



# Inclusion of professionals with disabilities in the workplace: challenges for the Human Resources Management

## *Inclusão de profissionais com deficiência no trabalho: desafios para a Gestão de Recursos Humanos*

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the issue of diversity in the labor context from a review of the literature on the topic and from an empirical study about the inclusion of professionals with disabilities in the labor market. This research was intended to find out about the difficulties faced by professionals with disabilities in the process of searching for a job vacancy, as well as by employers. Results have shown that both professionals with disabilities and organizations experience difficulties during this process of inclusion, consequently, Law 8.231/91 (the Quotas Act) has been partially observed by many of the companies surveyed, and the Human Resources department becomes responsible for creating practical alternatives to address the challenges this Law imposes to organizations and, irrespective of said Law, to enforce the basic right of these professionals that is social inclusion, starting with access to the workplace.

**Keywords:** Inclusion of professionals with disabilities; Law 8.231/91.

**Resumo:** *Esse artigo aborda a questão da diversidade no contexto laboral a partir de uma revisão da literatura sobre o tema e de um estudo empírico a respeito da inclusão de profissionais com deficiência no mercado de trabalho brasileiro. Nessa pesquisa, buscou conhecer as dificuldades enfrentadas nesse processo pelos profissionais com deficiência em busca de uma vaga de trabalho e também pelos empregadores. Os resultados apontam que tanto os profissionais com deficiências, quanto as organizações têm dificuldades nesse processo de inclusão, assim a Lei 8.231/91 (Lei de Cotas) vem sendo cumprida parcialmente por muitas dessas empresas pesquisadas, cabendo ao setor de Recursos Humanos criar alternativas práticas para enfrentar os desafios que essa Lei impõe às organizações e também, independente dessa legislação, para fazer valer o direito básico desses profissionais que é a inclusão social a partir do acesso ao trabalho.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Inclusão de profissionais com deficiência; Lei 8.231/91.*

## 1 Introduction

The concern with building an inclusive society has increased, worldwide. The issue requires discussions and practical measures in the context of employment as well since work is a significant factor in the construction of an individual's identity, as it provides psychic balance, social inclusion, continuous learning opportunities and can positively impact a person's life.

Social inclusion in the workplace should provide workers with the conditions they need to feel respected

in their conditions - regardless of their limitations - and allow them to perceive their ability to contribute to society. To offer such conditions, society is constantly invited to bring about changes intended to welcome all individuals without discrimination, irrespective of employment, leisure or other daily life situations.

In the discussions about social inclusion, within Human Resource Management - an area that interfaces with Business Administration, Production Engineering, Organizational Psychology and other

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areas of knowledge - little has been debated about more practical actions to make the inclusion of professionals with disabilities more effective. Deduction tells us there is a gap, mainly in the literature in the fields of Business Administration and Production Engineering. Therefore, this article is intended to help fill the gaps found in this discussion.

Approaching diversity in the context of labor is a big challenge. Such difficulty is expressed in discriminatory actions from organizations, represented by managers who show resistance to hiring professionals that have disabilities. There is explicit evidence of such resistance when established laws compel public and private organizations to spare a quota of vacancies for these professionals.

It is noticed that the legislation for this type of hiring in private companies is not so recent, but the difficulties faced by managers - mainly in the Human Resources department - are still heavy and require that this debate be always in the agenda of research works, so that a multidisciplinary dialogue can be attentive to the proposition of current solutions for this topic.

The purpose of this article is to present some of the difficulties faced in this process by professionals with disabilities, who are in search of a job, and by employers, represented by companies located in the interior of Minas Gerais. Results show that both professionals with disabilities and organizations experience difficulties in this process of inclusion, resulting in a partial observance to Law 8.331/91 (the Quotas Act) by most of the companies surveyed.

The first section contains an introduction to the article. The second section contains a brief contextualization of disability in Brazil and some considerations about the Brazilian legislation on people with disabilities and access to work. The third section presents some research works and discussions on the inclusion of professionals with disabilities in Brazil, as well as the challenges posed to Human Resources regarding the management of diversities. The fourth section presents the research methodology. The fifth section contains the results and the main discussions, and the sixth section summarizes the article.

## 2 Contextualizing disability in Brazil

The literature on the subject reveals there has been, over the years, some difficulty in the adoption of proper designation for people with disabilities. For Sasaki (2003), times bring the usage of terms which meanings are compatible with the values in effect on society, as it evolves in its relationship with people with disabilities.

