



## **ACCESS TO THE LABOR MARKET FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES VIEW IN THE CITY OF MAPUTO**

**Access to the Job Market for Visually Impaired Individuals in the City of Maputo**

## **ACCESS TO THE LABOR MARKET FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES VIEW IN MAPUTO CITY**

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### **SUMMARY**

Access to work for people with visual impairments in the city of Maputo is a topic that reveals significant challenges and gaps that impede the inclusion of visually impaired people in the labor market. The research aims to analyze such challenges, using a qualitative approach, based on interviews with the main stakeholders involved and a literature review. The results indicated that, although there are standards that guarantee rights, there is a lack of specific regulations that address the needs of people with visual impairments, such as reasonable accommodations in the workplace and targeted training programs. In addition, prejudice and discrimination persist as relevant barriers in the workplace, reflecting an ableist view that still permeates city dwellers in Maputo. Employers often have limited perceptions of the capabilities of these people, which generates resistance to hiring them. The main challenges faced include the lack of awareness about the rights of people with disabilities and the lack of effective public policies to ensure their inclusion. The conclusions indicate that there is a need to strengthen existing policies and implement training programs for both workers with disabilities and employers, aiming to raise awareness about the importance of inclusion. It is also recommended that awareness-raising campaigns be created to promote inclusion and respect for people's rights.



with visual impairment. These actions are essential to ensure a more inclusive and accessible environment, allowing visually impaired people to contribute to society and the job market in the City of Maputo.

**Keywords:** Access, visually impaired people, job market.

## ABSTRACT

Access to work for visually impaired people in the City of Maputo is a topic that reveals significant challenges and gaps that prevent the inclusion of visually impaired people in the job market. The research aims to analyze such challenges, using a qualitative approach, based on interviews with the main actors involved and a bibliographic analysis. The results indicated that, although there are standards that guarantee rights, there is a lack of specific regulations that address the needs of people with visual impairments, such as reasonable adaptations in the work environment and targeted training programs. Furthermore, prejudice and discrimination persist as relevant barriers in the workplace, reflecting an ableist view that still permeates city residents in Maputo. Employers often have limited perceptions of these people's capabilities, which creates resistance to hiring them. The main challenges faced include the lack of awareness about the rights of people with disabilities and the insufficiency of effective public policies to ensure their inclusion. The conclusions indicate that there is a need to strengthen existing policies and implement training programs for both workers with disabilities and employers, aiming to raise awareness about the importance of inclusion. It is also recommended to create awareness campaigns that promote inclusion and respect for the rights of people with visual impairments. These actions are essential to ensure a more inclusive and accessible environment, allowing visually impaired people to contribute to society and the job market in the City of Maputo.

**Keywords:** Access, visually impaired people, job market.

## INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of visually impaired people in the labor market in Maputo City is an issue of great social and legal importance. Although the country has made progress in creating laws and policies to promote the participation of these individuals, there are still significant challenges that limit their full and equal inclusion in the workforce.

The Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique, enacted in 2004, recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. In addition, Law No. 13/2023, of 25 August (approves the Labor Law in Mozambique) and legislation

specific to people with disabilities, seek to guarantee equal opportunities and the protection of the rights of these individuals in the context of employment.

In this article, an in-depth analysis of the access of people with disabilities to work was carried out, existing gaps and challenges were identified, as well as possible legislative, political and social measures were discussed to promote greater inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the context of employment in the City of Maputo.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Disability, according to SCHEWINSKY (2004) cited by SILVA (2004)<sup>1</sup>, some ancient societies (Greek and Roman), if a child had a difference or a characteristic that was not considered normal at that time, they were most often abandoned and even eliminated. Before the Middle Ages, given the lack of information and knowledge about disability, and because people lived off activities such as fishing and hunting, people with disabilities were excluded because they could not “participate” in these activities. The same scenario occurred in Egypt, as well as among the ancient Hebrews, disability was seen as an interference from evil spirits (SCHEWINSKY, 2004 cited by SILVA, 2004).

In Greece, there was a high value placed on a beautiful and strong body that could participate in wars; anyone who did not correspond to this ideal was marginalized and even eliminated (SILVA, 2004).

