

# Education of Disabled Adult People

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## **Abstract**

We live in the so called "learning society" where nobody is deprived of the possibility to learn during all his life. In her article, the author deals with the forms of the lifelong education as well as with the questions of the education of adult people with different kinds of disability. She analyses the reasons and factors supporting but also making impossible the active participation of this target group in educational activities. The author also presents the partial results of the realised project aimed on evaluating the current situation in the given topic.

**Key words:** lifelong education, disability, motivation, hindrances in further education;

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, probably nobody has doubts about the importance of ideas, proposals and needs connected with the lifelong education which are more and more intensively emphasized and highlighted regarding the demographic factors but also due to the economical, political and social changes influencing the present society. No human being should be deprived of the possibility of learning for all his life, nor due to the reasons of his age or disability, as it is also confirmed in the *Memorandum of Lifelong Education* (2000, s. 4): „*The lifelong education is already not only one aspect of education and professional preparation; it must become a leading principle for providing possibilities and participation in education in its manifold contexts. All people, without exception, should have the same opportunities to adapt themselves to the requirements of social and economical changes and to participate actively in creating the future of the human society.*“

Education represents a key factor for every person by entering into the labour market and also by getting and keeping his job. It is possible to say that this assumption is twofoldly valid when talking about citizens with disability because their educational level can become the factor „neutralising“ the existence of their disability and it helps them to obtain a dignified position at the labour market. To refuse an access to the education means, at the same time, to make impossible a good work adaptation and improvement of the prestige of disabled people (Vrubel, M., Pančocha, K., 2012; Bednárík, R. et al., 2006). The education of disabled people is frequently interpreted only as saturation of educational needs of children and teenagers and the lifelong dimension of education is forgotten. However, this kind of education is also a very important tool of the continual personal development of every person (Repková, K., Sedláková, T., 2014).

### **Lifelong education and its forms**

The ancient philosophers were already dealing with the topic of lifelong education but this area was systematically put into practice under the influence of current social – economical conditions and factors in accordance with the knowledge from psychology which confirms the ability of a person to learn at every age, not excluding the productive and post-productive period of life. The idea of lifelong education arose as a consequence of changes in the perception of education itself and it expresses a new attitude towards the education which puts into the centre of attention the processes of learning and it declares that opportunities of learning available during all the life are very important attributes of the present society. At the same time, we are witnesses of the transformation of the society where the educational level is becoming a key factor. We are talking about the so called educated, learning society which requires from its citizens certain competences and qualifications which are not provided only by school education. The task of lifelong education is to provide help to every person in the general development but also in the development of his abilities, with the aim to enable him carrying out his creative potential. It considers learning as a natural and inevitable activity of a man in every age period. The concept of lifelong education includes the possibility to gain, complete, recover and use also earlier acquired knowledge and skills at any age. It is a concept of current educational politics and also a concept of politics of developing human resources. At the same time, it is supposed that there will occur the widening of the psychical horizon, the increasing of the cultural level, the developing of talents and also character traits, the gaining of qualification or specialisation and the improving in the profession. The lifelong education shows the direction of the present reforms of education in the area of general, vocational and academic school system as well as in further professional education of employees, education of adults and in alternative education in families. However, it is not already achieved reality but it represents a gradual process and realisation of its particular elements. It is not limited only to the passing through the educational system but it also emphasizes the development of natural relationships between learning and work. Promoting the idea of lifelong learning is not only a pedagogical issue or a topic of education of adults. It requires a whole set of coordinated legal, administrative, organisational and methodical decisions (Beneš, M., 2009; Palán, Z., 2006; Porubská, G., 2009; Rabušicová, M., 2006; English, Leona M., Mayo, P., 2012).

The concept of lifelong education is derived from the idea that an individual himself is able to direct his learning and search for educational possibilities during all his life. The emphasis is put on the freedom, flexibility and projecting of personal development which leads to the fulfilling of his own dreams and personal satisfaction. This perception of lifelong education has two basic aims: the support of active citizenship and the support of employability (the ability to find and keep a job) (Rabušicová, M., 2006).

