

Public policy and labor inclusion: employment strategies for people with disabilities in Ecuador

Políticas públicas e inclusão no trabalho: estratégias de emprego para pessoas com deficiência no Equador

Políticas públicas e inclusión laboral: estrategias de empleo para personas con discapacidad en Ecuador

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Public Administration Program**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: This study aims to analyze and relate public policy and labor inclusion variables to identify improvement actions for compliance in favor of people with disabilities working in the GAD cantonal of La Libertad. **Methods:** The research used a quantitative approach, collecting data through surveys and interviews. Surveys were administered via Google Forms to 194 workers from the GAD cantonal of La Libertad, Ecuador and an interview was conducted with the Social Worker. Also, a bibliographic review of documents and scientific articles was conducted, focusing on the employment rights of people with disabilities in Latin America and Ecuador. **Results:** The SPSS statistical program was used for data analysis, revealing that the GAD cantonal of La Libertad complies with Ecuadorian legal requirements to hire 4% of people with disabilities in public and private companies with 25 or more workers, and with physical accessibility regulations. The methodology and analysis were validated using Cronbach's Alpha, KMO and Bartlett, Communalities, and Spearman's Rho coefficients. **Conclusion:** Implementing, promoting, and ensuring inclusive local policies, with constant monitoring and encouraging the participation of people with disabilities in decision-making for their full integration, is recommended.

Keywords: public policy, labor inclusion, disabilities, accessibility, regulation, Ecuador.

RESUMO

Introdução: Este estudo visa analisar e relacionar variáveis de políticas públicas e inclusão laboral para identificar ações de melhoria no cumprimento das mesmas em favor de pessoas com deficiência que trabalham no GAD cantonal de La Libertad. **Métodos:** A pesquisa teve um enfoque quantitativo, coletando dados através de pesquisas e entrevistas. Questionários foram administrados via Google Forms para 194 trabalhadores do GAD cantonal de La Libertad, e uma entrevista foi realizada com a Assistente Social. Da mesma forma, foi realizada uma revisão bibliográfica de documentos e artigos científicos, com foco nos direitos de emprego de pessoas com deficiência na América Latina e no Equador. **Resultados:** O programa estatístico SPSS foi utilizado para análise de dados, revelando que o GAD cantonal de La Libertad cumpre os requisitos legais equatorianos para contratar 4% de pessoas com deficiência em empresas públicas e privadas com 25 ou mais trabalhadores, além das regulamentações de acessibilidade física. A metodologia e a análise foram validadas utilizando coeficientes como Alpha de Cronbach, KMO e Bartlett, Comunidades e Rho de Spearman. **Conclusão:** Recomenda-se implementar, promover e garantir políticas locais inclusivas, com monitoramento constante e incentivando a participação de pessoas com deficiência na tomada de decisões para sua plena integração.

Palavras-chave: políticas públicas, inclusão laboral, deficiência, acessibilidade, regulamentação, Equador.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar y relacionar las variables de política pública e inclusión laboral para identificar acciones de mejora en el cumplimiento de las mismas en favor de las personas con discapacidad que trabajan en el GAD cantonal de La Libertad. **Métodos:** La investigación tuvo un enfoque cuantitativo, recopilando datos a través de encuestas y entrevistas. Las encuestas se administraron mediante Google Forms a 194 trabajadores del GAD cantonal de La Libertad, y se realizó una entrevista con la Trabajadora Social. Se realizó una revisión bibliográfica de documentos y artículos científicos, enfocándose en los derechos laborales de personas con discapacidad en América Latina y Ecuador. **Resultados:** El programa estadístico SPSS se utilizó para el análisis de datos, revelando que el GAD cantonal de La Libertad cumple con los requisitos legales equatorianos de contratar al 4% de personas con discapacidad en empresas públicas y privadas con 25 o más trabajadores, y con las regulaciones de accesibilidad física. La metodología y el análisis se validaron utilizando coeficientes como el Alfa de Cronbach, KMO y Bartlett, Comunidades y Rho de Spearman. **Conclusión:** Se recomienda implementar, promover y garantizar políticas locales inclusivas, con monitoreo constante e incentivando la participación de personas con discapacidad en la toma de decisiones para su plena integración.