Looking at Roman civilization, the same phenomenon was observed, as perfection and body aesthetics were advocated, and thus disability was considered a “monstrosity”, a fact that legitimized the condemnation of “malformed” babies to death. The shared view at that time was that disability hindered the survival/subsistence of people, since a body without the functions that guaranteed vigor and strength contributed little to agriculture or war. Now, the predominant type of activities of the people, which required physical labor, considering the discriminatory conscience and the lack of automated equipment, catapulted a pejorative and harsh view of human beings with disabilities, specifically visual disabilities.

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SILVA. People with disabilities and their role in society. (1st edition). Lisbon. Plural editora.2004

Disability can be socially defined as the product of a mismatch between the conditions of the individual affected by a functional limitation, their expectations regarding the execution of basic and instrumental activities of daily living, the environmental demands in this regard and the lack or inadequacy of instrumental and social conditions that allow them to function adequately, maintaining autonomy and self-esteem. In addition to instrumental resources, people with disabilities need personal resources to face the prejudices and stereotypes that exist in society, as they are generally the object of discrimination and prejudice, since being “different” means standing out in a negative way and thus generating tensions.

In historical terms, disability is associated with a situation of disadvantage. In other words, it refers to the condition of a situation of imbalance, which is only possible in a comparative scheme: That person with some disability, in relation to the other members of his/her group. That is, the idea of disadvantage only assumes the connotation of relevance, when it takes into consideration a certain individual with such a disability, such sex, such race in relation to his/her peers and inserted in a specific socio-affective-economic and cultural group. That is why, for AMARAL (1992: 144), these aspects end up generating secondary disability, which is “(...) that which is not necessarily inherent to the difference itself, but also linked to the social reading that is made of that difference”. Thus, the affective, emotional, intellectual and social meanings that the group attributes to a given difference are included here.

## **Job**

The term "employment" is generally associated with a formal relationship between a worker and an employer, characterized by a contract and the provision of services in exchange for remuneration. According to Ianni (1996), employment is the contractual relationship between a worker and an employer, in which the former undertakes to provide services in exchange for previously established remuneration, under certain conditions and legal standards. For Castel (1998), employment is a social bond that goes beyond remuneration, as it provides the worker with a sense of belonging and stability within society.

## **Work**

The concept of work can be understood in different ways, depending on the theoretical approach used.

According to Marx (1985), work is a conscious and intentional activity of human beings, in which they transform nature to satisfy their needs. Work is an essential condition for human existence and one of the main elements that differentiate man from other living beings.

According to Antunes (2018), work is a social process that involves interaction between individuals and society, structuring production relations and forms of economic organization.

### **People with disabilities**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), disability is understood as a complex interaction between an individual's functional limitations and the environmental and personal factors that influence their participation in society.<sup>2</sup>

### **Visual Impairment**

The WHO defines visual impairment as "a condition in which a person has a visual acuity of less than 3/60 or a visual field of less than 10 degrees" (WHO, 2019). This definition encompasses both blindness and low vision, recognizing the diversity of visual experiences.<sup>3</sup>

**Barriers and Challenges for Inclusion in the Labor Market in the City of Maputo** Despite advances in doctrine and legislation, the effective inclusion of people with visual impairments in the labor market still faces substantial challenges. Many employers continue to show resistance to hiring professionals with visual impairments, either due to prejudice or a lack of knowledge about the reasonable adjustments that can be made to enable these individuals to perform their activities efficiently.

Among the main barriers identified are:

1. Prejudice and Stigma: Visual impairment is often associated with the inability to perform productive functions. This distorted view perpetuates the exclusion of people with visual impairment from the formal job market.
2. Lack of Accessibility: Although assistive technologies are available, many companies do not invest in making their spaces and tools accessible. This includes everything from the physical adaptation of environments to the implementation of accessible software.
3. Lack of Professional Qualifications: In many countries, people with visual impairments face additional difficulties in accessing quality education, which limits their opportunities for professional qualifications. Without adequate training, their chances of entering the job market are further reduced.
4. Lack of awareness on the part of employers: Many employers are not aware of the capabilities and potential of people with visual impairments. They do not know how to adapt the work environment or use assistive technologies to integrate these professionals.