Sasaki (2003) surveys many terms and meanings from the years 1960 until 2005, ranging from: invalid, unable, handicapped, cripple, disabled, exceptional, disabled people, handicapped people, people with impairment, challenged people, people with special needs, special people, people with disabilities, people who have special rights, to the term that is being currently used by other authors "person with disabilities". The author points out that the worldwide movements of persons with disabilities have discussed the name by which these people wish to be called. Worldwide, they have defined they want to be called "persons with disabilities" in all languages.

The definition of persons with disabilities, according to articles 2 and 3 of the Brazilian Statute for Persons with Disabilities (Brasil, 2013):

Art. 2. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Art. 3. For recognition of the rights set forth in this Law, deficiencies will be considered those that cause impairment to the functions or structure of the body relating to communicative, mental, intellectual, sensory or motor abilities (Brasil, 2013, p. 2).

Data from the 2010 IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) Census show that nearly 46 million Brazilians - around 24% of the population - have reported having at least one of the disabilities investigated (mental, motor, visual and auditory). These data show that there is a significant portion of the population that has some kind of disability and deserves attention as to the need of reviewing, by society, the rights of these people to enter the labor market and enjoying all services: health, qualification courses and professional training, in addition to recreational and other activities.

The highest percentage was found in the Northeast Region (26.6%), while the South and Central West regions showed the lowest proportions (22.5%). Rio Grande do Norte (27.8%), Paraíba (27.8%) and Ceará (27.7%) had the highest percentages. Roraima (21.2%), Santa Catarina (21.3%) and Mato Grosso do Sul (21.5%) had the lowest incidence (IBGE, 2010).

Visual impairment was the most common, reaching 35.8 million people with difficulty to see (18.8%), even when wearing glasses or contact lenses. Severe visual impairment (people who reported having great difficulty to see or could not see at all) reached 6.6 million people, 506.3 thousand of whom were blind (0.3%). Locomotion impairment was found in 13.3 million people (7.0%). Severe motor impairment was declared by 4.4 million people, of which 734.4 thousand could not walk or climb stairs at all (0.4%). Hearing impairment affected 9.7 million people

(5.1%), and severe hearing impairment was declared by 2.1 million people, of which 344.2 thousand were deaf (0.2%). Mental or intellectual deficiency also considered severe was declared by 2.6 million people, representing 1.4% of the population (IBGE, 2010).

Data from the IBGE Census (IBGE, 2010) also revealed that inequalities persist in relation to disabled people, who have lower enrollment rates compared to the population who do not have any of the disabilities investigated.

In 2010, the population with disabilities who were employed accounted for 23.6% (20.4 million) of the total number of persons employed (86.4 million). Of the 44 million persons with disabilities in working age (10 years old or above), 53.8% (23.7 million) were not employed. In relation to the total population that was not occupied (75.6 million), the population with disabilities represented 31.3% (IBGE, 2010).

In relation to the activity rate by type of disability, mental disability was the one that most limited the insertion in the labor market, for both men and women (whose activity rates were 22.2% and 16.1%, respectively). Visual impairment was the one that had the least influence on the activity rate, which was 63.7% for men and 43.9% for women. The same was observed for the level of activity which, overall, was 17.4% for people with mental disabilities and 48.4% for people with visual impairment. 40.2% of persons with disabilities who are employed have a formal contract (IBGE, 2010).

## **2.1. The Brazilian legislation for persons with disabilities and the access to the workplace**

Convention 159 on the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities of the International Labor Organization was adopted in 1983 and considers that all persons with reduced possibilities are disabled for work - due to a duly proven physical or mental disability - to secure and retain suitable employment and advance in it.

From this international standard, Brazil, seeking to facilitate the inclusion of professionals with disabilities or rehabilitated to work, instituted Law n. 8.112/90 and Law n. 8.213/91 (also called the Quotas Act). The first Law defines the sparing of up to 20% of the vacancies in selections for public service in the Union for disabled professionals. Following the same guidance, Law n. 8.213/91, in article 93, provides that private companies with 100 employees or more must hire qualified or rehabilitated persons with disabilities. The specified quota varies from 2% to 5% of the number of employees formally hired by the company, in direct relation with the size of its staff. Failure to comply with this legal precept is

considered a discriminatory practice prohibited by the Federal Constitution of 1988.

The existence of these Brazilian laws for the inclusion of professionals with disabilities reveals a great interest in investing in social inclusion through labor, however, making companies observe those laws has been a challenge both to professionals involved and to the public power, which usually only performs occasional inspections, especially in smaller towns.

Literature reveals studies with detailed analysis intended to understand how the inclusion of these professionals has been occurring. One of these studies was developed by Ribeiro & Carneiro (2009) who studied adherence to Law n. 8.213/91 in companies in the State of Minas Gerais. The research involved the process of issuing notices, due to non-compliance with laws, as performed by the competent agency within 2000-2007. The results showed low adherence in relation to said Law and the main defensive strategies adopted by companies to circumvent, postpone or minimize the compulsory hiring of professionals with disabilities.

