use the legally prescribed benefit by which public institutions have the obligation to order 20 percent of materials and equipment from companies that employ persons with disabilities . However, this is not being implemented, we have no insight into whether the 20% has been respected, no one controls it and there are various abuses and ways to offer our companies disqualification because corruption in society has generally become so widespread and it is reflected in all fields and activities.”

Employers also recognised the need of more coordinated activities and projects for the employment of PwD where state should take a lead as it has "the strings in its hands."

“Cooperation and a comprehensive approach. Now, in this situation, when asked what to do, I can only say everything from the beginning to the end, from education, work on empowering people, removing prejudices, obstacles, so that financial incentives can have any effect at all.”

According to the answers, there is also a problem of lack of training, insufficient support when solving acute problems and as a consequences workers lose their rights, due to lack of information by employers and also by people with disabilities, what limits possible ways to solve the emerged, acute problems. Proactive support, training and networking seem to be crucial.

“We did not use it because we were not instructed in procedures, practices, benefits. I can say from my experience that employees also do not know about their rights. We had a situation where a good employee started to have serious problem and did not cope with it on time, after a while he could no longer fulfill the obligations imposed by the pace of work, we were also blocked and we could not offer him a solution as a company, nor did we know and in the end it was such a tedious process for everyone.”

It seems interesting to note the big differences in answering the question: “Is your company/organization able by the nature of the work performed in your company / organization and the work policy of the company / organization to provide flexible working conditions for certain jobs and are you able to offer e.g. flexible working hours, part-time work from home and the like?” The answers differ precisely by the groups that were singled out in the research methodology itself. Companies with large business structure and offices in the entire BiH answer that the structure of decision-making and working in the company is complicated and therefore they can not answer that question. Public institutions answer positively, but one of them highlighting that this is possible for auxiliary workers and those who are not in charge of key tasks in the company. Employers of PwD under special conditions (support for the employment of PwD) have already elaborated procedures for adjusting working hours and working conditions. Local companies answer that flexible working conditions is partly possible but highlighting that important documents “have their place inside the company and must necessarily always be in its circle.” Further research is needed, but our data suggest that large structures within the business sector have more complicated decision-making structures and therefore more difficult to open up for flexible working conditions. Public institutions, although with rigid bureaucratic arrangements on the other hand, do not see the flexibility as a problem.

Employers in our sample mostly can not answer the question what are the biggest problems that employers face in the activities of adapting the workplace and working conditions for people with disabilities (architectural, flexible working hours, work tasks, special computer software ...) as they do not have any experiences. Small local companies mention insufficient and untimely incentives.

“Probably infrastructural adaptation of the space, especially if it is, for example, the need to install an elevator. Just imagine if any private sector employer would go through that process of installing an elevator, access ramp and everything else... I don't think it would. The private sector calculates a lot,

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money is important and that money is constantly invested in new projects. Few of us would set aside a larger sum of money for such a thing.”

To any of the company / organization, have not been offered training or an information class by state funds or other institutions related to any topics related to the employment of persons with disabilities. There is a big discrepancy here, because the big problem that all employers mention is insufficient information, and on the other hand no one is offered training or information classes, what prevents any further development and maintains the status quo.

“No, but we would like to participate in such an activity. Why wouldn't we? Combine useful and learn something new, change someone's life if there is an opportunity for it.”

There is no cooperation in our sample with the employment and professional rehabilitation funds or the employment bureaus and / or associations of persons with disabilities when it comes to employing people with disabilities. Employer of PwD under special conditions (support for the employment of PwD) cooperate with other employer of PwD and associations of persons with disabilities and highlight the problem of one-dimensional approach by state institutions, which leads to the fact that activities, measures, policies are not planned according to recognized and real needs.

“There is no cooperation other than applying for calls. There is no interest in what we need, although we have tried on several occasions to draw their attention to it.”

Employers finally summarize and draw general conclusions by answering the question that are presented in the table below “How and in what way is it possible to increase, improve cooperation between all relevant actors in the process of employment of persons with disabilities from the perspective of the business sector?”(see table No. 4.)

Employers	<i>Question: How and in what way is it possible to increase, improve cooperation between all relevant actors in the process of employment of persons with disabilities from the perspective of the business sector? “</i>
companies with large business structure and offices in the entire BiH	S: Information, training, visible, accessible and active assistance in specific problems during complete process, financial incentives, perhaps even cooperation in creating incentives.  T: I think that training for people with disabilities would help a lot, but I also think that in large systems it is very difficult to adapt work to these sensitive categories.
public institutions	V: Maybe joint projects that would benefit everyone. We are happy to get involved in projects.  M: It is necessary to expand effort and look at all aspects of work and assess whether there are jobs in the company that could be performed by a person with a disability. In many companies and areas of industry, this is possible, but it requires visible and active participation of state institutions and incentives in the form of certain benefits that would interest employers to employ people with disabilities.

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EMPLOYMENT**

<p>employer of PwD under special conditions (support for the employment of PwD)</p>	<p>FBiH: BiH has ratified UN Convention, those are the things that had to be done. Of course, everyone should be connected and when they take certain measures, it should be in interest all of us. I don't believe that will happen in the near future.</p> <p>The Federation Fund is not transparent. They are now trying to make it more transparent, but it is not.</p> <p>It all comes down to public calls. They say that they employed a large number of people, a lot of money was spent. No one keeps track of how long those people stay in the workplace.</p> <p>RS: By establishing a network of employers who employ under special conditions, reducing abuses, greater transparency of the Fund's work.</p>
<p>firms and private trades from smaller towns</p>	<p>C: The state should inform employers about these opportunities, but at the same time manage the full integration of PwD in the labor market. It seems to me that the entire burden of this issue is by the authorities, because employers themselves are not sufficiently informed and involved.</p> <p>C2: I think that the inclusion of PwD in the labor market is not a problem as long as a person can do the job without special adjustments and if there are no major difficulties in performing tasks. The private sector strives for efficiency, profit and fast work, and in that case due to some general opinion about the inefficiency of PwD in work, they become marginalized. If you ask me, I think it's misperception. But only practical action of the Funds can help here, the allocation of incentives and participation in the payment of contributions for employees and the systemic integration of PwD in the labor market.</p>

*Table No. 4.*

#### **5.4. Analysis of Interviews Conducted with Representatives of the Funds for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD at the Entity Level**

In order to provide an objective overview of the situation in the legislation as well as in practice, the research team conducted a semi-structured interview with representatives of both Entity Funds.

A draft question was sent to the interviewees in advance. Also, the information obtained in the interviews was supplemented with subsequently sent data, if they were available in the Funds.

The following were interviewed:

- Miloš Marjanović, Head of the analysis and development service for RS
- Sabina Zubčević, Head of the Department for Development, Preparation and Implementation of the Fund's Programs for FBiH.

We divided this part of the analysis into three topics, in order to present the data obtained on the basis of the interview in the simplest possible way.

**Employment and professional rehabilitation programs and the effectiveness of these programs in the field**

As presented in the “*Recommendation for systemic changes report*”, both entity Funds allocate funds based on their programs. In this part, we will present the programs through numbers and their effectiveness in the practice. The period of presented data will be 2019-2020. and it’s based on the information we received from the Entity Funds.

