



STUDY REPORT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY ON THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN KOSOVO

Assessing the alignment of the work skills of
youth disabilities with the labour market needs

Kosovo, 2021



Save the Children®

Improving inclusive education and employment for children and youth with disabilities

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

<i>WHO</i>	World Health Organization
<i>CRPD</i>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<i>SAA</i>	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>NSRPDK</i>	National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo
<i>VTC</i>	Vocational Training Centre
<i>VET</i>	Vocational Education Training
<i>UNDP</i>	The United National Development Program
<i>MEST</i>	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
<i>KEEN</i>	Kosovo Education and Employment Network
<i>EU</i>	European Union

Introduction

This study is developed in the framework of the project “Improving inclusive education and employment for children and youth with disabilities” implemented by Save the Children in Kosovo and financed by Save the Children Italy. This project aims to empower boys and girls with disabilities in Kosovo to reach their full potential by promoting easier access to inclusive quality education and employment opportunities. Specifically, this study aims to:

- analyse the skills of youth with disabilities, and their compatibility with the labour market needs in Kosovo;
- assess the needs of youth with disabilities in the employment context in Kosovo;
- identify the gaps that are hindering the inclusion of youth with disabilities in the labour market;
- investigate how youth with disabilities can advance towards the potential gradual approximation with the labour market needs in our country;
- assess the availability of the potential employers to employ and accommodate persons with disabilities in the work places;
- to define how the labour market can improve the access of youth with disabilities.

The literature review in the framework of this study, provides information for the interlink of education and vocational training with the employment opportunities. The study emphasises the importance of quality education of children with disabilities, as a prerequisite for higher employability chances. The role of vocational training and attendance of the tertiary education level, are presented as keen preconditions for development of the skills required in the labour market. Data on impressions of the employers, in regard to the integration of youth with disabilities in their companies, are also a keen element of this study. The study provides relevant recommendations for the policy makers in Kosovo, private sector and youth with disabilities, on how to act towards the gradual approximation of the job seekers and potential employers. Resultantly, the employment of persons with disabilities is considered as an issue requiring to be immediately addressed, considering its implications in the broader attempts of persons with disabilities for social integration.

Background

Home to an estimated 150.000 people with disabilities (World Health Organization, 2011, hereafter WHO)¹, Kosovo, faces many challenges when it comes to embracing equality and inclusion principles. The country has only recently transitioned from an interethnic war (1999) to a country that is orientated towards a democratic state-building based on western European principles of civic equality and social inclusion. The process of shaping the democracy, implied among others, the efforts for the equalization of the employment opportunities for the marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities. These efforts were rapidly reflected in the level of legal policies; however, the practical aspect and the real experience of people have encountered significant transformation difficulties.

Disability Legal Framework

With specific reference to the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in education, as a prerequisite for employment, the Stabilization and Association Agreement (hereafter: SAA, 2016)² signed between the Kosovo government and the European Union (EU), outlines the European contours against which Kosovo's policymakers have drafted their legislation. As stipulated in Article 106, cooperation with the EU is aimed at,

[...] ensuring that access to all levels of education and training in Kosovo is free of discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, *disability*, age or sexual orientation. Cooperation shall seek to address the needs of students with disabilities in Kosovo.

This agreement was integrally adopted in Kosovo's legal framework and it aimed to have as an outcome, the further improvement of the legal framework and the embracement of inclusion principles. The attempts for ensuring the respect for the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities in Kosovo, are closely related to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with

¹ World Health Organization (2011), World Report on Disability.

² Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Kosovo and EU (2016).

Disabilities (hereafter: CRPD, 2006)³ - an international human rights treaty adopted in 2006 by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), which reaffirms that persons with disabilities should be able to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. UN CRPD stipulates that persons with disabilities have the right for participation in all segments of life, without any hampering that is based on their disability or other characteristics. Ratified by 181 countries, UN CRPD urges public and private authorities to promote equality and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities⁴. Kosovo, as a non UN member, is politically ineligible to ratify the document. However, in terms of international human rights treats, as stipulates in Kosovo Constitution, Article 22:

[...] Human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the international agreements and instruments are guaranteed by this Constitution, are directly applicable in the Republic of Kosovo and, in the case of conflict, have priority over provisions of laws and other acts of public institutions.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo, however, is not part of the list of eight (8) International Agreements, listed in the Constitution of Kosovo under the Article 22, as directly applicable in our country. The situation can be explained with the fact that UN CRPD entered into force in May 2008, in the same year with the declaration of the independence of Kosovo, and the approval of the Kosovo's Constitution.

In line with UN CRPD, Kosovo has drafted the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2013-2023 (hereafter: NSRPD, 2013)⁵, an institutional policy that reaffirms the right of persons with disabilities, in social, economic and political life. NSRPD aims to provide a sustainable framework of actions that address challenges and obstacles as well as promotes an inclusive society, through five strategic objectives: Health, Employment and Social Services, Education, Legal Framework and Access. The NSRPD serves as a strategic document that aims

³ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

⁴ European Disability Forum (2019) Countries Report on UN CRPD's level of implementation.

⁵ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo 2013-23

to guide and direct the country policies and institutional efforts, in regard to the advancement of the social position of persons with disabilities. However, reports assessing the level of the implementation of the NSPD, are emphasizing that the level of implementation of this strategy is very low and that the position of persons with disabilities in Kosovo continues to be highly unfavourable⁶.

Narrowing down the employment gap between persons with and without disabilities, has been a country challenge. In this context, the Law on Vocational Training, Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, No. 03/L-01915 is aiming to promote and enhance the employment of persons with disabilities, by imposing companies to employ one person with disabilities in every 50 employees, and by providing financial incentives⁷ for the companies that fulfil the legal obligation. Legal sanctions are also foreseen for companies that do not comply with the law; however, monitoring mechanisms are not yet in place and these sanctions remain barely implemented. Even though the employment policies in Kosovo are closely aligned with the European standards and principles, the practical aspect of the employability of persons with disabilities, remains in a non-favorable situation⁸.

Education of Children with Disabilities

One of the main Education challenges for a person with disabilities is access⁹. Unfortunately, children with disabilities in Kosovo lack the same quality education as children without disabilities. Challenges for children with disabilities in terms of their ability to access education are due to of physical, sensory, emotional or intellectual development. As such, the limited access of persons with disabilities to quality education services, especially tertiary level (namely undergraduate and graduate education), is directly linked with their perceived ability to acquire adaptable skills and capacity to respond to the current labour market needs.

⁶ Kosovo Disability Forum (2019) The report on the level of implementation of the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

⁷ According to the Law for Vocational Training, Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities the employer who employs persons with disabilities as well as the person with disabilities who exercises independent activity, realize the right to tax relief according to the tax and customs laws in force.

⁸ HandiKos Pristina (2018). Findings from the research on the employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private companies in the municipality of Pristina.

⁹ UNDP (2019) Recommendation for the Inclusion of the Persons from the Marginalized Group in the Labour Market

Before the conflict of 1999, and for several years later, the education of children with disabilities in Kosovo was segregated, and did not embrace the principles of inclusion. Children with disabilities in Kosovo were educated in separate schools, or separate classrooms¹⁰. Such approach matched with the stigmatizing views of the general population, encouraging the belief that a disability was seen as a defect of the individual, and as a deviation from the normal traits and characteristics. As a contrary of the segregation philosophy, inclusion promotes equalization of the opportunities, recognizes everyone's value in the society and foresees to enhance the access of all children in education, regardless of their traits or limitations¹¹.

Following the ongoing attempts at European integration, Kosovo's institutions incorporated principles of inclusion in the legal framework of education. The process included the harmonization of the local policies with the international documents such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This was followed by the rapid closure of special classes, and the partial closure of special schools¹². These latter turned into so called Resource Centres, and serve even today for the education of children with disabilities whose education is considered too challenging for mainstream general education settings.

However, the inclusion philosophy and the rapid change from the segregation system, did not match completely with the cultural context of our country. Children with disabilities were placed in inclusive classrooms, with teachers who lacked the necessary professional capacities to provide quality education, with non-compatible school infrastructure, with parents doubting the benefits of the system and with child -level peers unable to provide a welcoming environment for children with disabilities. Even after more than one decade since the radical reforms, the education of children with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms is facing significant challenges¹³.

Teachers continue to receive limited support from the relevant institutions, in regard to building their professional capacities to work with the children with disabilities. Parents often continue to reinforce their disbelief in the system, while little progress is experienced in the development of

10 Zabeli, Perolli-Shehu & Gjelaj, (2020). From Segregation to Inclusion: The Case of Kosovo.

11 Stainback & Stainback, (1996). Learning in Inclusive Classrooms.

12 Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2016). Kosovo Education Strategic Plan.

13 Destani, Hoxha & Kelmendi, (2015). Survey on Inclusion Education in ten primary schools in Kosovo.

their children. Schools are lacking the necessary physical access for wheelchair users. Indeed, they are also lacking the necessary classroom adaptations to make sure that information and resources are also accessible to the entire school population (referring to the use of Braille literacy tools and Sign Language), including assistive technology for blind and deaf children. Peers and their families are hardly overcoming their conscious and unconscious prejudices towards the capacities of children with disabilities and their right for inclusive education¹⁴.

The tertiary education level is also hardly accessible for persons with disabilities. Public universities are lacking the necessary infrastructure to provide physical and information access. Therefore, only a limited number of youth with disabilities are currently attending university. Higher education is closely related with the advancement of the career competences. Indeed, the inability to access this level of education, is directly linked with fewer opportunities for integration in the labour market. Therefore, the employment challenges of persons with disabilities, is strongly linked to the individual and collective struggles of a particular community to adapt to actively provide w quality inclusive education.

Vocational Education and Training for Persons with Disabilities

As suggested by UNDP, the situation with the low level of education of persons with disabilities in Kosovo, can be partially addressed or compensated with their engagement in vocational education and training¹⁵. According to MEST, based on the Law No. 04/L-138 for Vocational Education and Training: there are 69 Vocational Education and Training (hereafter: VET) schools in Kosovo, offering 149 profiles. Vocational education and training is offered for students to allow them to acquire the competencies and skills needed to be more competitive when joining in the labour market. According to Kosovo Education and Employment Network (2019) the interest of youth to enrol in Vocational Education and Training has been increasing recently.

In addition, Vocational Training Centres in Kosovo provide training and retraining of persons who are registered as job seekers, unemployed and those who receive career guidance services, at all Employment offices in municipalities¹⁶. However, Vocational Training Centres in Kosovo,

¹⁴ Zabeli, Perolli-Shehu & Gjelaj, (2020). From Segregation to Inclusion: The Case of Kosovo.

¹⁵ UNDP, (2019). Labour Market Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo.

