



Report on the employment of disabled people in European countries

Country: Hungary
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Background:

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the *Thematic report on the implementation of EU Employment Strategy in European countries with reference to equality for disabled people*. The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation of the European Employment Strategy from a disability equality perspective, and to provide the Commission with useful evidence in support of disability policy mainstreaming. More specifically, the report will review implementation of EU Employment Strategy and the PROGRESS initiative with reference to policy implementation evidence from European countries, including the strategies addressed in the EU Disability Action Plan (such as flexicurity and supported employment).

PART ONE: GENERAL EVIDENCE

1.1 Academic publications and research reports (key points)

Some of the most important, mostly internet-based publications in English

[Disability related databases of Hungarian Central Statistical Office: Definitions and data](#)

Frey, Mária – Ilona Gere 2006: [Growth and Employment](#). The National Employment Public Foundation, Public Benefit Company for Employment Promotion (OFA Kht). Budapest

Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2002. [Population Census 2001](#). HCSO. Budapest

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Laky, Teréz, et. al. 2005. [The Hungarian Labour Market 2004](#). Employment Office, National Employment Foundation. Budapest

Krémer, Balázs 2008: [People with Altered Working Capacities and the Labour Market](#). (in Hungarian). Revita Foundation, Debrecen

Kálmán, Zsófia – György Könczei 2002. [From Taygetos to Equal Opportunities \(in Hungarian\)](#). Osiris Publ. Co. Budapest

Könczei, György – Róbert Komáromi – Roland Keszi – Lilla Vicsek 2002. [Employment of persons with disabilities and altered working ability using a database of TOP 200 companies](#). (Abridged version). The National Employment Public Foundation Public Benefit Company for Employment Promotion (OFA Kht). Budapest

KOPINT DATORG 2005. [European Employment Strategy. Ways of Adaptability in New Member States](#). The Case of Hungary. Unpublished conference report. Budapest

[List of key official documents on integration of persons with disabilities to the open labour market \(in Hungarian\)](#)

Mental Disability Advocacy Center 2007. [Guardianship and Human Rights in Hungary](#). MDAC. Budapest

Nagy, Zita Éva – Zsolt Pál 2008. Legal and Social Situation of People Living with Altered Working Capacities and Disability in Hungary and in International Perspective. Revita Foundation, Debrecen (Unpublished research report, in Hungarian)

Varjú, Tamás 2008: [Special Elements of Services Serving Reintegration of People with Altered Working Capacities](#). Revita Foundation, Debrecen (Unpublished research report, in Hungarian)

[Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities \(an internet-based overview\) - Hungary](#)

A few key conclusions of the research:

1. Statistics

The number of persons with disabilities was assessed by the 1990 and 2001 censuses. The 1990 census reported 368 thousand persons with disabilities, whereas this population consisted of 577 thousand individuals in the 2001. This was 5.7 percent of the entire population of Hungary in those days. The data from the Central Statistical Office typically show an underestimation in the *number of* persons with disabilities. In our estimate it could be as high as 600 thousand. According to unpublished statistical estimations, the number of persons with disabilities is continuously increasing, it may reach 1 million by 2021 (following the present trend it may grow up to 968,000 – Habcsek 2005).

There are significant differences between the census data from 1990 and 2001. One reason for this may be related to the 11 years time difference. Another factor is the difference in sampling methods because the 2001 collection targeted the full population of the country, whereas only 20 percent of the population was represented in the data collection in 1990.

