

Call for Proposals for an edited book on "Vocational integration systems for people with disabilities and impairments. International country studies".

The situation of people with disabilities and impairments at the labour market remains a complex issue, despite the existence of different national and global legislation on the subject (Beatty et al., 2023).

According to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). Disability is defined as follows "Art. L. 114. - A disability, within the meaning of this Act, is any limitation of activity or restriction of participation in society suffered in his or her environment by a person because of a substantial, lasting or permanent impairment of one or more physical, sensory, mental, cognitive or psychological functions, a multiple disability or a disabling health disorder."

The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is on average double the general unemployment rate (OECD, 2010, p. 10). As a result, people with disabilities and impairment often struggle to participate into the labour market and experience difficulties throughout the employment cycle (Bonaccio et al., 2020). Once successfully participating in the labor market, people with disabilities and impairment also face challenges in developing their careers (OECD, 2022, p. 77; Kulkarni, 2016). Policies to integrate people with disabilities and impairment into the labor market are needed not only to combat discrimination (Corby et al., 2019), but also in response to skills shortages (OECD, 2022, p. 95).

Countries have developed different systems to integrate people with disability and impairment into the labor market. Initially, during the development of the welfare state in Europe in the late 19th century, the focus was on protecting workers in the labor process (Wicki, 2001, p. 253). After the two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century, the focus shifted to vocational integration due to the large number of war-disabled people. As a result, several countries introduced mandatory quotas for the employment of people with disability (Canonica, 2020, p. 28f.). This approach remains dominant in European countries in conjunction with anti-discrimination legislation (Vornholt et al., 2018). In addition, in the 21st century, further steps have been taken in various ways to improve vocational integration. These efforts focused on strengthening cooperation with employers and ensuring the retention of people with disability in their companies. Preventive measures for occupational integration have become increasingly important, such as early intervention and support for workers with health problems (Geisen, 2019, p. 191ff.). In parallel, in contrast to the European approach, countries overseas, such as the United States and Canada, support a voluntary approach through the promotion of training and rehabilitation programs, combined with anti-discrimination legislation (Vornholt et al., 2018).

Therefore, the evolution of welfare state policies on employment since the 19th century has led to diverse systems of vocational integration, with no standardized pattern. Instead, there are different approaches, with the involvement of employers being a key differentiating factor. In summary, legislation influences the employment status of people with disabilities in different ways, and the national context plays a crucial role. In a context where there is a need to better understand the effectiveness of existing legislation while taking into account the national context (Beatty et al., 2023), this book aims to present country case studies of existing disability employment policies. The book will cover European and non-European, Western and non-Western countries to show how the disability employment system affects the employment status of people with disabilities. By studying

countries with different pathways, it will be possible to contextualize different approaches to vocational integration within the country specific system (Geisen, 2001; Kraus & Geisen, 2001).

This book proposal invites authors to propose country case studies that illustrate the complexities and nuances of policies for the vocational integration of individuals with disabilities. We welcome case studies from any part of the world – especially also from countries of the Global South - and invite authors to reveal the complexity of the employment system, its underlying tensions, paradoxes and unintended consequences.

The expected structure of the proposed chapter is as follows:

- Abstract
- Introduction + definition and key figures
- Context, history of vocational/professional integration
- Legislation and implications on how disabled people are supported
- How does the system work?
- Challenges/Opportunities
- Conclusion

The titles can be changed according to the author's preferences. The chapter should be about 7500 words including references, tables and figures. In a first step we would need a proposal with a short description of the vocational integration system and its specialities, which you want fully to describe in your chapter (500 words max.). Please send the proposal to thomas.geisen@fhnw.ch until April 30, 2026. Thank you very much!

Timeline for the publication is: deadline for submitting the full paper will be June 30, 2026. We are planning to peer review the submissions, deadline for submitting the final article is August 10th, 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact the editors: Thomas Geisen (thomas.geisen@fhnw.ch); Sarah Richard (srichard@audencia.com); Anna Yang (anna.yang@fhnw.ch)

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