¹⁶ Ahmetaj, (2016). Vocational Training in Kosovo, INDEP

are currently lacking the capacities to integrate persons with disabilities, and provide them with the opportunity to advance their work skills. The training profiles in VTCs are not adjusted to the specific needs of persons with disabilities. In addition, instructors are often lacking the competences to use the appropriate pedagogical approach while working with candidates with disabilities. Responding to this gap, Down Syndrome Kosovo, an organization that defends and promotes the rights of persons with disabilities in Kosovo has drafted the manual “Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Vocational Training Centres in Kosovo”¹⁷. The manual consists of seven vocational training profiles, adjusted to the needs of persons with physical disability, blind and persons with intellectual disability. In line with the agreement of Down Syndrome Kosovo and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the manual became directly applicable in the VTCs in Kosovo.

Employment of Persons with Disabilities

Employment contributes directly to higher opportunities for social inclusion, since it implies a source of income and higher independence of the person¹⁸. Persons with disabilities are often prohibited from this right, because of the prejudices and underestimation of their potential. Old views on disability, have negatively affected the image of persons with disabilities, in terms of their capacities to actively contribute in all social vectors. Nowadays, modern views on disability, even though not largely accepted, are promoting the potential of persons with disability and the value of diversity in the society. A larger transition of the society, from old to modern views on disability, would directly contribute towards paving the way for a smoother social integration of persons with disabilities.

As a result of low employment rates, persons with disabilities in local and global terms, are frequently at greater risk of poverty. The lack of opportunities for active participation in the society, denial of political and social rights, increases the chances for intersectional discrimination for persons with disabilities. Consequently, the lack of employment reinforces the cycle of

¹⁷ Hocaoulgu and Geci (2019). The inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Vocational Training Centres in Kosovo.

¹⁸ European Congress on People with Disabilities. (2002). The Madrid Declaration: “Non Discrimination Plus Positive Action Results in Social Inclusion”

marginalization and tends to confirm the negative stereotypes regarding the lack of potential of persons with disabilities.

One of the most critical issues in Kosovo, demanding to be urgently addressed, is the low general employment rate, 29.4 % for the general population and 55% for youth¹⁹. Such situation is directly affecting the chances of persons with disabilities to integrate in the labour market. The latter struggle to find a job, and unfortunately only a small part of them, succeed. According to a survey developed by UNDP (2019), 85% of persons with disabilities in Kosovo are unemployed²⁰. The process is negatively impacted by several factors, such as: the limited availability of the labour market to integrate and accommodate persons with disabilities and the lack of opportunities for youth with disabilities to advance their professional skills.

Businesses in Kosovo report that they lack the experience of employing persons with disabilities; they lack the necessary work conditions and accommodation, and that they believe that the nature of the work skills that they require cannot be possessed by persons with disabilities. In this regard employers are often revealing their unconscious biases about the ability of persons with disabilities to perform certain work tasks²¹.

In terms of youth with disabilities, they often feel (pre)judged and neglected, which hinders their motivation to seek a work place. The behaviour of the labour market, can often be considered discouraging and negatively affecting the willingness of youth with disabilities to engage in the labour market. The general belief that the employment rate in Kosovo is very low directly affects the decision of youth with disabilities to apply for a job position, given their perception that a low general employment rate means an even lower rate for persons with disabilities. In addition, a study investigating the skills mismatch in Kosovo, suggests that only 2.3 percent of the total number of 472 enterprises in Kosovo recruit their candidates through regular open calls. The vast majority of enterprises, use recommendation and informal channels, in the recruitment process (Rexha, Ziberi and Ukshini, 2021)²². Such modalities of recruitment do not provide open access for the interested candidates, and are usually concentrated in specific communities.

¹⁹ Kosovo Education and Employment Network, (2019). Linking VET institutions to Businesses in Kosovo.

²⁰ UNDP (2019). Labour Market Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo.

²¹ Avdyli and Geci (2020) Focus Group Analysis on the Needs of Women and Persons with Disabilities in Employment

²² Rexha, Ziberi and Ukshini (2021). Skills mismatch in Kosovo.

Therefore, they tend to reinforce the disbelief of the youth with disabilities in the system and the passive approach of the community in terms of seeking and finding a job.

In addition, the local context in Kosovo, is characterized with high dependence of persons with disabilities on the social protection system. The potential employment of some specific groups of persons with disabilities, would directly hinder their availability to benefit from the social protection system. In the framework of the Law for Social Pension Schemes, persons with disabilities are categorized as “work disabled”²³. Therefore, the beneficiaries of this law, would automatically be excluded from the social scheme, in cases of employment. This implies that persons with disabilities might be uninterested to risk these benefits (that are mostly financial: 75 Euro per month) with a potential employment, especially because employment in the private sector is considered unstable, and returning to the pension social scheme takes long and is a tedious process²⁴. According to a study developed by Aliu and Bushi (2019), Kosovo during 2018 spent € 97,780,000 for the financing of disability schemes²⁵. The study suggests that the gradual allocation of this amount in the active labour market measures, or initiatives related to the employment of persons with disabilities, would positively affect the employability of persons with disabilities, their integration in the social life and their personal fulfilment.

Labour Market Needs

Technological innovation and global economic activity, have directly affected the labour market in the world. Rapid changes are happening in terms of occupations and skills that labour market requires. In parallel terms, these changes are not completely reflected in vocational training and higher education institutions. Therefore, a discrepancy between what labour market is demanding and what training and education institutions are supplying, is prevalent²⁶. The lack of alignment of the skills and occupations offered in the training and education institutions, with the labour market demands, is tied to low unemployment rates. A study analysing the skills mismatch in Kosovo²⁷, suggests that enterprises in Kosovo are facing difficulties to find the

²³ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2014) State funded Pension Schemes

²⁴ Avdyli and Geci (2020) Focus Group Analysis on the Needs of Women and Persons with Disabilities in Employment

²⁵ Aliu and Bushi (2019). Employment Policies for People with Disabilities in Kosovo.

²⁶ UNDP, (2016). Skills needs assessment: Identifying employers needs in six economic sectors in Kosovo.

²⁷ Rexha, Ziberi and Ukshini (2021). Skills mismatch in Kosovo.

appropriate candidates for their vacancies. Findings suggest that enterprises in Kosovo are asking for managers, marketers, technical engineers, commercialists, certified financial and managerial accountant, promoters, and certified auditors. According to the study, enterprises in Kosovo consider training of the employees as very important for their accommodation in the work place, even among university graduates. These findings imply that the labour market demands, are not completely in line with what the workforce in Kosovo is offering.

A study investigating the employment possibilities of persons with disabilities in the private sector in Kosovo, suggests that businesses are able to employ persons with disabilities in administration, finance - accounting, supervising - camera, IT and online communication, security and production²⁸. However, it is very necessary to analyse what vocational training and education institutions provide for persons with disabilities in terms of occupations and profiles, and how these latter are aligned with what the labour market is demanding or available to absorb. In the same context, it is also very important to analyse what are the occupations for which youth with disabilities feel prepared and confident. The current study aims to analyse exactly this potential alignment between the workforce of persons with disabilities and the labour market demands.

Accommodation of Persons with Disabilities in the Workplace

According to the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, accommodation of persons with disabilities in the work place refers to all the arrangements undertaken in a work setting, to facilitate the participation and performance of an employee with disabilities, based on a real need. Persons with disabilities might need to be provided with accommodations, that would enable their participation and engagement in the work place. Some examples of the accommodation of the persons with disabilities in the workplace, are as follows:

- A blind or visually impaired employee working as call centre agent might need specific software that converts text to audio, in order to have access on the use of technology. Once such accommodation is provided, a blind employee with the relevant knowledge of

²⁸ Shatri and Salko, (2016). Employment Possibilities for Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Private Sector – Kosovo Case

the software use, becomes able to perform the work duties in the same way with other employees.

- A wheelchair user working as accountant needs to be provided with physical access. The same can be guaranteed with the availability of the ramp, elevator, special toilet and the necessary space for mobility. Once these accommodations are provided, the employee might perform his/her work duties as any other employee.
- A deaf person working in administration, might need to be provided with the opportunity to communicate only through written communication, be facilitated by sign language interpreters or palantypist²⁹.

It is very important to emphasise that not all persons with disabilities need special accommodations. There might be work positions that a person with disabilities does not need any accommodation for. Some examples are as follows: a blind or visually impaired working as physiotherapist or as an interpreter, a deaf or hard of hearing person working to organize the goods in a store, a person with physical disabilities working in camera monitoring.

In addition, not all accommodations are costly and technological. A considerable number of accommodation require mainly minor adjustments. However, they are significantly based in the creativity of the Human Resource officers, or supervisors to provide solutions that enable the employee with disabilities to overcome the potential barriers in the work place. Therefore, the engagement of persons with disabilities, is often closely and directly affected by the willingness of the Human Resources and Supervisors to make solutions and provide them with the necessary accommodations³⁰.

Methodology

The subject of this study are youth with disabilities on one hand and potential employers on the other hand. The study aims to understand if youth with disabilities are acquiring occupations that are in line with the labour market needs. The reports from both targeted subjects, are analysed

29 A Palantypist (Speech to Text Reporter) is a specially trained and qualified person who is dedicated to improving communication for the deaf and hard of hearing.

30 Lawson, A. (2012). "Equality for the Disabled, Reasonable Accommodation, and Avoidance of Being Treated as Ill." *Journal of Human Rights*.

with the aim of understanding the internal compatibility and the potential alignment. The data are obtained from 22 semi-structured interviews with youth with disabilities and a survey with 66 businesses focused on soliciting feedback from HR and recruiters regarding their availability and recruit and accommodate persons with disabilities.

Assessment Tools

Two assessment tools were designed in the framework of this study. Youth with disabilities reported to semi structured interviews, an instrument aiming to assess their impressions, feelings and perceptions regarding their potential integration in the labour market. The Companies reported to a self-reporting questionnaire, distributed online. The instrument contained 21 questions aiming to assess the labour market needs and the availability of the recruiters to employ youth with disabilities.

Study Design

The study generates both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were generated from the self-reporting questionnaires with the companies; while, qualitative data were generated from the semi structured interviews with youth with disabilities. The study is exploratory in its design, and aims to establish an understanding of the general nature of the problem of labour market integration of youth with disabilities.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the low representation of youth with hearing disabilities. Initially, due to communication barriers it was exceptionally difficult to conduct semi-structured interviews as they were conducted with other youth with disabilities. Considering that a sign language interpreter was needed to facilitate the communication, a focus group was organized, intended to bring together 4 youth with hearing disabilities. However, only one invitee joined the meeting, allowing therefore the minimal representation of this community in the study. The perspective of the boys with hearing disabilities is therefore unrepresented in the findings of this research. Other studies aiming at exploring the voice and the perspective of youth with disabilities, are recommended to ensure an equal representation of all disability types.

