

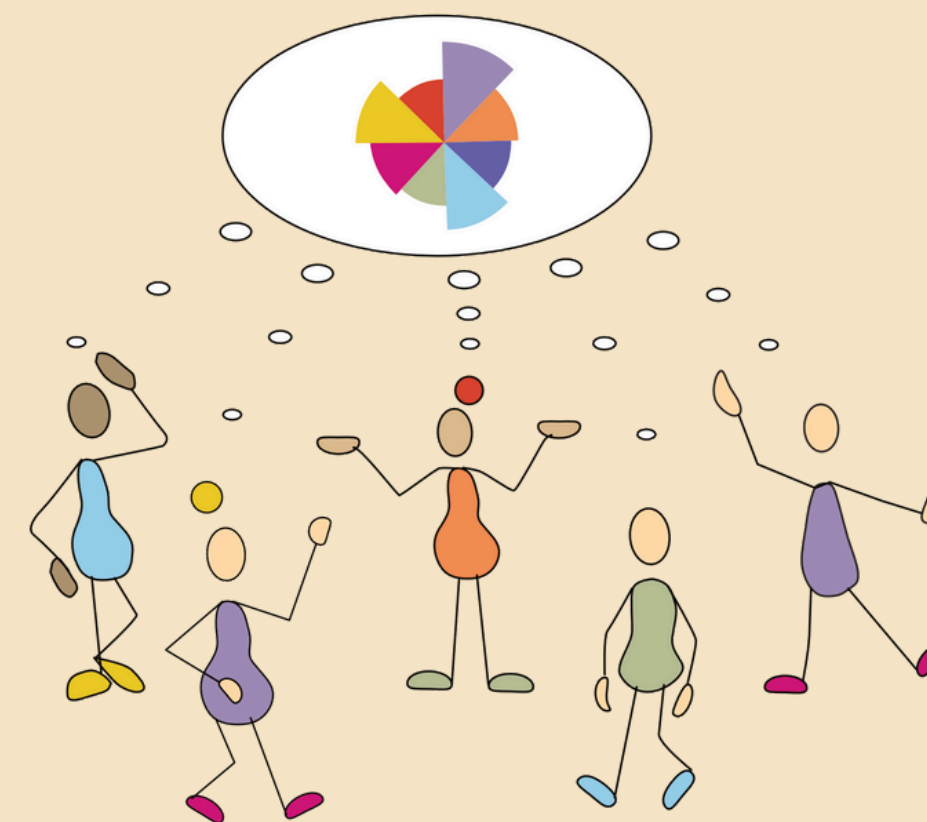
EXCHANGE SESSIONS

**What autistic People want and need
to thrive at a Job and in Employment**

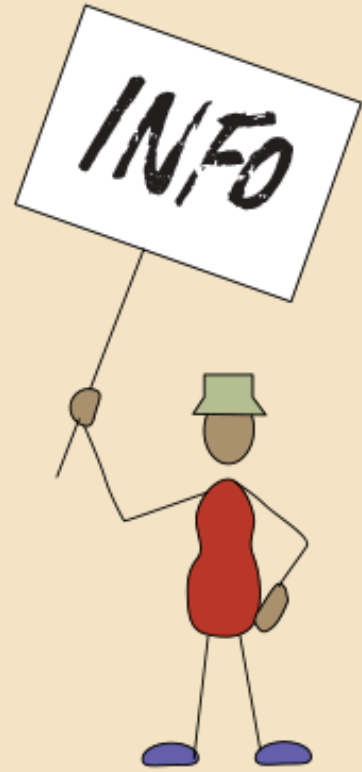


Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

May 4th, 2024



Today's Session



- 15/20 min presentation
- 5 minutes break
- 30 min discussion in breakout rooms
- 10 minutes break
- 30 presentation of results



Autism

Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition that impacts the processing of information.