Palabras clave: políticas públicas, inclusión laboral, discapacidad, accesibilidad, regulación, Ecuador.

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The research primarily focuses on aiding the development of public employment and inclusion policies for individuals with disabilities in developing regions.

Originality/value:

This ground-breaking research offers original insights on labor inclusion for people with disabilities, making significant contributions to the epistemic debate and furthering the objectives of sustainable development in terms of equality and social inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of disability has been evolving. It has gone from conceiving disability as a disease to a human rights approach (Gil, 2007), considering the person with disability as a person subject to rights and obligations, with equal opportunities and social participation. Now, disability, from Seoane's (2011) point of view, "is no longer an attribute of the person, but the result of his or her interaction with social conditions and structures" (p. 147), shifting attention to a social environment. In any case, disability is a social construct and the response comes from the presence of various barriers in the environment, thus identifying an exclusionary society. These barriers are the ones that really hinder and prevent access, participation and inclusion of this priority attention group.

People with disabilities, over the course of time, have encountered great difficulties in achieving inclusion in the workplace, not only because the limitations of the environment have made it impossible for them to fully develop their skills and abilities, but also because there are still prejudices and fears about the efficiency of their work performance. Regarding the labor exclusion of people with disabilities, Quiñonez and Rodríguez (2015) argue that "it is mainly due to two factors: the low asset endowment and the mechanisms of occupational segregation and marginalization that operate according to the low social value given to this group of people" (p.34). Therefore, the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities requires institutional action by States, because "it is not only necessary to establish guarantees against social exclusion, but also to ensure real access to social opportunities through a systematic and comprehensive reform of the physical and institutional contexts that frame their lives" (Sanjosé, 2007, p.2).

According to the World Health Organization's report (2023) approximately 1.3 billion people live with some type of disability, whether physical, intellectual or sensory, representing 16% of the world's population. Although significant progress has been made with respect to social and labor inclusion in the countries of the region, there are still challenges to achieve the guarantee of their rights, and these are reflected in the existing gaps between people who have disabilities and those who do not. Moreover, the International Labor Organization (ILO) indicates that about 80% of people with disabilities are of working age; however, they are unemployed, as their right to access decent work is most often denied. As mentioned by the ILO, "persons with disabilities experience higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity and are at greater risk of insufficient social protection, which is key to reducing extreme poverty." (International Labour Organization, 2023).

In Ecuador, according to the National Registry of Disabilities of the Ministry of Public Health, which includes the historical base of the National Council for the Equality of Disabilities (CONADIS), it is reported that as of October 2022 there were 476,360 people with disabilities. Of this priority attention group, 68,901 people are active in the labor market in different areas. Likewise, according to CONADIS statistics (2022), through a report of the registry of persons by type of disability, it is reported that 54.2% of persons with disabilities in the country who are in a job have a physical impairment, followed by hearing impairment with 15.9%, visual impairment with 13.4% and intellectual impairment with 11.5%. The statistic from CONADIS (2022) illustrate that there are a total of 10,992 people with disabilities in the province of Santa Elena, 51.26% of whom have physical disabilities. Of this priority group, 1,300 are employed.

International contextualization: stylized facts from international literature on the promotion of inclusion

Overall, the international literature presents studies that have demonstrated the importance of ICTs in mitigating inequality and improving economic inclusion (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2020), as well as on the relevance of the social economy for social inclusion in Europe (Cace & Stănescu, 2013). Almalky's (2020) review of employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the United States provides insight into the challenges and benefits of employment for this population. Likewise, research such as that of González Marín and Rojo Gutiérrez (2023) and Vernby (2013) highlight the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion actions and political inclusion in improving public policies and resource allocation.

