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System of Inclusion Policy Indicators

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The available statistical information on the living conditions of people with disabilities (PCD) in Portugal is not only scarce but also fragmented across sectors and conceptually inconsistent. This lack of harmonization hinders analysis and makes it difficult to evaluate and monitor the impact of public policies for inclusion. The SIPI project was specifically designed to address this gap.

Main results

Despite progress in recent years in the field of inclusion policies, people with disabilities continue to face exclusion and discrimination in several key areas, particularly employment, accessibility, transport, and health. The findings from the SIPI panel of people with disabilities are concerning and highlight the urgency of continuing the project as a scientific tool to support informed and effective policymaking in this sector..

Recommendations

It is recommended the institutionalization of the project, consolidating and strengthening partnerships with INR, I.P and other private entities. Additionally, further reinforcement of the following public policy measures is advised: i) Independent Life Support Service (SAVI), Supported Employment Contract; iii) Social Inclusion Benefit (PSI). Finally, and given the results obtained in the field of discrimination, it is recommended that a national, cross-sector awareness campaign be designed and implemented to combat discrimination against this population group.

Recipient: Office of the Secretary of State for Social Action and Inclusion

Introduction

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), particularly Article 31, recommends the creation of a system of indicators to monitor the impact of public policies on the living conditions of people with disabilities. However, this recommendation has not yet been implemented in Portugal.

Statistical information on the living conditions of people with disabilities (PCD) is essential not only for monitoring existing public policies but also for designing and implementing new ones. Yet, the current scarcity and fragmentation of available data limit the understanding of this issue, hindering the evaluation and monitoring of the impact of inclusion policies on this population.

To address this gap, this collaborative pilot project proposes the development of a system of indicators, drawing on three main sources:

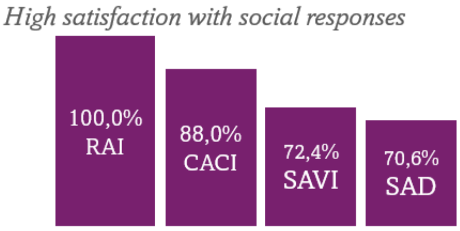
i) administrative data collected from public and private entities holding relevant records;

ii) a panel of people with disabilities (aged over 14), capturing both their living conditions and their own perceptions of reality;

iii) a panel of families, assessing the impact of disability on the household.

Main Results

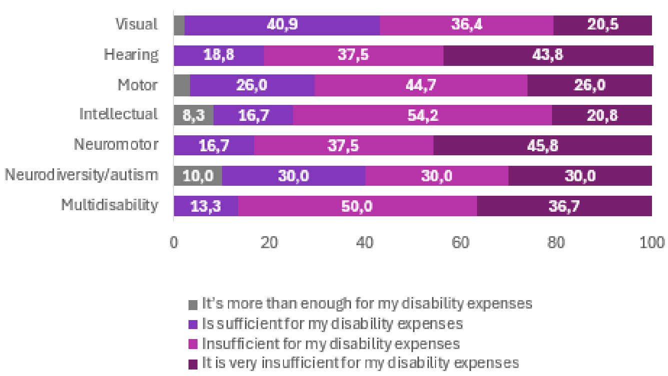
This collaborative project involved the collaboration of 29 public institutions, 26 Non-Governmental Organizations of People with Disabilities (ONGPDs) and 16 other entities. The system of indicators was developed through focus groups, with the participation of experts and contributions from national recognized NGOs. Data on the indicators were requested from the relevant public and private entities. The panel of people with disabilities (PDC) included 731 respondents, far exceeding the initial target of 100 participants. The preliminary results from the PCD panel show that respondents are globally satisfied with the social responses (RAI, CAVI, SAVI, SAD) provided within the framwork of social protection.


High satisfaction with social responses

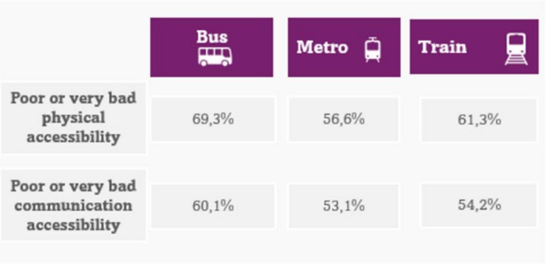
However, regarding cash benefits, 69.2% of respondents reported that the amount received through the Social Benefit for Inclusion (PSI) is insufficient — or very insufficient — to cover disability-related expenses. This pattern is consistent across all types of disability..

As for the monthly net income, 38,1% of respondents earn less than the minimum wage, including those who receive the PSI. In the field of employment, the sample data show a lower permanent employment rate (37,7%) and a higher unemployment rate (12,8%) compared to the general population. With regard to education, respondents report high satisfaction with the supports and adaptations available (73,7%). However, they are not satisfied with the Individual Transition Plans (PIT) (78,2% consider it non-existent or insufficient), the tools available (58,3%), teacher training (58.3%), the number and technical preparation of specialized professionals (34,8%), etc.

Perceptions about the value of PSI in relation to disability expenses (%)



Regarding accessibility, more than half of the PCD are dissatisfied with digital (approximately 66%), physical (approximately 60,0%) and communicational accessibility of public services and public transport (particularly on buses, metro and trains, as shown in the table below).



	Bus	Metro	Train
Poor or very bad physical accessibility	69,3%	56,6%	61,3%
Poor or very bad communication accessibility	60,1%	53,1%	54,2%

Regarding health, 68.8% of respondents believe that the NHS is poorly prepared to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

In terms of housing accessibility, 54.3% report that access to their homes is not adequate.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the services provided under the Support Services Allocation System (SAPA). However, dissatisfaction is evident regarding waiting times: 41.4% waited more than a year to access the requested support, and 24.3% waited between six months and one year

Regarding social participation, respondents expressed notable dissatisfaction, particularly concerning difficulties in accessing associativism (59.6%) and political and party life (70.2%), as well as the limited availability of recreational, cultural (56.3%), and sports activities (62.9%) that are accessible and adapted on equal terms with other citizens. The data also show that people with disabilities participating in this panel report experiencing discrimination in various aspects of social and daily life, including 41.6% in employment, approximately 70% in accessibility, and 45% in health, among other areas.

Recommendations

-Institutionalize the project and strengthen the partnership with INR, I.P., ensuring future financial sustainability by identifying one or more funding sources for the project ;

-Reinforce of the following public policy measures: i) Independent Life Support Service (SAVI), Supported Employment Contract; iii) Social Inclusion Provision (PSI).

-Design and implement a national, cross-sector awareness campaign to combat discrimination against people with disabilities, in light of the results obtained regarding discrimination .

Conclusions

This pilot project presented results that demonstrate the situation of vulnerability in which the generality of PCD find themselves. The high participation of PDC's in the panel, along with the engagement of ONGPDs, families of PCD, and other entities, demonstrates the value and necessity of collecting and producing statistical data on their living conditions. Given the successful design and implementation of SIPI's innovative methodology, as well as its feasibility, tested both with public administration services and with people with disabilities and their families, the research team at ISCTE considers it essential that this pilot project be institutionalized to ensure its future continuity. The data collected and analyzed will serve as a crucial scientific tool to support informed and effective policymaking.

References

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