This translates into differences in:

- social communication
- interaction
- sensory perceptions



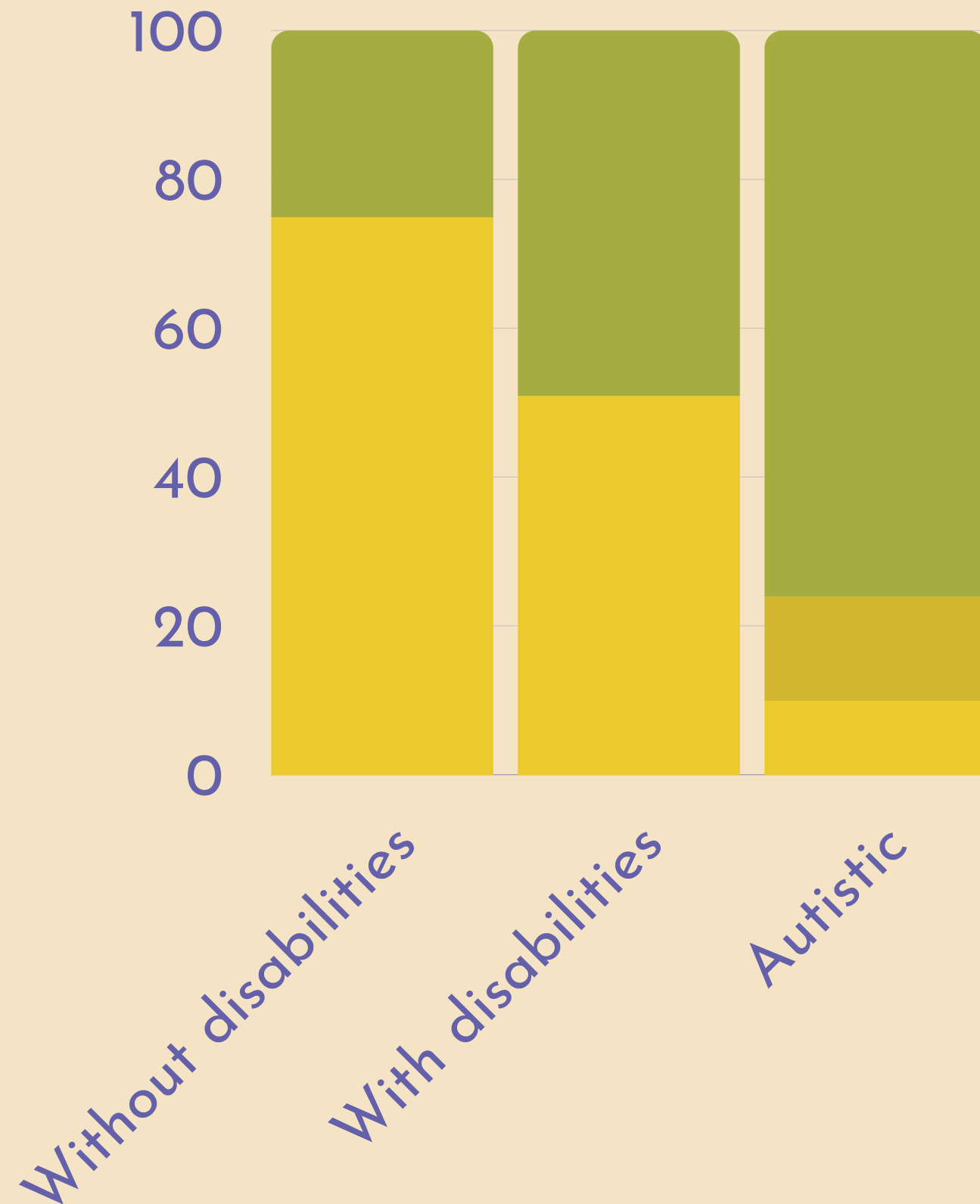
Autism is a spectrum.

**If you know one autistic person,
you know one autistic person.**

We are all different.



