

REPORT

Survey Results on Disability Employment Support



NEETcraft Initiative: Innovations for Empowering Youth with Disabilities

July 2026



Project Partners:



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Introduction

The CAWI survey was run in May-June 2026. An invitation to participate was sent out to PES, vocational rehabilitations centres, disability-specific providers, and other organizations working on issues related to employment of persons with disabilities (NGOs, research institutes). English, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish language versions were distributed.

Organizational characteristics

The majority of organizations that responded to the survey were Polish PES, acting at a local level. As such, the number of clients with disabilities they worked with usually did not exceed a hundred within the last year. Most organizations have been working on issues related to employment of persons with disabilities for over 20 years (Table 1A). Young people with disabilities comprise the minority of clients in most surveyed organizations (Table 1B).

Table 1A. Characteristics of organizations in the survey sample, by countries of operation

	IT	PL	PT	SI	ES	Total
Type of organization						
Disability-specific service provider	-	-	2	-	-	2
NGO	-	2	2	-	-	4
PES	-	155	-	-	-	155
Research institution	-	1	-	-	-	1
Vocational rehabilitation centre	-	-	-	1	-	1
Other	1	1	3	-	1	6
Level of operation						
Local	-	131	2	-	-	133
Regional	-	15	2	1	1	19
National	1	13	3	-	-	17
Organization has worked on disability employment for:						
2-5 years	-	1	0	-	-	1
6-10 years	-	2	1	-	-	3
11-20 years	-	6	1	-	1	8
>20 years	1	150	5	1	-	157

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Table 1B. Number of clients served by organizations in the survey sample, by countries of operation

	IT	PL	PT	SI	ES	Total
Number of clients with disabilities in the last 12 months						
Fewer than 50	-	87	2	-	1	90
50-100	1	30	-	-	-	31
101-500	-	30	2	1	-	33
501-1,000	-	7	2	-	-	9
1,001-5,000	-	3	1	-	-	4
More than 5,000	-	2	-	-	-	2
Percentage of clients with disabilities younger than 25						
0-10%	1	128	2	-	1	132
11-24%	-	18	1	1	-	20
25-49%	-	1	2	-	-	3
50-74%	-	1	-	-	-	1
75-89%	-	1	-	-	-	1
Don't know/Not tracked	-	10	2	-	-	12
Total	1	159	7	1	1	169

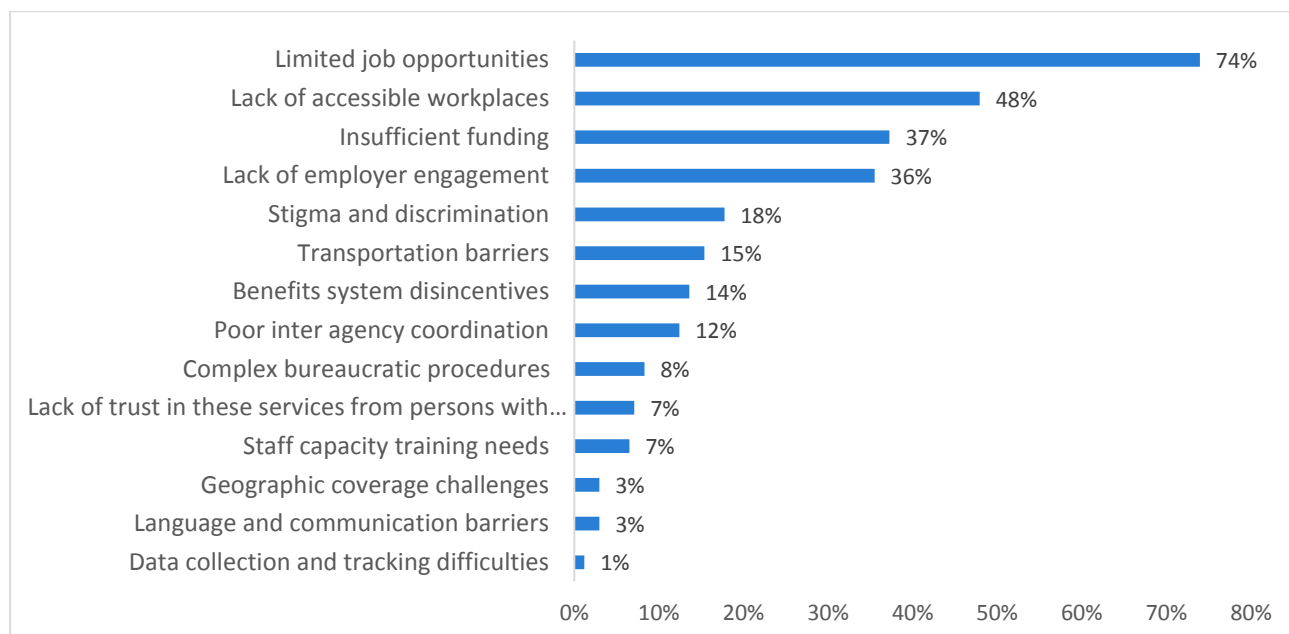
Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Challenges & barriers