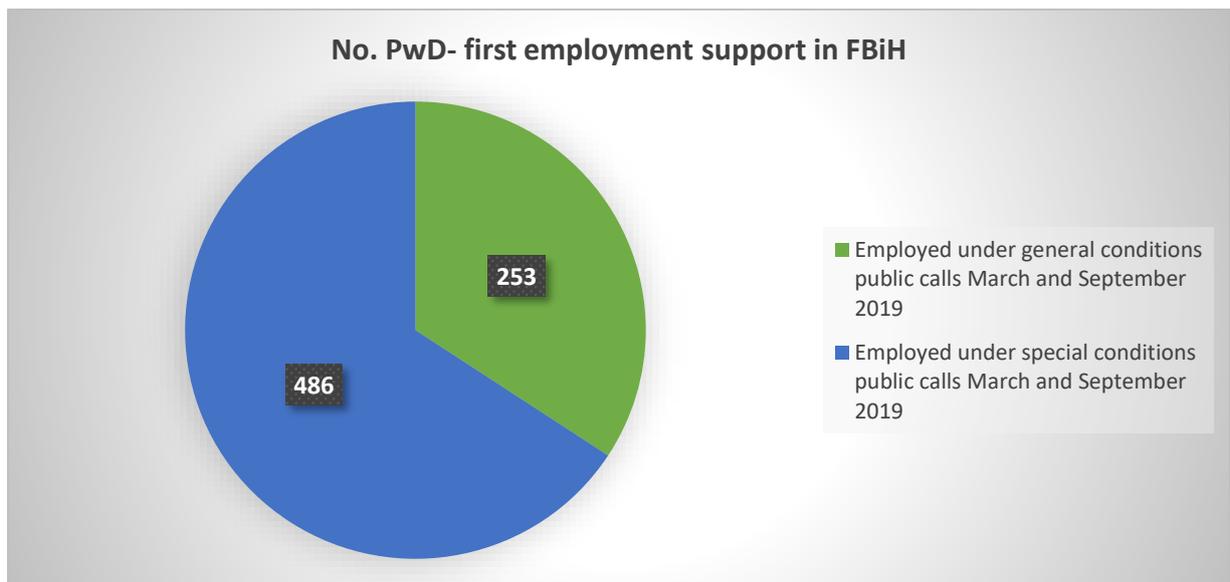
**Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD FBiH**

The fund in FBiH has data only for 2019, because they are still processing data from 2020, the reason for that, according to them, is the lack of capacity (staff).

In 2019. the Fund distributed funds in the amount of 24,603,513.40 BAM to programs and financial incentives (Through programs and incentives **4392** people with disabilities were supported in year 2019.).

The funds are distributed as follows:

- For the financial incentive for first employment were financed 740 persons and 170 employers in the amount of 9,769,997.89 BAM, what should be noted is that this is the only incentive to which employers who employ under general conditions ( open labor market) can also apply, so it is a bit surprising that there is a larger number of PwD that are employed under special conditions used this incentive as well. (see Data in chart no. 12).



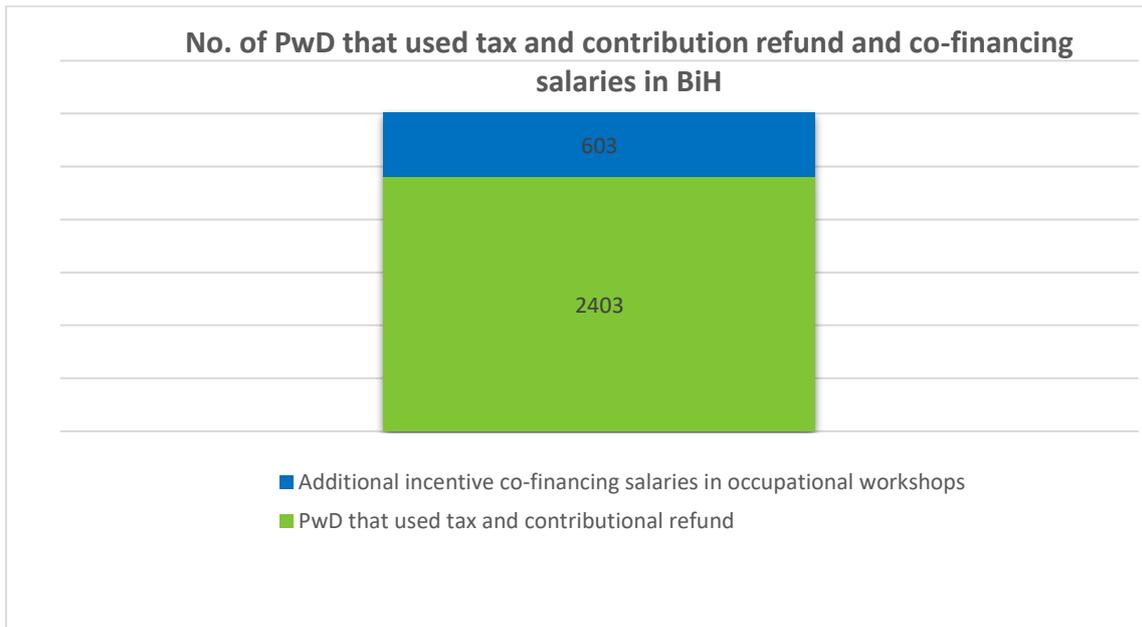
*Data in chart No. 12.*

**Incentive in the form of tax and contribution refund and co-financing salaries.**

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According to the submitted data, in 2019, the total number of people who used incentives was 3006.

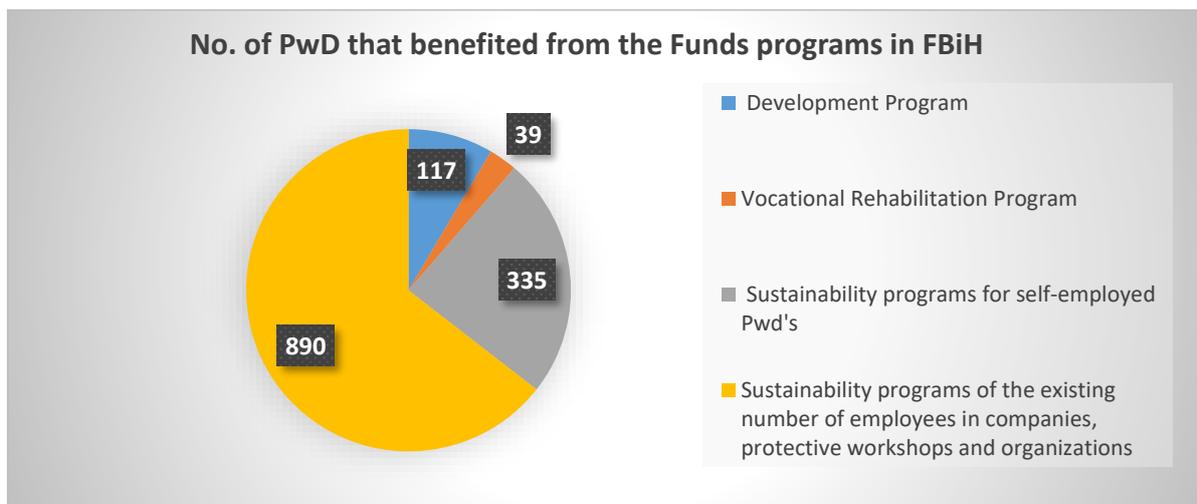
Of the total number used incentives, 2403 PwD were entitled to a refund of taxes and contributions, i.e. they used one of the incentives. In addition to the right to a refund of taxes and contributions, 603 persons exercised the right to co-financing net salaries (that is in the amount of 30% of the average net salary in the Federation per PwD in occupational workshops). These were supported in the amount of 9,168,965.51 BAM (see data in chart No. 13.)