Employability



According to EU figures, among people without disabilities, 74.8% are employed compared to 50.6% of people with disabilities. Among autistic people, the situation is much worse. Studies have shown that between 76% and 90% of autistic people are unemployed. **These figures point to significant discriminatory barriers that prevent integration into the job market.**



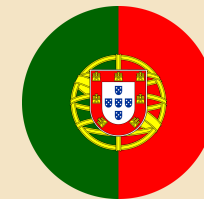
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Outlines the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities (December 2006)

Article 27 of the CRPD guarantees persons with disabilities the right to work on an equal basis with others. It mandates access to employment without discrimination, including reasonable accommodations and fair wages. Additionally, it promotes vocational guidance, training, and support to facilitate full participation in the workforce.



Austria ratified in 2008 - failed implementation, criticism from UN



Portugal ratified in 2009 - criticism from the Portuguese Observatory for Disability and Human Rights

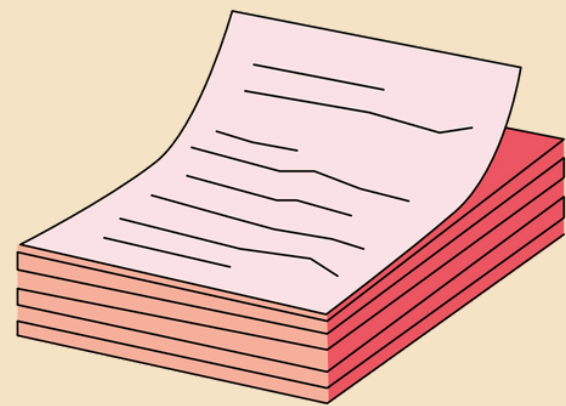


European Directive

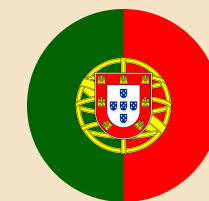
Directive 2000/78/CE of the Council of the European Union establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

This directive protects people with disabilities, introducing the following principles:

- the principle of equal treatment
- the principle of reasonable accommodation



Austria 2004: Equal Treatment Act
(Gleichbehandlungsgesetz - GlBG)



Portugal 2011: Law n. 3/2011,
February 15th

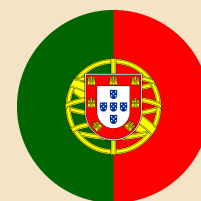


Person with disability

Having an autism diagnosis doesn't automatically mean someone "has a disability" before the law.



To get the "disability card", people must go through an assessment that will determine if they are eligible or not. Some people with disabilities may be considered "unfit for work" (criteria is unknown). This assessment is made at age 25.



Disability is assessed as a percentage. Most benefits apply to 60%+.



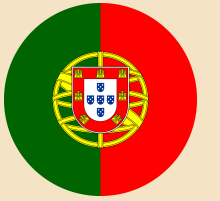


Programs with concepts such as Training Fit or Integrated Training provide training tailored to the needs of each individual. These programs are run by the government.

In practice, contracts for partial qualifications or extendable apprenticeships can only be arranged through the Employment Service.

Very few, specific programs are targeted for autistic people.

Training



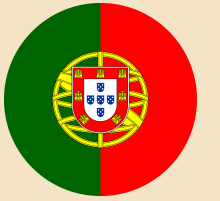
Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) has some programs that provide tailored training, such as Supported Employment and Protected Employment. These programs are run by NGOs and other private entities.

Some programs are targeted toward individuals at risk of social exclusion, some for people with disabilities. Very few are for autistic people.





Recruitment and Hiring



Companies must have at least 1 person with disability/25 workers – 4% – or Compensation Tax.

Many companies opt out.

Network for Vocational Assistance (Neba) can help find suitable jobs. The aim of these programs is to improve the employment prospects of people with disabilities.

Law n. 4/2019, January 10th

Companies with between 75 and 250 workers must have at least 1% of workers with disability.

Companies with more than 259 workers must have at least 2% of workers with disabilities.

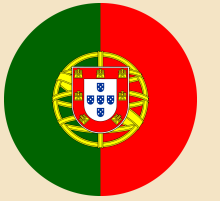
Benefit for companies is 9487,38€/y (2024)

Some companies (employers and recruitment companies) have their own programs for people with disabilities and autistic people.