Recent studies also highlight the importance of collaborative innovation in labor inclusion (Lindsay et al., 2021), educational access policies (Villouta & Villarreal, 2022), and managing inclusion in contexts without state regulations (Palalar Alkan, Kamasak & Ozbilgin, 2024). Jetha et al.'s (2023) research on the digitized economy and employment inequities for people with disabilities, along with Klinksiek's (2024) study on the challenges of implementing IED policies, and Mijailović, Pešić, and Petrović's (2024) analysis of transportation equity, provide a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing the employment inclusion of people with disabilities.

Despite advances in the understanding of economic and social inclusion through ICTs (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2020) and the social economy (Cace & Stănescu, 2013), as well as the labor challenges faced by people with intellectual disabilities (Almalky, 2020) and the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (González Marín & Rojo Gutiérrez, 2023; Vernby, 2013), significant gaps persist in the implementation and effectiveness of these policies in specific local contexts, such as the cantonal GAD of La Libertad in Ecuador. Furthermore, while recent studies have highlighted collaborative innovation (Lindsay

et al., 2021), educational access policies (Villouta & Villarreal, 2022), and inclusion management in settings without state regulations (Palalar Alkan, Kamasak & Ozbilgin, 2024), how these strategies can be adapted and implemented at the local level to improve the labor inclusion of people with disabilities has not been sufficiently explored. Research by Jetha et al. (2023) on the digitized economy and labor inequities, along with analysis by Klinksiek (2024) and Mijailović, Pešić, and Petrović (2024), reveals the need to address specific challenges in the practical implementation of inclusive policies. This article contributes to filling these gaps by assessing the current situation in the cantonal GAD of La Libertad, Ecuador, providing practical and specific recommendations to ensure effective compliance with Ecuadorian public policies, and offering a replicable model for other similar contexts in Latin America.

National contextualization: stylized facts from the literature regarding the Ecuadorian labor inclusion

The labor inclusion of people with disabilities in our country is a much discussed issue, because, both in the public and private sectors, sometimes the public policy that establishes the hiring of a minimum of 4% of people with disabilities in permanent jobs that are considered appropriate in relation to their knowledge, physical conditions and individual aptitudes is not complied with. For this reason, as Imacaña and Villacrés (2022) point out in their article related to the labor inclusion of persons with disabilities in Ecuador, "the State is in a constant search for alternatives aimed at generating and strengthening programs, projects and strategies aimed at labor inclusion from various perspectives" (p. 172).

In the process of labor inclusion of a person with a disability, according to Ordóñez (2011), it is necessary to take measures that guarantee the access and permanence of this person in the workplace, respecting his or her individuality and type of disability". For a person with a disability, being inserted in the labor market represents an advantage, by contributing to the improvement of their quality of life, contributing to family welfare and would be a productive entity to society (Zambrano et al., 2022, p. 317). Therefore, it is considered important for this population to develop their skills and abilities, since many of these people do not have access to education and therefore do not have a profession.

Currently, the municipal government of the canton of La Libertad has a payroll of 703 civil servants, of which 35 have some type of disability, thus complying with 5%, i.e., the provisions of the Disabilities Act in force are carried out. Consequently, the aim is to know how and to what extent the public policy regarding the Law on Disabilities has effectively favored the labor inclusion of people with disabilities in the cantonal GAD of La Libertad, ensuring dignified access and permanence in certain employment of this priority group.

Based on the need to critically analyze the right to labor inclusion of people with disabilities in the cantonal GAD of La Libertad, this research work aims to analyze and relate the variables of public policy and labor inclusion to identify and establish actions for improvement that promote compliance with them in favor of people with disabilities working in the cantonal GAD of La Libertad.

People with disabilities are a vulnerable group to which society has the responsibility to increase opportunities, because although significant progress has been made, there are still challenges to guarantee their rights. Likewise, "recognizing the needs presented by persons with disabilities implies differentiating their particularity from those of other groups to avoid barriers to inclusion at all levels" (Bietti, 2023).