**Access to the Job Market for People with Disabilities in the City of Maputo** The issue of access to the job market for people with disabilities is an extremely relevant social and legal issue. Despite the regulatory advances observed in recent decades, significant barriers still persist that limit the participation of these individuals in jobs compatible with their skills and potential.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), "the right to work is a fundamental principle of human rights" (ILO, 2009, p. 12). However, for many people with disabilities, this right is often denied due to various forms of discrimination, lack of physical and technological accessibility, and harmful stereotypes about their abilities. According to the United Nations (UN), "equal opportunities in employment are a fundamental human right" (UN, 2006, p. 5). However, many countries face significant challenges in ensuring this right for people with disabilities. Barriers such as lack of physical and technological accessibility, discrimination in the workplace,<sup>4</sup>

### **Prejudice and Stigmatization**

Another major challenge faced by people with visual impairments is prejudice, which often manifests itself in the form of discrimination in the hiring process or in job retention. In many companies, visual impairment is still seen as an insurmountable limitation, leading employers to avoid hiring individuals with this disability. In many cases, this prejudice is associated with a lack of information about the capabilities of these people and the adaptations that can be made in the workplace to ensure their full productivity (SOUSA, 2018).

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

### **Research classification** The

research is characterized as:

- Regarding the purpose: Bibliographic, based on material already prepared and published, such as books, scientific articles and legislation. According to CRESWELL, bibliographic research is based on material already prepared and published, such as books, scientific articles and legislation. This approach allows for critical and in-depth analysis of existing theories and perspectives on the subject, providing a solid basis for the construction of knowledge. Therefore, by adopting a bibliographical approach, this study is strengthened by integrating consolidated theoretical knowledge with practical reality, basing its conclusions and recommendations on scientific and normative bases. In this way, the research not only describes the scenario of the inclusion of people with visual impairment in the labor market, but also proposes reflections and solutions based on specialized literature and official documents.
- Regarding nature: Basic or pure, seeking to produce new knowledge on the topic in question. Regarding nature, this study is classified as basic or pure, seeking to produce new knowledge on the access of people with disabilities to work in the City of Maputo. As Lakatos and MARCONI (2017) point out, basic research is aimed at generating theories and concepts, contributing to the advancement of understanding on a given topic.

- Regarding the approach: Qualitative, seeking to understand the meanings and interpretations of the phenomena related to the theme. The qualitative approach adopted in this study. This implies an in-depth analysis of the social, cultural and legal contexts that influence the access of people with disabilities to work in the City of Maputo.

#### **Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

This research used two main data collection techniques: semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. According to TRIVIÑOS (1987), semi-structured interviews are an essential tool in qualitative research, as they allow the interviewer to explore the topic under study in depth, while providing flexibility to include new questions as needed. In the context of this study, this technique made it possible to obtain detailed information on the labor inclusion of people with visual impairments in the Mozambican legal system.

In addition to the interview, documentary analysis was used, which, according to CELLARD (2008), is an essential technique in qualitative research, as it allows the examination of official documents, legislation and institutional reports, enabling an in-depth understanding of the context studied. In the present study, this technique was used to analyze Mozambican legislation on the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market, as well as institutional documents from ACAMO – Maputo City.

#### **Data Analysis Techniques and Instruments**

Content analysis was used to analyze the collected data, which, according to BARDIN (2011), is a methodology that enables the categorization, interpretation and inference of information contained in textual materials, allowing the identification of underlying patterns and meanings in the speeches and documents analyzed. This technique was fundamental to organize and interpret the responses obtained in the interview and the data extracted from the documents, facilitating the understanding of the factors that influence the labor inclusion of people with visual impairments in the City of Maputo.

#### **Description of the Study Site**



The Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Mozambique (ACAMO) is a non-profit, social solidarity, civil society organization with national scope. Founded in 1980, ACAMO's mission is to create, promote and support all activities aimed at the physical, mental and moral health of people with visual impairment in Mozambique.

ACAMO works to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities for people with visual impairments, through various initiatives, such as:

- Defense of rights: ACAMO defends the rights of people with visual impairments, fighting for laws and public policies that guarantee their inclusion and full participation in society.
- Support for education: ACAMO promotes inclusive education and access to education for people with visual impairments, through the widespread use of Braille and support for schools and special education centers.
- Inclusion in the job market: ACAMO supports the professional integration of people with visual impairments, through professional training and job placement programs.
- Social support: ACAMO provides social support to people with visual impairments and their families, through psychological, social and material support programs.
- Community Center: ACAMO has a community center in Beira, where it offers a variety of services and activities for people with visual impairments. ACAMO is an important organization in the fight for the rights of people with visual impairments. Its work has contributed to improving the quality of life and social inclusion of people with visual impairments in the country, specifically in the city of Maputo.