In total, only 1,572 of the 4,982 vacancies for persons with disabilities determined by law had been filled, accounting for 31.6% of the total. There are many strategies companies use to postpone hiring professionals with disabilities. One of them is cutting back on employees who are directly hired, replacing them with outsourced workers. This way, the calculation index for the quota to be met is reduced (Ribeiro & Carneiro, 2009). Those strategies deserve discussion because the purpose is to encourage the inclusion of professionals, and employers play a key role in proposing actions to ensure that such workers are included.

In general, the research revealed that the reaction of companies when they are notified is, basically, seeking to justify the non-compliance with Law n. 8.213/91. Their claims are related to the peculiarities of the branches of activity. Some claim their activities are characterized by high degrees of risk and danger. Thus, they advocate the exclusion of positions they consider inadequate to persons with disabilities from the calculation of the quota, restricting them to activities of administrative or paper-keeping nature. This situation was perceived in companies in the industrial, civil construction and health care sectors. There are companies that raise the bar of their professional qualification and experience requirements for filling the vacancies offered and restrict the possibilities of potential candidates with the skills to fill these vacancies. There are also attempts to classify, as disabled people, employees who already belong to the company's staff. An industrial company in the automotive sector classified 471 employees as persons with disabilities, for an employment quota of 519 people; almost all of them had mild hearing

impairment. There are also attempts to contest the application of the law to the company, neglecting its relevance. This is the case of entities dedicated to social and religious assistance, for which the fact of developing philanthropic actions would suffice to exempt them from fulfilling the quota. Of the companies surveyed, six resorted to the argument that the quota policy is based on a paternalistic and misguided view of the person with disability, disregarding their effective ability of insertion in the labor market (Ribeiro & Carneiro, 2009). The authors criticize Law nº 8.213/91, considering it partial and exclusive, as selectivity in hiring tends to discriminate against persons with more severe disabilities, such as the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, patients with mental disorders and suffering, and persons in wheelchairs.

### 3 The inclusion of professionals with disabilities: some discussions

The social inclusion of persons with disabilities is an issue that has been discussed in the literature from different perspectives, as

Art. 34. A person with a disability has the right to work freely and acceptably in an accessible and inclusive environment, on an equal basis with other persons.

§ 1 The legal entities of public, private or of any nature are obliged to guarantee accessible and inclusive work environments.

Paragraph 2. The disabled person is entitled, on an equal basis with other persons, to just and favorable conditions of work, including equal remuneration for work of equal value (Brasil, 2015, p. 1)

In Brazil, there is much interest in discussing diversity emphasizing the insertion of professionals with disabilities to the workplace. Some studies aimed at identifying the facilities and difficulties of the persons to be inserted and remain in the labor market (Hoffmann et al., 2013; Simonelli & Camarotto, 2011; Violante & Leite, 2011; Oliveira et al., 2009; Ribeiro & Carneiro, 2009; Moraes de Souza, 2009; Rodrigues et al., 2009; Carvalho-Freitas, 2009; Carvalho-Freitas & Marques, 2007).

Considering that the literature has shown concern with the topic, one can deduce it is relevant in the contemporary labor context, justifying thus the discussion addressed in this article. Our aim is to contribute to expanding the debate, especially in the fields of Production Engineering and Business Administration, where there are still gaps in approaching the subject. These are very important knowledge areas that interface with the studies on People Management.

A research by Hoffmann et al. (2013), sought to identify the professional profile of persons with disabilities in the context of the federal public service, by mapping the characteristics linked to their labor relations. The results revealed that there is gender equality in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, there is career maturity, qualification progression without, however, involving specific training for their types of needs. Such data reveal there is a gap regarding the actions in Human Resources Management, since one of the essential activities for professional development is training.

Simonelli & Camarotto (2011) presented a more practical approach to disability, starting from the analysis of real workplace situations in which there is a possibility of inserting professionals with disabilities, where these workers can develop their potential.

The employability of persons with disabilities in 12 midsize and large enterprises in a town west of São Paulo has been the subject of research by Violante & Leite (2011), which results showed that only a third of private companies comply with the law. Business policies in the context studied prioritize hiring people whose disabilities do not require structural modifications or that represent a favorable aspect to the production. Most of the respondents showed some contradiction between speech and practice; they spoke about equal rights for all people, however, a great portion of them still fails to carry out support actions to meet the demand of these professionals and expect workers themselves to adjust to the situation posed.