Labor inclusion of people with disabilities, "is the process in which a dignified employment is provided to people in vulnerable conditions, who will be under the same working conditions as the rest of the staff in terms of tasks, schedules and remuneration" (Imacaña & Villacrés, 2022, p. 175). The hiring of people with disabilities promotes a diverse and inclusive work environment, improving the organizational culture, as stated by Guerrero and Velastegui (2020) state, "an institution that considers that one of its first objectives is to select high quality employees reaps important benefits for the company" (p. 22). Indeed, Bermeo and Naranjo (2022) mention that: "people with disabilities have few job opportunities, despite the regulations and laws that protect labor inclusion with equity and respect. Similarly, Imacaña and Villacrés (2022), state that:

New and better policies on the employability and integral development of people with disabilities must be managed so that each of these policies protect the right to equal opportunities, generate the strengthening of social development and reduce the difficulties that are still evident. This is a challenge for the National Government in terms of the adequate compliance with public policies.

The duty of those in power in the political sphere is to defend the human rights of this vulnerable group, where they must observe their main needs such as: economic, labor, health and social. Some of the public policies will not be able to achieve their desired objectives, since "the disadvantages that affect people with disabilities are not so much in their personal deficiencies but rather and mainly in the physical and mental barriers (attitudes, prejudices, discrimination) that society and the State build (Arias et al., 2020, p. 54).

In their study "Evaluation of employment policies for people with disabilities and formulation and economic cost of new proposals for labor integration", Rodríguez et al. (2009), indicate that: Job creation for people with disabilities depends in many ways on public policies aimed at stimulating the demand for employment by employers and boosting the supply of

employment through education, vocational training or other types of interventions that positively discriminate against the employed or employable person with disabilities.

For a person with a disability to be included in the labor market, it is extremely important to start with educational inclusion, since academically prepared people are needed to be inserted into the labor market. For such reason, "educational systems at all levels must guarantee preparation for socio-labor insertion" (Cruz et al., 2018, p. 10).

According to the perspective of Meléndez Rojas (2019), "public institutions and organizations dedicated to implementing policies and strategies for people with disabilities are framed within the so-called targeted institutional developments, which are mandated to guarantee the rights of certain segments of the population." (p. 12). In this sense, Ortega (2023), states that "in the implementation of policies for the promotion of employment of persons with disabilities, underlies above all the need for the recognition of the right to employment" (p. 137). (p. 137).

On the other hand, one of the main barriers to labor inclusion is the lack of accessibility in buildings. Both public and private companies are obliged to adapt their environments with a physical infrastructure according to the needs of this group of people, in other words, to have the basic conditions of universal design that allow safe and autonomous access to all facilities and services. In this sense, "accessibility is an indispensable condition for people with disabilities to fully exercise their rights" (Carrasco, 2018, p. 42).

The legal bases are essential norms that support the promotion and protection of human rights. It is important that these bases are created and applied correctly, so that policies and programs aimed at the labor inclusion of persons with disabilities ensure their compliance. As a result, the United Nations (UN) approved in 2006 the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", which has been in force since 2008. The purpose of this Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities. (United Nations, 2006, p. 4).

Regarding work and employment, Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stipulates the following:

States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for persons who acquire a disability during employment, by taking appropriate measures, including the enactment of legislation (United Nations, 2006, p. 22).

In this regard, the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador includes laws that are linked to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for all persons, without any distinction. Within the Constitution, the sixth section, referring to persons with disabilities, Article 47, paragraph 5, stipulates: "Work under conditions of equal opportunity, which promotes their capabilities and potential, through policies that allow their incorporation in public and private entities" (National Constituent Assembly of Ecuador, 2008). (National Constituent Assembly of Ecuador, 2008). Likewise, Article 330 of the Magna Carta states that:

The insertion and accessibility under equal conditions to paid work of persons with disabilities shall be guaranteed. The States and employers shall implement social services and special assistance to facilitate their activity. It is prohibited to reduce the remuneration of workers with disabilities for any circumstance related to their condition. (National Constituent Assembly of Ecuador, 2008).

Similarly, CONADIS presented the National Agenda for the Equality of Disabilities 2021-2025, which establishes commitments to improve the exercise of the rights of the population with disabilities. Within the axis of labor and employment, the public policy proposal contemplates "promoting awareness campaigns and promotion of the labor rights of persons with disabilities for companies, users and the public sector, on a permanent basis" (National Council for Equality of Disabilities). (National Council for Disability Equality, 2022).

