



REVIEW

Labor inclusion of people with disabilities in Colombia

Inclusión laboral de personas con discapacidad en Colombia

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ABSTRACT

The low participation of people with disabilities in the labor market has been a problem that has existed for many years, however, it was not always a relevant issue as it is today and that is why this article will highlight the factors. that must be taken into account so that they can actively participate in the workplace. Objective: determine the aspects that influence the adequate labor inclusion of people with disabilities in companies and identify their employability trend. Method: a documentary review was carried out of the research and documents published during the last 5 years in relation to labor inclusion and employability trends for people with disabilities in Colombia. This collection of information had the library as its main source. digital CUN from which much of the data contained in this document was extracted. Analysis and integration of information: For the analysis of the information, the background of the topic, the laws and regulations, as well as the data collected quantitatively and qualitatively, were taken into account. Conclusions: labor inclusion is a very broad issue in which both employing companies and the government play an important role since they must provide the necessary guarantees to achieve active participation in the business environment of people with disabilities.

Keywords: Labor Inclusion; Opportunities; Disability; Equality.

RESUMEN

La baja participación de personas en condición de discapacidad en el mercado laboral ha sido una problemática existente desde hace muchos años, sin embargo, no siempre fue un tema relevante como lo es en la actualidad y es por eso que en este artículo se resaltarán los factores que se deben tener en cuenta para que puedan participar activamente en el ámbito laboral. Objetivo: determinar los aspectos que influyen para la adecuada inclusión laboral de personas con discapacidad en las empresas e identificar su tendencia de empleabilidad. Método: se llevó a cabo una revisión documental de las investigaciones y los documentos publicados durante los últimos 5 años con relación a la inclusión laboral y las tendencias de empleabilidad para las personas con discapacidad en Colombia, esta recopilación de información tuvo como fuente principal la biblioteca CUN digital de la cual se extrajo gran parte de los datos contenidos en este documento. Análisis e integración de la información: Para el análisis de la información se tomaron en cuenta los antecedentes del tema, las leyes y regulaciones, así como también los datos recolectados de manera cuantitativa y cualitativa. Conclusiones: la inclusión laboral es un tema muy amplio en el cual tanto las empresas empleadoras como el gobierno juegan un papel importante ya que deben brindar las garantías necesarias para lograr una participación activa en el ambiente empresarial de las personas con discapacidad.

Palabras clave: Inclusión Laboral; Oportunidades; Discapacidad; Igualdad.

INTRODUCTION

The labor inclusion of people with disabilities is a central issue in Colombia's socioeconomic and labor landscape, posing fundamental challenges that require urgent attention and a multidimensional approach. Society is experiencing a significant paradigm shift about disability, moving from segregationist approaches to a growing recognition of diversity and equal opportunities in all areas of life, including the workplace.^(1,2)

Despite regulatory advances and government initiatives to promote labor inclusion, people with disabilities face significant barriers that limit their full and effective participation in the labor market. The low employment rate among this population group reflects deep-rooted structural inequalities and the need for innovative and sustainable strategies that foster an inclusive and accessible work environment for all.^(3,4,5)

In Colombia, 7,1 % of the country's population has some disability, whether physical, mental, or sensory, and this percentage is equivalent to 3134037 people. In addition, it should be emphasized that the nature and severity of these disabilities can vary widely. While some people are born with disabilities, others may acquire them throughout their lives as a result of an accident, illness, or aging.⁽⁶⁾

There is a widespread belief that assumes that a person with a disability has characteristics that limit them when it comes to carrying out any activity typically. This is why, on several occasions, they end up being undervalued. As a consequence, they are left behind in different aspects of daily life, such as their low level of social and political participation, barriers to accessing education, communication barriers, dependence on their caregivers, demanding access to medical care, among many others, which in turn have an impact on their mental health due to the discrimination and isolation they often face.^(7,8,9)

Although all these factors mentioned above are of great importance, the authors will focus solely on the workplace for the purposes of this article. This scenario does not reflect a very different situation since, according to DANE, during the third quarter of the year (July-September), the employment rate of the disabled population in Colombia was 22,2 %, while that of the non-disabled population was 60,5 %.⁽¹⁰⁾