Participants

Youth with Disabilities: In total 22 youth with disabilities responded to semi structure interviews, out of which 8 blind and visually impaired, 7 with physical disabilities, 6 intellectually disabled and 1 with hearing disability. Out of the total number of 22, 12 girls and 10 boys participated in the study. Participants’ age varied from 18 to 35. Data are visually presented in the following table:

Table 1- Gender of the Participants

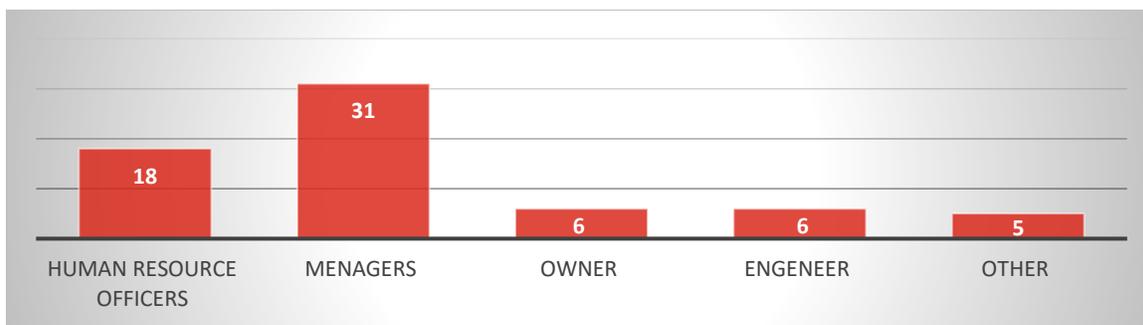
<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	4	4
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	4	3
<i>Youth with intellectual disability³¹</i>	3	3
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	1	N/A

Companies: On the other hand, 66 companies responded to the online self-reporting questionnaire. The self-reporting questionnaire was distributed online and people engaged in the recruitment process were encouraged to participate. Below are presented the data relevant with the companies who participated in the study:

From total 66 participants, 18 reported to work as Human Resource Officers, 31 as Managers, 6 as Owners of the Company, 6 as Engineers. The last 5 respondents are categorized as “others” with single responses as follows: Economist, Physiotherapist, Teacher, Doctor and Administrator. Even though in different work positions, they are involved in the recruitment processes of their companies.

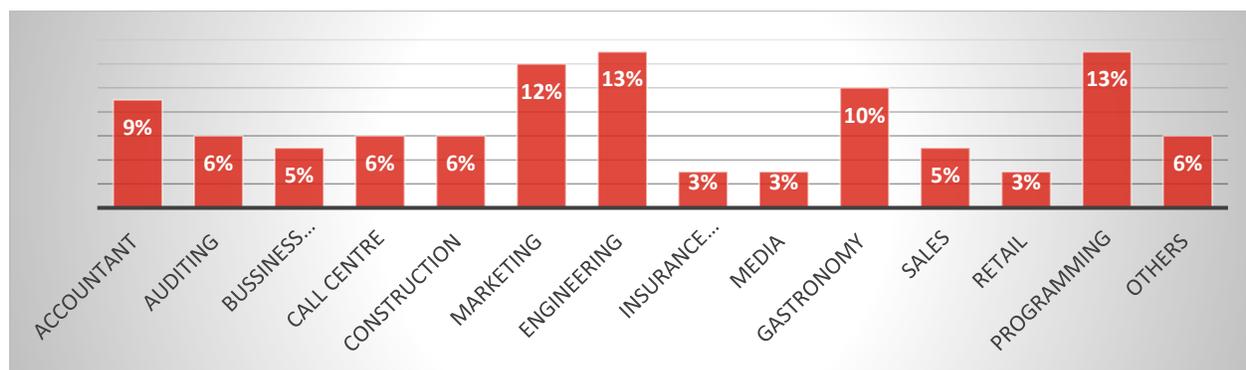
³¹ Interviews with youth with intellectual disabilities were facilitated by their parents or family members.

Figure 1- Work positions of the participants



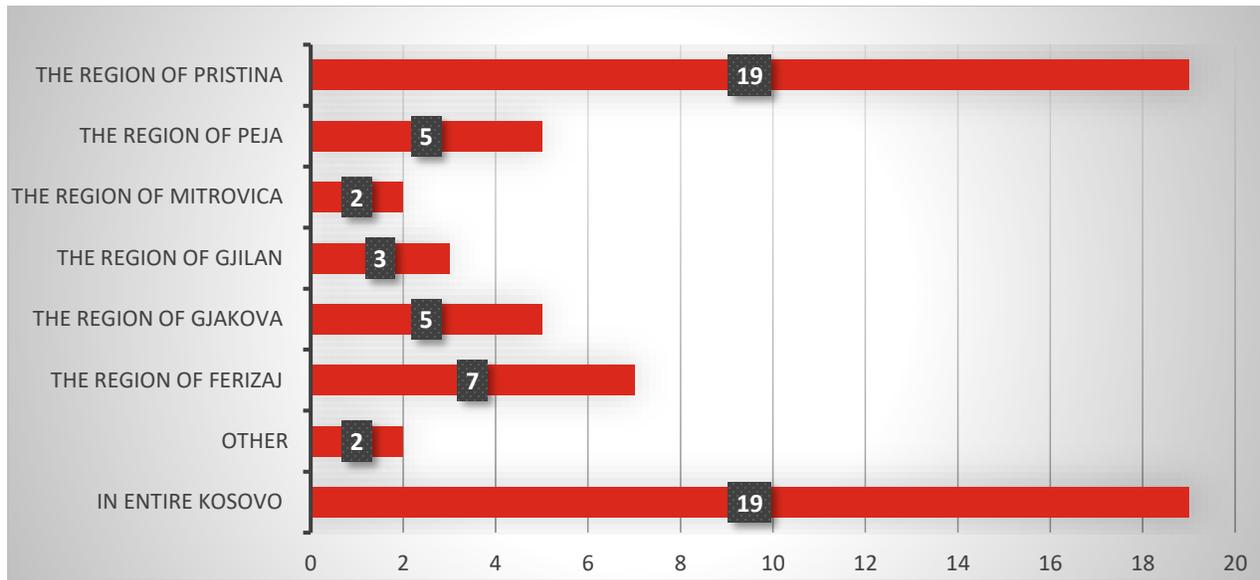
As it is illustrated in the figure below, the scope of the work of the companies participating in the study varied, and it represented several economic sectors. Sectors with the highest representation were: Engineering (13%), Programming (13%), Marketing (12%) Gastronomy (10%), and Accounting (9%).

Figure 2- Scope of Work



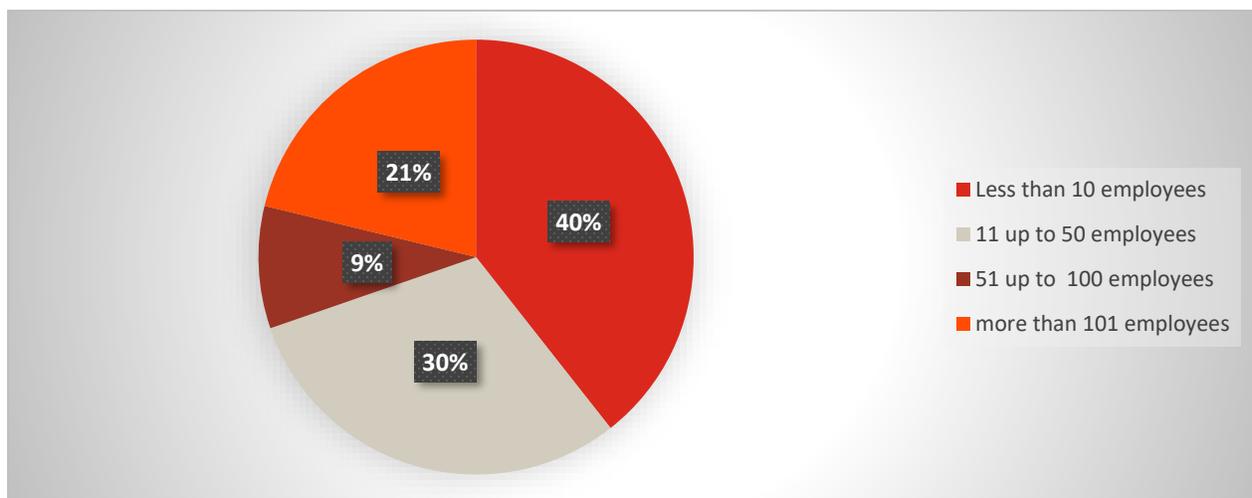
The region of Pristina was represented with the highest number of the participants in this study. Out of 66 participants, 18 belonged from the region of Pristina. However, 19 reported to operate throughout entire Kosovo. The region of Ferizaj was represented with 7 participants, region of Peja with 5 participants, region of Prizren with 4 participants, region of Mitrovica with 3 participants, region of Gjilan with 3 participants, and the region of Gjakova with 5 participants.

Figure 3- Operation Regions



Based on the number of the employees the interviewed businesses ranged as follows: 40% of businesses with less than 10 employees, 30% of businesses with 11 to 50 employees, 9 % businesses with 51-100 employees and 21% of businesses with more than 100 employees.

Figure 4-Number of the Employees in the company



Findings

Findings on the impressions of youth with disabilities

The current section of the study presents the findings relevant with the impressions of youth with disabilities regarding their potential alignment with the labour market in Kosovo. Findings

were conceptualized based on the responds of the participants obtained during semi structured interviews. The findings summarize the most representative answers of the participants and are disaggregated by gender and disability.

The highest levels of education are reported among blind and visually impaired youth, which implies higher chances for integration in the labour market. Blind and visually impaired youth often report to have completed higher education studies in fields such as: Law, Education or Psychology. They report for Bachelor and often Master degree, obtained in public and private universities of Kosovo. Among youth with intellectual disabilities, they mostly reported the completion of the primary school, or in specific cases, the secondary level in Resource Centres (former special schools). In terms of youth with physical disability, they mostly reported the completion of the secondary school, and in very specific cases the completion of the Bachelor degree as well.

Table 2-The level of education among youth with disabilities

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Completed Bachelor or Master	Completed Bachelor or Master
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Completed Primary or Secondary School	Completed Primary or Secondary School
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Completed Primary or Secondary School in Resource Centre	Completed Primary or Secondary School in Resource Centre
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Completed Secondary School – intended university but dropped out because of lack of information access	N/A

Skills of youth disabilities vary among groups and are directly affected by the implications of the disability type. Findings suggest that the work skills reported by youth with disabilities vary among disability types. The intellectual ability interferes especially in terms of the work skills. The major differences are noted between youth with and without an intellectual disability. In this regard, youth with intellectual disabilities are mostly reporting for skills related with handicraft work, serving, organizing and engagement on technical activity. On the other hand, youth with other types of disabilities, that not necessarily implicate the intellectual aspect, are mostly

reporting for: good communication skills, creativity, good command on the use of technology, critical thinking, and soft skills. No major differences were noted in terms of gender, in any of the groups, with an exception of youth with intellectual disabilities, where the skills are reported to be gender marked, and mostly traditional.

