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The Employment of Intellectually Disabled People – Assumptions, Reality, European Challenges

The crowning achievement of the process of occupational education, and also a successful social rehabilitation, is the employment of graduates, that is including them in the process of occupational education. Many representatives of social pedagogy, with reference to Christian, personalistic, or pragmatic philosophy underline the enormous meaning of a person's work. It determines the basic measure of a person's value, and is also a universal value thanks to which any other values arise and function (Wiatrowski, 1994). Work has a special meaning for the disabled people as it, on one hand, secures the existence of these people, and on the other hand, it gives the feeling of material independence, social usefulness, and also appreciation (Majewski, 1995).

Moreover, work favors the realization of one's own life plans and gives the feeling of sense of life. The employment and good functioning in occupational work is also the measure of the efficiency of the rehabilitation work of a special school. In this context, the school is interested in the fates of their graduates. The employment of persons with mild intellectual disability takes place mainly in ordinary institutions, on the, so called, open job market, as well as in institutions of protected work (in the case of additional disabilities). The open job market makes possible for these people to be employed on many varied positions, according with one's own occupational preparation, it creates chances for promotion, and also sentences to a competition with fully able people (Nowak, 2000).

Fulfilling particular roles within the domain of executed occupational work by a person with mild intellectual disability can be, however, limited by, among others, the character of development and social functioning, as well as the real possibilities of undertaking a paid job in a chosen profession, in the area of the place of residence. The first of the mentioned limitations is, in general, identified in the subject's literature with the following features (Pańczyk, 1987; Gajdzica, 2007, Trojańska & Kościółek, 2008): lack of independence and initiatives in acting, difficulties with effectively organizing work for oneself, orientation disorders in a new environment and complex situations, difficulties in maintaining proper relations and cooperation with other co-workers, etc. The second of the mentioned limitations is connected with the thesis of the social ambivalent situation of the people with mild intellectual disability (Gajdzica, 2007). This means that with slight difficulties with psychophysical functioning of these people (in comparison with more profound levels of disability), the real possibilities of gaining occupational qualifications by this group are unpretentious. The effect of this are difficulties in gaining education consistent with interests, and then the employment in the area of the place of residence.

In Polish special pedagogy the largest interest in occupational functioning of the graduates of special schools for the intellectually disabled falls within the period foregoing constitutional transformation (Urbańska, 1974; Górecki, 1972; Łaś, 1975; Pańczyk, 1976; Pańczyk, 1987; Larkowa, 1981). Research results coming from this period are optimistic, as most of the graduates did not have trouble with employment. Directed to a suiting them and mastered by them occupation, they did not yield to the intellectually able workers in the quantity and quality of work (Łaś & Pańczyk, 1981; Łaś, 1975).

Meanwhile, along with the new economic situation in Poland (constitutional transformation), there appeared many new phenomena making employment possibilities for the intellectually disabled people difficult. We can include to these phenomena: unemployment, bankruptcy of many work

institutions, reduction of some branches of industry, or the growth of new spheres of the social and economic life. The appearing signals, beginning from the 90's, concerning the situation of the graduates of special schools for the mentally disabled, do not fill with optimism (Łaś & Penar, 1994; Szymborski, 1994; Łaś, 2002).

The essence of market economy excludes in a smaller or larger degree the participation of the disabled people in the social life, as "an essential propriety of the market economy is the constant selection of people in relation to occupation usefulness (...), eliminating the weak from social participation, especially disabled people, less talented, less motivated" (Osowski, 1996).

An overall level of unemployment has a big influence on the employment of disabled persons. Unemployment rate in our country in June 2006 reached 16,0% (Ogorzałek, 2007). The number of unemployed disabled people in the West Pomeranian province, registered in the office of work, in general according to the position from August 2006 shaped on the level of 2677 people, what determined 1,9% of overall unemployed in the province (Nowak, 2007). Among the unemployed disabled persons, the vast majority of people possess a mild degree of disability (in year 2005 this share was 80,4%). In the structure of unemployed people remaining beyond employment according to education in 2005, we can notice that the largest group, after persons with a basic education (44,5%), consisted of unemployed graduates of basic vocational schools (31,8%; for those searching for work this part carried out 24,4%).