*Chart No. 13.*

The data for Funds programs employers that employ under special conditions and retraining programs shows that a total of 582 programs were funded with an amount of 5.664,998,89 BAM trough several programs: **Development program:** funds can be used for machines, tools, assistive devices, procurement of materials, purchase or lease of workspace, adaptation or construction for the purpose of support development and operations of the company and occupational workshops ect. **Vocational Rehabilitation Program:** to these programs can apply companies for employment of PwD, occupational workshops with designed retraining programs, then high schools, faculties, also people with disabilities can apply independently to finance their tuition fees. **Sustainability programs for self-employed PwD:** funds can be used for reparation or procurement of assistive equipment for work, adaptation and adjustment of space for the needs of PwD, procurement of materials, co-financing of work assistance and other ongoing costs. **Sustainability programs of the existing number of employees in companies, protective workshops and organizations:** funds can be used for machines, tools, assistive devices, procurement of materials, purchase or lease of workspace, adaptation or construction for the purpose of developing existing activities or introducing new ones in order to

maintain the number of PwD employees of the company and occupational workshops.<sup>6</sup> Although it seems that through **Sustainability programs of the existing number of employees in companies, protective workshops, organizations** and the **Development programs** finance the same items one program is intended for support development and operations of the company and occupational workshops while the other is intended for the purpose of developing existing activities or introducing new ones in order to maintain the number of PwD employees of the company and occupational workshops. According to data provided by Fund 1381 PwD benefited from programs (see data chart No. 14.).



*data chart No. 14*

“This is indeed a large number of people covered by the Fund's support, but I see that it mainly refers to people who are employed in PwD employment companies and occupational workshops. Do you have information on how much support is given to people employed in the open labor market?” (interviewer: Tanja Mandić Đokić)

“You see, when it comes to maintaining the existing level of employment focus is on employment under special conditions, and when it comes to employment in the open labor market focus is on new employment these 740 people that we have already mentioned are employed under special and general conditions (see chart No 12) So, in essence, we support sustainability, through programs (Lots), people employed under special conditions in companies to employ PwD the reason for that it's very difficult for these companies, self-employed persons maintain employment, and a large number of people are employed there. So these Lots are designed in accordance with Law. (interviewee: Sabina Zubčević)

“How the Fund stimulates employers who employ PwD under general conditions, are they entitled to a refund of taxes and contributions?” (interviewer: Tanja Mandić Đokić)

<sup>6</sup> Pravilnik o raspodjeli sredstava za finansiranje/sufinansiranje programa održivosti zaposlenosti, razvoja privrednih društava za zapošljavanje osoba sa invaliditetom i zaštitinih radionica, te programa profesionalne rehabilitacije osoba sa invaliditetom

“In accordance with the law, no they are not entitled to a refund of taxes and contributions, and in essence, we can and must implement only that is required by Law (Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities FBiH). When this Law was creating, the people who worked on that law did not have a vision of how much funds would be collected in the Fund and whether it would be possible to return contributions and taxes for all of employees under general and special conditions. Therefore, the priority was put on employment under special conditions. It was planned the rest of the funds collected to provide opportunity for first employment of PWD, so in practice every employer who wants to hire a person with a disability can apply to the Fund and receive a financial incentive amounting from 6000 to 13500 BAM. depending on the degree of disability” (interviewee: Sabina Zubčević)

It should be noted that there are currently no special measures to support people with intellectual disabilities. The only such measure is in the financial incentive hiring an assistant in the workplace.

Furthermore, as can be seen from the data and words of the representatives of the Fund in FBiH, most of the funds for the employment of PwD go to employers who employ under special conditions. Employers who hire under general conditions have very little incentive to hire PwD. Which has the greatest impact on people with disabilities who are socially isolated and are directly forced to work under special conditions. This can have a limiting effect on the possibility of personal and professional development.

It is necessary to make legal changes that would open up opportunities for employers in the open labor market to apply for tax and contribution refunds, as well as for sustainability programs in order to maintain the number of employees with disabilities within the company.

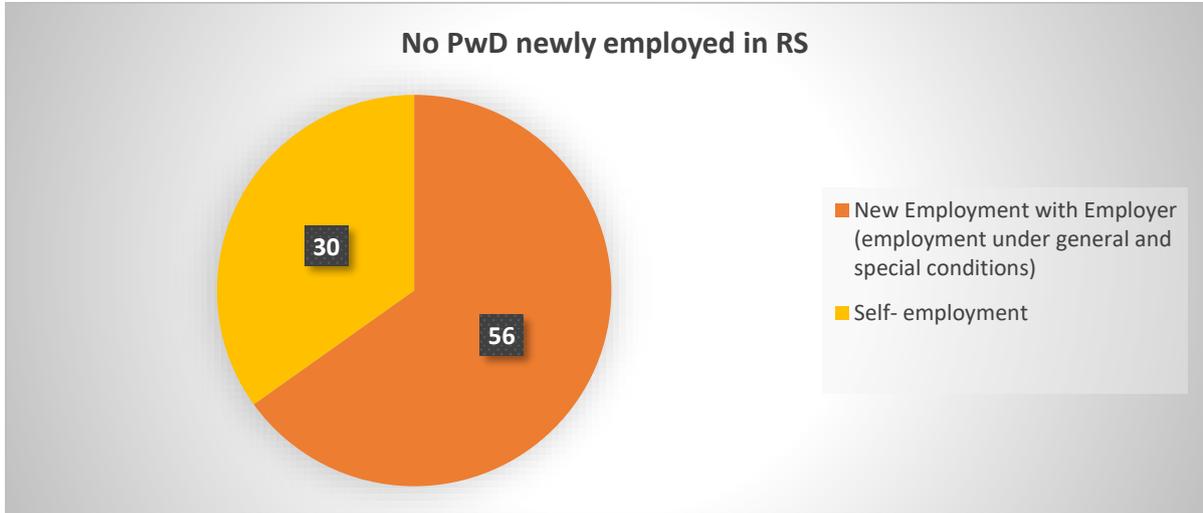
### **Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities RS**

Data on programs presented for Republika Srpska cover the period 2019-2020. The data for the programs, which are supported through the resources of the RS Fund, is presented below.

In the year 2019 and 2020 the RS Fund through programs provided funds for financial incentive for new employment (component I: New Employment with Employer and component II: Self-employment), tax and contribution refunds and economic support

In 2019. and 2020, 86 people with disabilities and 74 employers were financially supported with an financial incentive for new employment. The amount allocated for new employment is 4000 BAM per person. Currently every employer who employs a person with a disability receives the same amount regardless of the degree and type of disability, which further complicates the employment of persons with a higher degree of disability. Giving in consideration that the same amount is been allocated by the Entity Employment Agency for people without disabilities, these are very small funds to have an

incentive effect. This leads to a low number of employment of people with disabilities. (see chat No. 15.)



Chat No. 15.

In RS incentives in the form of tax and contribution refunds are opened to apply for all employers, for both employers who employ under special as well as under general conditions, unlike the Federation. Employers in public institutions are not entitled to a refund of taxes and contributions, although they have an obligation to employ PwD.

