

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: LIFE-LONG BENEFICIARIES OF INVALIDITY PENSIONS?

CONTEXT

During the period from 1993 to 1996 the number of invalidity pension recipients in Switzerland increased by 5 percent per annum. This marked increase has had a severe financial impact on invalidity insurance, the costs of which represent a growing burden for the Welfare State. The reasons for this growth are still largely unknown. Available statistics provide important information on the characteristics of the invalidity pension recipients as well as changes over recent years.

However, no investigations have been undertaken which start from a micro-social level and examine the numerous factors and transformation processes of health, economic, professional and social aspects which lead to entry into the insurance system. The research project "People with Disabilities: Life-long Beneficiaries of Invalidity Pensions?" does exactly this. It studies the concurrence of various partial aspects of the life situations of people with disabilities during the invalidisation process. Furthermore, the project pursues the question of how people are affected when confronted with the decision on whether an invalidity pension is granted or denied.

Finally, the study analyses what factors lead to a (renewed) professional re-integration after people with disabilities have entered the insurance system.

METHOD

An individual, life-historical (biographical) approach is most appropriate to the research questions at hand. Personal interviews were carried out with approximately 70 randomly selected invalidity pension recipients. This selection was complemented by interviews with people with disabilities who have been denied invalidity pension support. The research findings were then validated by means of a representative sample of recent invalidity pension recipients.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The project is expected to supply answers with regard to the reasons for the increase in invalidity pension recipients, since the project studies triggering factors and processes in the life situations of people with disabilities that lead to entry into or exit from the invalidity insurance system. At the same time, the study will make available in-depth findings on the changing processes in the life situations of people with disabilities in the aftermath of invalidity pension decisions. Finally, this research will provide the basis for conclusions on various social policy measures concerning people with disabilities. These will contribute to the professional and social integration of people with disabilities.

INFORMATION

Research project within the framework of the National Research Program 45 "Problems of the Welfare State".

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