The level of job opportunities in Colombia is much lower for people with disabilities. It is necessary to continue implementing initiatives promoting the participation of people with physical, mental, or sensory impairment to guarantee a more inclusive environment with more significant opportunities and improve their quality of life.^(11,12)

For people with disabilities, achieving economic autonomy is essential, allowing them independence in other aspects of their lives. For this reason, obtaining a job strengthens their confidence, recognizes their abilities, and guarantees that they have equal opportunities to participate in society actively.^(13,14,15)

This scientific article addresses this issue comprehensively, analyzing the determining factors that influence the labor inclusion of people with disabilities in Colombia. Through a detailed review of the existing literature, empirical data, and qualitative analysis, it seeks to identify existing gaps, key challenges, and best practices that can contribute to the creation of more inclusive and equitable work environments.

METHOD

A systematic review of research was carried out in specialized databases to compile the information obtained in the different studies carried out over the last 5 years that address the issue of the labor inclusion of people with disabilities. This review was based on identifying how to achieve labor inclusion of people with disabilities in Colombia. To develop it correctly, the PRISMA method was applied,^(16,17) as well as Excel tools and graphics that allowed synthesizing the information and putting it in the proper order for its correct interpretation and analysis.

The systemic review research was conducted by searching for information in the specialized databases provided by the university library (CUN Digital). These databases included documents such as reports, journals, and research, as well as information synthesis for subsequent analysis and presentation of results (figure 1).

This analysis is based on data collected to determine the rates of participation, employment, and unemployment among these two demographic groups. Its aim is to identify the differences and gaps in the labor inclusion of people with disabilities. This type of study evaluates equal employment opportunities and may be of interest to policymakers, researchers, and organizations working on issues of inclusion and employment.

Selection and eligibility criteria

Once the parameters had been defined, the classification process began (table 1), mainly discarding those that did not meet the required time range, i.e., within the last five years (from 2018 to 2023). Subsequently, the type of publication was considered, discarding all documents that were not published in official sources or had little credibility.

The following exclusion criterion to be addressed was the publication language, focusing on documents written in a language other than Spanish. This filter guarantees that the information analyzed is accessible and understandable to a specific audience, facilitating the dissemination of results. The last inclusion criterion is the type of participants, as people of both genders with physical, intellectual, or sensory impairments who are part of the economically active population in Colombia were taken into account.