There are many factors influencing the employment of disabled people, among others, the degree of disability (Fraczak-Nowak, 2007), age, education. More and more often there appear opinions that about the possibilities of self-realization, the level of life quality, in this employment, decide the socio-moral attitudes of the nearest surrounding, the social attitude and consent, giving the feeling of membership and safety in the human community (Dykcik, 2001). Meanwhile, disabled people are very often perceived through the prism of

dysfunctions, disorders and meet with discrimination and negative evaluation (Nowak, 2005; Ogorzałek, 2007). Destructive after-effects of lack of employment among graduates of vocational schools are widely known, and their psychological and sociological contexts have been described in scientific publications (Osowski, 1994; Drogosz-Zabłocka, 1994; Woźniak, 1997; Gajdzica, 2007; Popiołek, 1995; Łaś, 2004). All researchers express opinions that one should undertake every actions that enable the disabled persons to receive the highest occupational qualifications as possible, and then help in employment. In designing these workings one can use the elaborated in our country counteract unemployment procedures and more quickly initiate the elaborated by the European Union programs in this domain. Any discrimination against disabled people is forbidden in the European Union. Treating these people properly in the area of employment demands breaking up with the tradition of perceiving disabled persons as people who are passive, resourceless – objects of philanthropy. It seems necessary to elaborate in our country a suitable system of educational, vocational, and social support, based on the orders of equality, autonomy, right to respect, disabled persons' full participation in the social life (Nowak, 2005).

The possible counteraction of the unemployment phenomena among people with intellectual disability requires, first of all, a vast diagnostic research on the functioning of these people.

The author of the present study took an interest in the employment of graduates of special technical schools for the intellectually disabled with a mild degree. These are the detailed questions, for which I seek answers to:

1. What are the legal - administrative premises of employing disabled persons in Poland and in different European Union countries?
2. How does the employment of graduates of special vocational school for the intellectually disabled introduce itself in the light of research?
3. What are the causes of lack of employment of the disabled people?

4. What barriers in employment do people with a mild degree of intellectual disability encounter?

The research included 132 graduates of special basic vocational schools for the mildly intellectually disabled, finishing schools in the years 1996-2004, mostly in the West Pomeranian province. The author took interest in the occupational functioning of the graduates in the first three years from the moment of finishing school. The studied persons represented various professions: gardener, tailor, carpenter, painter, upholsterer, cook, mechanic. Two different research methods were used – method of individual cases and diagnostic survey. From research techniques the most useful were: observation, interview, and investigation of documentation.

The youth with a mild degree of intellectual disability predominated in the studied group. A small percentage of the studied persons (4,0%) disclosed additional disorders. The family situation in most cases did not favor psychosocial and occupational rehabilitation of the studied people.

2. Legal - administrative contexts of employing disabled people in Poland and European Union countries

Accordingly with the International Convention of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention No. 159 of International Work Organization as well as with recommendations of the Europe Council “Coherent policy towards handicapped people”, countries have to assure the possibility of employment for all categories of disabled people (Sekuradzki & Mrugalska, 1997).

The realized in Poland occupational rehabilitation system of the disabled people is based on the law form 27 August 1997 about the vocational and social rehabilitation and the employment of disabled people (Dz.U. 1997, No. 123 with subsequent amendments (Barczyński, 2001).

The disabled persons' rights to the life in the environment without barriers, and especially employment on the open job market, it emphasizes by the Card of Laws of the Disabled People (M. P. 1997, No. 50, poz. 475) resolved by Sejm (Lower House of Parliament) of the Republic of Poland August 1 year 1997.

The correct employment of the disabled people has to consider the lowered abilities to work, agreement of employment with actual qualifications – guaranteeing the achievement of average results at work. Two forms of employment dominate: in ordinary work institutions and in special work conditions (Majewski, 1995).

Elements of employers' motivation towards the relief and tax relinquishment were introduced to the accepted in Poland legal solutions. At the same time, for enabling the functioning of the firms that hire disabled people in the conditions of competitive economy, relatively liberal requirements concerning the number of employed handicapped and the degree of their disability were introduced. Firms that hire over 40% of disabled people could have received the status of protected work institution (Barczyński, 2002).

In result of introducing, from the beginning of 1999 the reform of the country's administration, the majority of undertaken actions in favor of disabled people had begun to be realized on the level of the territorial council (particularly the administrative districts). Thanks to these changes, these peoples' problems could have been considered based on real needs and expectations, articulated by the members of local societies (Szymanowska, 2002). The financial means are passed on to district councils and are aimed at:

- creating new or adjusting the already existing work positions to the needs of disabled persons,
- refinancing wages and due from them fees for social insurance in the form of refunding their costs to employers who oblige to employ the above motioned persons in the period of at least 54 months,

- training and re-qualifying unemployed disabled persons, searching for work and not staying employed, as well as being in the period of work contract termination due to causes concerning the employer (Szymanowska, 2002).