Considering the strategy of lifelong education in the Czech Republic from the year 2007, the authors Rabušic and Rabušicová (2008) hold an opinion that it is more suitable to use the term of lifelong learning than lifelong education because, in fact, it means an incessant disposing of an individual to learn than a continual and permanent study. Therefore we include in this concept also the learning activities of a man which are not organised but they run spontaneously by everyday human activities (while working, staying in the nature, at cultural, sport or social events, etc.)

The implemented form of applying the requirement of lifelong education is the intentional and directed education in the educational institutions. It takes place mostly in the school system which represents a sub-system of a wider educational system including not only schools but also companies and other educational institutions as well. A cooperation is required between these individual parts. Disabled adult people can also study in the primary and secondary sphere (in case of their incompleteness) which represents the basic education (primary, lower secondary education) and secondary education (lower secondary vocational education, secondary vocational education, complete secondary general education, complete secondary vocational education) as well as in the tertiary sphere which is divided into higher specialised education and academic education. The specific feature of institutional option is the so called professional education which is a part of further education and, for example, it is carried out by companies or job centres as qualification or re-qualification education (Müller, O., 2014; Kozík, T., Belica, J., 2007).

From the point of view of the operationalism, we can similarly divide the lifelong education of disabled citizens into the following, mutually related parts:

- preparation for profession (the system of initiatory education – primary, secondary and academic school system);
- education and preparation for the labour market (system of further education);
- social and work rehabilitation.

(Bednárík, R. et al., 2006).

We can define the current state of education in Slovakia as a change of the unified conception of education „everybody in the same way“ with the same aim and the same means into the conception which is primarily based on the individual development of a personality of every person respecting his potential possibilities and skills. The mentioned conception of education is equally valid for disabled children and teenagers. In our country, the education of this final group is performed and provided in special or integrated conditions. Among the institutions of special school system, there we include special schools from nursery schools up to the secondary special classes in traditional schools. Under the integrated education we understand individual integration of a disabled child in a traditional school. In spite of the current effort to support the education of pupils with special educational needs in a form of integration, their higher number in the special school system is still the reality. However, the process of gradual equalization of both educational models has been running on (Schmidtová, M., 2007; Repková, K., Sedláková, T., 2014).

An assumption of arranging a certain level of care and support is one part of the social relationship to disabled people. At the same time, it is also an indicator of the maturity of the given society. Special educational support of disabled adult people takes place in health, work and social areas by means of the complex rehabilitation care and it concentrates mostly on learning, activation and education (re-education, therapy) in specialised educational institutions. Vašek (2006) and Pipeková & col. (2010) describe up to eight parts of the complex rehabilitation care: curative, work,

social, educational, psychological, technical and legal. It focuses on all areas of life where the disabled people are disadvantaged or, in some way, restricted and limited in their self-development and self-realisation.

The complex rehabilitation needs cooperation among different areas. In this context, the disability is perceived as a fact which gives a certain dimension to the life. Naming of all activities which a disabled person is not able to do or feels certain limitations is currently substituted by modern attitudes. They try to specify not only the existing limitations in their personal, social and professional life, but they also deal with possibilities how to eliminate, alleviate and compensate these restrictions effectively. The complex rehabilitation requires a holistic perception of a man as a bio – psycho – socio – spiritual being (Jankovský, J., 2012).

Nowadays, the education of disabled people has an inclusive tendency what is supported also by the school law where are thoroughly elaborated all conditions of formal education of pupils requiring special care. The author Sayoud Solárová (2011, in: Pančocha, K. at al., 2013) emphasizes that it is inevitable to deal with further education of disabled people also after finishing their school attendance. If they are not able to find a job at the labour market due to their insufficient qualification, the risk of their social exclusion is much higher. However, by creating the offer of programmes and activities of lifelong education it is necessary to take into consideration some specific factors, such as the type and degree of disability, the age of a disabled person, the achieved level of his education and qualification, the mobility and also his social background.