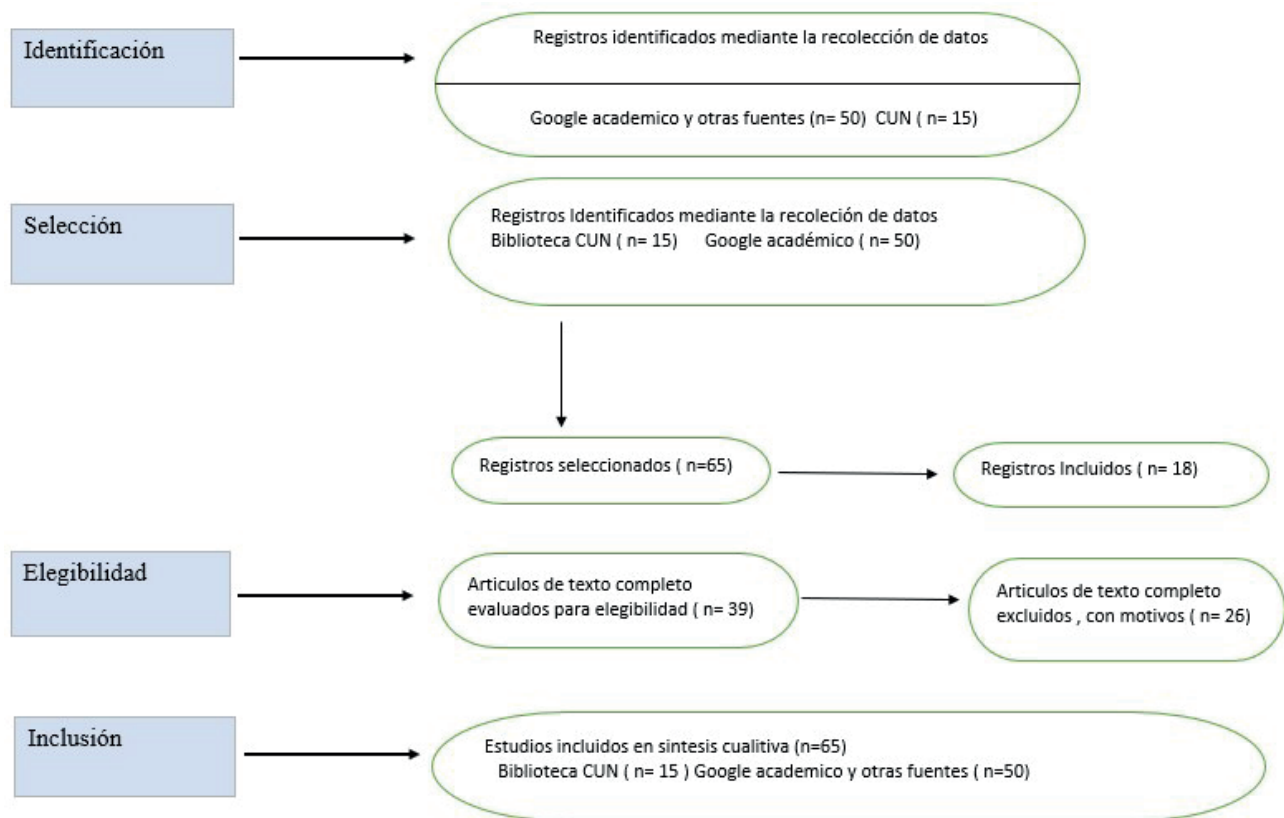


Figure 1. Flow chart

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria			
Inclusion criteria		Exclusion criteria	
Participants	People of both genders with physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disabilities who are part of the economically active population in Colombia	Language	Documents published in a language other than Spanish
Type of Studies	Articles, magazines and research papers covering the subject matter of this article.	Publication period	Those that are not within the last five years (2018-2023).
Type of Focus	Quantitative or qualitative research	Type of publication	Documents published in unofficial sources

This analysis seeks to go beyond the figures to understand and address the complexities of labor inclusion in Colombia. Considering factors such as the type of participants, focus, study period, and credibility of the publication, a solid framework contributes to informed decision-making and promoting inclusive work environments.

RESULTS

A table with the documents included was drawn to analyze the results (table 2). There has been a notable decrease in articles researching the labor inclusion of people with disabilities in Colombia. The year 2019 stands out as the year with the highest peak reached; in the following years, there has been a constant decrease in this research (figure 2).

The overall rate of participation of people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities was notable (figure 3). There is a difference of 41,8 % between the two groups, which indicates a significant gap in the labor participation of people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities.

Similarly, the employment rate of people with and without disabilities also presents disconcerting results. The difference between these rates is 38,3 %, which suggests that a much smaller proportion of the disabled population is employed compared to the non-disabled population (figure 4).

Along the same lines of analysis, the unemployment rate for people with and without disabilities shows relatively similar statistical results (figure 5). The difference between these rates is 1,6 percentage points, which indicates that the unemployment rate is slightly higher for the disabled population compared to the non-disabled population.

These data highlight a significant gap in labor participation and employment between the disabled and

non-disabled populations, indicating substantial challenges in the labor inclusion of people with disabilities. This underscores the importance of promoting equitable and accessible employment opportunities for this population.