2 In focus, but still somewhat blurry.

From a political science point of view and at the macro level persons with disabilities and their organizations have become one of the strongest pressure and lobby groups. This strength, however, is not reflected in the employment ratio. In terms of employment policy, a large number of people with disabilities remains in disadvantaged positions even at the beginning of the 21st century. This situation is determined by three strong influential factors (Könczei, 2007).

i) Starting point: Hungary started from a deep level at the time of the regime change. Both the attitudes towards disability and the practices, as well as the level of resource allocations were rather low. Thus, no spectacular results or high standards could be reached during the past two decades including the last few years since Hungary has joined the European Union. An employment related example is the creation of *accessibility*. Before the political regime change, accessibility was only important for persons with disabilities, their service providers and for a handful of disability studies researchers. It was part of neither the dominant approach nor budget calculations. This is the reason why we are lagging so terribly behind, and the *status quo* cannot be reversed in a decade or two despite the introduction of strict rules on making public buildings fully accessible (Act No. XXVI of 1998).

ii) Dependence on the budget. The measures of the separate decision making levels that are supposed to promote employment for people with disabilities are highly budget dependent and highly differentiated according to micro, mezzo and macro levels. It has been observed that in periods of budget cuts disability issues loose even their partial priority. During these times the power of the lobby is not even enough to retrieve its old resources, let alone going to fight for new ones – especially not at the level of the local self-government.

iii) Need for paradigm shift: as opposed to the medical (rehabilitation) model the social model has not gained strong enough momentum, therefore persons with disabilities and their organizations are not in control of the scarce resources. A too large portion of these resources trickles away in the system and a substantially smaller portion reaches people with disabilities. (This is also true for employment, see details later).

3 Anti-discriminatory legislation and equal opportunity policy are not complemented by affirmative actions (Kajtár 2007, 30).

4. The employment of the classic groups of persons with disabilities is treated mostly as a social issue (passive care) rather than employment policy (active support) issues.

5. Research shows that their employment rate – proportionately is as little as 9-12 percent. This number varies from census to census; based on the census of 2001 it is 9 percent and based on the 2002 one it is 12 percent (Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2002, Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2004). Ninety percent of people with disabilities who are employed, work in segregated environments, mostly in large groups. Exact data are not readily available on non-segregated employment.

Most important lessons for good policy and practice are as follows: the Hungarian vocational rehabilitation and supported employment systems produce a number of innovative, feasible and distributable solutions. Most of them are adaptations of foreign models, but they are improved and tailored to local needs. We will briefly discuss a few of them in the following sections. [Here you can read examples from the Web.](#)

Although vocational rehabilitation is expensive it is a worthwhile investment on the long run. Internet published research results show that every € spent on supported employment brings €4.77 in return to society in the following 5 years (Leadhem – Vég 2007).

Further research is needed in the following areas:

- i) Living conditions of people with disabilities,

- ii) Mapping out the interest system of employers and employees, i.e.: what interests drive employers to hire more persons with disabilities and how *could be that number increased*,
- iii) Creating the system of supported decision making,
- iv) Exploring the evaluation system, tools and methods of the 'ability to work',
- v) Exploring the pre-employment period – vocational rehabilitation - ; especially with regards to the role and interests of persons with disabilities.

In our present work, in order to be able to manage and follow up our results better, we take into maximum consideration sources of scientific value, first of all the English language ones, but from time to time a few Hungarian sources as well. We do not however take into consideration those Hungarian *information sources* that are lacking the scientific toolkit or are from this point of view specifically weak and have multiplied in numbers in the past period due to the EU support.

1.2 Employment statistics and trends (key points)

1.2.1 Statistical data on the employment of people with disabilities in Hungary.

Official statistics exist on the state supported forms of employment.

The collectors and providers of data are the following:

- i) on social employment: the Department of Family and Social Services of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour,

- ii) on the accredited employers: Employment Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour,

but the information they collect is only partially published and less accessible. Their data collection is poor therefore from the point of view of our analysis the quality leaves much to be desired.

The National Statistical Data Collection Program (unfortunately, it does not have a working website in June 2008) also collects myriads of data but since they do not ask particular questions about disability deeper analysis of these data is impossible. A case in point is adult education statistics: the data can be broken up into statistics by county, location of training, gender and level of education and adult education can be analyzed from this, but this data is not available for persons with disabilities.

1.2.2 Employment rates for people with disabilities in Hungary, compared to people with no disabilities

Data we can call reliable is the following:

There is evidence on the employment of persons with disabilities; however, this is for the most part *statistical evidence not conducive to deeper analysis*.