The accession of Poland on May 1 2004 to the European Union means a gradual adaptation of the Polish law, connected with employing disabled people, to the regulations of the Union law. The European Union by counteracting marginalization of disabled people in the society (in this, barriers in access to work) realizes from 2001-2006 a “Community program for fighting discrimination”, among others, for an equal treatment in employment and occupation execution (Directive of the Europe Council from 2000/79/WE) (Osoby niepełnosprawne w Unii Europejskiej, 2003; Wapiennik & Piotrowicz, 2002). In view of the high level of unemployment among disabled people, countries of the European Union have been obliged to a special consideration, in the National Plans of Employment, of the matters connected with disability. Moreover, in constructing guidelines on the level of the European Union, the Commission promotes the integration of the disabled people on the job market.

In the European Union there exist two systems serving the increase of possibilities of undertaking work by the people with disability (Wapiennik & Piotrowicz, 2002; Nowak, 2005). In Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Great Britain these systems are based on the right to work and prohibition of discrimination of the disabled people. This means that the society, and especially the employers, have to acknowledge the rights of the disabled people to occupational work, equal, along with fully able people, chances for employment. Member countries of the European Union are obliged to establish a sanction for violating the antidiscrimination law (e.g., in the form of compensation). The weight of evidence does not belong to the suffered people, but to the person who discriminates (the employer has to prove that he does not exert discrimination) (Wapiennik & Piotrowicz, 2002). In the rest of the Community countries there exist systems basing on the country’s intervention (so called, sum system). In

this system, employers are legally obliged to employ a definite number of disabled people in relation to the general number of their employees, and if they do not fulfill this demand they have to pay a fee into a specially created fund. All EU countries generate also for the disabled people, who cannot meet the requirements of the open job market, the possibility of employment on special conditions, in the, so called, protected environment.

Actions of the EU in favor of equalizing differences in the level of life and employment of disabled people in particular countries and regions of the Community, manifest themselves in creating suitable structural funds. The fight with discrimination of the disabled people (barriers, elimination, inequality) on the job market is the subject of the EQUALL initiative (2000-2006). It constitutes the continuity of previous programs of ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT (1994-1999) (Wapiennik & Piotrowicz, 2002).

3. The employment of graduates of special vocational schools for the youth with a mild degree of intellectual disability – research results

There exists a general conviction that the success in employment is the proof that a disabled person has been properly rehabilitated. A question arises, whether in the market economy system the above mentioned thinking is exactly entitled. Do any other factors exist, besides the qualifications and motivation to work on behalf of the graduate of vocational school, limiting the employment of these people? We will trace the problem of employment of people with a mild intellectual disability on a group of 132 graduates of special vocational schools.

Research conducted within the compass of 3 years from the moment of finishing vocational school have shown that among 132 graduates only 35% were employed. Among the employed, 15% worked in compliance with the school's occupational preparation, and 20% in disagreement with the obtained

qualifications. It worries that even 65% of the studied persons were not employed, in this, the majority was looking for work. It happened that pretentiously disposed parents of graduates did not hurry with making their children independent, so they would not deprive themselves of an income in the form of a benefit. In the group of not-working graduates, there were people (3,5%) who of right of additional disabilities (illness) had a stated inability to work, authorizing to collect a pension. Four people undertook vocational education in order of gaining a new specialty. Workers from the building, gastronomy, and mechanical trade had the biggest possibilities of employment. Problems with finding work had the dressmakers, gardeners (especially living in cities), carpenters, and upholsterers.

Signals about the high indicator of unemployment of people with intellectual disability, from the moment of constitutional transformation in our country, appear in other studies, e.g., Aleksandra Zawiaślak's (2002) (36,7% working); in the Report on the issue of accessibility to education and work for the intellectually disabled people (Prawa osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną. Dostęp do edukacji i zatrudnienia. Raport, 2005) (20,6% employed), Zenon Gajdzicy's (2007) (70% of not working persons), Małgorzata Trojańska and Maria Kościółek's (2008) (60% unemployed), as well as other researchers.