Limited job opportunities, lack of accessible workplaces, insufficient funding, and lack of employer engagement were most often indicated as challenges that the organization faces in the context of finding employment for persons with disabilities (Figure 1). Organizations find that employers' prejudices and stereotypes, as well as productivity concerns, and workplace accessibility issues contribute to difficulties in promoting employment of persons with disabilities (Figure 2). Furthermore, organizations point to fear of losing benefits, lack of awareness about services, and transportation difficulties as the greatest barriers to accessing services by persons with disabilities (Figure 3).

As regards accessibility measures provided by the organizations themselves, the majority of organizations (64%) provide at least some measures. Digital accessibility, remote online service delivery, and physically accessible facilities are among the most widespread. Flexible scheduling, home visits, multiple language support, and transport support remain the rarest (Figure 4).

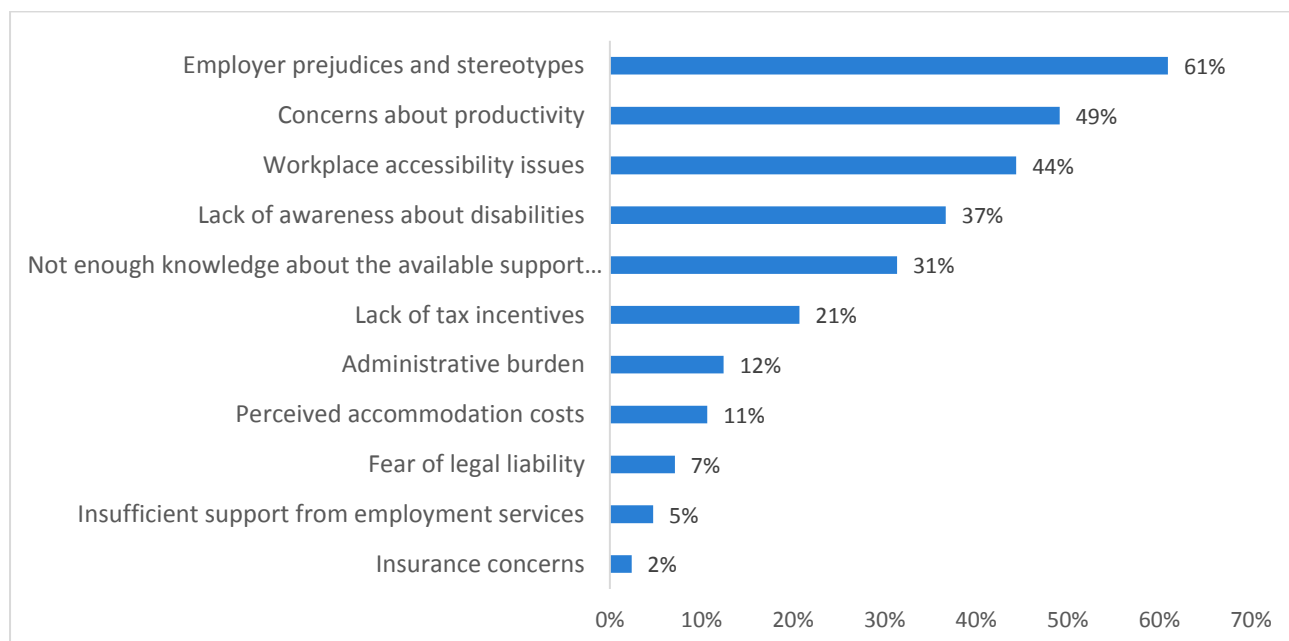
Figure 1. Challenges in helping persons with disabilities find employment, as seen by the organizations participating in the survey