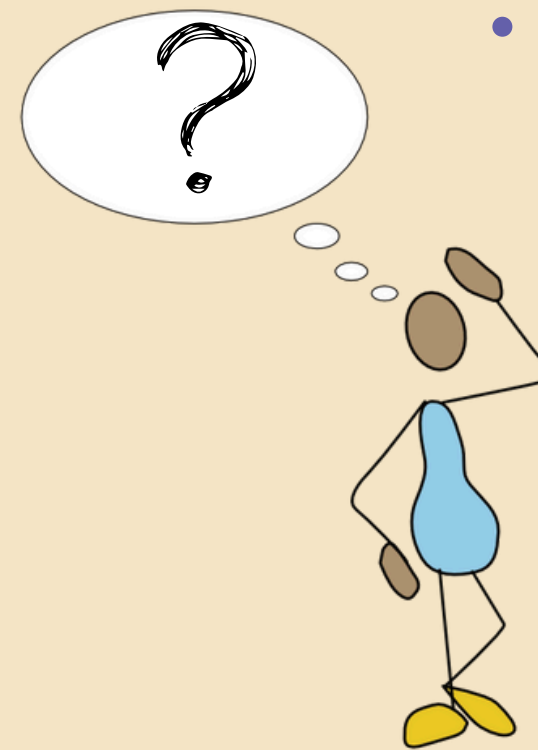


Job continuity



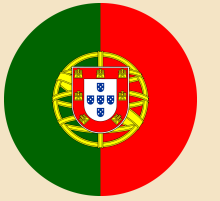
- Some training offers help later on, but there are age limits.
- Protection against dismissal of people with disabilities, after four years of employment
- Before that, people are protected under discrimination laws and taking social aspects into account.
- Companies are motivated, but do not provide enough training at the beginning or on an ongoing basis
- Difficulties often cannot be resolved and the person will lose the job

- There is some follow-up within the programs
- Reasonable accommodations are foreseen, but the concept is only vaguely understood
- Protection against discrimination is in the law
- In some cases, inclusion is an intention, but not a practice





Day Centers



Some persons with disabilities spend their day in Day Structures (Tagesstruktur) where they develop skills, routines, and habits that enable them to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives while also providing them with the necessary support and guidance to overcome challenges and barriers they may face in their daily lives.

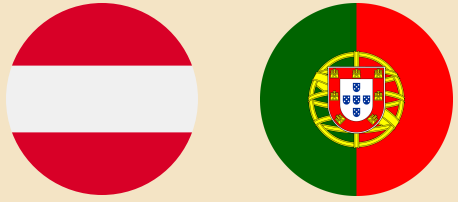
Many people work in these Centers, but they are poorly paid. Also, it's difficult to transition from a Day Center to the general job market.

Some entities (government + ONGs) run Day Centers, where people with disabilities spend the day engaging in several activities, and receive guidance and support.

Some of the activities are equivalent to work. Transition to the job market is rare, if at all.



Unemployment



When someone loses their job they might be entitled to receive unemployment benefit.

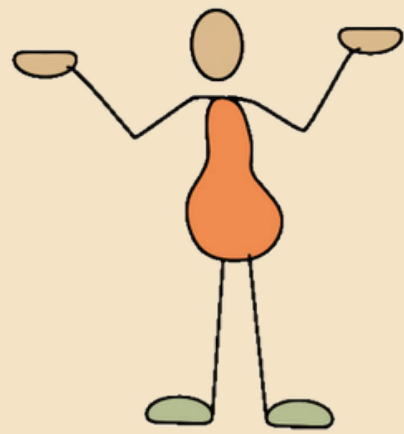
There are other benefits that may apply if someone has no other source of income or has a disability.



Even though these benefits exist, they are not specific to the needs of the beneficiaries, and most of the time are underestimated!



Problems



- **Stigma and discrimination**
- There's legislation, but not enough practice
- Very few Autism specific programs
- Limited access to vocational training programs
- Interview and application process barriers
- Lack of understanding and accommodation in the workplace
- Difficulty navigating workplace social dynamics
- Support needs not being met
- Diagnostic disparity and intersectionality!