We will find similar attitude also by Jesenský (2000). He states that by educational influencing on disabled adults we have to take into account their needs, possibilities and roles, their conditions and situations limiting the quality of their life and also the specific aspects of their life process. According to Sayoud Solárová (2011; in: Pančocha, K. et al., 2013), their lifelong education should be aimed mostly on gaining the computer literacy and language competences as well as on acquiring social and communication skills which are indispensable for the current labour market. Satisfaction of individual subjects represents the key factor for the successful process and results of the education of adults. When talking about their satisfaction, the most important fact in this education is the level of saturation of their interests, respectively, to what extent the reality approaches or goes farther from the needs and desires of the participants of education (Plamínek, J., 2010).

According to Novosad (2006), it is possible to divide the lifelong education of disabled people into two parts:

- for those people who want to get a re-qualification according to the requirements and situation at the labour market or for those people wishing to gain specialisation in their profession;
- for those people who have already achieved a certain educational level and they are motivated to increase their knowledge with the aim to grow and develop themselves personally.

Therefore the lifelong education of disabled adult people can have a form of activation, practice, education and therapy by offering social services and by work activity which is supported within the so called work rehabilitation. The means of developing the work activity is creating of the protected work positions, founding of the social companies, offering of the personal or work assistance and offering of the supported employment (Müller, O., 2014).

### Factors influencing the participation of disabled people in further education

Motivation represents the basic assumption for the effective use of strategical tools and it is a requirement of active interest of an individual in his professional and civic development within the lifelong education. It represents the energy which leads human acting towards the achievement of a certain goal. A complex of motives, connected with needs, interests, attitudes and abilities influences the beginning, the process and also the results of learning of an adult person who can learn but he does not have to do it. Therefore the best motivation is the so called self-motivation which awakes the energy to study. It is necessary to keep and revive the desire to learn mostly with the strengthening of one's own motivation. At the same time, the motivation of a man to learn permanently, to gain new knowledge or information, to acquire new skills is a basic condition for the successful realisation of the concept of lifelong education and it is also his main „driving force“ because only a motivated person is willing to dedicate his time and money for widening of his knowledge horizon. Therefore we talk about the proper motivation of a person to learn continually, to evaluate and project the self-education and self-learning and, simultaneously, to project one's own life programme by creating material and spiritual values (Mužík, J., 2005; Vychová, H., 2008; Perhács, J., 2011).

An assumption of effective education is the creation of the motivating environment.

From the point of view of the motivation of learning adult individuals, it is generally valid that:

- they need to know why they are supposed to learn,
- they need to learn on basis of their experience, knowledge and skills they have acquired until now,
- they approach the proper study as a solving of a problem,
- they learn the best if the topic is directly important and meaningful for them (Šiška, J., 2005).

The author Vychová (2008) mentions also other motivational factors or positives, respectively, which the education provides to a person and therefore they often motivate him to learn:

- a better position at the labour market,
- decreasing of the risk that a person will stay unemployed,
- a higher salary as a result of acquiring higher level of education,
- a better orientation in the informative society,
- a better quality of life.

The same author names also other factors influencing the participation of adult people in further education:

- *the appreciation of professional preparation* – the employees will be more willing to learn if their effort for higher qualification is adequately appreciated.
- *offers of educational activities* – the offer should be manifold and it should react to the needs of potential applicants. The contents of courses should be in accordance with the requirements of clients. Their time and local accessibility plays a very important role in this process.
- *financial costs* – excessively high financial costs for study can discourage interested people from learning and therefore a benefit for educational activities from employers can increase the interest of employees in studying.
- *the development of the situation at the labour market* – the current situation at the labour market emphasizes the importance of further education or, eventually, a change of the original qualification. In case of many specialised professions, continual education is a basic assumption for their practising.

- *the social background* – the social background plays an important role by creating attitudes of an individual towards learning. The importance, which is given to the learning itself by an employee, has an influence on his interest in increasing his current knowledge and experience (Vychová, H., 2008).