According to submitted data, the number of employers that used incentives in 2019. is 845. In 2020. the same incentives used by 843 employers. (see chart No. 16. )

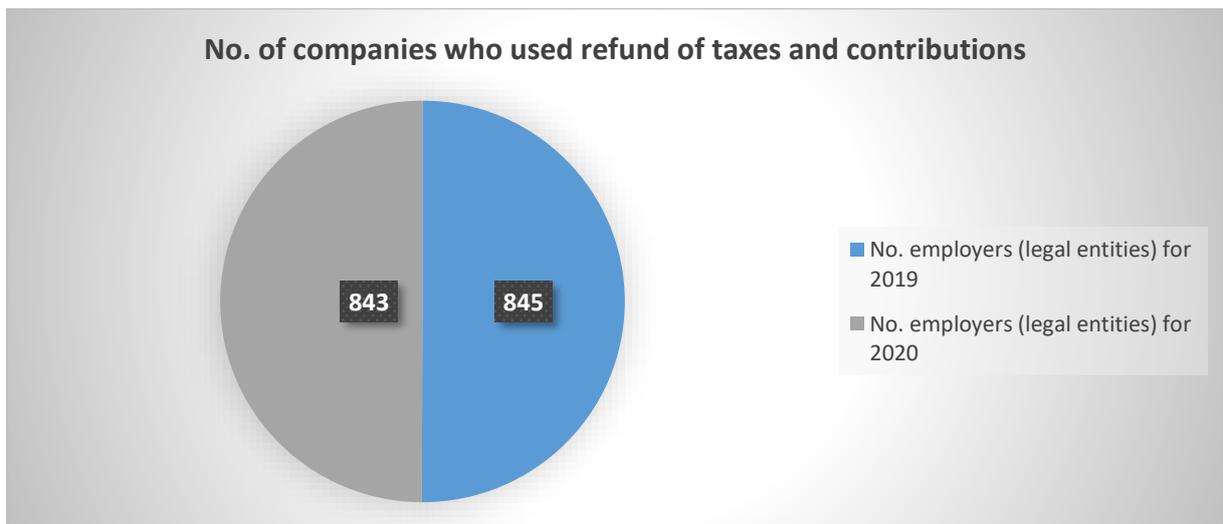


Chart No. 16.

Economic support funds are used for the procurement of agricultural materials and machinery for PwD engaged in agricultural activities as their primary activity. The request for the Program of economic support is submitted by a non-governmental organization with the status of an organization of the special importance. The request is submitted on behalf of persons with disabilities. It should be noted that persons with disabilities can't independently apply for this program but only through the organization that submits the application in the form of a project proposal on their behalf. According to the records Incentive "Economic support" awarded only in 2019. Nine DPOs received funds, through the economic support program, and passed on to their members.

"And why can't individuals apply for that economic support?" (interviewer: Tanja Mandić Đokić)

"First, there is a huge scope of work, there are large number of users. We allocate 100 to 200 packages a year, each user must be visited (monitored), the Fund does not have the capacity to do so and that is why we need those organizations. They will in some way control and be responsible for their members. In cooperation with the ministry, we have regulated this issue through regulations in which we have defined that funds are allocated to disability organizations with a status of special importance." (interviewee: Miloš Marjanović)

It is necessary to change the regulations and establish new ways of granting incentive of economic support and monitoring, because in this way individuals are indirectly forced to become members of the association. And that affects freedom of choice.

It is necessary to make changes and include additional incentives for retraining of PwD, because the current legal solutions do not have this possibility in practice.

### **Systematic monitoring of the results of implemented programs and their benefit to PwD.**

There are no databases of unemployed persons with disabilities at the Entity level. In RS, there are no regulations or institutions that keep records of unemployed persons with disabilities. In FBiH the obligation of keeping records falls on employment services, unfortunately, they don't fulfill that obligations.

The Entity funds keep records of persons with disabilities who received funds, although they have different methods of keeping records. In FBiH, record is kept mainly by the degree of disability and for some incentive cause of disability, and in RS by diagnoses.

### **Monitoring and data collecting and programs impact in FBiH**

As we have already stated, there is no unified database of PwD who are actively seeking for jobs at the FBiH level. The obligation to create a database falls on the employment service, according to legal provisions, but these provisions are not respected, according to representative of Fund.

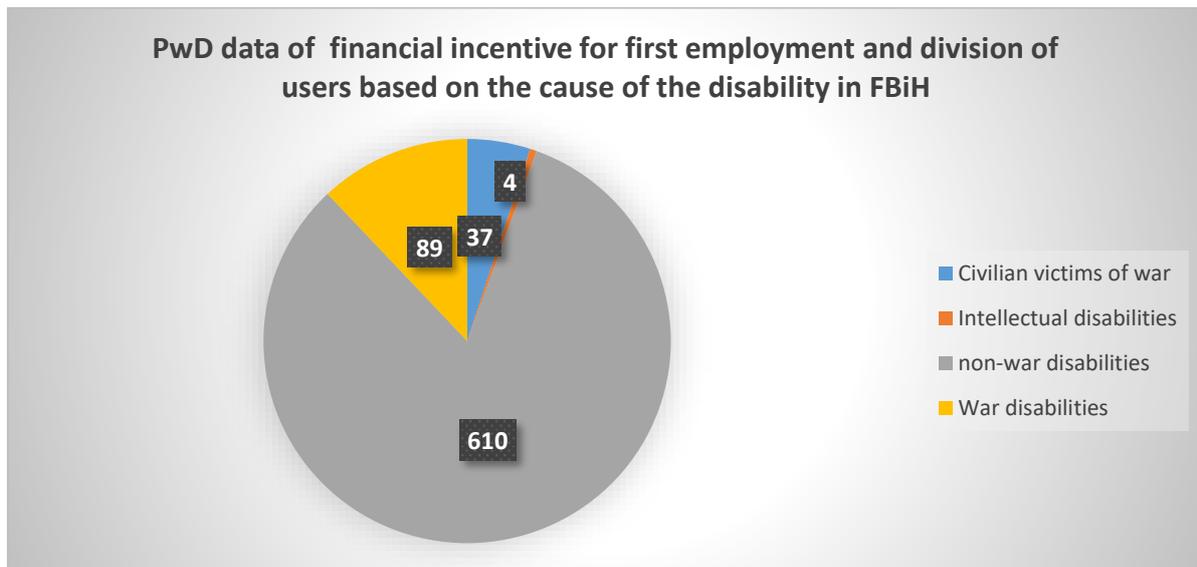
## REPORT ON THE STATE OF INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

“One year we asked for this information from the employment service and we got very flimsy information, so I think we actually reminded them of what is their job.” (interviewee: Sabina Zupčević)

The Fund financed a web application for monitoring the situation in the field, where all employers from FBiH should apply (via the electronic EP form), in order to establish the total number of PwD employees in a particular company / organization. To establish whether these employers fulfill the obligation to pay a special contribution in accordance with the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities FBiH (Art. 18. and 19.). The fund currently has 12,690 registered employers through the application, and registration is on a voluntary basis.

Furthermore, the fund currently does not have data on the type of disability of persons with disabilities because data is based on the degree of disability and since the fund currently does not have the capacity to monitor such data. For the future, their strategic goal is to create software solutions in the next three years that will enable them to collect more data on users that use the allocated funds.