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

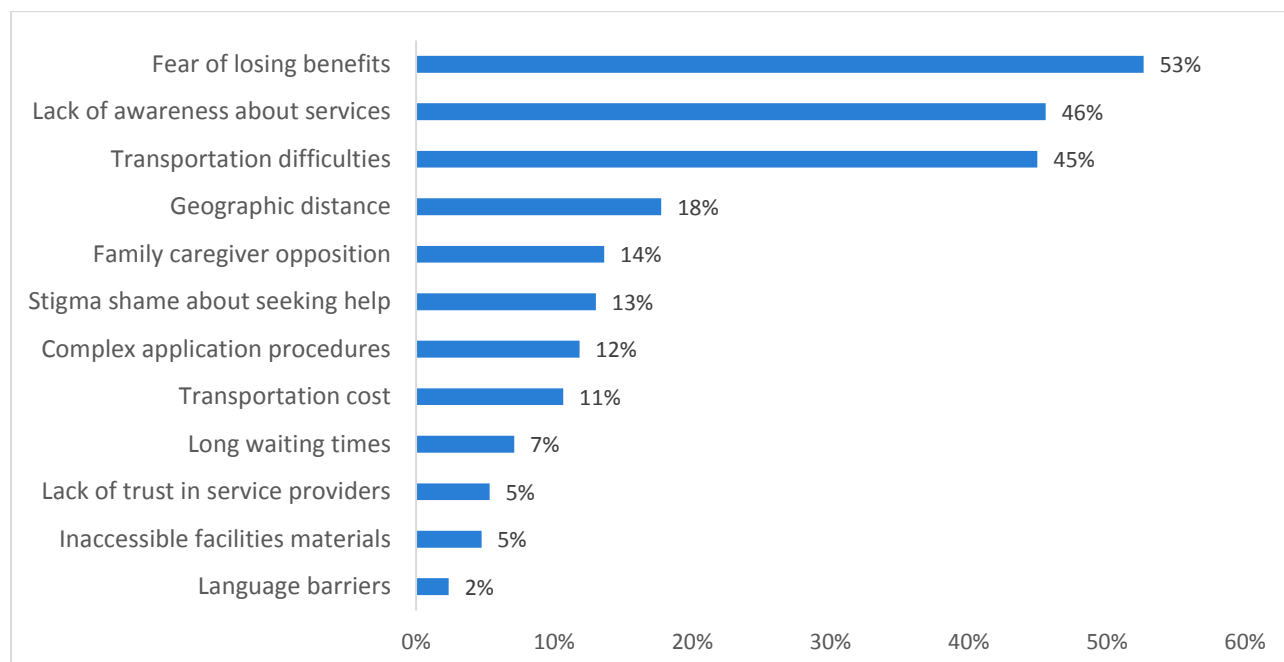
Figure 2. Barriers to employment of persons with disabilities on the side of employers, as seen by the organizations participating in the survey