The mapping of assistance and rehabilitation institutions, their actions and the public served in the city of São Carlos/São Paulo was the subject of interest in a research by Rodrigues et al. (2009). The authors concluded there is a low employability rate among persons with disabilities, and the institutions surveyed pointed out as limitations to inclusion the low education levels of these persons, the inadequacy of the public transportation system for people with physical disabilities, the lack of resources and structure to qualify them. Official data from the Regional Labor and Employment Management in São Carlos shows that 51.3% of the quotas have not been taken. These data prove that although there is an effort from the institutions surveyed by the authors, it is necessary to dialogue with other institutions - such as the municipal public power, besides others that can provide training and qualification courses - to increase access by professionals with disabilities, in the city.

Oliveira et al. (2009) analyzed the employment policies adopted in the United States, the European Union and in Brazil to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor market. They concluded there are advances and divergences in labor policies and that these are related to the particularities of each context; however, there is a common concern

towards securing persons with disabilities the access to a professional activity.

Ribeiro & Carneiro (2009) approach the Brazilian laws related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace. For that, the authors surveyed the adherence to Law 8.213/91 regards its implementation, and the difficulties that companies in Minas Gerais have faced.

The personal and professional trajectory of professionals with disabilities working in a Federal Public Organization was the subject of interest by Moraes de Souza (2009) who showed, from the respondents' reports, that the support from family and friends, in addition to a professional qualification, are very important factors in overcoming the difficulties of insertion in the workplace. Such data reveal that the individual alone cannot overcome the social and structural barriers and need to seek help in this context.

By adopting the method of historical analysis of the main behavior patterns that remain in shared visions over time, Carvalho-Freitas & Marques (2007) identified six matrices of interpretation on disability. Such matrices can be instruments for understanding diversity in organizations: the matrix of livelihood/survival; the matrix of the ideal society and instrumental function of the person; the spiritual matrix; the matrix of normality; the matrix of social inclusion and the technical matrix. These matrices help in understanding the ways companies interpret and act in relation to inclusion. The authors conclude that the coexistence of aspects of the different matrices indicate that diversity management can make up a complex task because it implies managing concepts of disability, sometimes antagonistic within the same company. This issue can negatively impact not only the process of inclusion but the work of these workers, as well.

The assessment of the current labor and workplace context regarding the matrix that discusses the livelihood/survival model (Carvalho-Freitas & Marques, 2007) is appropriate; disability was considered a difficulty factor in people's survival/sustenance, since a misshapen body or a body missing the functions that would ensure vigor and strength could barely help in agriculture or in war. From this perspective, the insertion of the person with a disability would be accepted only upon proof of the possible social contributions.

An interpretation of this matrix can be observed in an implicit and modified way in present times, as seen in facts that have been happening, for example, in the difficulties that many Brazilian organizations claim in complying with Law 8213/91 (the Quotas Act). They claim they cannot find professionals with enough technical skills that can contribute to their production processes. Thus, extra effort is required from these professionals to prove their capacity and

skills. Some companies do not perceive themselves as co-responsible for the inclusion of said workers in professional qualification activities, as well.

In the case of social policies turned to the needs of persons with disabilities, Sasaki (2003) characterizes two models for interpretation of disability, and the first one is the social integration model that addresses the medical point of view of disability and gave origin to social practices. The purpose of these practices was to adjust the person with disability to live in society. The other model is social inclusion, in which society adapts to the needs of the persons with disabilities and these people seek their development in society. We understand that the public policies many countries have adopted, such as Law 8.213/91 in Brazil, collide with the model discussed by the author, as this law suggests that companies, whenever possible, make structural adaptations for the inclusion of the professionals with disabilities and/or rehabilitated professionals.

### **3.1 Challenges to the Human Resources sector regarding the management of diversities**

People Management is an area of interest of Production Engineering, Business Administration, and Organizational Psychology, for that, it is necessary to discuss social inclusion through the work of persons with disabilities in the sphere of these areas of knowledge. The interdisciplinary dialogue Human Resources Management requires - and promotes - can enrich the proposal of concrete and sustainable actions regarding the inclusion of professionals with disabilities and rehabilitated professionals in the formal labor market.

About legislation, article 7 of the Convention on vocational rehabilitation and employment (disabled persons) of 1983, brings the following recommendation:

The competent authorities shall take measures with a view to providing and evaluating vocational guidance, vocational training, placement, employment and other related services to enable disabled persons to secure, retain and advance in employment; existing services for workers generally shall, wherever possible and appropriate, be used with necessary adaptations (Brasil, 1983).

The fields of knowledge involved in this discussion should dialogue with this legislation and with the public power to align actions and for effective practices when performed by the Human Resources management.