Taking into consideration a group of people with disability, we have to mention also factors which decrease the motivation of these people to learn:

- the disability itself is a source of hindrances and complications in the process of learning, such as long-term acute states of their illness, mental disability, learning disorders or increased tiredness,
- an excessive dependence on the help from other people of their surroundings,
- a high degree of disability, limiting or completely making impossible to enjoy the success,
- inadequate requirements from teachers and lecturers, or underestimation of the skills of the participants of learning with special educational needs,
- the social pressure emphasizing their defect, disability, stigmatisation,
- the unacceptance of their own disability, the dominance of resignation, passivity, yielding to the unchangeable destiny,
- the barriers of technical – organisational character (Jesenský, J., 2000a).

### **The methodological orientation of the research**

In the centre of our attention there were citizens – employees with disability, eventually with disadvantage in the system of further education in the company, firm or organisation where they work or outside their working place as well. The aim of our empirical research was to find out what educational possibilities are provided to them, which of these options they use and, at the same time, what hindrances they have to go through, respectively, what demotivates and prevents them from participation in the activities of further education. Our research sample was formed by disabled people who have a job, respectively, they are employed in whatever area of employment. We know that mental, physical, visual and auditive disabilities are the most frequent types of disabilities in the population. Regarding the fact that people with mental disability form a specific group for the education and also for the employment, we decided to administrate the questionnaire to the responders with physical, visual and auditive disability. To establish a contact with our target group, which represents the basic part in our research, we requested also many protected working places in Slovakia employing disabled people.

### **The methods and methodology of the research**

We adapted the choice of research methods used by gaining, analysing, compiling and interpreting the data to the assigned empirical targets. We gained new data by means of the *literary method* and *the method of a questionnaire*. Regarding the fact that our research topic has mostly a descriptive character, we used *a questionnaire of our own construction* to gain the empirical data. This questionnaire also had its online version. We chose the given method because it is difficult to contact directly the employees with disability due to the law about the protection of personal data. Therefore it seemed to us that it is more effective to obtain necessary data via the employers who subsequently passed this questionnaire to their disabled employees. We collected the data within the time period from August 2015 to October 2015. As we also used a suitable online questionnaire in many cases, it is not possible to determine the exact number of distributed questionnaires nor to define their retrievability. We transformed the obtained questionnaires filled in the printed version to the

electronical form as well. 78 responders answered altogether, we had to exclude four participants of this group because they did not fulfil two basic requirements of the research: they did not have any kind of disability or they were not employed. The number of valid responders included in the scientific research and subsequently in the final evaluation was 74. To compile and evaluate the obtained data from the questionnaire we used *the methods of descriptive statistics* (the determination of numerosness, the percentage evaluation) and *the methods of logical operations* (the analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction and the comparativeness). Subsequently we recorded the results of the empirical research in the particular tables and we completed them by means of the qualitative analysis.

### The results of the research

At the beginning of our questionnaire there we asked about the basic data of the responders, that means about their age, sex, kind of disability, as well as about their profession where they currently work and finally also about the highest level of the education they have achieved until now. We recorded the obtained data in the following tables. The first of them reflects the age category of the responders of our research.

**Table 1: The age of the responders**

The age of the responders	Number	Percentage
Until the age of 30	14	18,9
31 – 45 years	31	41,9
46 – 60 years	26	35,1
More than 60 years	3	4,1
<b>Together</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>

The second table of our final work, describing the basic data of the responders, reflects the number of disabled men and women who provided us precious information from their life related to the possibilities of education in spite of their existing health or social disadvantage.

**Table 2: The sex of the responders**

The sex of the responders	Number	Percentage
Men	20	27
Women	54	73
<b>Together</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>

We recorded the following facts in the answers: the representatives of the male sex created a smaller group that means 20 individuals forming 27 % of all participants. The female population was represented by 54 women forming 73 % of all participants. Thinking about disabled people we understand that it means thinking about a big variability regarding the kind, type or degree of disability and their manifold combinations whereas we always talk about a new quality of disability

and about the need of an individual access towards each disabled person. In spite of the fact that there exist generally valid descriptions of etiology and symptomatology of identical disabilities, every person with special needs is original and equally unique are his expressions and the coping with his own disability. Though, we included in our questionnaire also a question about the type of disability our responders have. The table number 3 brings us the following overview.