### **Gaps in the Mozambican Legal System Related to the Protection of People with Visual Impairments**

In the context of the analysis of gaps in the Mozambican legal system related to the protection of visually impaired people, the data from the interviews with the two interviewees offer a crucial perspective on how these gaps directly affect inclusion and accessibility in the labour market.

**Interviewee 1** He highlighted the lack of detailed regulations on the specific needs of people with visual impairments in the workplace. He stated: "Existing laws do not detail how to ensure accessibility in workplaces, especially in terms of assistive technologies or even physical adaptations in corporate environments." This comment illustrates a critical point in Mozambican legislation: it does not translate the guarantees

constitutional provisions into practical actions that can be effectively implemented by employers.

On the other hand, **Interviewee 2** addressed the issue of the lack of tax incentives for companies that hire people with visual impairments. He mentioned: "There are no incentive policies that attract the private sector to hire people with visual impairments. This makes broad and meaningful inclusion more difficult." This statement reveals another relevant gap in the legal system, since the lack of financial incentives discourages companies from adopting inclusive practices, perpetuating the exclusion of people with visual impairments from the job market in Maputo City. Comparing the Mozambican legal system with that of other countries, such as Brazil and the United States, where there are more robust laws, such as the Brazilian Inclusion Law and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there is a substantial difference in the effectiveness and application of these standards. In Mozambique, the lack of a rigorous monitoring system and effective enforcement of policies prevents the effective implementation of legislation. This deficiency was mentioned by **Interviewee 1**, who highlighted: "The enforcement of laws that protect the rights of people with visual impairments is insufficient, which creates a false sense of compliance with the law, but in practice, nothing changes."

Therefore, the gaps in the Mozambican legal system revealed in the interviews in Maputo City indicate that a more coordinated effort is needed to transform legislation into concrete inclusion measures.

This could include creating specific regulations for accessibility, implementing tax incentives for companies that promote inclusion, and creating an effective enforcement system to ensure that laws protecting the visually impaired are enforced.

### **Main Challenges Faced by Visually Impaired People in the Job Market in Maputo City**

The analysis of the main challenges faced by visually impaired people in the job market in Maputo City, as reported by the interviewees, reveals a series of interconnected barriers that make it difficult for these individuals to be included in the formal job market under equal conditions.

**Interviewee 1** shared an insight into the social stigma and prejudice that still exists towards people with visual impairments, which results in their exclusion from many employment opportunities. He commented: "Employers often prefer not to hire people with visual impairments because of prejudice and stigma, even if they have the necessary skills." This statement reflects how the stigmatized view of visual impairment hinders access to formal employment, forcing many people with disabilities to settle for informal or underemployed jobs, where working conditions are poor and opportunities for development are limited.

Furthermore, **Interviewee 2** made an observation about the lack of accessible materials and technologies in the educational field, a factor that perpetuates the cycle of exclusion. He explained: "The lack of Braille books, adapted digital tools and screen reading software prevents us from accessing quality education, which limits our potential for professional qualification." This comment illustrates how the lack of adapted resources and technologies in schools makes it difficult for visually impaired people to receive adequate training, making them less competitive in the job market.

The issue of infrastructure in the workplace was also addressed by **Interviewee 1**, who highlighted: "Even when we get a job, the work environment is not always prepared to welcome us. Lack of accessibility, such as reading software and physical adaptations, is a constant obstacle." This report shows that, even after overcoming educational barriers, the workplace also lacks fundamental adjustments to promote the inclusion of people with visual impairments, such as assistive technologies or adequate physical adaptations, such as ramps or adapted spaces.

Another critical point raised by **Interviewee 2** was the lack of adapted vocational training programs. He pointed out: "There are not many technical training options that meet our needs, which makes the opportunities for us to develop skills limited." The lack of specialized programs prevents people with visual impairments from acquiring relevant technical skills, which puts them at a disadvantage in the job market, where competitiveness demands specific skills. Finally, both interviewees highlighted the resistance of employers to hiring people with visual impairments due to fear of additional costs.

**Interviewee 1** stated: "Many employers argue that hiring a person with a visual impairment is expensive because it requires workplace adaptations, which discourages inclusion." This point reflects a significant challenge in promoting inclusion, as the lack of

Understanding the benefits of having a diverse workforce leads many employers to prefer to maintain the status quo, without considering the potential gains of diversity and inclusion.