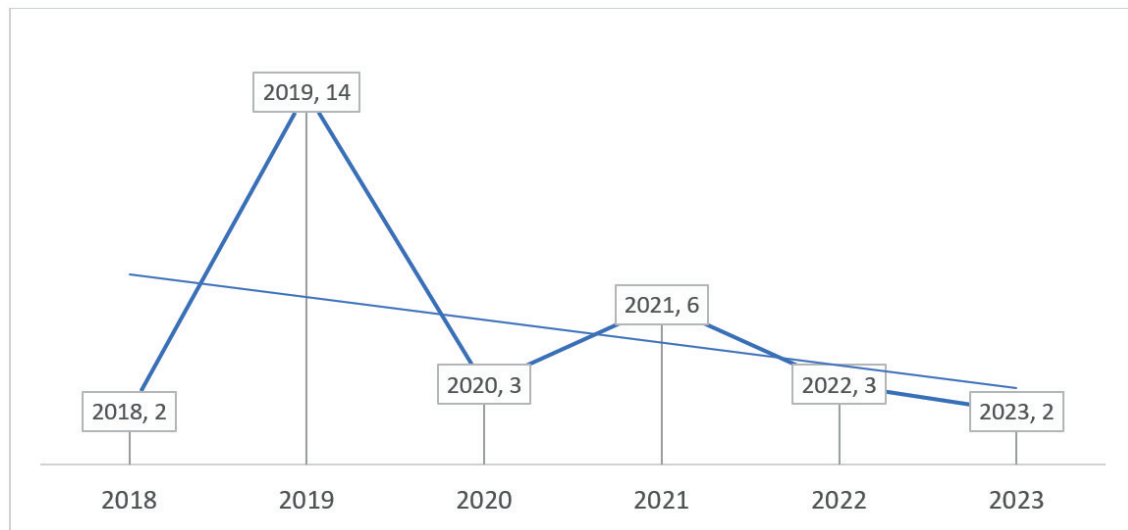


Figure 2. Analysis of publications by year

Table 2. Documents included

Year	Title	Autor
2018	El empleo de las personas con discapacidad: oportunidades y desafíos. ⁽¹⁸⁾	Rey Pérez. J. L
	El Diseño como Facilitador de la Inclusión Laboral de Personas en Condición de Discapacidad Física. Caso Almacenes Paraíso S.A. ⁽¹⁹⁾	García Solano, H., Camelo Pérez, F., Rodríguez Pinto, L.
2019	Discapacidad y derecho al trabajo. ⁽²⁰⁾	Mosquera, J., Rico, P., Rodríguez, C
	Estudio: factores para la inclusión laboral de las personas con discapacidad. ⁽²¹⁾	Morales, G
	Análisis de mejoramiento del proceso de inclusión de las personas con discapacidad sensorial en la comunidad indígena Arauca de Tuchin, Córdoba. ⁽²²⁾	Reyes.P.
	El trabajador con discapacidad en el ámbito laboral. ⁽²³⁾	MinTrabajo
	La influencia de la constitución política en el derecho laboral en Colombia. ⁽²⁴⁾	Benitez, J., Bermúdez, K., Frías, P.
	Diversidad funciona e inclusión en instituciones de Educación Superior en Medellín. ⁽²⁵⁾	Mejía, S.
	La responsabilidad social del empleador (RSE) en Colombia frente a la discapacidad. ⁽²⁶⁾	Parra Báez, A., Vargas Espitia, L., & Woolcott Oyague, O.
	Empresas y personas con discapacidad en el ámbito laboral. ⁽²⁷⁾	Perez.C
	El concepto de discapacidad en las leyes relacionadas con el enfoque de derechos de la salud laboral en Colombia. ⁽²⁸⁾	Gómez. Rúa, N.E., Cardona Arango, D. y Gañan Echavarrí, J.
	Análisis del mejoramiento en el proceso de inclusión de las personas con discapacidad. ⁽²⁹⁾	Pertuz Never, A., Lucas, O.
	Employment and inclusion of people with disabilities in Colombia. ⁽³⁰⁾	Mendoza Angarita YL.
	Derechos y obligaciones del trabajador con discapacidad. ⁽³¹⁾	Perez.C
	Accesibilidad de personas con discapacidad al área laboral en Colombia. ⁽³²⁾	Aguirre. E.
	Modelo social como alternativa para el desarrollo de la persona con discapacidad, Callao. Perú. ⁽³³⁾	Ordoñez, F. D., & Mendoza, I. M.
2020	Políticas para la inclusión laboral de personas con discapacidad. ⁽³⁴⁾	Montes.C.
	Grupo de gestión y políticas activas de empleo. ⁽³⁵⁾	Min. Trabajo Colombia
	Seguridad y salud ocupacional en base a la discapacidad. ⁽³⁶⁾	Trujillo. M.
2021	Los ajustes razonables: Estrategia de inclusión laboral para las personas con diversidad funcional en Colombia. ⁽³⁷⁾	Gómez, K., Rodríguez, O., Blanquiceth, V.
	Política y estrategia de la OIT para la inclusión de las personas con discapacidad (Vig. 2020-2023). ⁽³⁸⁾	Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)
	Una economía inclusiva para las personas con discapacidad. ⁽³⁹⁾	Martinez.J.L.
	El Alcance Jurídico y Límites de las Cuotas de Reservas para Personas con Discapacidad en el Trabajo. ⁽⁴⁰⁾	Aristizábal Gómez, K. V., Castillo Jaraba, P. A., & Ruiz Vargas, E. C.
	La persona con discapacidad y su protección jurídica en época de pandemia en Colombia. ⁽⁴¹⁾	Camargo Farías, D. C., & López-Zamora, S.