One of the main challenges faced by the sector responsible for Human Resource management in this context is to develop, deploy and manage a broad employability program to ensure rights to opportunities

for all, which focus is the potential of professionals and not the type of disability they have.

The Brazilian society is striving to build a context that recognizes, respects and welcomes, with dignity, the diversity that makes it (Schwartz & Haber, 2006). We should consider that Law 8.213/91 is already a big step forward. The process is complex and time-consuming because it implies changes in the way society and employers think and behave, and in the insertion of objective adaptations that meet the specific and peculiar needs of these workers. Thus, the company that hires employees with disabilities must have a structured program to adjust their physical structure, recruitment, selection, hiring and development and not just formally hire to comply with the law. From the point of view of Production Engineering, for example, this process may be considered costly, because structural changes often require significant expenses.

Regarding actions on People Management, Ávila-Vitor & Carvalho-Freitas (2012) aimed at learning the point of view of people with disabilities already included in the workplace, regarding the relationship between their perceptions of organizational values and how they would see disability in the workplace. The results revealed that there is a negative correlation between their perception of prestige and the way the company views normality. People with disabilities relate the prestige of the company to a conception of disability that does not place them as deviant from a standard human being. The research also identified other data considered important in this process of inclusion, among which are the recognition of inclusion as an organizational value, the need to adapt working conditions, the role of these people in the inclusion process and the importance of their coexistence with the other employees in a scenario favorable to their performance.

In the context of the actions of Human Resources managers, Carvalho-Freitas (2009) sought to analyze the possible relationships between the ways these managers perceive disability, the adequacy of working conditions, and the satisfaction of persons with disabilities regarding relevant aspects to maintain a quality of life at work, in a large Brazilian company that has more than a thousand employees with disabilities. The results revealed the existence of significant relationships between the conceptions of disability shared by managers and the adequacy of working conditions and practices in the company. Implications of the concepts of disability and of the adequacy of working conditions and practices for the satisfaction of people with disabilities have also been found. The possibilities of career for these people are one of the Human Resource Management practices that can be highlighted. There are very positive data in the context researched.

Regarding the conception based on inclusion assumptions, 81% of managers express the opinion that it is necessary to change the working environment so that it is accessible to all, which is a current trend. Regarding the perception of performance, 92% of managers evaluated positively the performance of persons with disabilities. In general, respondents stated that persons with disabilities have similar performance to the other people and that the insertion of these people has no negative impact on the company's competitiveness (Carvalho-Freitas, 2009, p. 131).

The deployment of a comprehensive program seems complex; however, it ensures that the efforts made in hiring are not wasted and increases the retention rates. If the person with a disability has clear, defined attributions and receives proper training to develop them, they will have responsibilities and be productive like the other employees. It is a win-win situation for both employees and employers (Schwartz & Haber, 2006).

The proposal of Simonelli & Camarotto (2011) can contribute in this perspective. The authors used a set of methods and techniques based on knowledge of Ergonomic Analysis of the Activity and Occupational Therapy for the construction of a model to indicate the skills needed to carry out the activities of industrial work. It was possible to identify jobs that could be potentially taken by persons with disabilities as an incentive to the actions of companies in the policy for hiring this population.

An important observation made by Carvalho-Freitas (2009) refers to the need for training, not only for professionals with disabilities to perform well at work but also for the managers who will receive these professionals. The author also points out the need for broader discussions on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the company. We endorse these claims because one of the attributions of the Human Resources must be the promotion of such dialogues, involving not only the leadership but also colleagues in the industry so that reception and cooperation can occur more maturely, towards the professionals with disabilities.

This brief review of the literature on the subject shows that there are studies being conducted, as an attempt to understand specific contexts with their challenges and possibilities. In general, there is a proposition for more dialogues involving persons with disabilities, local public authorities, companies, and society so that the inclusion of this population can occur in a productive way to them and to the other institutions involved.

## 4 Methodology

For the development of this research, we conducted a review of the literature on the main discussions regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities

and the challenges of Human Resources Management in the main periodicals of Production Engineering, in the annals of ENEGEP (National Convention on Production Engineering), in Business Administration and Organizational Psychology periodicals and others that are interested in the subject. It was possible to deduce this is still a poorly discussed subject in the literature, from this perspective.

After the literature review, an empirical research was developed in the period from August 2014 to July 2015, in companies located in a city in the interior of Minas Gerais/Brazil. Its purpose was learning the context of the inclusion of disabled people in companies located in the region; more specifically, it was intended to address general organizational issues pertaining to Human Resources Management: hiring, training, retention of professionals with disabilities.