The Labor Code establishes another legal regulation to guarantee the labor rights of this priority group. Article 42 emphasizes the obligations of the employer; among them are the installation of workshops and offices, which shall be subject to safety and prevention measures and other regulations that ensure the proper movement of people with disabilities. In addition, within this same article, paragraph 33, it is established that:

The public or private employer, who has a minimum number of twenty-five workers, is obliged to hire at least one person with disabilities, in permanent jobs that are considered appropriate in relation to their knowledge, physical condition and individual aptitudes, observing the principles of gender equity and diversity of disability (...) (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2022).

According to the Regulations for the Eradication of Discrimination in the Labor Sphere, in force since 2017, under Ministerial Agreement 82, the Organic Law on Public Service has as its objective and principle non-discrimination and labor

inclusion; within it, it is established that:

Throughout the years there has been discrimination against workers, due to distinctions of the color of their skin, sex, religion, language, political opinion or affiliation, social origin, migratory condition, nationality, marital status, judicial past, disability, having some type of disease, being in gestation period, among others, which has prevented them from maintaining equal job opportunities, resulting in labor precariousness; however, with this agreement we seek free access to work without exclusion or restriction, based on respect and equality. (Ministry of Labor, 2017).

The Organic Law on Disabilities, in force since 2012, aims to:

Ensure the prevention, timely detection, habilitation and rehabilitation of disability and guarantee the full validity, dissemination and exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities, established in the Constitution of the Republic, international treaties and instruments, as well as those derived from related laws, with a gender, generational and intercultural approach. (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2012).

Within the same law, in Section V, Labor and Training, Article 45, states that:

Persons with disabilities, impairment or disabling condition have the right to access to paid work under equal conditions and not to be discriminated against in employment-related practices, including procedures for the application, selection, hiring, training and compensation of personnel and other conditions established in the public and private sectors (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2012).

METHODS

For the development of this research work, a literature review was conducted. With this methodology, according to Guirao Goris (2015), "we approach the knowledge of a topic and it is in itself the first stage of the research process because it helps us to identify what is known and what is unknown about a topic of our interest." (p. 3). In this case, information was collected through the analysis and interpretation of the different laws and regulations focused on the right to employment of persons with disabilities in Latin America and Ecuador (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, Labor Code, Organic Law on Disabilities).

Likewise, books, documents and scientific articles specialized in the research topic were selected. Regarding the articles, documents were obtained from the Scielo, Scopus and Web of Science databases, through a methodical search considering the publications of the last five years to date, the same that will allow reaching conclusions regarding the determination of the aspects that affect the labor inclusion of people with disabilities in the GAD of the canton of La Libertad.

The present work has a quantitative approach, which, according to Jiménez (2020), "has some key elements that differentiate it from other types of research, precisely in its purpose, by obtaining numerical data from the prediction of the phenomena addressed" (p. 62). Thus, a structured design and method is used and this requires the intervention of the variables by the researcher.

For the realization of this work, the research technique that will help to collect information will be the survey, which, according to García Ferrano (2000), as cited in Gómez-Escalonilla (2020): A survey is an investigation conducted on a sample of subjects representative of a larger group, which is carried out in the context of everyday life, using standardized questioning procedures, in order to obtain quantitative measurements of a wide variety of objective and subjective characteristics of the population (p. 69).

In addition, an interview was applied to the Social Worker of the municipality of La Libertad, in order to obtain more in-depth and detailed information related to this research process. Regarding the interview, (Carl and Ravitch, 2018, as cited in Ibarra-Sáiz et al., 2023), mention that "it is a data collection technique that is used, among other reasons, for the ability it has to provide contextualized and individualized data" (p. 502).

The population under study includes all the employees working in the municipality of La Libertad, equivalent to 703 people. Due to the size of the population, it is necessary to calculate the sample, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 6%, which resulted in 194 people to whom a survey structured by 11 questions will be applied, through an online form of Google Forms. The questions of the instrument have a Likert scale, with 5 response options: always, almost always, occasionally, almost never, never. Likewise, the survey included a section of sociodemographic variables, for example: age, gender, type of disability, level of education, job position, seniority in the job.