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

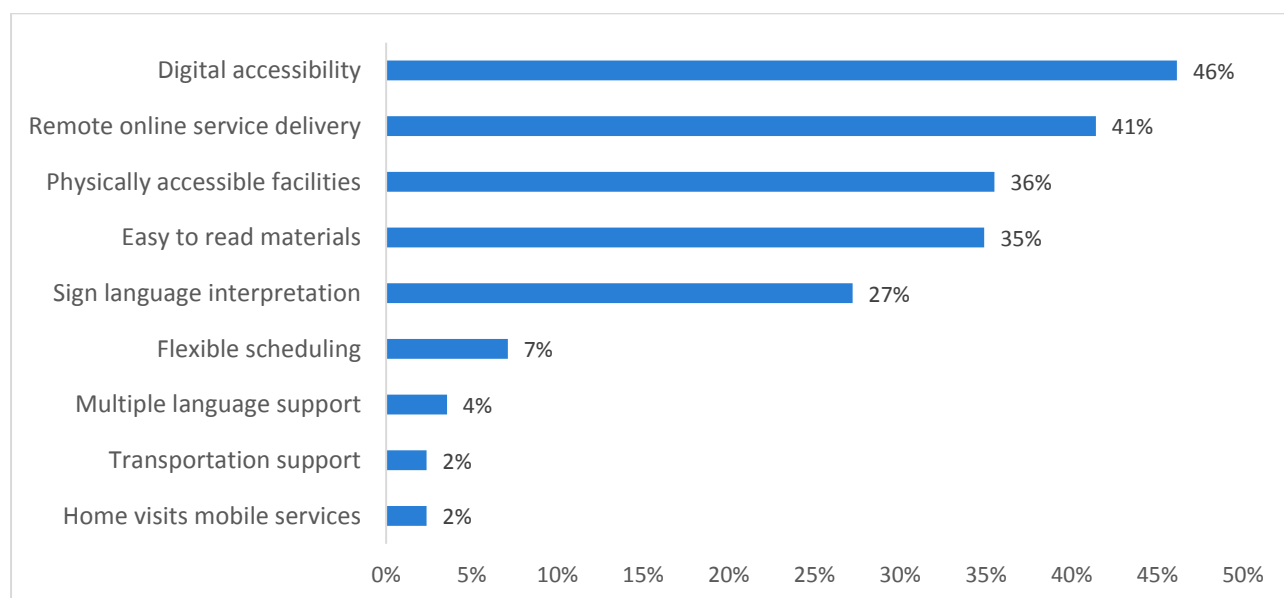
Figure 3. Possible difficulties that persons with disabilities face in accessing services of the organization, as seen by the organizations participating in the survey



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 4. Accessibility measures provided by organizations in the survey



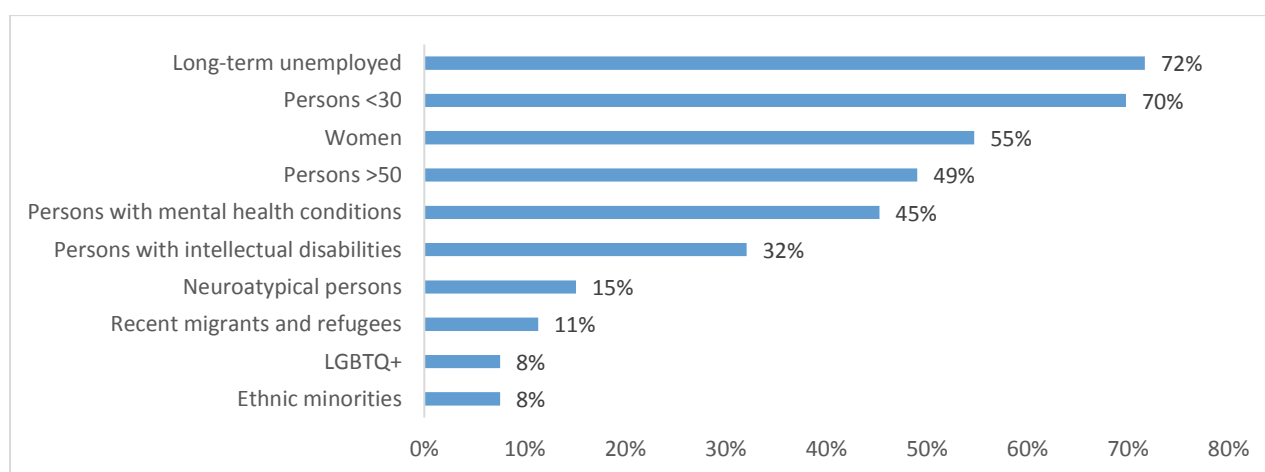
Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Outreach

Less than half of the responding organizations identify and reach out to persons with disabilities (44%). For those, the most popular outreach methods were referrals from social services (45%), employer referrals (39%), and partnerships with educational institutions (37%). Online presence, employer referrals, and referrals from social services and/or disability organizations were indicated as best outreach methods. Many organizations reached out to underrepresented persons with disabilities as well, especially long-term unemployed persons with disabilities, young people with disabilities, and women with disabilities. Ethnic minorities with disabilities, LGBTQ populations with disabilities, and recent migrants/refugees with disabilities were contacted least often (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Outreach to underprivileged groups



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Innovations

Innovative practices in the last three years were relatively rare in the sample, as they were mentioned in only 15% cases. Respondents who described innovations highlighted the role of modern technologies and the integration of various services in one place.