**Table 3: The kind of disability of the responders**

<b>The kind of disability</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Physical disability	48	65,8
Visual disability	7	9,6
Auditive disability	10	13,7
Multiple or combined disability	9	10,9
<b>Together</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>

In Slovakia there does not exist any national statistics which would record the exact number of people with disability of different kind and degree. Various legal systems and subsystems perceive the disability from a different point of view and they always use their own assessorial criteria for specifying the relevance of disability. From the point of view of precising the number of disabled people, we can consider the System of compensation as the most universal one which involves people of all ages and all kinds of disability what represents about 8% of all population in our country. However, there do not exist statistics regarding the prevalence of a certain kind of disability. In general we know that the highest number form people with mental and physical disability (the physical disability includes up to three groups of people as we described it in the theoretical part). Also in our research there participated mostly people with somatic disability, counting 48 individuals that is 65,8% of all participants. They were followed by responders with auditive disability (13,7%), multiple or combined disability(10,9%) and visual disability (9,6%).

Then we wanted to find out the achieved educational level. In this way we could evaluate the relationship between the degree of education and the subsequent interest in activities of further education, that is in courses, schoolings, seminars, etc.

**Table 4: The highest achieved level of education of the responders**

<b>The highest level of education</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Basic education	4	5,4
Secondary education without the school-leaving examination, only with the vocational certificate	11	14,9
Secondary education with the school-leaving examination	36	48,6
Academic education	23	31,1
<b>Together</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>



Almost the half of disabled employees (36; 48,6%) included in our research, has achieved the secondary education finished with the school-leaving examination during their life. The second place in the Table 4 was occupied by a group of disabled people with the academic education (23; 31,1%). Then followed people having the secondary education finished with the vocational certificate (11; 14,9%). The last place was taken by disabled people who have achieved only the basic educational degree. These results confirm the fact that the current society tries to enable education for all groups of inhabitants without any discrimination and that we really live in the „learning“ society.

The target group of our research was formed by people with a certain kind of disability who are employed in whatever area at the labour market. Therefore we considered it relevant and, at the same time, interesting to ask them about their current work position which they have in their professional life. We classified the obtained answers into specific groups according to the *Catalogue of work positions* with a stated number of disabled employees in the given are (<http://www.pozicie.sk/#oblasti>). The following results demonstrate that now also disabled people are active in many areas of work life despite their barriers and restrictions: Administration (6x); Economy, Finance and Accounting (8x); Human Resources and Personalism (1x); Tourism, Gastronomy and Hotelier Business (7x); Assisting Work (4x); Production (9x); Safety and Security (3x); Transport, Shipping and Logistics (4x); Insurance Business (1x); Chemical Industry (1x); School System, Education, Science, Research (7x); Journalism, Polygraphic Area, Massmedia (1x); Customer Services (1x); Marketing, Advertising (1x); Supreme Management (1x); Management (2x); Building and Real Estates Area (2x); Textile, Clothing and Leather Industry (2x); Healthcare and Social Care (9x); Commerce (1x); Information Technologies (2x); Translating and Interpreting (1x).

The responders participated in many different courses or trainings at their work and also in their free time as it is possible to see it in their answers. We were also interested in finding out what area of education attracts their attention the most and what they would choose if they could decide about it themselves. According to the instructions of the questionnaire, the responders were allowed to mark only one answer to this question so that we could determine the dominance of choice of the most preferred area of educational activities. We recorded their answers in the following table.

**Table 5: The preferred area of education**

The preferred area of education	Number	Percentage
To learn in the area of one's own profession	46	62,1
To learn in the area of hobbies and interests	17	23
To learn in the civic area	4	5,4
No area of education	7	9,5
Other areas	0	0
<b>Together</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100</b>

The obtained data confirm that more than the half of our research sample (62,1%) is interested in improving personally and professionally in the area where these disabled people work. They want to acquire new knowledge in their employment area and to deepen already mastered skills. Seventeen responders, representing 23% of all participants, would prefer to improve their abilities and acquire new knowledge in the area of their interests and hobbies. Only a small percentage (5,4%) of

responders chose the education in the civic area and seven participants (9,5%) did not select any given option and they did not mention any other option they would be interested in.