The only information we were able to get about the users' disabilities concerns data of financial incentive for first employment, but information gained are very limited. (See data chart No.17.) NOTE: Data is linked to chart No. 12



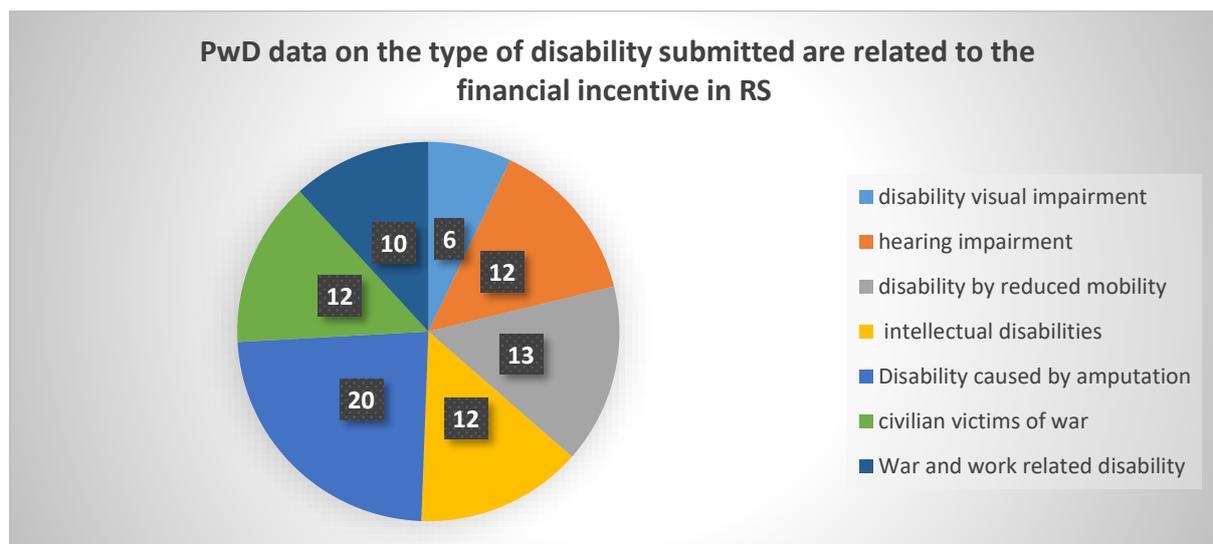
**data chart No.17.**

Talking about the system of monitoring the financing which stimulates employers, we have learned that before the pandemic, the Fund went to monitor the expenditure of financing together with the Federal Employment Agency (10% of the funds planned in the employment support program for the current by the Federal Employment Agency and transferred to the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities in FBiH for co-financing their programs). These activities are stopped because of the pandemic. The monitoring of the funds that are allocated to beneficiaries is

monitored by the submissions of financial documentation for the refund of taxes and contributions and other documentation (eg: payroll, payment slips). The documentation is submitted by the users of the funds. There is no monitoring system after the completion of the new employment program, nor do they monitor persons with disabilities for whom tax and contribution refunds are made (apart from the submission of the above-mentioned documentation). Given the lack of an effective monitoring system and the practice of non-involvement of PwD in employment processes, unfortunately we can't know with certainty whether the allocated funds fulfill their purpose or open up opportunities for their misuse.

**Monitoring and data collecting and programs impact in RS**

As is the case in the FBiH, neither the RS has a database of unemployed persons with disabilities on the Entity level, nor a defined institution that should compile data and make this database. As we presented above, the fund keeps its records on the allocated funds and their recipients as we presented in the previous section. Data on the type of disability submitted are related to the financial incentive 2019-2020. (See Chart no. 17.) NOTE: Data is linked to chart No 15.



*Chart No. 17.*

Data held by the Entity Employment Agency on employed PWD is incomplete because persons with disabilities are not obliged to declare themselves as PWD, and persons whose disability is caused by the war are not obliged to register in employment agencies at all. The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Fund monitor the employment status of persons who have exercised the rights to incentives for a maximum of two years (for the duration of the Incentive Agreement).

### **Cooperation between the Funds, Public Sector, the Private Sector, DPOs and PwD**

Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities FBiH states the cooperation between Federal Employment Agency is somewhat good in the last couple of areas: they give recommendations to the right and need of vocational retraining for PwD; regularly allocate resources to the Fund as indicated by law (that resources partly fund incentives). Cooperation is weaker with the same Cantonal Employment agencies because they do not allocate resources on regular basis into the Fund. Cooperation with the private, business sectors and PwD organizations is reflected in the fact that before the pandemic Fund had regular presentations of programs and incentives that offers.

Cooperation with direct users (persons with disabilities) is done through the user service.

“Since you have user service, what is it that they most often ask for and report?” (interviewer: Tanja Mandić Đokić)

“When it comes to PwD, we cannot be someone who will mediate between them and the employer. We try to instruct them on how to look for an employer and to inform the employer with the benefits offered by the Fund. Most often, they think that no one will hire them, primarily due to prejudice and general unemployment. A lot of parents come with their children who have some severe disabilities, they would like to include them in an activity, but it is very difficult to find a job that would match the remaining abilities of that person.” (interviewee: Sabina Zupčević)

It is evident that most of the responsibility for informing employers about the fund's programs rests with the direct beneficiaries, which should not be the case. Since the users themselves are not sufficiently informed.

### **Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities RS**

The representative of the RS Fund stated a good working relationship with the agency for employment at the entity level, coordinates public calls, exchanges data “no matter how few there are”. Cooperation with employers, organizations of persons with disabilities they consider as institutionally resolved because their representatives sit in the governing bodies of the Fund.

According to the representative of RS Fund and previous experience, when Fund is holding presentations or public hearings on changes to the law, the representatives of PwD organizations respond to invitation, while the representatives of employers rarely respond to such events without any further explanations.

## 6. Findings

The general conclusion is that persons with disabilities, even many organizations of persons with disabilities, are not sufficiently informed about the activities carried out for the purpose of employment and professional rehabilitation of PwD, and related to this they do not have enough confidence in the system what makes them demotivated, but also due to discrimination in society there is a lack of self-confidence and independent initiatives by the persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities often emphasize the problem of insufficient investment also, we can see from data obtained from the organization of persons of disabilities that the issue of professional rehabilitation is completely neglected, the possibilities of acquiring skills that would increase the competitiveness of PwD in the labor market are limited as warned by a representative of the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities from RS. The area of professional rehabilitation, retraining and additional training for PwD is not well regulated by law, and the current model does not work in practice.

Current employment support is not sufficiently individualized, leading to waste of resources and exclusion/ discrimination of certain groups. The right to employment support is determined on the basis of the percentage value of the degree of disability, which often leads to the exclusion of persons who do not have the prescribed percentage of disability, but still need employment support.

The expectations of persons with disabilities from the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities are significantly higher than the mandate prescribed by law, as well as from the budget allocated for this issue. The current role of the funds is only in redirecting material incentives (which have been shown to be insufficiently stimulating for employers), and this is not enough to advance employment issues. On the other hand, Funds for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities are designated as bearers of employment activities for persons with disabilities, which leads to the conclusion that by isolating this problem in a special, separate institution with prescribed very limited resources and legal powers, it justifies insufficient commitment of a wider range of responsibility level and conceals insufficient systemic commitment.

In the FBiH, employers under general conditions have far fewer incentives to employ PwD than employers under special conditions because they are not entitled to refunds of contributions and taxes for employees with disabilities, as well as applications for sustainable employment programs announced by the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. This directly reflects on the possibility of employing PwD in the open labor market. This is not only an economic problem because it reduces the possibility of earning money and limits the possibility of

advancement in the workplace, but it also excludes PwD from the society under equal conditions and pushes into a kind of social isolation. It is necessary to make legal changes that will enable employers in the open labor market to apply for all the incentives to which companies for the employment of persons with disabilities are entitled.

There is no effective control over the collection of special contributions that employers are obliged to pay to the Funds in case they do not employ the legally prescribed number of workers with disabilities. In the FBiH, special contributions are currently collected through the Fund's web application, where employers register on a voluntary basis. Therefore, most employers do not fulfill this obligation.

Currently, there is no single database of unemployed people with disabilities who are actively looking for work in any entity ( FBiH or RS) or in Brčko District. Also, there is no signed cooperation protocol between Funds (as leads institutions regarding employment PwD) and employment services or other institutions and organizations that can contribute.

This leads us to the conclusion that the issue of PwD employment is not approached systematically or within the general policy of reducing unemployment in the country, but more sporadically and the problem is tried to be solved only with monetary incentives and insufficiently efficient because neither the fundraising system nor its distribution is sufficiently developed.