Innovations

Respondents highlight two directions: bringing employers and people with disabilities (PwDs) together, and co-locating support services in one place. Digital tools add a further layer of reach.



Employer collaboration

Job fairs designed specifically for PwDs help connect employers directly with candidates.

Integrated service points



Job Express

Małopolska bus stations

- Job placement services
- Career counselling
- Legal and psychological advisory
- Activation, motivational and makeover vouchers
- Adaptation scholarships



w Punkt (Bullseye)

Pułtusk County, 2023–2024, ages 18–29

- Career counselling and job placement
- Social welfare support
- Psychological support

Digital and mobile tools



AI tools

Applied across a variety of situations



Mobile devices

Text messages on new job offers



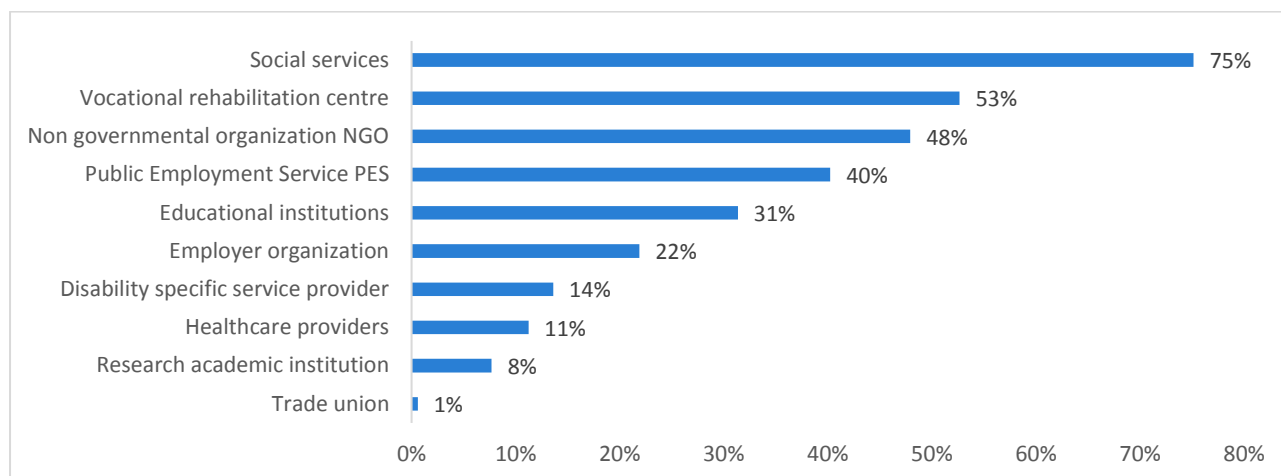
Online conferencing

Remote meetings and counselling

Collaboration

Most surveyed organizations declared collaborating with other agents (92%), such as social services, vocational rehabilitations centres, and NGOs. Cooperation with healthcare providers, research institutions, or trade unions was mentioned least often (Figure 6). Lack of standardized procedures, insufficient funding, and differing organizational priorities were most often indicated as cooperation barriers (Figure 7).