The previous question was centered on a certain area of education generally. However, in the next part of our research we wanted to find out preferred educational activities by disabled people. The number of options, which they could choose and mark, was not limited.

**Table 6: Preferred educational activities**

Preferred educational activities	Number	Percentage
Complementary education in one's own profession	42	56,8
Re-qualification course	13	17,6
Foreign language	32	43,2
Work with PC and other technology	22	29,7
Handling at the offices	8	10,8
Accounting	7	9,5
Communication and other skills to get on well with people	20	27
Preparation of meals	8	10,8
Housekeeping, handling with finances	7	9,5
Ability of cooperation by solving problems of disabled people with public institutions and other organisations	22	29,7
Learning about the rights of disabled people	18	24,3
No activity	8	10,8
Other activities	1	1,4

Like in the previous question, which was asking about the preferred area of education by our responders, they answered also this question identically – they mostly prefer participating in the complementary education in their own profession. It is a good sign when employees are motivated to a professional growth and they are never satisfied with the achieved educational level but they feel the need of lifelong education. The second position was occupied by the interest in learning foreign languages what is not surprising for us because, nowadays, there are many possibilities to travel abroad to study or to work without any problems. Many people, mostly the young ones, use this possibility of gaining foreign experience. As we can see, both the youngest and also the middle generation are aware of the necessity to improve their language skills and therefore 32 responders (43,2%) probably marked this item as the area of interest. As we live in the period of new technical possibilities, it is not surprising that the third position was occupied by the choice of educational activities named *Work with PC and other technology*. 22 people chose this option what represents 29,7% of all participants. We are very pleased that a significant number of the responders chose those items which are also included among eight key competences for lifelong education described in the document *Key competences for lifelong education – European referential framework (2007)*. Specifically, we think about the communication in foreign languages and the digital competence.

The same number of disabled employees (22%) chose from our educational offer also the following area: *The ability of cooperation by solving problems of disabled people with public institutions and other organisations*. It points at their need to be able to communicate with competent

institutions which can and should guarantee the existing rights of disabled people. The responders of the research showed the smallest interest in learning activities of everyday life, such as preparation of meals, housekeeping, handling with finances, communication at the offices, etc. We suppose that school education has played a very significant role in this direction. One responder suggested another educational activity which was not mentioned in the offer of options, specifically it is a course of handicrafts.

We realise that it is a motive which represents a very important factor influencing the enthusiasm or the apathy of a man to learn. A motive is a driving force for doing any kind of activity. Therefore we included in our questionnaire the following question: *What is for you a motive for the participation in further education?* The responders had more options to choose and they could mark more than one. The Table 7 points at tea fact that the disabled employees were really motivated to improve themselves professionally by participating in the activities of further education. When talking about this topic, we would like to emphasize the fact Průcha (2014) refers to. He says that there overlap three psychological traits in the attitudes of adults towards education and that it is difficult to separate them. These three traits are: motivation – interest – need. They are sometimes used as synonyms in the psychological and pedagogical theory but the mentioned author highlights the differences among them in his publication.

**Table 7: Motives of participation in further education**

<b>Motives of participation in further education</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Professional growth and carrier promotion	28	37,8
Financial evaluation	27	36,5
Increasing of qualification	32	43,2
Reducing the risk of staying without work	22	29,7
Desire, wish and need to learn – a personal motivation to educate oneself	30	40,5
Nothing motivates me to further education	10	13,5
Other motives	2	2,7