It is worth mentioning that the V-Aiken coefficient was calculated through the review of the questionnaire by experts such as Judges, a procedure that validated the content of the questionnaire, obtaining a result of 0.94. Likewise, through the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) coefficient equivalent to 0.928, Bartlett's sphericity test equivalent to 0.000 and the extraction of communalities greater than 0.4 allowed validating the construct of the instrument (Table 1). Additionally, the reliability

analysis by means of Cronbach's Alpha; equivalent to 0.939 evidenced the reliability to apply the questionnaire (table 2), calculations that were developed with the support of the specialized software SPSS. In the process, 11 items were measured, related to two variables: public policy (table 3) and labor inclusion (table 4), generating statistical results to acquire the necessary suitability for the report. As mentioned by Virla (2010) the internal consistency coefficient will depend directly on the correlations between the items or reagents, that is, on the degree to which the items measure the same variable" (p. 250).

Table 1. Kaiser Mayer Olkin and Bartlett Coefficients

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		,928
Bartlett's test for sphericity	Approx. chi-square	1724,541
	df	55
	Sig.	,000

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Reliability statistics	
Cronbach's alpha	N of elements
,939	11

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Table 3. Items corresponding to the Public Policy variable

Item (Question)
Do you know the labor rights of people with disabilities, according to the different regulations in force in Ecuador?
Do you consider that the salary or wage is in accordance with the work activities you perform?
Do you consider that the GAD of La Libertad complies with the continuous training of all its human talent in labor rights, gender equality, eradication of violence and non-discrimination in the workplace, among others?
Have you participated in awareness campaigns related to the non-violation of the rights of personnel with disabilities, promoted by the GAD La Libertad?
In the elaboration of institutional plans in labor matters, do they involve the inclusive participation of all workers of the GAD La Libertad?

Note. Own elaboration (2024)

Table 4 Items corresponding to the variable Labor Inclusion

Item (Question)
Do you consider that there is equity in the human talent department of the GAD La Libertad when hiring personnel?
Do you consider that labor inclusion is guaranteed by the internal policies of the GAD La Libertad?
Do you consider that the GAD La Libertad promotes the eradication of all forms of labor discrimination, guaranteeing dignified treatment to workers with disabilities?
Do you consider that the GAD of La Libertad establishes accessibility to the physical environment to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities in employment, through adaptations to jobs in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Disabilities and INEN standards, among others?
Do you consider that the GAD La Libertad complies with the principle of equal opportunities for people with and without disabilities to occupy high-ranking positions in the institutional organization chart?
Do you consider that the institutional technological tools are friendly to workers with disabilities in the GAD La Libertad?

Note. Own elaboration (2024)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 5, with respect to the eradication and discrimination item, 39.1% and 18.8% of the municipality's employees believe that the GAD of La Libertad always and almost always promotes the eradication of all forms of labor discrimination, guaranteeing dignified treatment for workers with disabilities. Meanwhile, 6.8% and 5.7% of the municipality's employees believe that they never and almost never promote the eradication of labor discrimination in that entity. It is

important to begin to eliminate the perception that people with disabilities are not capable of performing administrative or operational functions, both in the public and private sectors. These results coincide with the theory of Ordóñez (2011), where he mentions that it is necessary to take measures to guarantee the access and permanence of these people in the workplace, respecting their individuality and type of disability. As stated by Sanjosé (2007), it is not only necessary to establish guarantees against social exclusion, but also to ensure real access to social opportunities through a systematic and comprehensive reform of the physical and institutional contexts that frame their lives.