According to the 2001 census (Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2002), the employment rate of persons with disabilities was 9 percent as compared to the 16.6 percent in 1990. Simultaneously, the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities increased to 2 percent from 0.7 percent. This could be explained by the fact that those involved became inactive in the meantime (from 57.5 percent to 76.7 percent).

Only one third of the registered unemployed persons with so-called *reduced capacity to work* were able to get a job on the labour market in the years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Based on the census data it can be determined that 44.6 percent of people with no disabilities were employed in 1990. By 2001, this was down to 37.8 percent that can be accounted for by the aging of society (Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2001).

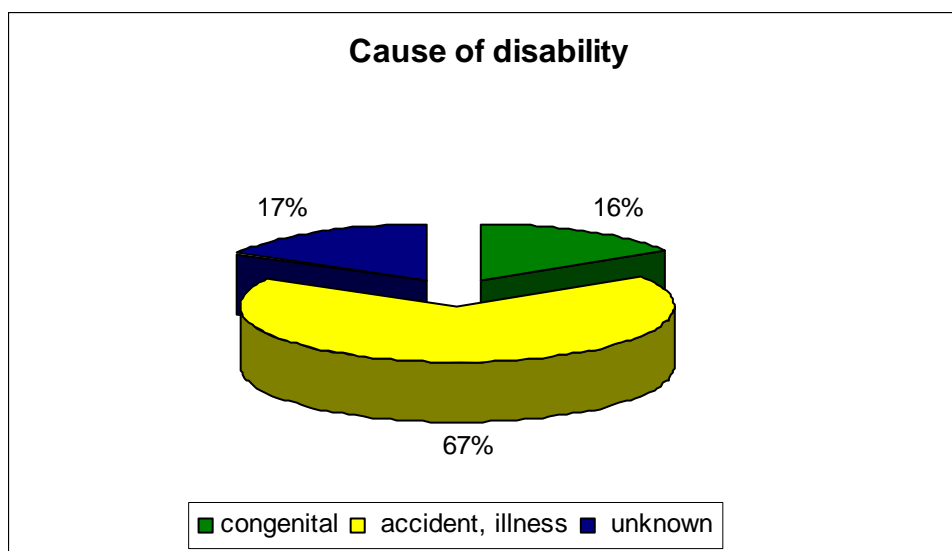
The previously mentioned very low employment rate of persons with disabilities suggests social exclusion. Social exclusion is partly a consequence of the low level of education of persons with disabilities. Integration is even more difficult due to the fact that rehabilitation services are only available in larger settlements, and buying the necessary equipments that would facilitate a more independent life is impossible from private resources alone.

Based on our knowledge it is evident that the position of women with disabilities is even worse than that of the men. Concrete empirical data only comes from the research TOP 200 ([unabridged version – in Hungarian](#), p. 101) for the top 200 companies with the highest revenue: “women with altered working ability had a 3 percent less chance of getting a job than men.” And “women made up only 39 percent of all employed persons with disabilities or altered working abilities, while men accounted for 61 percent... Among Hungarian-owned firms, gender discrimination when hiring persons with altered working ability was higher than among foreign-owned firms where the gender ratio was more or less equal (52 percent men to 48 percent women).” pp. 5-6.

1.2.3 Living with disability from birth?

Diagram No. 1

(Source of the data: Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2001)



A typical feature of the demographic composition of persons with disabilities is that a significant number of them are elderly since most of them were not disabled from birth. They became disabled due to disease or accidents as they advanced in age. The ratio of persons with disabilities above the age of 60 is 44.8 percent, more than twice as high as their ratio in

the population as a whole. In most cases, a long-term disease (53.8 percent) causes disability. 17percent of persons with disabilities have been living with some sort of disability from birth (Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2002).

Based on the above mentioned census data of 2001 the rate of employment of persons with intellectual disabilities and of persons with limited mobility are the lowest at 7 percent each. Persons with hearing impairment are at 11 percent. Persons with vision impairment are at 13 percent. It is important to take into account that in the latter two categories the hard of hearing and persons with limited vision have a higher rate of employment.