The recently conducted studies have shown that while 62% of fully able residents of the European Union work, then barely 24% of people with a considerate degree of disability are professionally active (Disability and social participation in Europe, 2001). It is a shame that the literature does not provide information concerning the occupational situation of the people with a mild intellectual disability.

4. The adjustment of graduates of special vocational schools to work and causes of lack of employment – the opinions of graduates and employers

The undertaken, in the recent years, governmental programs of actions in favor of disabled people (Rządowy program działania na rzecz niepełnosprawnych i ich integracji ze społeczeństwem, 1993; Kierunki działania w sferze polityki socjalnej, 1994), especially in the range of ensuring them basic conditions for the independent and active participation in the occupation and social life (in this, counteracting the effects of employment), in a little range, translates to the language of practice. It is confirmed by the presented research, where 65% of the graduates remain unemployed.

The causes of this phenomena, according to the graduates' opinion, can be classified into the following group:

- lack of job offers in the acquired profession
- lack of job offers in general
- lack of a clear interest in work from the graduates' side
- employers' refusal due to finishing school for the intellectually disabled
- switching to disability pension
- family problems (family members' illnesses, setting up one's own family, pregnancy, etc.

Part of the graduates, after an unsuccessful occupational start in the acquired profession, left their job. This touched mainly the dressmakers, gardeners, and carpenters. Most of these people undertook a job that was incompatible with their acquired profession. In the period of conducting research, the graduates executed various jobs, e.g., kitchen help, physical worker in a warehouse, cleaning and renovating furniture, gluing cardboards together, seasonal jobs, and other occupations. The causes of this phenomena, as also undertaking a job incompatible with qualifications directly after finishing vocational school, can be, according to research, searched in:

- lack of interest in work to which the pupil was prepared for,
- difficulties in maintaining in a given occupation (lack of occupational abilities, unsuitable attitude),
- lack of motivation having economic bases (low pay),
- bankruptcy of work institutions,
- are under the necessity to help parents in running an agricultural farm or household.

The author also took interest in the issue of adaptation to work of the graduates, who working in agreement with the acquired profession. For the evaluation of adjustment to work of the graduates, about whom we are talking about, the opinions of work institutions were used, and also the opinions of graduates about the difficulties in the adaptation process. The employers estimated technological, organizational, and social abilities (mainly professional attitudes). According to research results, the general evaluation of the mentioned above abilities, in the superiors' opinion, is satisfactory. Special problems, for the studied persons, are caused by organizational skills, in this, planning work, abiding bhp (security and work hygiene) principles. Some of the disclosed lacks can be included to the, so called, general abilities. They concern mainly maintaining order and cleanness at the work stand. These habits should be formed from the pupil's first days of his stay at school. The lack of independence at work of some of the graduates required a constant supervision and help from the superior and co-workers. Also, some of the lacks in technological skills caused difficulties for the studied persons in the adjustment to work. Irrespective of the executed occupation, lacks, in this ability class, connected with tempo, efficiency, and quality of work were repeated. Social skills of the studied people, their occupational attitude, did not arise bigger reservations in the light of the employers' opinions. Most opinions testify about diligence, novice's big motivation to work and the ability of cohabiting in a workers' team.

In the opinion of employers, the following factors can favor the employment of people with mental disability:

- the character of the executed job, worker's activity,
- the employer's help in searching for a suitable place of work,
- the quality of a person's preparation for occupation execution.

Małgorzata Ogorzałek (2007) received very interesting opinions from employers concerning the possibility of employing people with intellectual disability. About the occupational success, according to employers, decides mainly the employee's attitude, especially possessing such traits as: openness and communicativeness, discipline, correct interpersonal relations. In turn, some employers' worries and fears connected with employing people with mental disability come from current opinions, attributing them the possession of traits of a character of dangerous behaviors, e.g., conflictive, lack of cohabiting skills, non-productivity, non-disciplinary, etc.

Analyzing the adaptation to work of graduates of special vocational schools, it is impossible not to mention the opinion on the issue of the studied graduates themselves. Some of them, in this regard, perceived their difficulties in:

- the lack of vocational practices in work institutions (a big difference between didactic infrastructure of school workshops and the equipment of work institutions),
- the insufficiencies in the formal-organizational, professionally-productive, and social side of introducing them to the first job,
- the bankruptcy of work institutions,
- the social marking of the people with intellectual disability.