The impression is that it is necessary to initiate a fundamental reform of the employment system of persons with disabilities.

Although PwD and their representatives recognize the shortcomings of systems (more precisely Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities) they see a high degree of prejudice against persons with disabilities, as the main obstacle to the employment of PwD.

## 7. Recommendations

Given that recommendations related to advocating systemic change for the employment of persons with disabilities are given in Recommendation for systemic changes report, here we will provide recommendations for actions that can be taken in order to create an environment that will support systemic change.

1. Create and implement active information campaigns on incentives and activities intended for employment and vocational rehabilitation of PwD at the local level - include DPOs, local employment services, Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD and local development agencies.
2. Promote and support online work, education, and training systems for PwD. Encourage and subsidize more flexible working conditions.
3. Establish support and counseling services for all phases of PwD employment that will be easily accessible to all persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities and employers should have the opportunity to easily obtain accurate and relevant information on the employment of PwD at once and the possibility of counseling related to applying for a job, problems that arise during employment etc. In this way, we would have a concrete idea of the state of information of employers and PwD and not the assumptions and the illusion of familiarity with the rights and benefits of employment PwD.
4. Create unique databases of unemployed persons with disabilities at the entity level (FBiH and RS) and Brčko district.
5. Increase focus on education and training activities in line with labor market needs.
6. Through the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation on the issues of employment between the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of PwD, employment services and competent ministries, ensure that the next measures are in line with the actual needs of PwD.
7. Proactively and systematically planned activities of approach of the Funds to the employers in the open labor market for information and assistance before, during and after employment of PwD.

8. Provide incentives for setting minimum conditions in companies for possible access and operation in the existing work settings for PwD (software, ramps, elevators, etc.) in order to reduce the problem of poor starting positions in employment decisions.
9. Establish a network of companies for the employment of people with disabilities and self-employed people with disabilities to enable mutual support, better flow of information and joint advocacy for change.
10. Prevent abuses of benefits by increased control, not by reducing the scope of benefits or rights.

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## 9. Appendix

### 9. 1. Questionnaire for Entity Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities

Schedule for questions (it is not necessary to ask all the questions in the interviews, if it turns out through the interview and presentation of answers that some of the questions have already been answered)

1. Name of the institution and place where it is located

2. How many people in 2019 used the funds provided by the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities ?

3. According to the number of persons with disabilities who used the Fund's resources, how many of them used Fund's resources in 2019 (state the exact number on the next line):

- disability caused by visual impairment / disease \_\_\_\_\_
- disability caused by hearing impairment / disease \_\_\_\_\_
- disability caused by difficulty moving (without aids or with aids such as a cane, crutches, walker, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- disability caused by inability to move without a wheelchair \_\_\_\_\_
- disability caused by intellectual disabilities \_\_\_\_\_
- disability caused by mental illness \_\_\_\_\_
- combined (state exactly what and number) \_\_\_\_\_
- we do not have this information** (circle if you do not have information about the above)

4. How many employers used the funds and benefits offered by the Fund in 2019? Indicate the exact number, the municipalities they come from and what benefits they used below.

5. How do you cooperate with the Employment Offices/Services? Please describe and specify in more detail.

6. Which actors does the Fund for professional rehabilitation recognize as key in the activities of joint action in order to achieve the goals of employment and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities?

7. Is there an obligation for the Funds to cooperate with institutions that are recognized as key actors in activities to achieve greater employment of persons with disabilities, e.g. through the development of cooperation protocols or similar documents formally regulated? If so, provide specific examples and formal documents governing cooperation!

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8. Do you think that existing policies, financial incentives, professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state benefit people with disabilities to find adequate employment?

9. Do you have prescribed activities in official documents related to the collection of data on the employment situation and needs of persons with disabilities in the labor market? If so, what exactly does that mean, explain in more detail! If not, state in more detail why not. If so, are the analyzes made available to the public? Where exactly and how can they be reached?

10. Have you made an analysis of the employment situation of persons with disabilities (possibilities of difficulties, needs) on the labor market in 2019? If not, state in more detail why not. If so, are the analyzes made available to the public? Where exactly and how can they be reached?

11. If so, what exactly does this mean and what data and in what way do you collect about the needs of PWDs in employment?

12. According to the data and analyzes, what are the main problems faced by people with disabilities in the labor market?

13. According to the data and analyzes, what are the main problems that employers face when hiring people with disabilities in the labor market?

14. How should the Fund's policies, work and activities be improved? What are the biggest problems in achieving goals?

15. Do you and in what way do you cooperate with associations of persons with disabilities in planning and carrying out activities? Exactly which associations from which municipalities and in what way do you cooperate?

16. When it comes to the process of employment of PWDs, according to research, a serious obstacle to employment is created by prejudices and stereotypes towards people with disabilities, and many recommendations emphasize the need to work further to improve institutional protection against discrimination of PWDs and raising awareness on their rights and opportunities, what are the specific activities that the Fund undertook in 2019 regarding that?

17. Are there established entity databases of persons with disabilities with data on education level, qualifications as well as job descriptions that persons are able to perform? Are such databases available to employment offices / bureaus?

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18. Are legal entities obliged to report on the number of employed persons with disabilities or on the needs for certain categories of persons with disabilities that they can receive for internal / interns, training, etc.? Did you collect such data from legal entities in 2019? Do you have that information? If so, how can it be reached?

19. In 2019, did you organize and hold trainings for employers on the opportunities and benefits offered by the Fund? How many, in which municipalities, give specific examples!

20. Have activities been organized to support and provide additional education to persons with disabilities in 2019? If, in which municipalities, how, to give specific examples from 2019!

21. In 2019, were funds allocated for incentives for internships and volunteering for people with disabilities in companies and organizations? If so, in which municipalities, give specific examples, in cooperation with whom, how much in 2019?

22. Is the issue of professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with intellectual disabilities treated as an issue that requires separate considerations and solutions in relation to the entire population of persons with disabilities? If yes, explain your answer in more detail! If not, explain your answer in more detail!

23. Are there official data on the total number of persons with disabilities, sorted by age information, professional qualifications relevant to the labor market and the type of disability available to you?

24. Is there an established system for monitoring, reviewing and reporting in the field of vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities? If yes, state in more detail on which document the monitoring and reporting system is based and which elements and data it should collect / contain!

25. Do you make analyzes of the impact of previous programs and employment incentives? If so, please provide them to us for analysis and research!

26. What is the percentage of contributions collected from the business and public sectors? Does the business or public sector pay more or less and in what percentage, specifically according to the data from 2019? According to specific data from 2019, both payments and revenues of the Fund are specially classified from the business and public sectors.

27. Has the COVID-19 virus pandemic affected the inflow of funds into the Funds and / or the employment of persons with disabilities?

**Additional questions for the FBiH Fund:**

1. How much funds does the FBiH Fund lose, because it is not part of the Tax Collection System when paying salaries?
2. How much funds and time does FBiH waste on filing lawsuits against employers to collect special contributions?
3. The Strategy for improving the rights and position of persons with disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016-2021 emphasizes the improvement of the following elements important for improving the position of persons with disabilities in the context of employment:

3a. Involve employment services in the process of employment of persons with disabilities, as well as businessmen who should be acquainted with the competencies of graduates and the benefits of employment of persons with disabilities.

List the specific activities carried out in cooperation with the Fund or carried out independently by the Fund in order to develop and facilitate this point of the Strategy below:

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3b. Encourage the organization of cooperatives.

List the specific activities carried out in cooperation with the Fund or carried out independently by the Fund in order to develop and facilitate this point of the Strategy below

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3c. Encourage women's entrepreneurship, with special emphasis on women with disabilities.