Table 3- Work Skills among youth with disabilities

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Information technology, knowledge of foreign languages	Soft skills, information technology, team work, project development, knowledge of foreign languages
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Creativity, Information technology, work consciousness	Coordination skills, team work, work consciousness
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Handicrafts, organizing skills	Serving, technical work skills
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Critical thinking, creativity, coordination skills	N/A

64 % of youth with disabilities believe that their skills are in line with the labour market needs; however, they feel that recruiters would give priority to youth without disabilities. Youth with disabilities believe that business would select a candidate without a disability, with the same work skills as them, before hiring a disabled candidate. According to the participants, the majority of the youth feel that they would be able to show good performance in a work place, once having the opportunity. However, they are convinced that their chances to be hired in a job position, based on a fair selection process, are undoubtedly lower comparing to other youth without a disability.

Table 4- The impressions of youth with disabilities regarding their potential alignment with the labour market needs

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Report to believe that their skills are in line with the labour market needs; Mainly convinced that they should actively seek for work places and ignore the potential failures.	Report to believe that their skills are in line with the labour market needs;
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Report to believe that their skills are partially in line with the labour market needs and that they are disfavoured in the labour market.	Report to believe that their skills are partially in line with the labour market needs and that they are disfavoured in the labour market
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Report to believe that their skills are in line with the labour market needs; Mainly convinced that they should actively seek for work places and ignore the potential failures.	N/A

82% of the participants feel prepared for the labour market; however, further training and practical work are considered highly necessary. When asked how prepared they feel to integrate in the labour market, the majority of participants express to believe that they have the necessary capacities and potential to comply with the work duties and tasks. However, they express to be aware that further training opportunities and practical work are highly necessary to support their enhancement of their work capacities. The need for intense practical work, was especially

highlighted by parents facilitating the reporting of their children with intellectual disability. Based on their everyday learning experience with their children with intellectual disability, parents report that they consider the opportunities of training and practical work especially important to ensure that their children are able to comply with their work duties. However, parents are convinced that with the proper accommodations, youth with intellectual disabilities are able to perform correctly in the work places that are in line with their potential.

Table 5- Impressions of Youth with Disabilities on how prepared they feel for the labour market

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Prepared for the labour market, interested in training and practical work opportunities	Prepared for the labour market, interested in training and practical work opportunities
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Mainly prepared for the labour market; interested in education, training and practical work opportunities	Mainly prepared for the labour market; interested in education, training and practical work opportunities
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Prepared for work places in line with their capacities, and highly interested for practical work	Prepared for work places in line with their capacities, and highly interested for practical work
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Prepared for the labour market, interested in training and practical work opportunities	N/A

64 % of the participants feel discouraged to apply for a job position, since they feel that their chances to get the job are particularly low because of their disability. Youth with disabilities, with a special emphasis on youth who have not attended or completed studies on higher education, who have limited internship or training experience, feel especially discouraged to apply for a job position. When asked why they have only rarely or never submitted an application for a job position, the majority of the participants reported to consider it a waste of time, since they are convinced that they will not be invited for the interview, nor hired. The majority of the participants are acting passively in terms of their integration in the labour market. Differences

among groups were not relevant in terms of gender. However, they are mainly relevant with the level of education, the complexity of the needed accommodations and professional skills.

Table 6- Impressions of youth with disabilities for applying in an open job position

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Mainly willing to apply for a relevant open job position	Mainly willing to apply for a relevant open job position
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Mainly discouraged to apply for a job position	Mainly discouraged to apply for a job position
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Mainly discouraged to apply for an open job position	Mainly discouraged to apply for an open job position
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Partially willing to apply for a job position	N/A

82 % of the participants have never been employed, or their employment records mostly rely on Disabled People Organizations. Youth with disabilities often report to have been engaged as interns or employees in Disabled People Organizations in Kosovo. For instance: blind and visually impaired youth mainly emphasise their experience in FENIKS social enterprise – an organization that aims to provide vocational training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities with a special focus on blind and visually impaired. Both girls and boys report that they have been engaged in the process of paper processing and packaging in the framework of several projects implemented by this organization; Boys with intellectual disability (mainly Down Syndrome) often report to have worked as Waitress in the X21 Cafeteria, a training program managed by Down Syndrome Kosovo (DSK). Girls, on the other hand often highlight their experience in the Cards Workshop, the oldest training program of DSK, established with the aim of enhancing the work skills of the community; Youth with physical disabilities as well, report to

have worked in short projects in the framework of HANDIKOS, an organization that represents the rights of the physically disabled people in Kosovo. The participant with a hearing disability, reported as well, to have been provided with a work opportunity in the Deaf Kosovar Association, as her only employment record.

Table 7- Employment Records of Youth with Disabilities

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Limited work experiences; work experience in FENIKS social enterprise	Limited work experiences; work experience in FENIKS social enterprise
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Limited experience, engaged in HANDIKOS	Limited experience; self-employed.
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Limited work experiences; engaged in Down Syndrome Kosovo’s workshops	Limited work experiences; engaged in Down Syndrome Kosovo’s workshops
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	No work experience other than Kosovar Deaf Association	N/A

Participants relate their employment records in the open labour market, with short and limited internship experiences. When asked for their former work experiences in the open labour market, excluding the engagement in the Disabled People Organizations, the majority of the youth with disabilities were able to list only short internship experiences. Blind and visually impaired, with no gender differences, mostly highlight their as experience as interns in Kosovo Court. Youth with intellectual disabilities (with no gender differences) report to have served as interns in short time project in several private companies in Kosovo. Youth with physical disabilities report to have no- or limited internship experiences in the public or private companies in Kosovo, and the same applies for the youth with hearing disability.

Table 8- Internship records of youth with disabilities

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Engaged in several internship opportunities	Engaged in several internship opportunities

<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Engaged in very limited internship opportunities	Engaged in very limited internship opportunities
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Engaged in several internship opportunities	Engaged in several internship opportunities
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	No internship opportunities	N/A

Participants often report to feel discouraged when encountered with compassion and pity expressed by their colleagues. Blind, visually impaired, youth with physical or hearing disabilities, express to feel discouraged once encountered with compassion or pity expressed by people in the surrounding environment, including potential colleagues. When asked for their experience as interns or employees in public or private organizations in Kosovo, excluding those related to disability, youth reported to feel discouraged by the approach of the people who treat them with extreme compassion or pity. Youth with disabilities are often encountered with colleagues that are not focused on their work skills, but on their experience as a disabled people and tend to show extreme compassion and pity, what makes these youths to feel even more marginalized. It is important to mention that in the majority of cases, these people are not aware for the damage that their behaviour is causing in the self-confidence of youth with disabilities and the same are perceiving it as a way of solidarity. However, it is highly important to note that youth with disabilities would prefer that people surrounding are able to see beyond their label/ disability, more specifically- in their potential and competences.

Table 9- Impressions of Youth with Disabilities towards compassionate behaviour

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Especially discouraged when encountered with compassion or pity	Especially discouraged when encountered with compassion or pity
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Especially discouraged when encountered with compassion or pity	Especially discouraged when encountered with compassion or pity
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Especially discouraged when encountered with compassion or pity	N/A

Youth with disabilities often feel that the lack of accommodations in the work place is one of the hardest challenges to overcome towards their integration in the labour market. Youth with disabilities report that one of the most significant challenges that they perceive in regard to their potential integration in the labour market, is related to the lack of proper accommodations. In addition, youth with disabilities are able to identify the accommodations that would facilitate and enable their integration in the labour market. Blind and visually impaired, mention spatial orientation as the most challenging issues in terms of their engagement in a new work environment. In specific work positions, blind and visually impaired youth, report to feel high necessity for accommodations such as: specific software (text to audio converters), Braille typing machine, Braille Displayer and Braille printers. Youth with physical disability highlight elevators, ramps, and adjusted toilets, as key accommodations. Youth with hearing disability consider the sign language interpreter as especially important in the inceptive phase of work place integration; however, the role of the interpreter is supposed to fade during the process. In terms of youth with intellectual disability, repetitive practical work is considered especially important.

Table 10- Impressions of Youth with Disabilities on their Challenges for Integration in the Labour Market

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Specific software (text to audio converters), Braille typing machine, Braille Displayer and Braille printers	Specific software (text to audio converters), Braille typing machine, Braille Displayer and Braille printers
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Elevators, ramps, adjusted toilets	Elevators, ramps, adjusted toilets
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Repetitive, Practical work	Repetitive, Practical work
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Sign language interpreter only during the inceptive phase.	N/A

Participants believe that businesses can provide them with the necessary accommodations in the workplace, only if that would imply little or no financial implication. When asked if they believe that business can provide them the necessary accommodations in the work place, youth with disabilities reported that this would apply only in cases of little or no financial implications.

The majority of the youth participating in the study, perceive businesses as entities that are not socially responsible and are mainly seeking their financial benefit. They consider that it takes time, and is especially a difficult process, to increase the level of awareness among businesses, up to the point where they would be able to invest in accommodation, with the purpose of integrating persons with disabilities in the labour market. Youth with disabilities believe that the Covid-19 pandemic has only worsen the financial stability of the businesses, which in turn, has decreased the chances of investment in accommodating youth with disabilities in labour market.

Table 11- Impressions of Youth with Disabilities on the Potential Availability of Employees to provide Accommodations

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
<i>Blind and visually impaired youth</i>	Business are partially available to provide the necessary accommodations	Business are partially available to provide the necessary accommodations
<i>Youth with physical disability</i>	Business are barely non-available to provide the necessary accommodations	Business are barely non-available to provide the necessary accommodations
<i>Youth with intellectual disability</i>	Businesses are available to provide accommodation but are not interested in this work force	Businesses are available to provide accommodation but are not interested in this work force
<i>Youth with hearing disability</i>	Business are barely non-available to provide the necessary accommodations	N/A

Findings relevant with the labour market needs and inclusion in the labour market

This section of the study presents the findings from the self-reporting survey with businesses, that are relevant to the labour market needs and the availability of recruiters to employ persons with disabilities. The data are presented in graphs and interpreted narratively.