Only companies with more than 100 employees were selected, as a criterion for participation in this research, because they are covered by Law 8213/91. This way, thirty-one companies were invited via e-mail, however, only nine expressed interest.

The segments of the participating companies are diversified: supermarket, metallurgical, hospital, and trade of automotive parts. Visits to these companies were conducted to see the workstations and for other issues related to the work context, as well as to interview employers (management) and said professionals. The number of employees with disabilities interviewed was thirty, of which 6 women. Also participating in the survey were 21 professionals with disabilities who are unemployed and looking for a job vacancy. Only two women were in this group.

In addition to visiting the companies to learn about the work contexts of professionals with disabilities, we collected spontaneous verbalizations from them, from their immediate leadership, from supervisors and Human Resource managers or from other professionals when the company did not have a formalized HR department, and we used a questionnaire with semi-structured questions related to the topics: a) percentage of professionals with disabilities in the company's staff at the time of research; b) if it has managed to comply with the quota established by Law 8213/91; c) the difficulties the company has faced in hiring these professionals, the profile of professionals with disabilities the company finds it easier to hire; d) the profile the company finds it harder to hire and, finally, e) how the University (UFOP) can assist it in this process. A summary of the data collected in the questionnaires with a qualitative analysis of the content can be found next.

## 5 Results and discussions

Of the nine companies participating in this research, only three had the quota of work vacancies - for professionals with disabilities - filled during the

data collection period (August 2014 to July 2015). The main difficulties pointed out by employers were inherent in the recruitment, selection, and training of these professionals. In general terms, they stated that such professionals hardly seek out companies to deliver a resume and wait for an opportunity to work, thus making it very difficult to find them. The high turnover was also mentioned since many of these professionals do not adapt to the rules, routines, and tasks intrinsic to the position and quit their jobs at the companies. Possibly, there is also a great impact from the lack of training of the leadership (Carvalho-Freitas, 2009) on this turnover.

The recruitment of new employees has been made through advertisements in local newspapers and radios, nearby the premises of the companies and from recommendations from employees of these companies. Even so, there is hardly any candidates. The selection has been complex because when interested candidates appear - according to the reports of some managers - they generally do not meet the requirements, since they lack technical and behavioral qualifications. Also, in the study by Rodrigues et al. (2009) the findings have revealed that the low employability of persons with disabilities is also related to their low level of education.

Often, companies hire them to fulfill the quota, but the candidate does not meet the needs of the company. Then the company expects that, after going through training activities, the professional will be able to adapt to the position. However, they find it difficult to deliver such training, especially to those designated mildly mentally impaired, because of the high difficulty to learn the content presented. Thus, their retention in the organization also becomes complex. Usually, they are laid off after the first three months of hiring, i.e., they remain only during the legally defined period for integration and analysis of the experience by the employee and leadership.

When asked about which profiles of disabled professionals they find it easier to hire, the responses from employers and Human Resources managers varied according to the characteristics of the company's production processes, the physically impaired since they are not in wheelchairs (6 employers), the visually impaired (1 employer), the mildly mentally impaired (2 employers). And as for the profile that presents the highest difficulty, they pointed to wheelchair users, due to the current physical structures of the companies. Many have old facilities with lots of stairs. Employers argued that current financial conditions do not allow structural adaptations such as the construction of ramps. On the needs of structural adaptations, one employer pointed out:

*What the government wants is to pass on to company owners a responsibility that not everyone can fulfill. For example: spend on repairs. I am not going to*

*change a whole sector; install some expensive ramp, with exorbitant expenses to hire a collaborator who is in a wheelchair. The payoff this employee will give me does not cover the cost I will have. The government does not understand that. They want to inspect, collect, penalize and they think the company owner will continue spending* (Spontaneous verbalization collected during the research).

This issue is consistent with that also found by Violante & Leite (2011) in which the business policies in the context studied prioritize hiring people whose disabilities do not require structural modifications or that pose a production-friendly aspect. Some employers, when expressing their intention to include professionals with disabilities in their personnel, seek to make it as economically as possible for the company, paying little attention to the demand of this population.

When asked about how the Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP) could assist them and the professionals with disabilities in this insertion process, the employers were unanimous in pointing out the need for help in recruitment (with a channel to receive resumes and advertise vacancies) and help with their technical and behavioral training. These issues were also mentioned by professionals with disabilities who are employed and by the unemployed. In this way, the University is seen as a place that can provide knowledge and professional qualification.