5. The barriers of employing people with intellectual disability – implications to a system of social and educational support

In compliance with research results, the field of vocational activity of graduates of special fundamental vocational schools has been blocked by the fact of the progressing unemployment in Poland. The causes of this phenomena and its effects, and also the repair actions can be analyzed on the social and educational level.

The quality of a human's life, in a considerable measure, is stated by factors of a socio-cultural character, which define his place in the structure of collective life. The existing social system in Poland, quite often appoints the disabled people to marginalized positions, offering the standards of functioning that are different from the ones recognized as normal and desired in a given community (Błeszyńska, 1996). The barriers in employing people with intellectual disability are the best evidence of such an approach. In social perception, a person with a mild intellectual disability is perceived as an employee of a little occupational usefulness, but simultaneously one sees the needs to give him special social support, just as one does in relation to people with a profound disability. This dual social situation of the people with a mild degree of intellectual disability results in these peoples' social drama. Unemployment pushes these people to the social margin, it disrupts their value and identity system, leads to passivity and helplessness. Not having a financial backup and remaining, in general, on the family's maintenance, with a lot of free time, these people often infringe the law. The human being is able to fight with one's own limitations under the condition that he receives suitable support. Meanwhile, the received support by the studied graduates from the family and state's side turns out to be insufficient. The realization of the social state conception in our country, which assumes the division of responsibility for the citizens' social security among the state, local social authorities, non-state sector, family, and individual – with limited financial means on one hand and on the other, however, the constantly increasing request of the poor population

groups for testimonies and services – turns out to be little effective. One should also add that the majority of graduates, in time, get used to the unemployed person situation and using different forms of support, stop seeking work. The consciousness of unfavorable social attitudes, remaining on the society's maintenance determines an additional factor that makes the correct social functioning difficult for the disabled people. It also determines a serious social, psychological barrier impeding undertaking occupational activity and in consequence leading to a further social marginalization. These people feel doubly socially marked: firstly, because of the unemployed person status and secondly, because of the disability. This phenomenon causes specified unfavorable psychological effects, e.g., apathy, aggression, isolation, and other deviations (Łaś, 2004).

In connexion with the outlined situation, it is not difficult to also count the costs, which the entire society bears. To the costs connected with unemployment (social services) one should also include the costs connected with these peoples' preparation to an independent life (physical, psychical, vocational, and social rehabilitation) as well as psychological costs, that directly touch the disabled person (Popiołek, 1995). The new Directive of the European Union Council, in the matter of establishing general frames of an equal treatment in employment and occupation execution (Wapiennik & Piotrowicz, 2002), creates a great possibility of change of this situation. The quoted regulations can protect from situations, when someone cannot find a job just because one is disabled, although one has the suitable qualifications. Although people with intellectual disability have the same rights as every other citizen, in reality they come across too many obstacles, in order to use these rights. Therefore, the European Union justly recognized the removal of environmental barriers as the key to equal changes for the disabled people – as these barriers, more than disability, limit their participation in the social life (Osoby niepełnosprawne w Unii Europejskiej, 2003).

The problem of unemployment of the graduates of vocational schools for the intellectually disabled implies certain premises to the educational system.

The occupational start has an enormous meaning for every young person. Currently, it awakes many reservations. The effectiveness of crossing over by the pupils from school activity to adulthood (work, social life, etc.) requires planned and coordinated actions of various institutions, services, and people. The family and school can play an important role in this process (Łaś, 1979; Łaś & Pańczyk, 1981).

Graduates with a mild intellectual disability, in comparison with fully able graduates finishing fundamental vocational schools, can turn out to be more helpless on the difficult job market. To the factors causing a more difficult socio-occupational start for the graduates of special vocational schools one can include, first of all, such factors as: impoverishment of intellectual processes, unfavorable family conditions. Therefore, there exists a need to monitor the vocational fates of the graduates of special schools.

Patterns of a, so called, “professional carrier”, all-embracing today all people, including also people with a mild intellectual disability, portray the necessity of a big changeability of occupational activity (change of profession, employers, work teams). Only people with big adaptive skills can cope with these changes. The resulting from mental retardation adjustment difficulties of these people, large helplessness on the job market motivate the need of a planned and organized help in employment and socio-vocational adaptation by the specialized, in this domain, services.