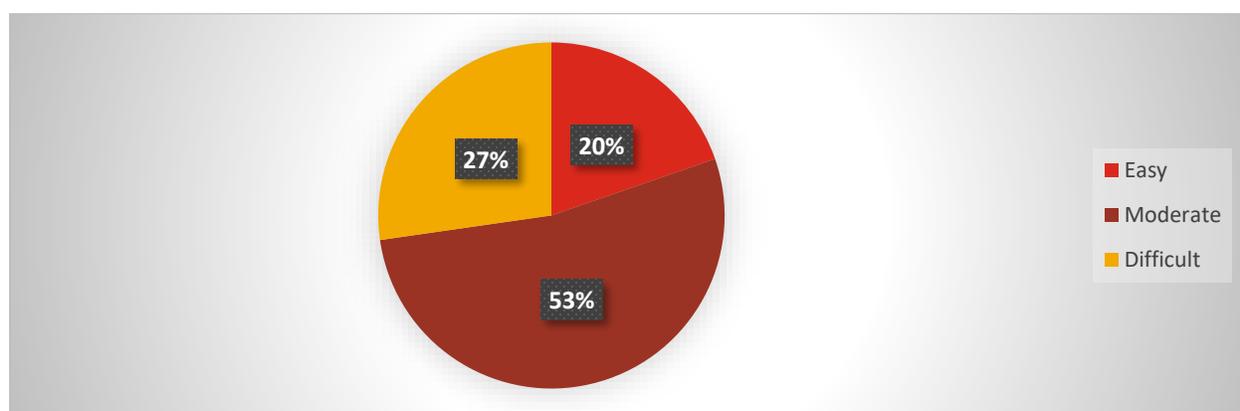
Recruitment Process

73 % of the participants find the recruitment of the suitable candidates as moderate or difficult.

When asked: “How would you assess the process of recruitment in your company?”, 20% of the recruiters answered “Easy”, 53 % answered: “Moderate”, and 53% answered: “Difficult”. “Easy”

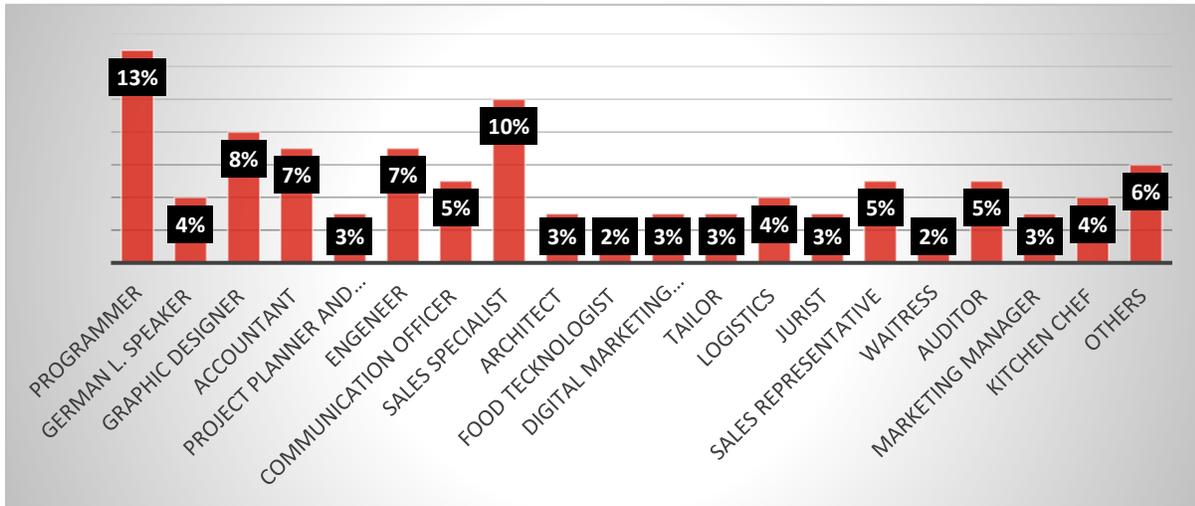
implied that they encounter no difficulties to find the appropriate candidates; “Moderate” implied that the process varies and they might experience slight difficulties to find the suitable candidates in specific cases; “Difficult” implied that they encounter difficulties to find the candidates that fit to their needs. The majority of the participants reported that the process of recruitment can be assessed as “Moderate” in terms of finding the suitable candidate. However, it is important to note, that recruiters who consider it difficult to find the suitable candidate are higher in percentage comparing to those who find the process easy.

Figure 5- Recruitment of the suitable candidates



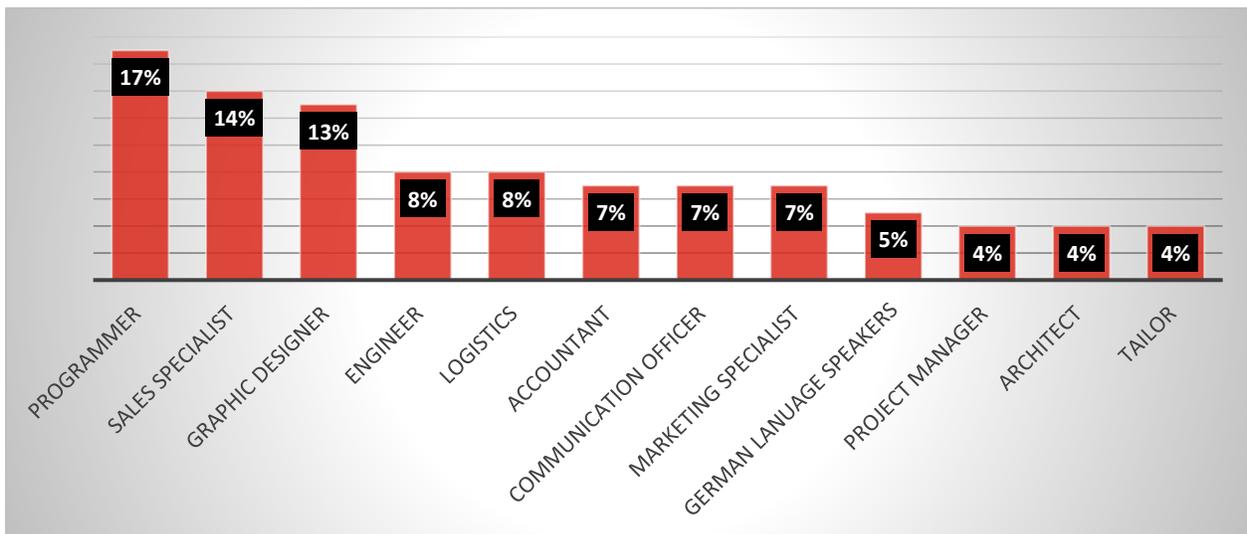
The most required job profiles among the companies participating in the research are Programmers, Sales Specialists and Graphic Designers. In regard to the most required job profiles in the today’s labour market, the companies reported as follows: 13% of the participants identify “Programming” as a highly required job profile; 10% identify “Sales Specialist” and 8% identify “Graphic Designer”. With lower percentage the following job profiles were identified: Accountant, Engineer, Sales Representative, Auditor, German Language Speaker, Communication Officer, Logistics, Waitress, Food Technologist, Jurist, Tailor, Marketing Manager and Kitchen Chef. Responds with less than 1 % score are presented as “Others”.

Figure 6- Occupations required in the labour market



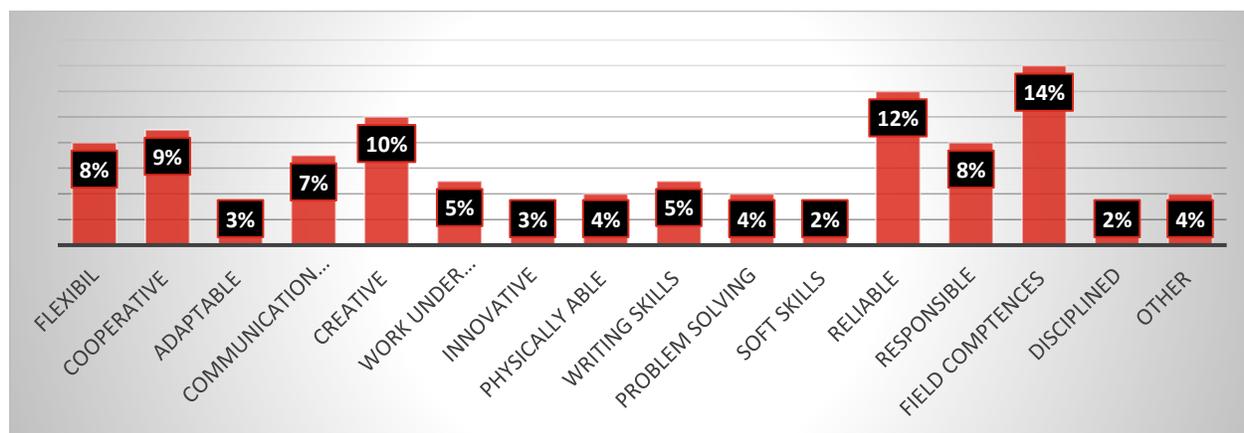
Companies surveyed report that the most difficult job positions to recruit are **Programmers, Sales Specialists, Graphic Designers and Engineers**. In regard to the job positions that are the most difficult to find and recruit a suitable candidate, the participants reported as follows: 17% of the participants identified “Programmer” as the most difficult job position to recruit for a suitable candidate. The participants followed with 14% for “Sales Specialist”, 13% for Graphic Designer, 8% for Engineers, 8% for Logistics, 7% for Accountant, 7% for Communication Officer, 7% for Marketing Specialist, 5% for German Language Speakers, 4% for Project Managers, 4% for Architects and 4 for % Tailors.

Figure 7- Profiles that are found difficult to recruit the suitable candidate



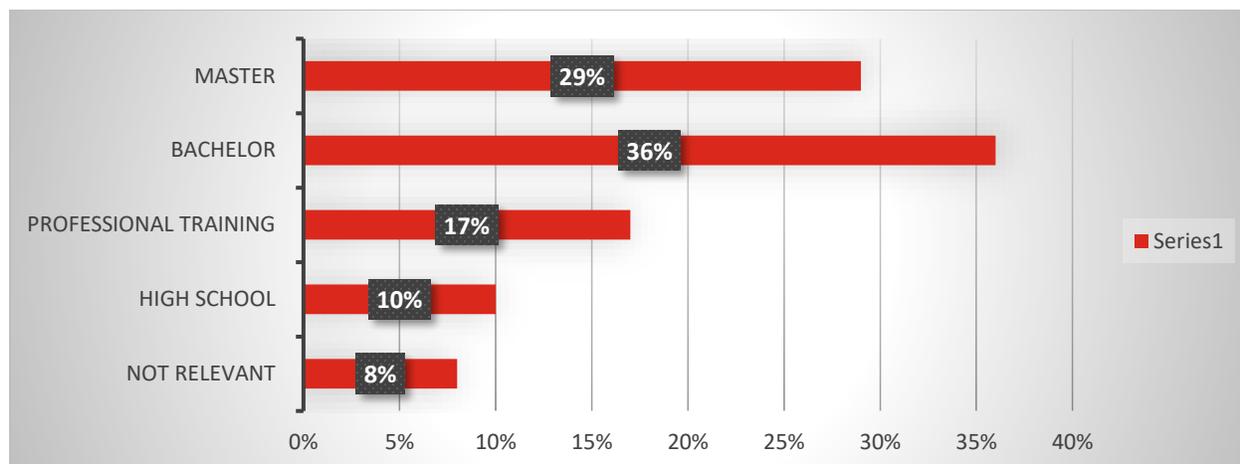
Field Competencies, Reliability, Creativity, Cooperation and Responsibility are the most required work skills. From the total number of the responds 14% considered “field competences” as the most required and necessary skills to be possessed by the candidates, 12% considered “Reliability” as the most important skill, 10% responded “creativity”, 9% “cooperation”, 8 % “responsibility” and “flexibility”, 7 % identified “communication skills”, as one of the most important work skills. With lower than 7% were defined the following skills: work under pressure, writing skills, physical ability, problem solving, adaptability, innovation and soft skills.