One of the managers is a former student of that university and, during a visit, he pondered:

*If UFOP could deliver courses for those employees and future employees, it would help a lot. Not only the company owners here in the region but also these people who, in addition to having disabilities, are also very poor. They cannot afford to leave here and go to a bigger city to take, say, a computer course or a security training, for example. At UFOP you can deliver these courses. There are laboratories there. It is a public university, it means it is for the people, right?* (Spontaneous verbalization collected during the research).

Responses from professionals with disabilities who were employed with the companies participating in the research bring the following data: ages vary between 28 and 62 years old (most are between 30 to 38 years old); education varies from incomplete elementary to high school, and only 5 of them fall into this last educational level. As for the types of disabilities, most (18 people) have physical disabilities (due to infantile paralysis in lower and/or upper limbs or due to occupational accidents in the companies they worked previously. There are cases of car accidents sequelae). However, there are 5 professionals with mild mental impairment (or intellectual disability - Down syndrome). Among the respondents, 5 have hearing impairment and 4 visual impairment. Occupied positions

vary: from tax, doorman, packer, archivist, janitor and housekeeping assistant, gardener, reception assistant, and telephone operator (these are usually occupied by the visually impaired). The time in the positions ranges between 11 years (only 1) and 2 months. Most have been in office for 1 year. All are in their second or third company, i.e., this is not the first opportunity and they say they were dismissed from their previous company without explanation from the employer as to the reason for the dismissal. Three professionals had quit for a better opportunity.

When asked what being working meant to them, the answers were positive and manifested in sentences such as: "I am able to do something useful for the company", "it is very good because I have my own income", "I learn a lot here", "I feel satisfaction because working is good", "I know many good people who help me here, in this company". All responded positively also regarding their reception by the current leaders and colleagues, however, when asked about their perception of the current context of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the companies, the answers were quite negative. They reported that they suffer much prejudice from interviewers. Getting the current job was very complex, they have been to other companies, faced many interviews, there were many attempts until they were hired by the current company. Some have cited examples of friends, neighbors, and acquaintances who are unemployed and struggling to find a job.

Regarding the satisfaction of being employed, we mention the verbalization of a telephone operator who has visual impairment:

*I really enjoy working here. I have worked in another company, too. I liked it there. I left because it is closer to my house here. I like everything: the kind of service, my colleagues, my boss. The money I get. I help with the expenses at home. If I do not work, I even get ill. I like it a lot. The day I miss work, my boss says they miss me. I only miss work when I really need. Sometimes we get ill. But I do everything I can to come. The company is good.* (Spontaneous verbalization collected during the research).

When asked about the possibility of the Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP) assisting them in this process of inclusion, most suggested the offering of courses such as: computer, customer service, human relations and others, since they have great interest in changing jobs (promotion) in the current company or in other companies with more interesting positions - both in terms of jobs that add more knowledge and higher wages.

Professionals with disabilities who are unemployed and looking for work are aged between 18 and 57 (most are also in the 30-37 age-group). Educational level varies from incomplete elementary school to full

secondary education. None have higher education or were in school at the time of the research. The type of disability also varied: physical impairment (11), hearing impairment (3), visual impairment (4) and mild mental impairment (3). From that group, 7 have never had a job. The previous occupations of the others vary: carpenter, mechanic, security, general service assistant, gas station attendant, receptionist, telephone operator. Unemployment time ranged from 4 years and 2 months to 6 years. Everyone is looking for work: some only ask their friends to be recommended, in case they learn of vacancies, others deliver a resume at companies. The main difficulties encountered are prejudice and those related to access because the physical structures of companies prevent the free accessibility by people with physical and visual impairments. Many companies are located outside the city and are not served by public transport bus service. The context studied by Rodrigues et al. (2009) also approaches the inadequacy of public transportation system for persons with physical disabilities, the lack of resources and structure for the qualification of these professionals, which makes more difficult the process of inclusion in the workplace.

All professionals participating in this research live with their families and none of the respondents receive some type of financial aid from the Government. All state they need to work to help their families in basic expenses. When assessing the current context of inclusion, they report it needs lots of improvement, given the time that they have been unemployed. They suggest that UFOP (the Federal University of Ouro Preto) offers free training courses, as they have no financial conditions to afford them in other institutions in the city (computer courses are considered very expensive by them) or outside it, like in the capital. They also suggested that the University works with the companies, raising awareness as to the need to include these professionals. According to their statements, they consider themselves able and want to contribute to the companies but realize that they do not give them opportunities.

It was also possible to notice other barriers in the personal and family levels, like: a) many disabled professionals do not recognize their potential, thus needing help to recognize themselves as agents in changing their realities; b) lack of support from the family for them to seek job vacancies and c) companies need to mature in the issue related to giving work opportunities (without intentionally increasing the job requirements for the positions in their professional staff) and prepare the environment both physically, based on structural adaptations, and psychosocially to receive these people, giving them opportunities consistent with their technical abilities, without underestimating them by giving them simplistic and routine activities.