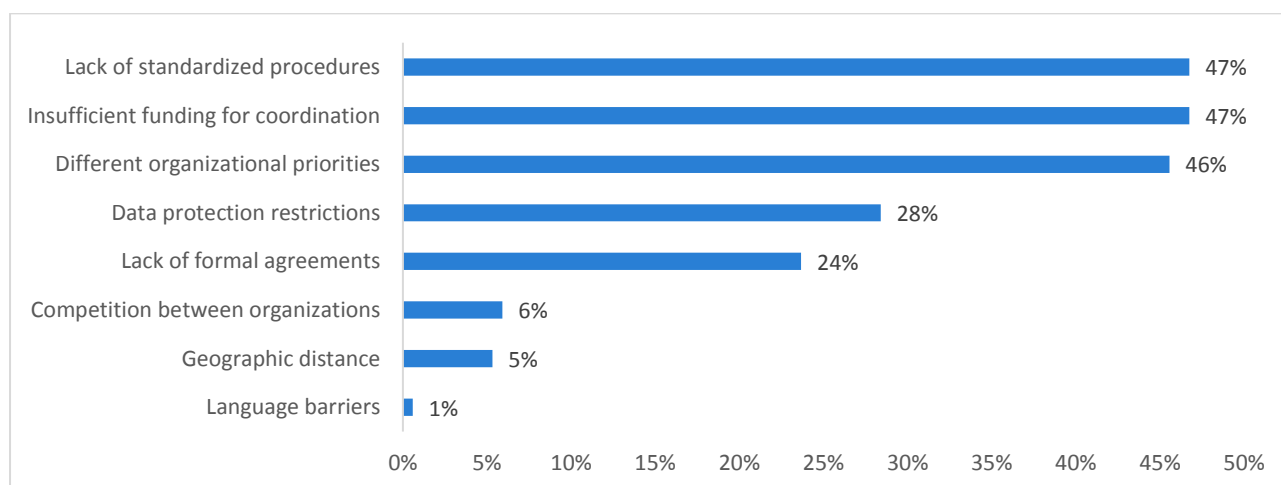
Figure 6. Collaboration partners of surveyed organizations



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

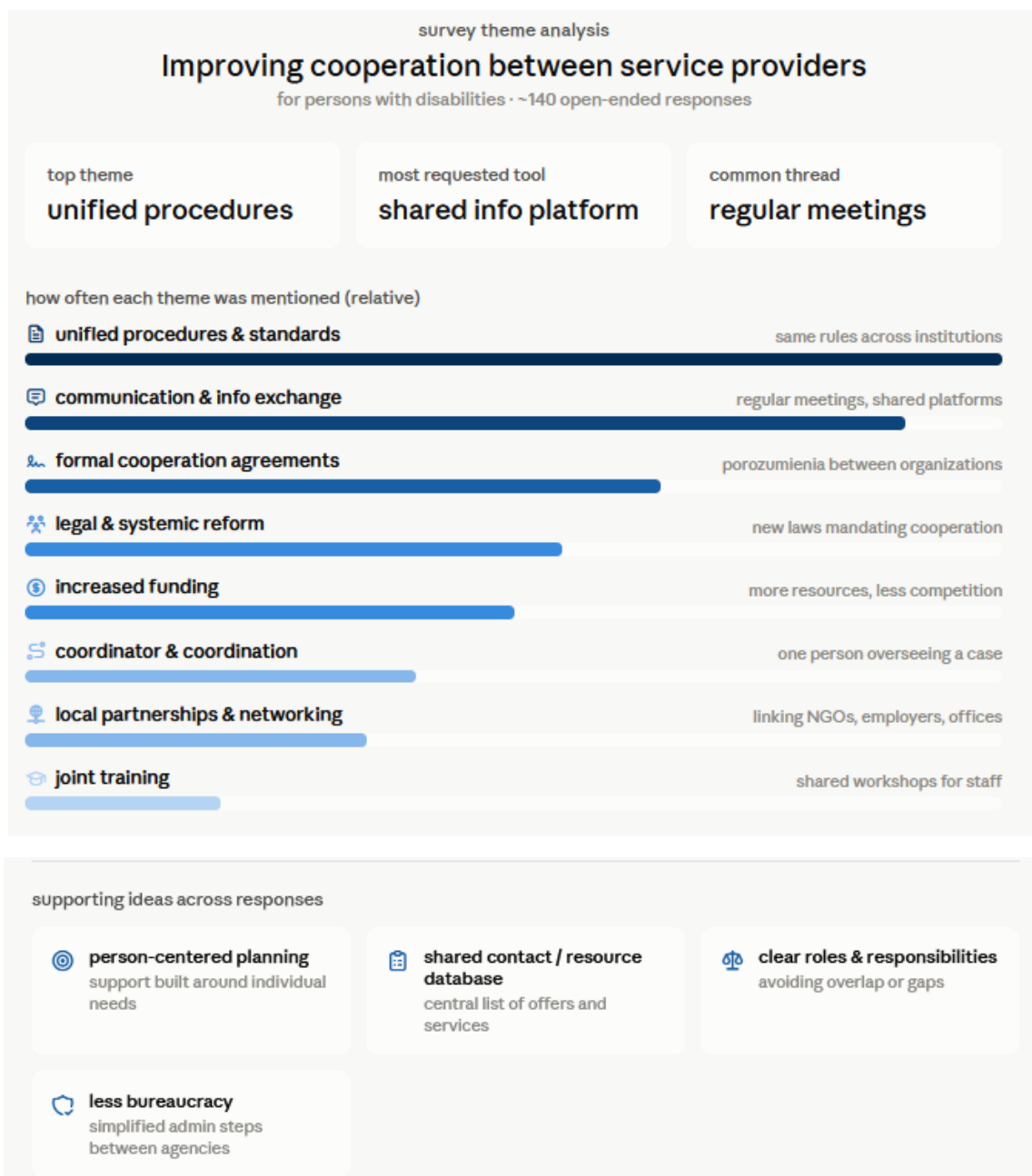
Figure 7. Cooperation barriers, according to surveyed organizations