Figure 8- The most required skills in the labour market



36 % of the companies/businesses surveyed require Bachelor Degree as the necessary level of education for the job position. From the total number of the responses, 8% found the school preparation is not relevant for the job positions that they require, 10% declared “high school” as the necessary level of education for the job positions, 17% declared “professional training”, 36% declared “bachelor” and 29 % required “masters” for their job positions.

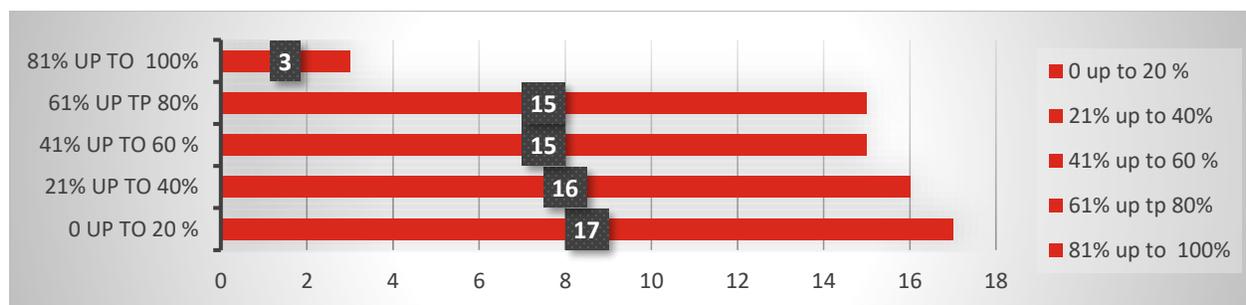
Figure 9- Required level of school preparation



Inclusion in the Work Places

Women are represented approximately equally in the companies participating in the study. In regard to the percentage of women in the participating companies, 17 participants defined it as between 0 – 20%, 16 participants defined it as between 21-40 %, 15 participants as 41-60%, 15 participants as 61- 80% and only three participants as 81- 100%.

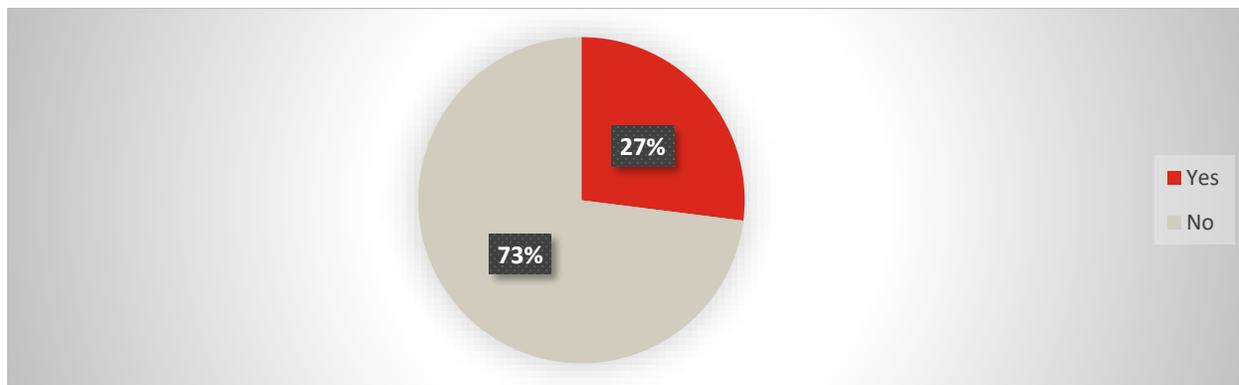
Figure 10 - The percentage of women in the work places



Persons with Disabilities are underrepresented in the Labour Market in Kosovo. Out of the total number of 66 participants, 73 % declared that they do not have persons with disabilities in their staff; while, 27 % of the participants, declared that they have persons with disabilities in their staff. When asked to respond in terms of what disabilities do their employees have, participants mentioned the following disability types: Physical disability, visually impaired and intellectual disability (Down Syndrome). The participants reported that these persons with disabilities are

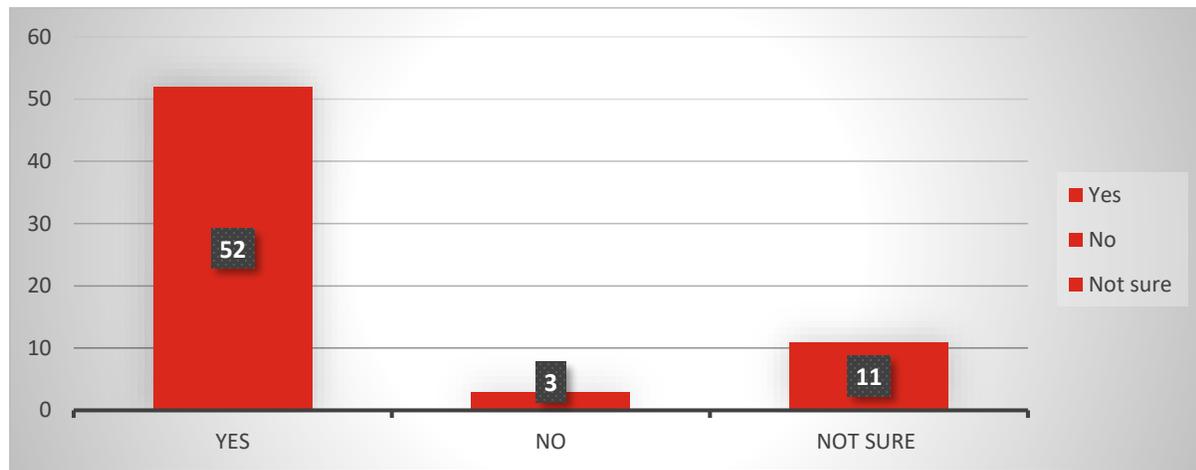
accommodated in the following work positions: Jurist, Receptionist, Tailor, Call Centre, Assistant and Logistics.

Figure 11- Persons with Disabilities integrated in the work places.



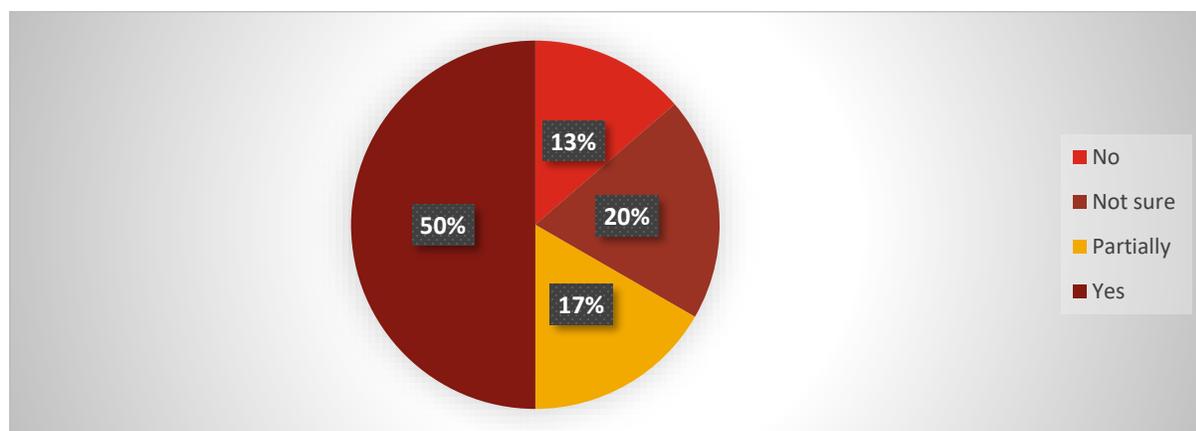
52 % of the companies participating in the study express to be able to employ persons with disabilities, if they are suitable candidates for their open job positions. Out of 66 participants, 52 declared that they would agree to employ a person with disabilities if he/she is a suitable candidate for a job position; 3 participants declared that they would not employ a person with disabilities; while 11 participants declared to feel not sure if they would employ or not a person with disabilities. In regard to these responds, it is important to understand that the answers of the recruiters could have been influences by what they believe is right to declare, rather than what they would exactly do. Participating declaring that they would not /or feel unsure to employ a person with disabilities gave the following reasons (presented qualitatively) for not being able or sure to employ a person with disabilities: “The nature of the work is not suitable for their abilities”, “the job position requires physical engagement what makes it not suitable for persons with disabilities”, “because of the low work efficiency”, “not sure how the clients would react”, “lack of appropriate infrastructure and access”, “for no specific reason”. These reports reveal the conscious and unconscious prejudices of the employers regarding the potential of persons with disabilities.

Figure 12- The availability of the companies to employ youth with disabilities



50 % of the companies participating in the study, consider their physical premises to be accessible for persons with disabilities. In regard to the accessibility of the premises, 50% of the participants declared that their premises are accessible for persons with disabilities, 20% declared to be unsure if their premises are accessible, 17% declared that their premises are partially accessible and 13% declared that their premises are not accessible.