Table 5. Eradication - Discrimination

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Never	13	6.8	6.8	6.8
	Almost never	11	5.7	5.7	12.5
	Occasionally	57	29.7	29.7	42.2
	Almost always	36	18.8	18.8	60.9
	Always	75	39.1	39.1	100.0
	Total	192	100.0	100.0	

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Limitations to the environment is one of the greatest barriers faced by people with disabilities to achieve inclusion in the workplace, accessibility is a primary point and an indispensable condition for people with disabilities to fully exercise their rights, as stated by Carrasco (2018). In this sense, in the item corresponding to physical means, represented in Table 6, it can be evidenced that 39.6% and 27.6% of people working in the municipality, consider that in the GAD of La Libertad always and almost always facilitates the inclusion to employment of this vulnerable group, since the different accessibilities to the physical environment are established (ramps, elevators, accessible bathrooms, handrails), through adaptations to jobs in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Disabilities and INEN standards, among others. In contrast to this result, 3.1% and 12.5% of employees of the municipality of La Libertad canton, say that they have never and almost never had accessibility according to their jobs. Recognizing the needs of people with disabilities implies differentiating their particularities from those of other groups in order to avoid barriers to inclusion at all levels, which coincides with those referred to by Bietti (2023).

Table 6. Physical Media - Inclusion

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Never	6	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Almost never	24	12.5	12.5	15.6
	Occasionally	33	17.2	17.2	32.8
	Almost always	53	27.6	27.6	60.4
	Always	76	39.6	39.6	100,0
	Total	192	100,0	100,0	

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

In compliance with the Constitution and the different laws, the State designs public policies focused on guaranteeing the rights and satisfying the needs of this priority group, such as labor, economic, health and social needs, among others, on equal terms with those of people who do not have disabilities. In relation to this, in Table 7, regarding the item Knowledge of Regulations, 38.5% and 21.9% of people working in the GAD of La Libertad always and almost always claim to have knowledge about the labor rights of persons with disabilities, according to the different regulations in force in Ecuador (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, Organic Law on Disabilities, Labor Code). However, there is a percentage of 10.4% and 9.4% who have never and almost never had knowledge of the regulations that guarantee the rights that this group has in labor matters. Thus, Bermeo and Naranjo (2022) mention that, due to lack of knowledge, people with disabilities have few job opportunities, despite the laws that protect labor inclusion with equity and respect. On the other hand, Imacaña and Villacrés (2022), consider that new and improved policies should be managed regarding the employability and integral development of people with disabilities in order to protect the right to equal opportunities and generate the strengthening of social development to reduce the difficulties that are still evident.

Table 7. Regulatory Knowledge

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Never	20	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Almost never	18	9.4	9.4	19.8
	Occasionally	38	19.8	19.8	39.6
	Almost always	42	21.9	21.9	61.5
	Always	74	38.5	38.5	100.0
	Total	192	100.0	100.0	

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

Regarding the item Awareness Campaign, Table 8 shows that 31.8% and 14.6% of the workers of the GAD of La Libertad have never and almost never participated in campaigns related to the non-violation of the rights of personnel with disabilities. Meanwhile, 19.8% and 12% state that they have always and almost always participated in these awareness campaigns. It is essential to sensitize and train public officials working in this entity, as it is necessary to generate greater social awareness, recognizing the capabilities, skills and contributions of this group; promoting awareness campaigns and promoting the labor rights of persons with disabilities for companies, users and the public sector, on a permanent basis, which coincides with what is referred to by CONADIS (2022).

Table 8. Awareness Campaign

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Never	61	31.8	31.8	31.8
	Almost never	28	14.6	14.6	46.4
	Occasionally	42	21.9	21.9	68.2
	Almost always	23	12.0	12.0	80.2
	Always	38	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	192	100.0	100.0	

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

In addition, it was necessary to apply the normality test through the Kolmogorov Smirnov Coefficient; since the sample size was greater than 30 elements, it is the correct test to apply, where a significance level of 0.000 was obtained, which when compared with the standard p-value of 0.05, shows that the data do not follow a normal distribution, i.e. they are non-parametric (Table 9).