List the specific activities carried out in cooperation with the Fund or carried out independently by the Fund in order to develop and facilitate this point of the Strategy below

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3d. Promote social entrepreneurship

List the specific activities carried out in cooperation with the Fund or carried out independently by the Fund in order to develop and facilitate this point of the Strategy below

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**Additional question for RS Fund:**

1. Strategy for Improving the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities in RS 2017-2026 emphasizes the improvement of the following elements important for improving the position of persons with disabilities in the context of employment.
2. Increase the economic independence of persons with disabilities through support in employment and self-employment;

List the specific activities carried out in cooperation with the Fund or carried out by the Fund itself in order to develop and facilitate this point of the Strategy below

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3. Develop social entrepreneurship;

List the specific activities carried out in cooperation with the Fund or carried out by the Fund itself in order to develop and facilitate this point of the Strategy below

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4. Develop institutional and professional capacities for conducting professional rehabilitation.

List the specific activities carried out in cooperation with the Fund or carried out by the Fund itself in order to develop and facilitate this point of the Strategy below

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Do you want to share something else with us and single it out as important, which is not covered with questions and conversation?

## 9.2. Questionnaire for employers

1. Where is the location of your company / organization on whose behalf you provide answers?  
Specify the place / city / municipality!
  - 1a. What is the approximate total number of employees in your company?
2. Are you aware of the possibilities and benefits of incentives, existing policies, financial incentives, active professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state in order to benefit people with disabilities to find employment? If yes, give specific examples in more detail.
3. Have you used the opportunities and benefits of incentives, existing policies, financial incentives, professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state in order to benefit people with disabilities to find employment? Have you used funds and benefits from the Funds? If yes, give specific examples in more detail?
4. Do you employ or have you employed people with disabilities?
5. How many employees with disabilities are employed in your company?
  - 5a. If so, what type of disability is it exactly? How long has the person been working/is currently working? What are the specific events related to the above examples from your business?
6. If you have experience in employing people with disabilities, have you used the benefits of the Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation Funds and state employment mechanisms? If so, what exactly and was it useful and adequate as an incentive?
7. If you are familiar with the funds, policies and incentives for professional rehabilitation and training provided by the state in order to help people with disabilities to get a job, where is it necessary to strengthen incentives and how to adequately motivate employers to hire more people with disabilities?
  - 7a. What would motivate you and other employers to hire people with disabilities or more people with disabilities?
8. In your opinion, what are the current employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the open labor market in your local community?
9. What are the main barriers to employing people with disabilities in the local community in which you operate?
10. Does the state, through its policies, activities and incentives, sufficiently encourage the interest of employers in employing persons with disabilities in your local community? How to adequately stimulate interest?
11. Are you able by the nature of the work performed in your company / organization and the work policy of the company / organization to provide flexible working conditions for certain jobs and are you able to offer e.g. flexible working hours, part-time work from home and the like?

12. What are the biggest problems that employers face in the activities of adapting the workplace and working conditions for people with disabilities (architectural, flexible working hours, work tasks, special computer software ...)?
13. If there are such employees, does the person / persons with disabilities employed in your company / organization require special adjustments in order to perform work activities (architectural, flexible working hours, work tasks, special computer software ...)?
14. Do you have specific experience in adapting the workplace and working conditions for people with disabilities (architectural, flexible working hours, work tasks, special computer software ...) in your company? Describe in more detail and give examples if yes?
15. If so, at what stage of employment or work with PWD did the adjustment take place? If there are special adjustments, did you make adjustments before employment decisions or after the experience of working with PWD? Explain specific examples!
16. As a company / organization, have you ever been offered training or an information class by state funds or other institutions related to any topics related to the employment of persons with disabilities? If yes, give specific examples and explain in more detail.
17. Do you cooperate with the employment and professional rehabilitation funds or the employment bureaus and / or associations of persons with disabilities? If so, which institutions or associations exactly and in what way?
18. How and in what way is it possible to increase, improve cooperation between all relevant actors in the process of employment of persons with disabilities from the perspective of the business sector?

### 9.3. Questionnaire for CSO of persons with disabilities

1. State the name and description of the organization and the place / municipality in which it is located. (whom he represents, goals, etc.)
2. Are you familiar with the work of the funds for professional rehabilitation in the employment of persons with disabilities and the activities, opportunities and incentives provided by the state for the purpose of professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities?
3. If yes, do you consider that existing policies, financial incentives, professional rehabilitation processes and training provided by the state benefit people with disabilities to find employment? Explain your answer in more detail and preferably give specific examples from your experience!
4. What are the main obstacles faced by persons with disabilities in relation to existing policies and financial incentives offered by the state in order to employ persons with disabilities? Explain in more detail and preferably give specific examples from your experience!
5. According to the experiences of your users and the experiences of working within the organization, what are the real needs of PWDs in the recruitment process, and what are the obstacles they face?

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6. Are the existing incentives and existing policies of professional rehabilitation and employment created according to the real needs of persons with disabilities and harmonized with them? Please explain your answer in more detail and preferably give specific examples from experience.
  
7. Which actors can you single out as key in the activities of joint action in order to achieve the goals of employment and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities?
  
8. Do you have cooperation with the professional rehabilitation and employment fund from your entity or with another institution whose competence is the employment of persons with disabilities?
  
9. If yes, can you briefly describe this cooperation? If yes, is there a protocol or memorandum of cooperation or other official document?
  
10. If not, explain in more detail why? Have you ever launched a collaboration initiative?
  
11. Do you and in what way do you cooperate with the employment bureaus and / or the business sector in the employment activities of persons with disabilities? If so, which institutions or companies / organizations exactly and in what way?

	<b>Do not agree at all</b>				<b>Completely agree</b>
Working places and working hours are not sufficiently adapted for people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
PWDs are difficult to employ because they do not have enough work experience	1	2	3	4	5
The main reason is that PWDs have a lower performance than non-disabled people	1	2	3	4	5
PWDs face great prejudices in society, which affects the lack of self-confidence and active commitment of people with disabilities in search for work	1	2	3	4	5
PWDs face high prejudices in society which affect both discriminatory attitudes and practices of employers and in employment decisions	1	2	3	4	5

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Employers do not have enough support or motivation to employ PWDs, because the state has not paid enough attention to the issue of motivation and support for employers	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of opportunities to attend additional courses and improve competencies required by the labor market for people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
People with disabilities are at a disadvantage in work organizations due to unfavorable working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
People with disabilities have less chances and opportunities to progress compared to the general population	1	2	3	4	5
People with disabilities are more exposed to discrimination and mobbing in the workplace than the general population	1	2	3	4	5
Something else that is important to you, and is not listed (specify below)	1	2	3	4	5

12. In your opinion, in what way and how is it possible to increase, improve cooperation between all relevant actors in the process of employment of persons with disabilities from the perspective of work within your organization?
  
13. Has the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus affected the opportunities for independent living in general, but also specifically in the employment of persons with disabilities?
  
14. Do you think that the issue of employment of people with intellectual disabilities should be advocated in a special way in relation to people with physical and sensory disabilities? (elaborate)
  
15. Can you tell us the advantages and disadvantages of employing PWD in the open market and under special conditions (companies for the employment of PWD, occupational workshops and work centers)?
  
16. What is your opinion regarding the current practice of depriving persons with disabilities of their full legal capacity? How does it affect people with disabilities? Do you see the justification of such a practice in the context of BiH? If yes in which cases, if not what are the alternatives? Has your association undertaken specific activities and actions (e.g. advocating for changes or similar) that

address the issue of problematizing the practice of depriving persons with disabilities of their legal and business capacity?