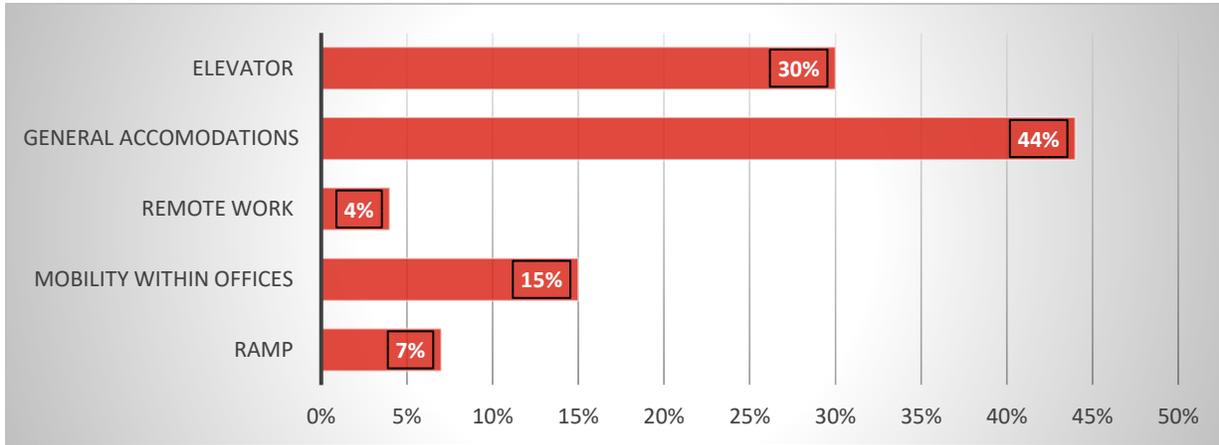
Figure 13- Accessibility of the work premises



Recruiters participating in the study are often not able to define the type of the accommodations available in their company or relate the concept with physical

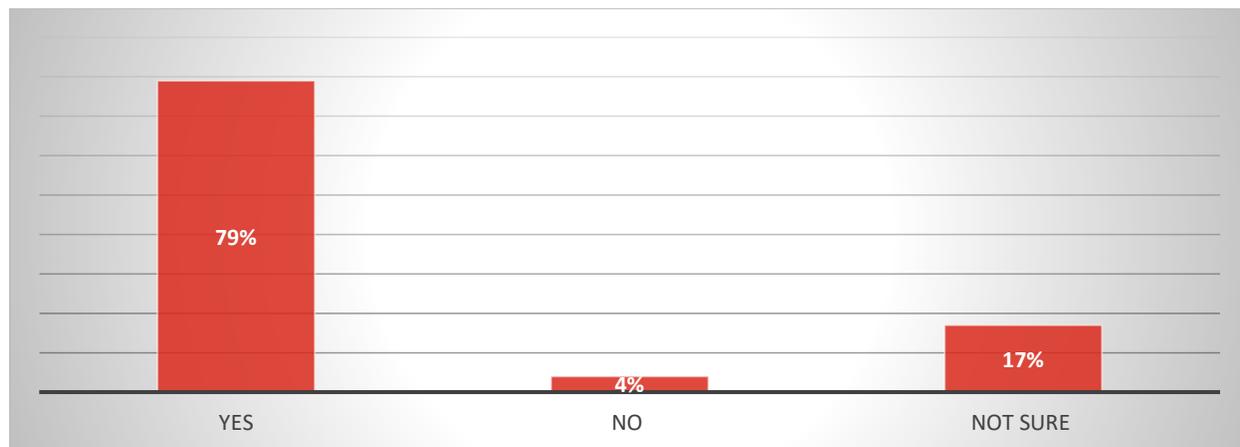
accommodations. From the total number of the answers of 66 participants, 7% of them related the availability of the accommodations with the availability of the ramps, 15% with the mobility within offices or work places, 4% with the option of remote work - referring to work from home, 44% with general accommodations such as “everything that is needed” or “good work conditions”, and 30% with the availability of the elevator.

Figure 14- Type of Accommodations Available



79% of the companies participating in the study, report to be willing to invest in accommodations for persons with disabilities. From the total number of the participants 79% of the employees report willingness to invest in accommodations for persons with disabilities if the candidates would be suitable for the job position, 17% of the participants responded to be unsure if they would be able to invest and 4% of the participants expressed no willingness to invest in the accommodations needed for the integration of persons with disabilities in their work places.

Figure 15- Willingness of employees to invest in accommodations

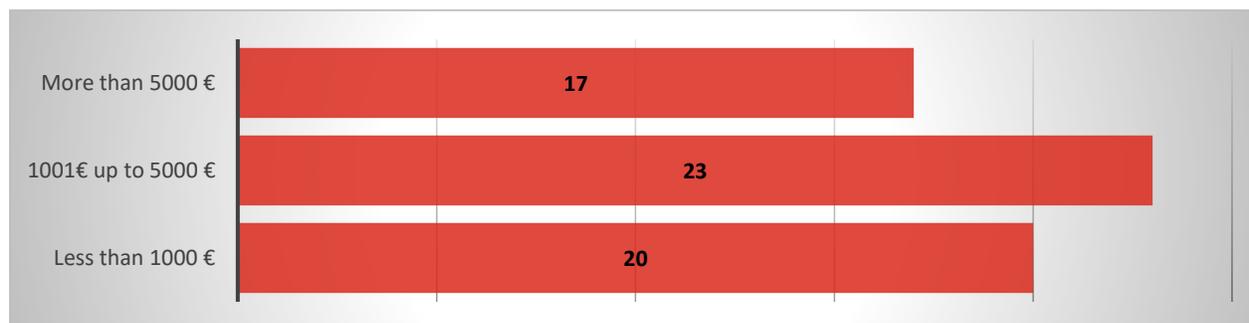


The majority of the companies who expressed willingness to invest in accommodations, declared that they are willing to invest from 1001€ up to 5000€. From 79 % of the participants who declared to be able to invest on accommodation that would facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities in the labour marker, 28% declared that they would be able to invest more than 5000 Euro, 38% declared to be able to invest 1001€ up to 5000 € and 34% declared to be able to invest less than 1000 Euro.

The investment under 1000 €, might often be sufficient for the accommodation of youth with intellectual disabilities, whose accommodations are usually requiring more creativity than financial means. In some specific cases, the same might imply for the accommodation of youth with hearing disabilities, including the cases when a sign language interpreter is needed for the inceptive phase. The investments between 1001€ up to 5000€, implies that blind and visually impaired youth can get easily accommodated in the workplace, when needed to be provided with specific software's, Braille machine, Braille display or other types of assistive technology. The same amount of money invested in ramps or adjusted toilets for wheelchair users, would also imply an easier accommodation of this community in the workplace. However, it wouldn't be sufficient for the provision of elevators what would enable the mobility of the wheelchair users within different floors of the building. For such accommodations, higher amount of money is necessary. However, it is important to highlight, that not all companies in Kosovo would have

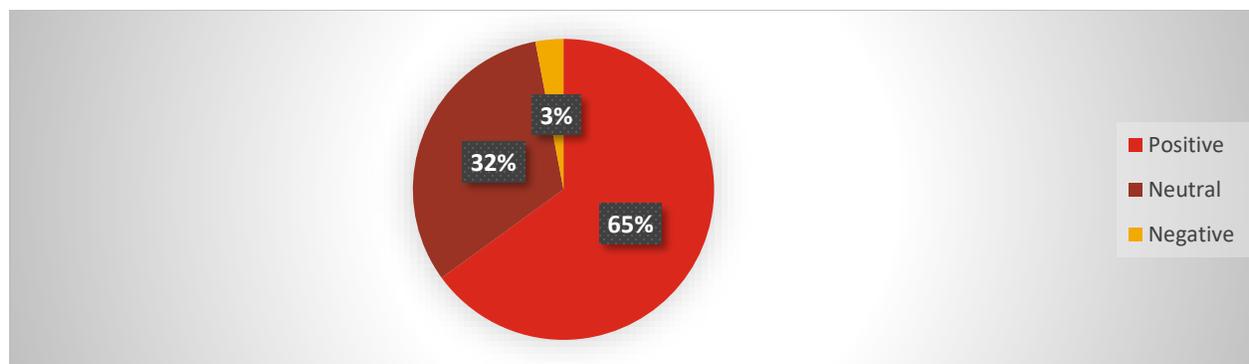
the financial capacities to provide such accommodations, or if that would imply “undue hardship” for the company³².

Figure 16 - The amounts willing to spent for accommodations



65 % of the recruiters participating in the research believe that other employees would have a positive reaction for the employment of a person with disabilities. From the total number of the participants 65% declared that they believe that their other employees would react positively if they would employ persons with disabilities, 32% of the recruiters reported that the reaction of other employees would be neutral and only 3% reported that the reaction of their employees would potentially be negative.

Figure 17-The potential reaction of other employees when employing persons



³² According to the American Disability Act, companies should provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities if that does not imply “undue hardship”. Undue hardship” is defined as an “action requiring significant difficulty or expense” when considered in light of a number of factors.

Comparing the main findings

The next portion of this study presents the findings from youth with disabilities and those from public and private companies in Kosovo, and aims to compare them in terms of the potential alignment. Findings suggest that both youth with disabilities and public/private companies in Kosovo should take big steps towards aligning with one another.

FIELDS	FINDINGS FROM YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES	FINDINGS FROM COMPANIES
EDUCATION	The majority of youth disabilities participating in the research have only completed high school .	The majority of the companies participating in the research require Bachelor studies as the necessary level of education for their open job positions.
PROFESSION	Youth with disabilities are oriented in the following professions: law, psychology, education, administration, waitress.	The most difficult to recruit job positions among the companies participating in the study are Programmers, Sales Specialists, Graphic Designers and Engineers.
SKILLS	Youth with intellectual disability are mostly reporting for skills related with handicraft work, serving, organizing and engagement on technical activity. Youth with other types of disabilities, that not necessarily implicate the intellectual aspect, are mostly reporting for ability of good communication skills, creativity, good command on the use of technology, critical thinking, and soft skill.	Field competencies, reliability, creativity, cooperation and responsibility are the most required work skills from the companies participating in the study.

<p>EMPLOYMENT RECORDS</p>	<p>The majority of youth with disabilities have never been employed/ or their employment records mostly rely on disabled people organizations. The majority of youth disabilities relate their employment records in the open labour market with short and limited internship experiences.</p>	<p>Persons with disabilities are underrepresented in the labour market in Kosovo. 73 % of the companies participating in the study declare that they do not have persons with disabilities in their staff.</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT</p>	<p>The majority of the youth with disabilities feel discouraged to apply for a job position, since they feel that their chances to get the job are particularly low because of their disability.</p>	<p>The vast majority of the companies participating in the study express to be able to employ persons with disabilities, if they are suitable candidates for their open job positions.</p>
<p>ACCOMODATIONS</p>	<p>The majority of youth with disabilities believe that businesses would be able to provide them with the necessary accommodations in the workplace, only if that would imply little or no financial implication.</p>	<p>The majority of the companies participating in the study, report to be willing to invest in accommodations for persons with disabilities. The majority of the companies expressing to be able to invest in accommodations, declared that they are willing to invest from 1001€ up to 5000 €.</p>

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, which provide an overview of the main challenges in regard to the integration of youth with disabilities in the labour market, the following recommendations are provided for the involved parties:

Recommendations for Policy Makers:

- To provide youth with disabilities with higher and qualitative education opportunities on purpose of becoming suitable candidates for the labour market. Currently they are prohibited from quality education opportunities what hinders their chances for employment in the labour market in Kosovo.
- To align the vocational education opportunities offered in Resource Centres of Kosovo, with the labour market demands. Youth with disabilities attending the resource centres should be provided with vocational education opportunities that are required in the labour market, and not only with opportunities that have been traditionally perceived as “possible” for the capacities of youth with disabilities.
- To provide youth with disabilities with the necessary support and financial incentives that would increase their chances for self-employment; thus, enabling them to promote their skills, and provide the society with examples of autonomy and independence among youth with disabilities.
- To further increase the access of youth with disabilities in the Vocational Training Centres in Kosovo. VTCs in Kosovo should offer professional profiles that are adjusted to the needs of youth with disabilities. In addition, instructors of the VTCs should have higher professional capacities to design and implement the adjusted training modules.
- To establish monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the Law for Vocational Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, with a special emphasis in the article 12, according to which, every public or private institution should employ one person with disability in 50 employees, should be in place.