Given these challenges, it is crucial that the City of Maputo implements effective public policies and vocational training programs tailored to the needs of visually impaired people. Examples from countries such as South Africa, which have established specific training centers, offer good practices that could be applied in the Mozambican context to improve the qualifications and employability of this population.

### **Strategies for Promoting Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

By exploring strategies to promote inclusion and equal opportunities for visually impaired people in the labour market in Maputo City, the interviews provide valuable insights into the obstacles faced and possible solutions to overcome these barriers. **Interviewee 1** shared a critical perspective on legislative reforms, highlighting that: "The government needs to implement more robust inclusion policies, such as creating employment quotas for people with visual impairments, as well as tax benefits for companies that invest in accessibility." This view is in line with the proposal to adopt clear regulations, such as Brazil's Quota Law, which has shown positive results in promoting employment for people with disabilities. Implementing mandatory quotas and tax incentives would not only stimulate hiring, but would also foster a cultural shift in the private sector, making inclusion a priority rather than an exception.

**Interviewee 2** emphasized the importance of social awareness campaigns to combat the prejudices and stigmas that still limit opportunities for people with visual impairments. He stated: "Society needs to be better informed about what people with visual impairments are capable of doing. Campaigns should be carried out to show our capabilities, not our limitations." This view points to the need for an educational and awareness-raising approach, using the media, schools and communities to demystify the stigmas surrounding visual impairment and show the value that these people can add to organizations.

Campaigns could also highlight success stories, highlighting concrete examples of visually impaired people who have overcome barriers in the job market.

Regarding investment in inclusive infrastructure, **Interviewee 1** mentioned the lack of assistive technologies in the workplace, stating: "There is still a significant shortage of assistive technologies such as screen readers and text-to-speech software, which are essential for us to perform our jobs efficiently." This comment highlights one of the main structural barriers that hinder the inclusion of people with visual impairments. Investing in appropriate assistive technologies in the workplace could not only improve efficiency, but also ensure that people with visual impairments are given equal opportunities to contribute on an equal footing with their colleagues. With the advancement of digitalization, this is a crucial opportunity to create a more accessible workforce.

**Interviewee 2** also reinforced the idea that digitalization can be a powerful tool for inclusion, stating: "Digitalization can be a great ally, as long as it is done in an inclusive way.

Creating accessible platforms and processes can open many doors for us." The digitalization of the labor market in Maputo City is still at an early stage, but if implemented correctly, it could represent a major advance, not only in the inclusion of people with visual impairments, but also in promoting a more modern and inclusive economy. Finally, collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector was also highlighted as an important solution to achieve inclusion. **Interviewee 1** suggested: "It would be interesting for the Government to seek partnerships with international organizations to finance training and inclusion programs in the country." The experience of other African countries, which rely on the support of organizations such as the International Labour Organization to finance inclusion programs, could be adapted to the Mozambican context, contributing to the creation of more inclusive environments and training the workforce more comprehensively. Such strategies are essential to promote the inclusion of visually impaired people in the labor market in Maputo. As discussed by the interviewees, an integrated approach, involving legislative reforms, awareness campaigns, investment in inclusive infrastructure and public-private partnerships, can create a more inclusive environment and allow equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their disabilities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It should be concluded that one of the main challenges is the lack of specific regulations that respond to the needs of the visually impaired population. The lack of concrete measures to ensure reasonable accommodations in the workplace and the scarcity of targeted training programs limit opportunities for professional integration. In addition, the imprecise definition of “disability” in legislation can lead to varied interpretations, resulting in difficulties in accessing rights and benefits aimed at promoting inclusion. The main challenges faced by visually impaired people in the labor market in Maputo also include persistent prejudice and discrimination. The ableist view that still prevails in society fuels employers’ resistance to hiring professionals with visual impairments, often underestimating their capabilities. The lack of awareness about the rights of people with disabilities, both among employers and in society in general, contributes to the perpetuation of these barriers and limits the possibilities for integration into the labor market.

In order to promote the effective inclusion of people with visual impairments in the labour market in Maputo, the Government and the responsible institutions need to implement more robust and specific public policies. It is recommended that a monitoring and evaluation system be created for existing laws, with the aim of identifying gaps in their application and proposing improvements. Furthermore, it is essential to develop training programmes aimed at both people with visual impairments and employers, raising awareness of the capabilities and rights of this population. Training should include guidance on reasonable accommodations in the workplace, enabling people with visual impairments to perform their duties effectively and with dignity.

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