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Respondents offered some suggestions on how to improve cooperation between institutions. Clear communication, a platform for sharing information, and unified procedures were most often mentioned.

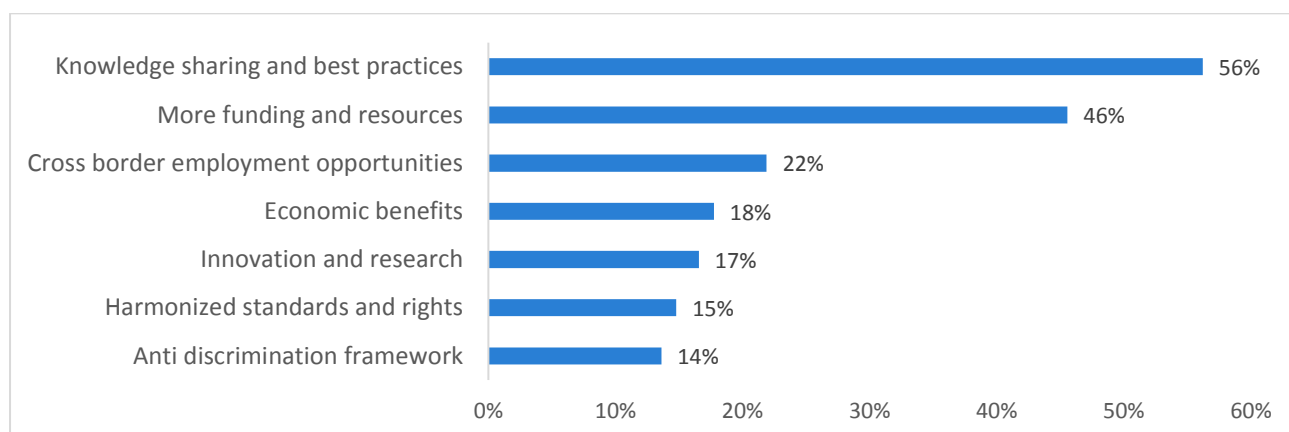


We also asked whether difficulties in cooperation differ depending on the type of organization. While most respondents denied this (70%), the remaining responses highlighted the rigidity of PES partners, which contrasts with NGOs' flexibility. Legal/regulatory rigidity and data-protection formalities came up most often as sources of friction, and respondents noted cooperation is easiest between similar types of organizations (NGO-to-NGO or agency-to-agency) that already share working methods and goals.

Role of the EU

Most respondent (74%) see benefits to EU-level collaboration on issues related to employment of persons with disabilities. Sharing of knowledge and best practices, increased funding and resources, as well as cross-border employment opportunities motivate these beliefs (Figure 8). About half of the respondents (53%) agree that some themes are important for EU-level collaboration. In particular, these include employer engagement strategies, staff training and capacity building, and supported employment models (Figure 9).