People born with disabilities require help from when they first look for employment since they enter the labour market as persons with disability. However, only persons receiving rehabilitation allowances are entitled to complex rehabilitation services. In their case, it is important to make a rehabilitation plan and to conclude a rehabilitation agreement with the Labour Centre.

Conversely, good portions of the vocational rehabilitation services are tied to social insurance legal status that can only be accessed by being employed. Therefore, when people born with disabilities reach the labour market they do not receive rehabilitation allowances thus they are not entitled to rehabilitations services either. The snake bites his own tail. This situation was not addressed by the Act of 2007 on Rehabilitation Allowances. This is a typical Catch 22.

We have no information on migrants with disabilities or people from ethnic minorities with disabilities.

1.3 Laws and policies affecting the employment of people with disabilities in Hungary

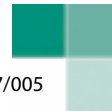
1.3.1 Are employment issues of persons with disabilities important for politicians and policy makers in Hungary?

The question certainly requires a complex answer, as there are two pieces of legislation with significant employment implications. Act No XXVI of 1998 on the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities and the Act on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were *unanimously* passed by Parliament, without blackballs and abstentions. Based on this the answer by all means is yes. At the same time the auxiliary regulations necessary for the *implementation* were not enacted, nor were the appropriate resources allocated. This prompted post facto rewriting of the provisions for the entering into force of the law.

1.3.2 Which laws or policies are most important for people with disabilities at this time?

The most important legal documents are:

- ✚ [Act No XXVI of 1998 on the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities](#),
- ✚ [the National Disability Program of Hungary](#), and
- ✚ [Act on the Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (in Hungarian).



Whereas the previous system preferred passive allowances (i.e. disability pension) and did not guarantee rehabilitation, the Act of 2007 on Rehabilitation Allowances placed the system on a new foundation. The emphasis on the decline in ability to work – the medical model – was replaced by an interdisciplinary review of the remaining ability to work based on which a rehabilitation plan was supposed to be drawn up. In turn, this could be the basis for a rehabilitation agreement entered into with the Labour Centre.

With the replacement of the previous non-target, subsidized system that was based on the level of disability the state support for the employment of people with disabilities got a new foundation.

1.3.3 The role of the National Employment Action Programme

The [National Employment Action Programme](#), in accordance with EU specifications, embodies employment policy with regards to people with disabilities. (Please see [a summary in English](#)). The essential facts included in it are the following:

“7.2.2. In addition to modernizing the institutional and implementation systems of vocational rehabilitation under the subtitle of employment market assistance service also does planning, including the following:

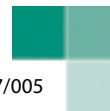
- implementation of technical and communication accessibility in the institutions of the National Vocational Service and the creation of four new rehabilitation information centres, and
- guaranteeing alternative labour market services with the involvement of non-profit organizations.”

The employment of persons with disabilities in public administration via the open labour market is promoted by the creation of so-called Equal Opportunity Plans. These plans provide detailed descriptions of all the tools and human resources suitable for the promotion of the integration of persons with disabilities already employed in public administration and which helps increase their number in the system.

Several ministries have appointed equal opportunities officers in order to facilitate the implementation of these plans.

1.3.4 Are persons with disabilities included within the mainstream of employment policies or treated as a separate group?

The Hungarian situation is double-faced (Janus-faced). The labour centres deal with persons with disabilities; they register them and provide them with services. At the same time, due to the shortage of human resources and the lack of competence, tailor made services have to be purchased by the labour centres from civil organizations specializing in the care of people with disabilities.



1.4 Types and quality of jobs (summary)

The Government supports the transition from protected employment to the open labour market. However, *at the same time, there are less encouraging signs.*

1.4.1 Some less encouraging signs

The number of persons with disabilities on the Hungarian labour market is low; only as little as 9 percent of them are active participants most of which are employed under protected circumstances.