17. What are the main causes of high unemployment and unfavorable position on the labor market of persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina according to the experiences of your work with beneficiaries? (For each paragraph, circle the degree of agreement with the statement made, where 1 means I do not agree at all, and 5 completely agree)

#### 9. 4. Questionnaire for persons with disabilities (individuals)

1. What gender are you? (circle or put an X next to the answer that applies to you):

- Female  
 Male

2. The level of education you have acquired? (Circle or put an X next to the answer that applies to you)

- Elementary school  
 High school education  
 University or college

3. Do you have work experience (circle the answer that applies to you)?

- Yes, less than 1 year  
 Yes, from 1 to 3 years  
 Yes, 3 to 5 years  
 Yes, 5 to 10 years  
 Yes, more than 10 years  
 No.

4. Are you employed? I am currently (check only one answer that applies to you)

- Permanently employed full time  
 Permanently employed part-time or some form of part-time work  
 I am currently working but I am not permanently employed but under occasional employment contracts  
 No, I am unemployed and looking for a job  
 No, I am unemployed and not looking for a job

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5. If you are unemployed, indicate if any of the answers below apply to you or offer another:

- Occasionally engaged in the non-governmental sector without an employment contract
- I volunteer
- I am an intern or mentored through one of the community programs
- Other (write exactly what below)

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6. If you have indicated that you are employed, indicate whether you are employed (tick the answer related to your employment)

- In the open labor market
- Self-employed entrepreneur (craftsman)
- Employed through other employment models regulated by law (eg. special companies for employment of persons with disabilities, occupational workshops)

7. What type of disability do you have? (Mark the answer that applies to you):

- disability caused by visual impairment
- disability caused by hearing impairment / disease
- disability caused by difficulty moving (without aids or with aids such as a cane, crutches, walker, etc.)
- disability caused by inability to move without a wheelchair
- disability caused by intellectual disabilities
- disability caused by a mental illness
- combined \_\_\_\_\_ (write on the line)

8. Name of the municipality in which you live? (write the name of the municipality on the line)

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9. Do you live in (circle the answer that applies to you)

- In the city
- In the suburbs (outskirts of the city)
- In a rural area (rural)

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10. How old are you? (circle the answer that applies to you)

- from 18 to 25
- from 26 to 35
- from 36 to 45
- from 46 to 55
- from 56 to 65
- more than 65

11. How satisfied are you with the business engagements you have had so far? (circle one of the offered answers)

- I am completely satisfied
- I am partially satisfied
- I am not very satisfied
- I am extremely dissatisfied
- I have no paid work experience at all

12. In your opinion, what are the main causes of high unemployment and unfavorable position on the labor market of persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina? (For each paragraph, circle the degree of agreement with the statement made, where 1 means I do not agree at all, and 5 completely agree)

	<b>I do not agree at all</b>				<b>I completely agree</b>
Jobs and working hours are not sufficiently adapted for people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
PWDs are difficult to employ because they do not have enough work experience	1	2	3	4	5
The main reason is that PWDs have a lower performance than non-disabled people	1	2	3	4	5

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PWDs face great prejudices in society, which affects the lack of self-confidence and active commitment of people with disabilities themselves in search of work.	1	2	3	4	5
PWDs face major prejudices in society which also affects on discriminatory attitudes and practices of employers and in employment decisions	1	2	3	4	5
Employers do not have enough support or motivation to employ PWDs, because the state has not paid enough attention to the issue of motivation and support for employers	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of opportunities to attend additional courses and improve competencies required by the labor market for people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
People with disabilities are at a disadvantage in work organizations due to unfavorable working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
People with disabilities have less chances and opportunities to progress compared to the general population	1	2	3	4	5
People with disabilities are more exposed to discrimination and mobbing in the workplace than the general population	1	2	3	4	5
Something else that is important to you, and is not listed (specify below)	1	2	3	4	5

13. Are you currently, or have you unemployed for more than 2 consecutive years while actively looking for a job?

- No, I have been actively looking for **and found a job for less than 2 years**
- I have been actively looking for a job for more than 2 years and I have not been able to find a paid business engagement **till today**
- In the earlier period of my life** I was actively looking for a job and I could not find a paid business engagement for more than two years
- I have been or have been currently unemployed for more than 2 years, but **I have not actively look for employment**

	<b>does not apply to me at all</b>				<b>fully refers to me</b>

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I am not actively looking for a job	1	2	3	4	5
The biggest problem is the inadequacy of the workplace where it is impossible for PWDs to perform work tasks	1	2	3	4	5
The biggest problem is the inadequacy of work tasks	1	2	3	4	5
The biggest problem is the inadequacy of working hours and inflexibility (eg when it comes to opening the possibility for the option of part-time work from home, flextime working hours or similar)	1	2	3	4	5
Difficulties in getting to work, it is physically impossible for me to go to work, because there is no infrastructure that would enable this in my local community	1	2	3	4	5
do not have enough knowledge and skills for quality work	1	2	3	4	5
No one is looking for my profession	1	2	3	4	5
Prejudices of others	1	2	3	4	5
I have no obstacles	1	2	3	4	5
Something else that is important to you, and is not listed (specify below)	1	2	3	4	5

14. If you are currently unemployed or in a situation where you have been unemployed for a long time, what are the main reasons for the unemployment situation in your particular case? (For each of the above statements, circle the degree to which the statement refers or does not refer specifically to your situation, where 1 means does not apply to me at all, and 5 fully agrees / fully refers to me)

15. What specifically would help you get a job or achieve better working conditions? (circle everything that applies to you)

that there are no physical barriers (list existing):

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to have the possibility of flextime or part-time work

to have a personal assistant at work;

to have a mentor at work

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that my colleagues and boss understand my needs better

something else (specify on the line in more detail specifically what):

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16. Are you familiar with the activities and function of the professional rehabilitation and employment fund?

Yes I am, I heard about them and contacted them personally to ask for support

Yes I am, they contacted me and I was offered support

I have heard of them and I know what their role is, but I have not contacted them, nor have they contacted me

I have heard of them, but I don't know what their role is

I have not heard of them

17. Have you used the funds of the employment and professional rehabilitation funds?

Yes

No

18. If you used the funds of the employment and professional rehabilitation funds, what type of incentives did you use (indicate the answer that applies to you)?

for self-employment

to improve business

to adjust the workplace

for co-financing of salary

for retraining / additional training

18. How long did you stay in the workplace if you received funding for employment, adjustment of the workplace / working conditions or co-financing of salary?

15/18 months

2 years

3 years

more than 3 years

19. Do you get contacted by employment bureaus / services?

Yes, I always have calls from the employment service

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- Yes, I often get a call from the employment service
- Sometimes I get a call from the employment service
- I have never received a call from the employment service

20. Where you would prefer to be employed in:

- DPOs, PWD employment companies
- In a public institution under general conditions
- In the business / real sector under general conditions
- I don't care

21. What exactly do you do in the job search process? (specify everything that applies to you, it is possible to mark more than one answer)

- I follow ads through the employment bureau
- I follow ads through the professional rehabilitation fund
- I look for job ads and offers over the Internet or I search for job ads in newspapers, on the radio
- I ask friends and acquaintances if they know about job offers
- I personally contact various employers
- I explore opportunities to start my own business
- I turned to the PWD association for help in finding a job
- I am informed about employment incentives
- I do nothing about looking for a job

22. If you do nothing, state in more detail why, what are your reasons (state in more detail below)!

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23. Do you want to share something else with us, related to employment opportunities and practices for people with disabilities, which is not covered by the questionnaire, and you consider it important to mention them? (if you specify in more detail below)

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