

**INTERACTIONS**  
**INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF RESEARCH**  
**INTO DYSFUNCTIONS AND HANDICAPS**

N<sup>r</sup> 4 coordinated by Barbara Murray\* and Marc Maudinet\*\*

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**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Training and employment of persons with disabilities**

As many countries actively seek to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, there is accumulating evidence of a lack of skills among these persons. Even when non-discrimination legislation or quota systems have been put in place, the lack of qualifications often remains an obstacle in accessing employment.

Approaches to vocational training of persons with disabilities are changing. Programmes implemented in specialised institutions are being increasingly replaced by access to training programmes offered in institutions open to job-seekers in general.

In some countries, this transformation is just beginning, while in others, the majority of adults with disabilities receive training in general institutions. In addition, disabled persons are increasingly taking advantage of post-secondary education, employment-related training, distance learning as well as other forms of skills development as a means of accessing employment.

With the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD 2006<sup>1</sup>), and, in particular, articles 24, 26 and 27 (concerning education, habilitation and rehabilitation, work and employment), these trends will accelerate. In the countries of the European Union, they are reinforced by the debate on life-long learning, underway since the Lisbon summit<sup>2</sup>

In developing training programmes, an analysis of the needs of a specific group of people and their environment should be carried out and taken into account, so that the programmes are of relevance to the situation. Training programmes targeting persons with disabilities are rarely based on such an analysis.

Following the strengthening of legislation to promote full participation of persons with disabilities in economic and social life, more and more businesses are faced with the need to retain in employment, workers who have become disabled as a result of an accident or illness. This development makes it necessary to identify the disabling elements present in the environment of these persons and in particular their training and work environments.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Resolution A/RES/61/106, 13.12.06.

<sup>2</sup> Lisbon summit of the Education Committee of the Council of the EU Strategy for Lifelong learning, March 2000

It is taken as given that the concept of “handicap” results from the interaction between the characteristics of an individual (generally an impairment, or a physical, physiological, or psychological dysfunction) and some elements of the situation in which the individual finds him or herself (way of life, social, family, professional, legal economic and other contexts and circumstances).

In other words, disability cannot be reduced to an individual dysfunction. The significance of the difficulties encountered – that is, the handicap as such – is a function of the material and social situation in which the persons find themselves. From this perspective, “handicap” is not an individual characteristic but the result of an interaction between the characteristics of a person and some elements of the situation in which it is placed

Volume 4 of ‘Interactions’ will welcome articles from any scientific discipline likely to make a significant contribution to the analysis of problems relating to the training and employment of persons with disabilities.

Some examples of the themes likely to be investigated (not an exhaustive list) are:

- Functioning and dysfunction of training systems accessible to persons with disabilities: specialised systems and general systems. Training, on-going training, apprenticeships
- Training of instructors: is it necessary to develop specific skills. What environment is most conducive to optimal effectiveness of training?
- Comparative analysis of public policies which promote the employment of persons with disabilities and of policies which are anti-discriminative in nature.
- Analysis of the discourses and representations of persons with disabilities regarding training, employment and working in a business environment.
- Individual approaches to professional integration : individualised training, mentored work, modification of the workplace, accessibility.
- While diplomas are increasingly used as a means of preselection on the labour market , it remains to be asked what investment should be made (public or private, tangible or intangible) in systems of skills development which are inclusive of persons with disabilities ?

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