The results of the given table clearly show and confirm the fact we mentioned above when we marked the area of education in one's own profession as the most preferred one. We can see that the most frequent motive of participation of disabled employees in different educational options is increasing of qualification. 32 responders marked this option what represents 43,2% of the whole research sample. We were pleased to find out that this option was immediately followed by the statement that the disabled people feel the desire, wish and need to learn and they are lead towards it by their personal inner motivation. As we know this kind of motivation is more important for the stability of making decisions than purely outer motivation. 30 participants (40,5%) answered in this way. The third place was occupied by the option of *professional growth and carrier promotion* which was marked by 28 responders of the research. For 27 participants (36,5%) the financial evaluation also plays a very important role. 22 responders (29,7%) see in further education a certain guarantee of reducing the risk of staying without work. Unfortunately, the option „*Nothing motivates me to further education*“ was a feedback of 10 disabled people (13,5%). We noticed three answers, respectively, the

descriptions of the educational motives, by the item *Other motives: to be able to show one's own knowledge, abilities and experience; to reach the appropriate evaluation and to understand the relationship of the state administration to the clients.*

Besides the motivational factors which stimulate and strengthen the interest of an individual in further education, there exist also other factors which can act as hindrances and they can provoke frustration or apathy rather than desire to participate in educational activities. The following table demonstrates exactly those aspects which can act in the limiting way regarding the relationship to the participation in offered educational programmes.

**Table 8: Hindrances in the participation in further education**

Hindrances in the participation in further education	Number	Percentage
Difficulties in transport to the educational institution	8	10,8
Insufficient wheelchair-access environment in the educational institutions	5	6,8
Unsuitable offers of educational activities and programmes	14	18,9
Unsuitable time and timetable	20	27
High financial costs for the participation in educational activities	28	37,8
Inadequate requirements from lectors or teachers	3	4,1
Personal barriers (e.g. „I am too old for learning“, „Learning makes me tired“, „It is not interesting for me“, etc.)	10	13,5
Employer	4	5,4
Family reasons	10	13,5
Health problems	22	29,7
Nothing prevents me from the participation	11	14,9
Other hindrances	4	5,4

28 responders, representing 37,8% of all participants, see the biggest hindrance to continue learning in the high financial costs required for the participation in educational activities. It is a pity that material and economical factors are becoming the reason of decreased interest of disabled employees in further education. Another well-founded reason, which we recorded on the second place regarding the number of answers, were the health problems of the disabled employees. The health problems form a common part of the everyday life of a disabled person and they influence the quality of his life in a significant way. This reason was marked by 22 responders what forms 29,7% of all participants. Unsuitable time and timetable of educational activities were also marked by 20 people (27%) as a factor influencing their lack of interest in educational possibilities. Then followed other reasons which were mentioned less frequently, such as unsuitable offers of educational activities and programmes (18,9%), personal barriers (13,5%), difficulties in transport to the educational institution (10,8%). We have to admit the fact that despite the effort to build wheelchair-access buildings and to enable wheelchair access for disabled people, five responders mentioned *insufficient wheelchair-*

*access environment* in the given building as a hindrance for the participation in educational activities. Four participants (5,4%) perceive their employer as a hindrance to improve personally and professionally and three participants (4,1%) also marked the item *inadequate requirements from lecturers and teachers* as a barrier. However, it is true that eleven responders (14,9%), probably due to the lack of interest or apathy, do not attend any educational activities because they stated that they do not have any inner or outer hindrances which would prevent them from the participation. Four responders (5,4%) mentioned in the item *Other hindrances* the following answers: *I have other hobbies; the educational activities are without signing; the age; the retirement.*

## Conclusion

In our article we tried to emphasize the importance and significance of further education as well as employment of disabled people with the aim of their maximal development and active integration into the work and social life. We seldom realise that the need of further education is as important for disabled people as for intact people. However, it is necessary to take into account the fact which is also confirmed by our research findings that the education should be precisely adapted to the disabled person who already has a certain work position or he is in the stage of looking for an adequate employment. The education should be also meaningful and it should lead to the practical application of new knowledge and skills. Every new acquired skill, ability and habit help to improve the quality of life of a disabled person. They also help disabled people to take responsibility for their life, they support them in making decisions when solving everyday problems as well as in choosing of what they think it is important. However, we must not exclude the necessity of the positive motivation so that disabled people would like to participate in the educational process and they could handle the difficulties they would certainly have to face despite the effort of the society to provide the inclusive education of all age categories.

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