Policy Recommendations

Training

- Accessible Vocational Training Programs
- Support for Transition to Employment
- Accessible Application and Interview Processes
- Reasonable Accommodation Policies
- Autism-Friendly Workplaces
- Training and Awareness Programs
- Supportive Networks and Peer Mentoring
- Promotion of Neurodiversity Initiatives
- Comprehensive Support Services

Recruitment
and Hiring

Job
Continuity



Breakout Rooms



- Someone will be guiding the discussion
- Raise hand if you don't know when to talk
- Be mindful that other people also may have their turn

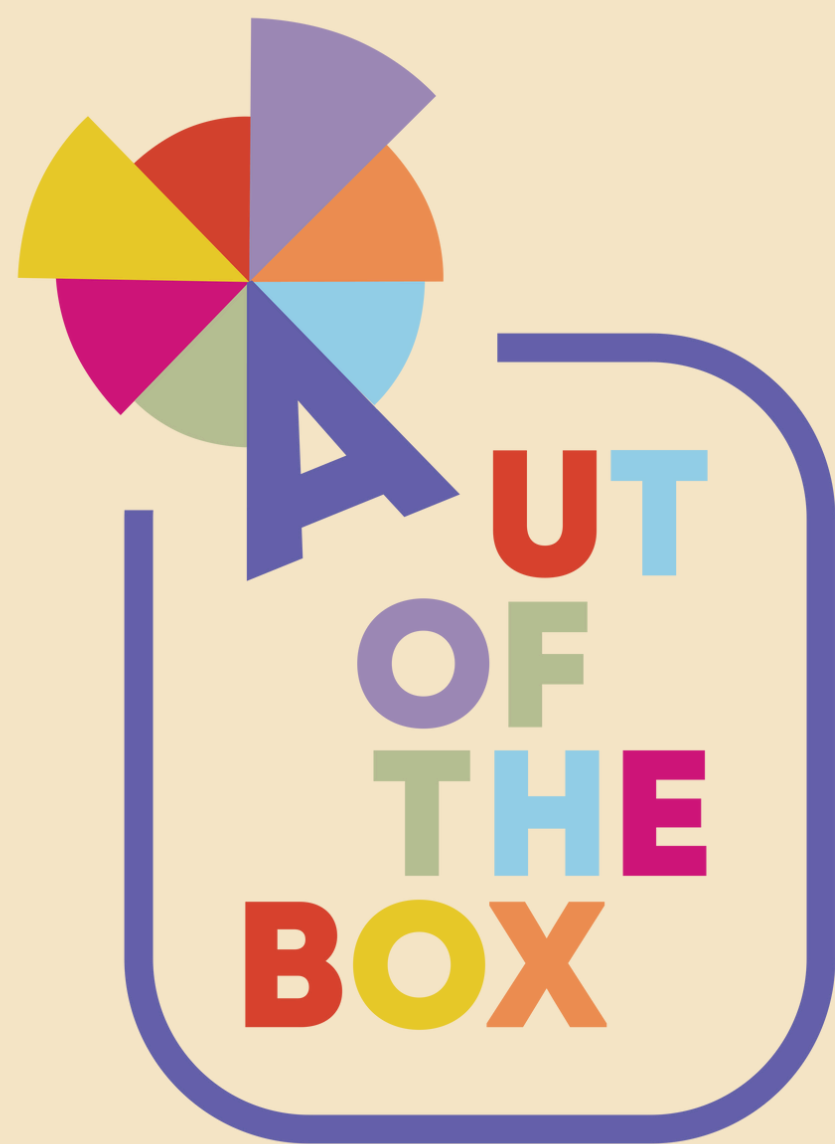
Keep autistic people's needs, autonomy and well-being in mind.



Online Library Survey

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNiMLja0lbKzCPi5xHhgEabLhE26rGZy22G5UQ2jPyYgqJFg/viewform>





**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR PARTICIPATION!**



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