Results show that an often cause of dismissals from work, among graduates of special vocational schools, are the lacks of a school preparation concerning the occupational attitude (work discipline, relation to superiors, resistance to stress, lack of independence). In this situation the school should yet lay a bigger pressure on social abilities of their pupils. It concerns that many employers show reluctance to employing disabled people. The employers’ worries and fears, in

general, come from ignorance – mainly the lack of information and unacquaintance with these people. A negative image of disabled people has its source in thinking stereotypes marking these people, what in result leads to discrimination and social exclusion. Moreover, the consciousness of unfavorable social attitudes manifested by the employers and some members of the local society, constitute a serious social barrier, making it difficult to undertake occupational activity, and in consequence leading to a further social marginalization. This unfavorable trend must be consequentially changed through organizing trainings, discussions, delivering written information (flyers, brochures, guides), meetings giving the possibility of convincing employers about the advantages and psychosocial and vocational capabilities of these people. Media exposing these persons' achievements can play a big role in the reconstruction of the employers and the entire society's mentality.

The large competitiveness on the job market generates the need of the schools' bigger elasticity in the domain of profile changes of and occupational education. A gradually conducted, by the vocational school, diagnosis of the employment of their graduates, supported by the interviews in the office of employment, should activate innovative actions in favor of appointing new educational directions, for which there is a demand on the job market. It concerns that the youth from smaller localities, being in a difficult material situation, does not have access to a special vocational school (integration education), administering a wider offer of a vocational education. In this situation, undertaking education in the place of residence, one does not accomplish one's own vocational interests, what in turn may unfavorably project onto the quality of the school's preparation and motivation to undertake work.

The qualifications level of the graduates of a vocational school, in a large measure, depends on a practical preparation, realized in school through a practical learning of an occupation and vocational practices. Following the technical progress on different education directions, requires connecting the

school education with leading work institutions. The practical learning of an occupation, at least in the last grade, should take place in enterprises (firms). Thanks to such a practice, the youth with mental disability can simultaneously gain skills and experiences needed to function in the enterprise. Contact with the authentic world of production is also an important asset of a successful entry by the young persons onto the today's demanding job market (Biała księga kształcenia i doskonalenia. Nauczanie i uczenie się. Na drodze do uczącego się społeczeństwa, 1997).

Probably, in the area of constant education, there lies a chance for the improvement of the occupational situation of the graduates of special schools. In this situation, a big efficiency, in the fight with unemployment and the marginalization of the people with a mild intellectual disability, can have their re-qualification, training, and accustom to the occupation, for which there is a demand. Meanwhile, the high indicator (65%) of graduates remaining without work is an evidence that the hitherto legal regulations (Bulenda & Zabłocki, 1991; Kurzymowski, 1997) do not solve, in a satisfactory way, the problem of disabled peoples' employment. The studied graduates, registered in the work institution, according to the law about employment and counteracting unemployment (Law from 14 December 1994 about employment and counteracting unemployment (Dz.U. 1995, No. 1, poz. 1)), gain the status of unemployed and are entitled to use the services proclaimed by this institution.

It seems that the solution of this difficult issue requires the co-operation of at least two resorts, namely the resort of work and social policy as well as the education resort. New tasks in improving their pupils, in a large domain, could be taken over by special vocational schools. This would require, however, investing in these schools and guaranteeing that the newest technologies will remain on the services of education.

Results show a big participation of the special vocational schools in searching for work for their graduates and further, in their socio-occupational

adaptation. The school's help in the pupils' employment and becoming independent is not embraced by any regulations. It is the good will of the school's staff. In many countries the problem with employment and socio-occupational adaptation, of these people, gained a higher rank. The problems of work mediation for the disabled people are taken care of by the appointed to this services (Majewski, 1995; Łaś, 2002; Nowak, 2005). Realized in the United States, Western Europe, and Scandinavian countries programs of a successful proceeding from school to work of the disabled people, should be gradually universalized also in our country. Without complex help from various institutions and services, humanitarian slogans about equal chances, social integration, will only remain in the sphere of wishes.

For showing the unemployment's actual size among graduates with a mild degree of intellectual disability, one should conduct comparing research with graduates in the intellectual norm with an equivalent occupational education. The present tendency of educating people with a mild intellectual disability, aiming at total socio-occupational integration of these people with the rest of the society, does not have a chance for realization without the organized forms of support from the autonomy authorities' side in the process of employment. Otherwise, the graduates of special vocational schools, in comparison with their fully able peers, can have a more difficult occupational start, making independence, self-reliance and the realization of fundamental life needs impossible.

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