An employee with a physical impairment working in a sector of patients file archives in one of the companies surveyed made the following remark:

*I think I am very smart. I learn things fast. There has been a year I am in the same job. I do the same thing. I really wanted to do other things. Be promoted. No one is talking. I am afraid to ask to go to another sector and get fired. People who are disabled must be careful. Not here, but there are companies that think we are worthless. But I wanted to learn other things, you know? Earn a bigger paycheck. (Spontaneous verbalization collected during the research).*

We emphasize that generally speaking, Law 8213/91 is alien both to employers and to professionals, in the context studied. When dealing with the first ones, there is a relative lack of interest in complying with it. A Human Resources manager verbalized:

*This company was notified more than three years ago, we even tried to fulfill the quota at the beginning, but then... I do not know, it seems that management gets laid-back. We even had some meetings. Someone suggested installing a ramp next to that stairway outside. That would help in hiring people in wheelchairs, for example. But then the discussions cool down (Spontaneous verbalization collected during the research).*

A professional who was looking for a vacancy showed to be unaware of said Law, in his verbalization.

*The companies here in this region do not care for us. They think that because the person has some impairment - like me, who cannot hear from one ear - is invalid and worthless. The Government should see us. Not retire us. I am a worker. I want to work honestly and make my money. The government should pass a law for companies to hire us (people with disabilities) (Spontaneous verbalization collected during the research).*

The research revealed a little of the context of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace in a city in the interior of Minas Gerais, as well as some characteristics of the management of the work of those who are employed. However, it has been pointed out that there is a lack of information and relative omission of the Government in assisting in the compliance with the laws on the subject. It was possible to perceive that professionals with disabilities who are seeking a vacancy still reveal a lack of knowledge on the laws that protect them. They are on the margins of society, seem devoid of minimum information to make their rights respected and to claim equal rights concerning social inclusion in the workplace.

Simonelli & Camarotto (2011) might help with information in this context since the proposition of the authors allows helping managers identify the jobs

that can be taken by persons with disabilities, since the dialogue between management and experienced professionals in this type of inclusion may result in more effective actions.

Carvalho-Freitas (2009) propose broader discussions on disability, in the companies. We also propose discussions in institutions such as trade unions and other institutions in the city so that the population seeks to find out and keep posted with the rights of inclusion of person with disabilities in the workplace, in addition to promoting a broader debate to assist local businesses in proposing practical actions for this inclusion to occur.

## 6 Conclusion

In addition to other goals, the Quotas Act - in its 27th anniversary in 2018 - intends to provide opportunities of inclusion for professionals with disabilities in the workplace and participation in the productive community and, for that, the role of companies as jobs creators is very relevant. The hiring of these professionals is not a recent issue, however, in the context studied, there are companies that still show poor lack of preparation and/or interest on this subject; in certain circumstances, there are even strategies to circumvent the law. This attitude is almost aggressive towards professionals with disabilities who are looking for work opportunities because they have their rights disrespected.

The data found in this research reinforce what the literature shows: the education level of people with disabilities is low, considering that in the group of 51 professionals with disabilities (employed and unemployed) who participated in this research none has a college degree or is attending a graduation course. The context of this population should also be considered: it is a city in the interior, where opportunities for higher education are restricted. The consequences of a low education level are reflected in the directing of these professionals to jobs and in the perception of lower wage levels when compared with other employees.

The Human Resources department has many challenges in this context because, in addition to the routine activities inherent in hiring, maintaining, developing and dismissing personnel, the task of developing other activities for the effective inclusion of persons with or without disabilities in the company is also delegated. This department, upon meeting the management requirements and increasing the requirements to hire professionals with disabilities, creates alternatives that make it harder, if not impossible, to include such professionals. An alternative would be to find ways to help them qualify within the company, after their hiring. This sector must also seek partnerships with other sectors in the company

and with other institutions in this process so that their actions are more effective.

Production Engineering can assist in these actions, as it provides the future engineers with a broad vision of the productive processes, enabling them to interact with departments such as the Human Resources Management and prepare actions in the companies to make inclusion more effective.

According to the literature presented, social inclusion in the workplace is a complex topic, so it is necessary to suggest the broadening of research agendas in a multidisciplinary way in the scope of Production Engineering, Business Administration, Organizational Psychology and convene other areas of knowledge, since social inclusion must also be part of the discussions but also of the practices of professionals in this area, because their support is essential to Human Resources managers and professionals with disabilities who are looking for vacancies in the labor market.

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