There are two forms of social employment i.e. two forms of social institutions. The first one is the work-rehabilitation type of employment¹ based on the institutional legal relationship involving 5000 people. The other one functions under the Labour Code² codifying normal employment. The latter one is the type of employment focussing on development and preparation and it involves 4000 people. The 2008 budget for this is HUF 5.6 billion (Government of the Republic of Hungary 2006, 5-6).

In 2008, 18,346 persons with altered working abilities were employed in 21 protected institutions (these do not come under the competition regulations of the Union). Their state subsidy amounted to as much as HUF 31.2 billion. Fifty so-called accredited employers coming under the competition rules of the Union receive as much as HUF 3.83 billion in compensation and they employ 12,075 people. The system originally created with healthy intentions has become unbelievably *unbalanced and unjust* due to inappropriate regulation. It also does not serve the interests of persons with disabilities. On the contrary, it is serving isolated lobbying interests. Therefore, it is in need of immediate radical reform.

As for employment in the open labour market, we might cite the results of the [TOP 200 research](#): “A larger portion of the leading corporations in the sample, on average 58.1 percent, did employ persons with altered working abilities...” (Könczei et. al. 2002, p. 5.)

We have no detailed information on full- or part-time work. Persons receiving disability pensions may only work for a maximum of 6 hours a day

Public or private sector employment: in spite of the fact that a 5 percent quota exists and for refusing to observe it a levy is imposed it looks like the private sector is more willing to employ people with disabilities than the public sector.

‘Training’ placements vs. ‘real’ (paid) jobs: in the so-called social employment there are more training placements whereas the accredited employers offer more real paid jobs.

Employment in the social economy / social enterprises

In Hungary, the social economy is unable to become more robust and cannot create traditions within the community of people with disabilities...

¹ In this case the director of the institution is signing an employment contract with the resident.

² Normal employment



1.4.2 Supported employment

The Salva Vita Foundation plays the central role of this system. Its institutional and financing background has been built up but it has not become widespread to the extent necessary. (Leadhem – Vég 2007, Rácz – Varjú 2008, Salva 2006). The Foundation provided service for 192 persons in 2006.

Considering the available evidence employment activation policies for people with disabilities do not focus on specific kinds of work or specific types of jobs.

1.4.3 *Is there action in some employment sectors but in not others?*

It is possible to bring up several unique examples. Persons living with Down syndrome are employed in some service industry jobs as cleaners. In industries such as the handicraft industry employing people with disabilities is more dominant than in other industries but the available data does not disclose a clear pattern. For example based on the Economic Research 2007 they employ approximately 80,000 people with disabilities out of which 47,000 are employed by the processing industry.

Their employment is not characteristic in mining, financial brokerages and the hotel and restaurant industry.

Based on the available data we cannot say that some groups of people with disabilities would benefit more than others.

PART TWO: SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

2.1 Reasonable accommodation in the workplace

Specific support to make employment more accessible for people with disabilities

Provision of special equipment or adaptive technology at work is financed from the rehabilitation portion of the labour market fund through the labour centres. Personal assistance for people with disabilities at work is part of the expenditure compensation subsidy. It is not administered through the labour centres but directly through the ministry. 50 organizations receiving HUF 3.86 billion in subsidies which amount includes the overhead costs of these organizations (Department for Employment 2008).

State subsidies for work place adaptation, adaptive technologies and personal assistance are guaranteed. All of these are available on a competition basis every year until the *funds are exhausted*. The legal basis for flexible employment contracts is set up, however distance work, for example, *as a systemic factor of high impact* is virtually non-existent.

2.2 Other activation policies

Examples of positive action to support people with disabilities in employment, relevant to the EU Disability Action Plan

Financial incentives for employing people with disabilities:

- personal income tax allowances,

- corporate tax allowances for businesses with a payroll of less than 20 employees, sole proprietors and farmers are entitled to for employing people with disabilities. This tax-allowance is available for hiring persons with a minimum of 50 percent altered ability. It can reduce the taxable income of the entitled businesses by the amount of the wages paid out to persons with disabilities but to a maximum of the minimum wage.

In Hungary a 5 percent quota/levy system is in place.