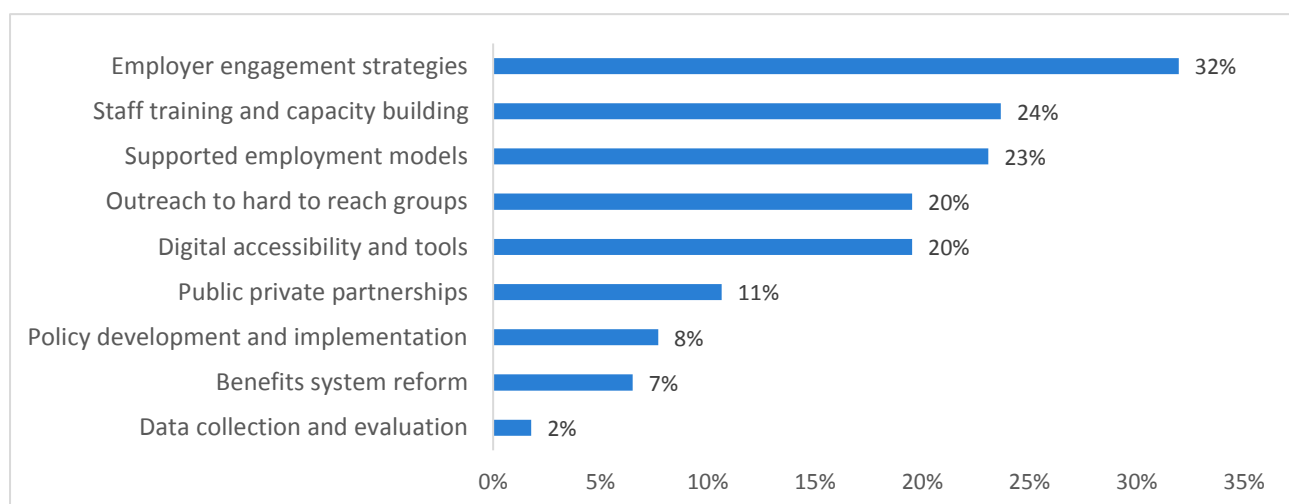
Figure 8. Benefits from EU-level collaboration, as seen by the surveyed organizations



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Figure 9. Possible subjects of EU-level collaboration



Note. Respondents could choose up to three options, so the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Source: Own elaboration based on survey data.

Conclusions

Although the majority of respondents represented Polish PES, some insights gained from this survey may be valuable in other contexts.

On the demand side, organizations continue to face a narrow labour market for persons with disabilities, compounded by inaccessible workplaces, limited funding, and weak employer engagement. They see further barriers in employers' own prejudices, productivity concerns, and unaddressed accessibility needs. On the client side, fear of losing benefits, low awareness of available services, and transport difficulties remain the principal obstacles to accessing support. While most organizations offer some form of accessibility accommodation, provisions such as flexible scheduling, home visits, multilingual support, and transport assistance are still uncommon.

Proactive outreach is not yet the norm: fewer than half of responding organizations actively identify and approach persons with disabilities, and where outreach does happen, it relies heavily on referral networks - social services, employers, and educational institutions - rather than direct engagement. Certain groups, including ethnic minorities, LGBTQ persons, and recent migrants and refugees with disabilities, are reached markedly less often, suggesting that intersectional needs are not yet well addressed by current outreach strategies. Similarly, innovation appears limited, with only a small share of organizations reporting new practices in the past three years, mainly centred on digital technologies and service integration.

Collaboration between organizations is widespread. Difficulties tend to stem from the comparative rigidity of public employment services, and are most easily overcome between organizations of similar type. EU-level collaboration on disability employment is appreciated, especially for the sharing of knowledge and best practices, additional funding, and cross-border opportunities. Around half of respondents identify specific priority themes for such cooperation, with employer engagement strategies, staff training and capacity building, and supported employment models standing out as the most relevant areas for future EU-level action.

These findings point to several priority areas:

- Increased informational outreach, also to underrepresented groups: as some employment barriers relate to the lack of knowledge/awareness of existing services, or stereotypes;
- Improved accessibility of services: not only digital, but also including flexible scheduling and home visits;
- Promoting innovation, especially in strengthening employer engagement.



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