- To create the technical conditions so obliged companies (those who did not meet the obligation of 1/50 quota) are able to pay monthly contributions for the incitement of employment for persons with disabilities in the budget of the Republic of Kosovo.
- To develop designated education policies which speak of more effective inclusive pedagogical practices.
- To ensure more emphasis is given to peer-to-peer sensitization and community level school-focused advocacy (e.g. using parent-teacher associations/meetings) to address ongoing stigmatization.

Recommendations for Youth with Disabilities:

- Youth with disabilities should actively seek information and consider paths that match labour market needs, if they wish to enter the labour market. Currently, based on the findings of the study, youth with disabilities attending the tertiary education level are more interested in social fields such as Law, Psychology and Education, while the labour market is demanding for profiles in technology, marketing, or engineering.
- Youth with disabilities should mobilize towards seeking job opportunities, revealing their potential and actively engage in activities that allow to enhance their work skills. It is especially important to reduce their own feelings of discouragement to attempt entering in the labour market.
- Youth with disabilities should explore self-employment opportunities as a way to promote their potential, and eventually contribute towards breaking the stereotypes related to their ability to actively contribute in the society.

Recommendations for Businesses:

- To reduce prejudices about the potential of people with disabilities, by focusing on the “ability” factor, instead of the disability, thus allowing themselves to use the untapped source of potential of youth with disabilities.
- To address the issue of employment of persons with disabilities from the perspective of their legal rights ensured by national and international legal instruments, and from the perspective of the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the labour market. Business should

- become aware that employment of persons with disabilities is a fundamental right, that brings valuable mutual benefits for the disabled community and labour market as well.
- Business in Kosovo which by law are obliged to employ one person with disabilities for every 50 employees, should establish internal policies that are encouraging for the participation and integration of youth with disabilities in the labour market. This might include: encourage youth with disabilities to apply in their open job positions, be able to divide budget for potential accommodations, host youth with disabilities in internships followed with employment opportunities.

Recommendation for Disabled People Organizations

- To orient their work towards providing social mentorship services for youth with disabilities in order to increase their chances for potential alignment with the labour market. Social Mentoring services consist on parallel work with youth with disabilities and potential employees. On the one hand, the work with the youth with disabilities consists on identifying their job preferences and skills, supporting them to enhance their skills, advance professionally and prepare them for the recruitment process. On the other hand, the work with employers consists on identifying the potential employers, approaching towards them with potential candidates (youth with disabilities), support them to identify the necessary accommodations, and convince them for the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the labour market. These efforts are supposed to result with potential internship opportunities for youth with disabilities or even regular work places.
- To design and undertake specific campaigns targeting private and public companies in Kosovo, and aiming at increasing their awareness regarding the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the labour market.
- To monitor the implementation of the Law for Vocational Training, Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with disabilities in Kosovo and use the findings as an important advocacy tool to address the gaps of employment, in front of the policy makers in Kosovo.

Recommendations for Researchers:

- To ensure an equal participation of all disability groups in the study, allowing therefore a higher representation of the potential perspectives of youth with different types of disabilities. This study is limited by the low representation of youth with hearing disabilities. Future studies are recommended to ensure the representation of this group in equal bases with other groups.
- To consider involving joint focus group discussions between youth with disabilities and recruiters in the study design. This would allow a deeper understanding of how the perspectives of both groups stand in front of each other and how they can potentially interlink.

Conclusions

The study aimed to compare the impressions of youth with disabilities regarding their potential engagement in the labour market, with the impressions of the recruiters in the private companies in Kosovo in terms of their availability to provide youth with disabilities with an opportunity of employment. The point of departure is that there is a perceived lack of alignment between what labour market is requiring and what youth with disabilities are offering, that is causing the discrepancy.

The findings in the framework of this study indicate that youth with disabilities are often lacking the opportunities for quality education, what is hindering their chances to integrate in the labour market. Once having the opportunity of enrolling in higher education studies, youth with disabilities are mainly focused on getting an occupation that is related to social sciences such as Law, Psychology or Education, while companies are reporting to have a higher demand for profiles with technological and technical background.

Youth with disabilities feel discouraged to apply for a job position, since they are convinced that youth without a disability would have priority for the recruiters. The employment of youth with disabilities is mostly related with opportunities provided by Disabled People Organizations in

Kosovo, while the majority of businesses report to have never employed a person with disabilities. Private and public companies in Kosovo are hosting youth with disabilities mainly for internship positions, that are only symbolically addressing the employment issues of youth with disabilities in Kosovo.

One of the most difficult challenges for the integration of youth with disabilities in the labour market is the lack of accommodations including physical and information access. Businesses are reporting to be able to invest on accommodations that facilitate the inclusion of youth with disabilities in the labour market; however, youth with disabilities are convinced that their availability would be present only when accommodations require no or limited financial implications. Business have limited knowledge regarding what exactly the term “accommodations” implies and their usually relate it with general work conditions of physical accommodations.

The employment of youth with disabilities continues to be a country challenge, requiring immediate addressment. Youth with disabilities should be provided with more education and training opportunities with the purpose of enabling the enhancement of their work skills. Companies in Kosovo should create higher opportunities for the employment of youth with disabilities, what would empower the community and would encourage other youth to seek and find a work place. The potential alignment of youth with disabilities and the work places, could be implemented if youth would have more qualitative opportunities for professional advancement, while recruiters would have less prejudices and more willingness to accommodate them in the work places.

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Appendix I: Semi Structured Interview

Demographic Data

Disability Type	
Sex	
Age	
Birthplace	

Questions

1.	<p>What is your school preparation? / What is your profession / What are your main work skills?</p> <p><i>If not or limited:</i> <i>What has hindered your school preparation / professional development / development of work skills and abilities?</i></p>	
2.	<p>What work/ job position you would like to have?</p>	
3.	<p>Do you feel you have the right preparation / skills or abilities for the job you want to do?</p> <p><i>If YES, how do you think your skills fit into the position / job?</i></p> <p><i>If NO or DON'T KNOW, where are the challenges?</i></p>	
4.	<p>How do you assess the labour market demands for this profession / ability / skill?</p>	

	<i>How often do you see an open call for such a position?</i>	
5.	What are the challenges that hinder you from finding a job that suits?	
6.	<p>Have you ever applied for a job? If YES, how was your application experience?</p> <p><i>If YES, were you invited to the interview?</i></p> <p><i>If YES, how did the interview go?</i></p> <p><i>If you went to the interview, did you have a problem with physical access / access to information?</i></p> <p><i>If NO, why have you never applied for a job?</i></p>	
7.	<p>Have you ever worked?</p> <p><i>If YES, was that job in line with your schooling / profession / skills or abilities?</i></p> <p><i>If YES, how did you get to that job?</i></p> <p><i>If YES, what has been your work experience (access / accommodation / interpersonal relationships)?</i></p> <p><i>If YES, why do you still not work at that job today?</i></p> <p><i>If NO, what were the main</i></p>	

	<i>challenges that hindered your employment?</i>	
8.	<p>Do you think that companies that are looking for candidates with your school / vocational training / skills and abilities, meet the conditions you need to be accommodated in the workplace?</p> <p><i>What is your experience in this regard?</i></p>	
9.	<p>What do you think should be regulated in the general system (policy, approach, awareness raising) of our country, to improve your access to the labour market?</p>	

Appendix II: Self Reporting Questionnaire

This questionnaire is administered on purpose of generating data related to the professional skills and competencies that are currently required by businesses in Kosovo during the process of recruiting new candidates. The questionnaire also aims to generate information about the potential inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market.

Your information will only be used for research purposes and your identity is anonymous.

The maximum time to complete this questionnaire is 10 minutes.

- 1) What is your profession or job position?

- 2) What is the scope of your company?

- 3) What is your company offering?
 - a) Products
 - b) Services
 - c) Both
- 4) In which region does your company operate?
 - a) Region of Prishtina
 - b) Region of Ferizaj
 - c) Region of Mitrovica
 - d) Region of Gjilan
 - e) Region of Gjakova
 - f) Region of Peja
 - g) Region of Prizren
 - h) In entire Kosovo
 - i) Other_____
- 5) What is the number of employees in your company?
 - a) Less than 10
 - b) 11 – 50
 - c) 51 – 100
 - d) Over 101
- 6) What is the percentage of women in your company?
- 7) What are the most required job profiles in your company? (Please list them)
- 8) How would you evaluate the process of recruitment in your company?
 - a) Easy (There are enough suitable / capable / expert candidates)
 - b) Average (Process varies, sometimes easy to find candidates, sometimes difficult)
 - c) Difficult (There is a lack of suitable / skilled / expert candidates)
- 9) What is the profile / profession for which you have the most difficulty in finding the right candidate / s?

- 10) What school preparation should the candidates have?
- 11) What skills and abilities should the candidates you are looking for have (Please list them)?
- 12) Do you have persons with disabilities in your staff?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 13) If Yes, how many persons with disabilities?
- 14) If YES, what type of disability? (Select all options that apply)
 - a) Blind or visually impaired
 - b) Hearing disability
 - c) Physical disability
 - d) Intellectual or mental disability
 - e) Other: (please specify) _____
- 15) If Yes, in what work positions?
- 16) Would you consider hiring a person with a disability in your company, if he / she fits the profile of the candidate you are looking for?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not sure
- 17) How do you think other employees would react if you hire a person with disability?
 - a) Positive
 - b) Neutral
 - c) Negative
- 18) Would you consider your company premises as accessible to people with disabilities?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Partially
 - d) Not sure
- 19) If YES or PARTIALLY, can you list the conditions in your company that facilitate access for people with disabilities?

- 20) Would you be willing to invest in equipment, infrastructure or software that enable a candidate with a disability to be accommodated in the workplace if he / she has the necessary skills and abilities to get the job done for the position you have opened?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not sure
- 21) If yes, what would be the maximum amount you would be willing to spend?
 - a) Less than 1000 €
 - b) 1001 - 5000 €
 - c) More than 5000 €