Job matching/profiling services and mapping of competencies are included in the individual rehabilitation plan. Employment and job coaching are also included.

Help with transport to work: within the framework of social services, the so-called Support Services provide housing that the employer can apply for from the Labour Centre.

Vocational training services – within the framework of adult education state subsidies can be claimed for training people with disabilities, i.e. in the framework of [Public Employment Service](#) the regional training centres provide training for people with disabilities according to the type of their disability. (This is not a mainstream type: the training centre in Székesfehérvár is specialized in people with physical impairment, the one in Pécs in people with intellectual disabilities, the one in Miskolc in people with visual impairment and the one in Debrecen in people with hearing impairment.)

2.3 One example of best practice

E.g. a policy, programme or case study

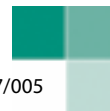
Macro level policy. In order to have the values and principles of disability issues prevail in all sectors as a horizontal priority, in the course of the preparation of the National Development Policy Concept of Hungary (the 'Concept'), the drafting of the professional policy tasks necessary to create an inclusive society is emphasised.

The Concept determines the long term priorities until 2020 which, if developed, will support Hungary becoming a competitive economy. The Concept has a separate criteria system. A similar principle has prevailed upon the determination of the priorities of the National Development Plans. These will provide the opportunity for the enforcement of equal opportunity in regional and economic development, environmental protection, agricultural policy and human resources development programmes.

Possible examples of the case study:

[Salva Vita Foundation](#) (supported employment),

Hand in Hand Foundation ([Lantegi method](#) – Spanish innovation: is about testing the skills of persons with intellectual disabilities and brings it together with their job description). In the whole Transdanubian region the [4M](#) method was developed, based on the British model. The 'you too' ([te-is](#)) tolerance strengthening programme can also be mentioned.



PART THREE: SUMMARY INFORMATION

3.1 Conclusions and recommendations

A summary

People with disabilities get a role in policy making since employers providing a protected institutional framework and large organizations of people with disabilities are members of the National Disability Council functioning as an advisory body to the Government.

People with disabilities are included in employment activation policies/active labour market policies, but this inclusion is not successful yet.

The effectiveness of current policies is not particularly high. They do not attract more people with disabilities into finding work nor do they keep a high percentage of them at work. Because of the extraordinary economic cutbacks the efforts today can only go as far as making sure the results already achieved in the area of employment do not disappear and the situation does not deteriorate. There exist modern policies but in the present situation, the achievements already attained should be preserved due to the shortage of resources. This is the reason why we cannot speak about progress in the area of employment.

3.1.1 Is the employment situation for people with disabilities improving?

In the area of vocational rehabilitation due to the injection of EU resources even in the middle run the prognosis suggests exponential development (based on the so-called Social Renewal Operative Program, SROP). In order to be able to maintain and develop these results even in the middle run the strongest possible internal and external consensus is required among the truly interested parties: i.e. a creative cooperation between the organizations of the affected groups, the most involved Hungarian experts and EU bureaucrats with real power in the area.

3.1.2 Urgent action required for certain priority groups of people with disabilities

The most disadvantaged actors in the Hungarian labour market are persons living with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Their situation is made particularly grave by the institution of guardianship and within that substitute decision-making, i.e. their complete *de facto* and *de jure* deprivation of civil rights, thus their *legal death*. In their case, the most urgent legislative reform-steps are required (Habeas Corpus – NANE 2002, 37; Könczei et. al. 2008; Mental Disability Advocacy Center 2007; Open Society Institute 2005).

Much more evidence is needed based on further research results addressing the following:

- i) Living conditions of people with disabilities,
- ii) Mapping out the interest system of employers and employees, i.e.: what interests drive employers to hire more persons with disabilities and what *would increase* that number,
- iii) Creating the system of supported decision-making,
- iv) Exploring the evaluation system, tools and methods of the 'ability to work',
- v) Exploring the pre-employment period – vocational rehabilitation - ; especially with regards to the role and interests of persons with disabilities.



3.2 References

This list focuses mainly on internet based publications in English

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