Looking for a Job: the Orientation Process for Persons with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

If finding a job is currently difficult for many people, for those with disabilities it actually is a path with many obstacles. The ONU Convention on persons with disabilities rights is in line with the basic concepts of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which supports programs against discrimination, and adopts equal opportunities and active inclusion as priorities. In the European and national policies for the realization of the objectives and strategies of "Lisbon 2010" and "Horizon 2020", lifelong guidance is recognized as a permanent right for every person. The main objective of the research is to develop a self-orientation online path that helps to increase and improve the match between disabled people and businesses in the country and internationally. The purpose is to collect data about each transition: from school to university, from university to the first entry into the labor market, from the first work experience to the stabilization of the employment. The collection of data will be analyzed, considering job as a means for self-realization and not only for the mere subsistence.

KEYWORDS: *disability, employment, recruiting online, lifelong guidance, self-orientation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

If finding job is difficult for many, for those with a disability becomes a path with more obstacle. Nowadays the conceptual framework of reference in the field of disability is the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which led to a reversal of the term disability from negative to positive: we no longer speak of impediments, disability, handicap but of functions, structures and activities. In this terms, disability is not a consequence of the individual's physical condition but the relationship between an individual and the context where he/she lives [1].

Job placement of people with disabilities has gone through different stages over time up to the enactment of the Law 68/99 also known as Targeted Placing [2]. Despite Law 68 has an overview of the most advanced and shall guarantee in Europe, last year Italy has been taken by the European Court for not meeting the obligations in relation to the placement of workers with disabilities [3]. There are several reasons that lead the unemployment rate of disabled workers to more than 80%, the first being the difficulty of achieve a cross demand/supply because the required tasks of the companies do not coincide with the characteristics of human resources in the area of reference (the province). According to the recent survey "Limitations in their work of people with health problems", only about the 16% of those with chronic diseases or functional difficulties works. Among those who have a disability, unemployment is between 50% and 70% in industrialized countries, with peaks of 80% in Italy, despite our legislation provides specific routes for entering the labor market [4]. The ONU Convention on persons with disability is in

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line with basic concepts of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which supports programs against discrimination, and adopts equal opportunities and active inclusion as priorities [5, 6].

The technological change occurred must be take into account and, in particular, the importance of the network in the process of recruitment. As highlighted in the White Paper "Interministerial Commission on the development and use of information technology for Disadvantaged Groups", even if technology has offered new solutions to problems once insurmountable, can simultaneously generate new problems for disabled users [7]. Indeed, there is a real danger that they may be excluded from society based on information technology. On the other hand, it is possible to make Internet and network accessible to a disabled person and become an irreplaceable support for his/her guidance and employment. Some of the problems that the user with disability encounters using technology, in fact, stem from the fact that the standard products do not take into account the special needs. The limitations are not internal to technology, which is characterized by an enormous flexibility, but from the absence of requests made to the technology itself. Understand what is the right place to be assigned to a person with disabilities becomes crucial.

Within this context, orientation and job placement are taking an increasingly important role. In European and national policies of "Lisbon in 2010" and "Horizon 2020", lifelong guidance it is recognized as a permanent right of each person, which is applied in different forms and methods depending on the needs, contexts and situations [8]. The ONU Convention provides that States must "enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to technical and vocational guidance programs, to the employment services and to vocational and continuing training " [5]. From the perspective of orientation to work for people with disabilities, all those actions that lead to an "awareness of their abilities/skills" assume importance, both for the subject and for the company where he/she could usefully be added.

2. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL
2.1 The Aim of the Research

The main objective of the research is to develop a self-orientation online path that helps to increase and improve the match between disabled people and businesses in the country and internationally, thus making the platform already launched by the start-up Jobmetoo more accessible and transparent. The national and transnational dimension provides more opportunities for interaction between supply and demand. Therefore there will be significantly greater chance to identify the best candidate. Labor mobility of persons with disabilities is another challenge to play.

In particular, specific objectives are:
- enhance existing online platform' strengths and its use by both disabled users and companies;
- develop guidance skills in disabled people who are preparing to enter the labor market, promoting the awareness of their disability's characteristics as well as of their own resources;
- increase the specificity of the matching between the professional profile of candidates with a disability and the different professional fields;
- facilitate the access to information on the obligations and benefits relating to the employment of persons with disabilities provided for in different countries, both in Europe and outside Europe;

- promote the platform's spread in foreign markets, in line with the policies of international development.

2.2 Method and Activities

The first step of the research will be to reconstruct the state of the art, collecting data, through bibliographic and statistic research. In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing online platform, the next step will be to prepare, through a precise methodological approach that uses some of the tools of social research, a qualitative and quantitative survey targeting both people with disabilities and companies.

The second step is to build a model for self-orientation collecting data following a bottom-up process:

1. definition of placement orientation's needs related to the disabled population involved in the project;
2. identification of the instruments of success in the placement orientation field that can be used according to the defined target;
3. integration of the tools, even with innovative adaptations, in guiding paths;
4. testing of those paths.

According to socio-constructivist theories, build a training means to bring out prior knowledge and preconceptions of the participants and allow a comparison according to the context, in order to encourage the creation of new ideas and solutions [9].

Considering the progressive socio-economic changes that led to highlighting the importance of "soft skills" in the labor market, the model will include activities that serve in the development and maturation of self-management's skills in lifelong guidance's process, especially for persons with a functional, sensory or intellectual impairment [10, 11].

Once implemented and tested the online self-orientation model, we will evaluate the results and validity of the pilot project, identifying both qualitative and quantitative outcomes Finally, after analyzing the collected data, we will select the case studies that revealed statistically significant findings. Based on this part of the research we will develop recommendations for good practices, also presenting at conferences and congresses both nationally and internationally, thus promoting the enhancement of the platform within the European context.

3. RESULTS

Research is currently in progress: started in November 2014, it will end in November 2017.

We created a questionnaire based on existing research in the field of job placement. The purpose of the questionnaire is to monitor the career and employment status of university students and graduates with disabilities and identify their needs related to work. The questionnaire was tested by a consultation of experts in disability services, guidance and placement at the higher education level. The questionnaire has been sent to students and graduates of Macerata University enrolled in the 2000/2001 academic year to currently, for a total sample of 117 people. Additional participants were being identified to join the survey collaborating with other Universities in Italy.

These are the specific areas of the final version of the questionnaire:

- General Information
- Disability
- Education
- Careers

- Work Experiences
- Needs work-related

This step of research will be necessary to the implementation of further actions, such as the following:

- create an online self-orientation model that assists in improving the matching between people with disabilities and local businesses, transforming disability job placement from a legal obligation to a valuable, productive resource;
- produce a survey on the platform that allows members to check the effectiveness of the same, both in terms of creating the personal profile of skills and in reference to real working solutions;
- bring out improvements and new solutions in companies through the inclusion of people with disability in different professional fields, according to their specific profile. If a company begins to take into account the unique needs and experiences of persons with disabilities, it is very likely the perspective and attitudes towards persons with disabilities will change/improve. The worker with disabilities will be seen as a resource of competitive advantage and not an inconvenience or a person hired by statutory obligation.

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