Table 9 Kolmogorov Smirnov Coefficient

	Normality tests			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Stat	gl	Sig.	Stat	gl	Sig.
Equity	.246	191	.000	.817	191	.000
Labor Inclusion	.282	191	.000	.774	191	.000
Eradication Discrimination	.231	191	.000	.839	191	.000
Physical_Means_Inclusion	.231	191	.000	.836	191	.000
Equal Opportunity	.193	191	.000	.856	191	.000
Technology_Tools	.251	191	.000	.873	191	.000
Regulatory_Knowledge	.223	191	.000	.836	191	.000
Salary	.215	191	.000	.850	191	.000
Training	.231	191	.000	.842	191	.000
Inclusive_campaign	.193	191	.000	.853	191	.000
Institutional_Plans	.223	191	.000	.843	191	.000

a. Lilliefors significance correction.

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

On the other hand, a previous process was necessary to identify the appropriate statistician to measure the correlation between the variables under study and to apply the hypothesis test. The non-parametric correlation was applied, using Spearman's Rho, obtaining a result of 0.836 (table 10) which, according to the measurement range, is equivalent to a positive correlation between the variables public policy and inclusion; according to the following Table 10:

Tabla 10. Spearman's Rho coefficient

		CORRELATION		
			Public Policy	Inclusion
Rho Spearman	Public Policy	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.836**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	.000
		N	192	192
	Inclusion	Correlation coefficient	.836**	1.000
		Sig. (bilateral)	.000	.
		N	192	192

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

Note. Own elaboration with the research data (2024)

In conclusion, through the result of the significance level equivalent to 0.0001 and being less than the standard p-value of 0.05, the decision is made to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, i.e. effective public policy management favors the labor inclusion of people with disabilities.

FINAL REMARKS

This study focused on analyzing and relating the variables of public policy and labor inclusion to identify actions for improvement that promote the enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities working in the GAD of La Libertad, Ecuador, within a framework of respect and equity, eliminating discriminatory habits and attitudes.

As a result, the study showed that, within the payroll of public officials working in this entity, 35 people, i.e. 5% of the total staff, have some type of disability, which means that it complies with the provisions of the institutional legal framework, rectifying that there is equity in the human talent department at the time of hiring staff.

Likewise, it was possible to show that the building where the GAD of La Libertad operates has accesses available for people with disabilities and in relation to the adaptations of the workstations, facilitating the development of their activities according to their abilities.

On the other hand, it is recommended to provide continuous training to all its human talent on labor rights, gender equality, eradication of violence and non-discrimination in the workplace; in addition to implementing awareness programs, satisfaction levels and accessibility evaluations, thus measuring the management in relation to the commitment to inclusion. Finally, this municipal entity must implement, promote and guarantee inclusive local policies, ensuring their effectiveness through constant monitoring, encouraging the participation of people with disabilities in decision making, as it is crucial for their full integration.

Theoretical and methodological limitations

The study has some theoretical and methodological limitations. Theoretically, the research is based on conceptual frameworks that may not fully capture the complexities of labor inclusion for people with disabilities in specific local contexts (be it cultural, political-legislative and/or economic). In addition, the literature review having no focus on gray literature, there may not be some relevant theoretical perspectives and approaches such as those from the context of critical epistemology from developing countries, which could limit the diversity and depth of the analysis. Methodologically, although the study uses quantitative data collection instruments, the reliance on surveys and interviews may introduce self-selection bias and subjectivity in the responses. In addition, the focus on a single cantonal GAD may limit the generalizability of the results to other contexts or regions of Ecuador and beyond. Also, the study cannot by its very scope capture all the qualitative and contextual dynamics that influence labor inclusion.

Future research agenda

To address the identified limitations and address theoretical and methodological gaps in the field of labor inclusion of people with disabilities, a research agenda that includes several key components is suggested. First, it is essential to conduct comparative studies that analyze different cantonal and regional public organizations, which will allow the identification of patterns and contextual variations in the implementation of inclusion policies. In addition, it is recommended to complement quantitative methods with more in-depth qualitative approaches, such as case studies and in-depth interviews, to better capture the experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities and other key stakeholders. It would also be indicated to explore the interaction between different types of disabilities and the effectiveness of inclusion policies, as well as to investigate the role of emerging technologies and social innovations in improving labor inclusion. Finally, it is

crucial to examine the long-term dynamics and sustained impact of inclusion policies in order to develop more effective and sustainable strategies.

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