

# ICF implementation in targeted employment of persons with disabilities: the Italian work in progress.

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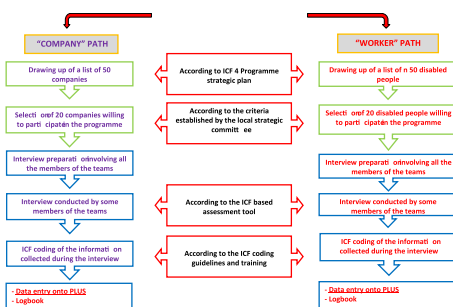
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**Abstract.** In 2010, a new national programme was launched on the evaluation of functioning/disability of disabled persons in order to study the conditions necessary for their inclusion in a work setting and to include a study sample. Matching a person's features with company's requirements is the key factor for a successful work placement. The common language provided by the ICF is tested to verify how the ICF model of disability may be useful to facilitate such a matching process.

## Introduction

Action on the employment situation of disabled people in European countries should be considered in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the Lisbon Agenda and European Employment Strategy, the Employment Directive 2000/78/EC, and the European Disability Action Plan. The current economic downturn raises substantial challenges to the goals and actions proposed in recent periods of policy development. There is a substantial lack of detailed, up-to-date and comparative information about the employment situation of disabled people in European countries (1). National background - The Law no. 68 12 March 1999 ("The right to work of persons with disabilities") regulates the access in the labour market of disabled peoples in Italy, through local support and targeted employment services. The key points of this law are: the global evaluation of the individual, highlighting above all the personal skills and the acquired competences rather than disability; the role attributed to training and retraining disabled people targeted to the demands of the labour market; and the presence of incentives and tax relief for the companies that hire disabled persons. This scheme is known as "targeted employment" because it aims to allow disabled people to compete on the labour market. The implementation of ICF-based assessment tools to realize the targeted employment of people with disabilities started in Italy in 2004 and it represents a work in progress (2). In 2010, a new national programme was launched on the evaluation of functioning/disability of disabled persons in order to study the conditions necessary for their inclusion in a work setting (ICF 4 Programme).

**Figure 1 . ICF 4 Programme flowchart**



Italia Lavoro is the governmental body responsible for the programme on behalf of the Ministry of Labour. On the basis of a specific agreement, the WHOFIC Italian CC supports Italia Lavoro to train professionals, to develop the ICF based assessment protocols, to decide how the information system may use ICF as a standard, to analyse data, and to monitor the programme.

## Methods & Materials

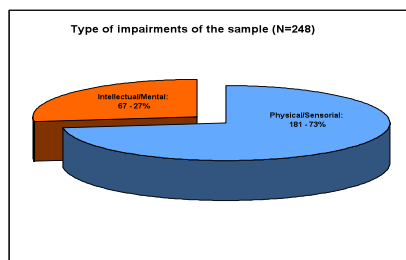
ICF 4 Programme Organization - A steering national committee and 11 local committees were established with the aim to monitor the implementation and to gather outputs and results.

The workflow is shown in Fig.1

**Assessment tools** - Two ICF-based assessment tools (Employee Assessment Protocol, Company Assessment Protocol) were developed. The first was developed on the basis of the ministerial schedule for the evaluation of persons with disability and was set up starting from the protocol defined by the WHO-FIC Italian CC and tested in more than 1,000 persons in Italy under a previous national programme (2).

The second represents a new way to analyze a work setting having in mind the principle that a successful placement depends on how a work place may be adapted to the need of a disabled employee.

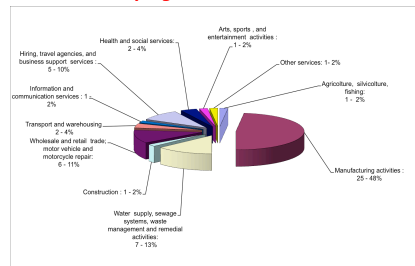
**Figure 2 . ICF4 Programme - Types of impairments of the 248 people that voluntarily accepted to be involved in the programme**



**Database** - A specific individual database (named PLUS) was realized and it was incorporated in a more general national labour information system.

**Training** - CoTraining was provided, on how to carry out interviews and to input data onto PLUS starting from September 2010 to July 2011.

**Figure 3 . ICF4 Programme - Types of companies involved in the programme**



## Results

More than 700 professionals from 11 Italian Regions were trained in the period September 2010-July 2011. 256 of them were grouped in 49 multidisciplinary teams and directly involved in the assessment, (Table 1).

A sample of 248 disabled persons from 11 Regions will be recruited and assessed (Fig.2). More than 200 companies that must hire persons with disabilities were selected and their assessment is ongoing (Fig.3). 11 focus groups were realized in order to monitor the state of the art, to analyze and solve problems in coding information using ICF, and to update the teams on the general programme.

**Table 1 . Professionals involved in ICF4 Programme**

HEALTH operators (C.M. L.104/92 and L.68/99: doctors, social workers, administrative workers)	107	42%
WORK operators - (CPI operators, CPI trainers, provincial coordinators L. 68/99)	86	34%
SOCIAL POLICIES operators - (social workers, social services contact persons)	9	4%
INPS operators - (medico legal doctors, administrative workers of Medical Commissions)	8	3%
UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL operators - (disability offices contact persons)	7	3%
THIRD SECTOR operators - (social cooperators)	2	1%
DISABLED PERSONS ASSOCIATIONS - (FISH, FAND)	4	2%
Operators of the territorial multidisciplinary groups:		
Doctors	8	3%
Social workers	9	4%
Nurses	7	3%
Administrative professionals	9	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Conclusions

A well-known problem is that disability is not a single and clear policy concept, varying considerably in definition between administrative jurisdictions or relying upon individuals' perceptions about their disability status. The EU social model approach acknowledges disability as a social construct and focuses on the environmental barriers that restrict participation, while national policies are often dependent upon medical or functional assessments of individual impairment and capacity. WHO conveys some of this complexity by representing disability as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors. The issue is further complicated when trying to disentangle the relationship between definition of disability and systems of disability benefit. Matching a person's features with company's requirements is the key factor for a successful work placement. The ICF 4 Programme represents the first attempt in Europe to study this matching using the ICF model of disability. The common language provided by the ICF is tested to verify how the ICF model of disability may be useful to facilitate such a matching process. A first analysis shows that the ICF-based approach to assessment of both workers and companies is able to detect the aspects crucial for target employment. Nevertheless, the data on services and systems that support disabled people employment are difficult to map to ICF Environmental factors and adaptations are under study. The description of the job placement using ICF is challenging and a first mapping of job activities to ICF A&P is in progress.

## References

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