	Análisis factorial confirmatorio para medir la percepción sobre la inclusión laboral de personas con discapacidad. ⁽⁴²⁾	Pérez-Hernández, S., Elí Magaña-Medina, D., & Guzmán-Fernández, C.
2022	La inclusión de las personas en Latinoamérica. ⁽⁴³⁾	Pérez, L., Lorenzo, R.
	Inclusión De Personas Con Diversidad Funcional Auditiva Ámbito Laboral Colombiano. ⁽⁴⁴⁾	Rico Castillo, Erik Fabian, Angela Yuleni Forero, Leidy Diana Lemir, and María Camila Pulido.
	Estabilidad laboral por debilidad manifiesta en salud: Omisión estatal, en seguridad jurídica y alternativas para remediarlas. ⁽⁴⁵⁾	Universidad Externado de Colombia.
2023	Recopilación de datos. ⁽¹⁰⁾	Dane
	Parámetros indispensables para un modelo de inclusión laboral para personas con discapacidad. ⁽⁴⁶⁾	Perlaza Moreno, A. M., González Vaquiro, P. A., Martínez Álvarez, L. A., & Girón Restrepo, G. A.

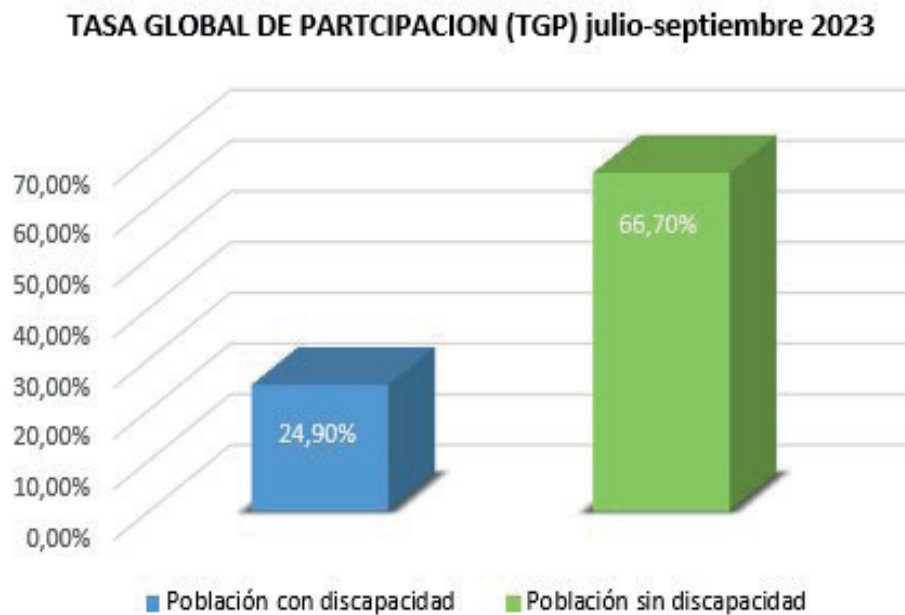


Figure 3. Global Participation Rate of People with Disabilities

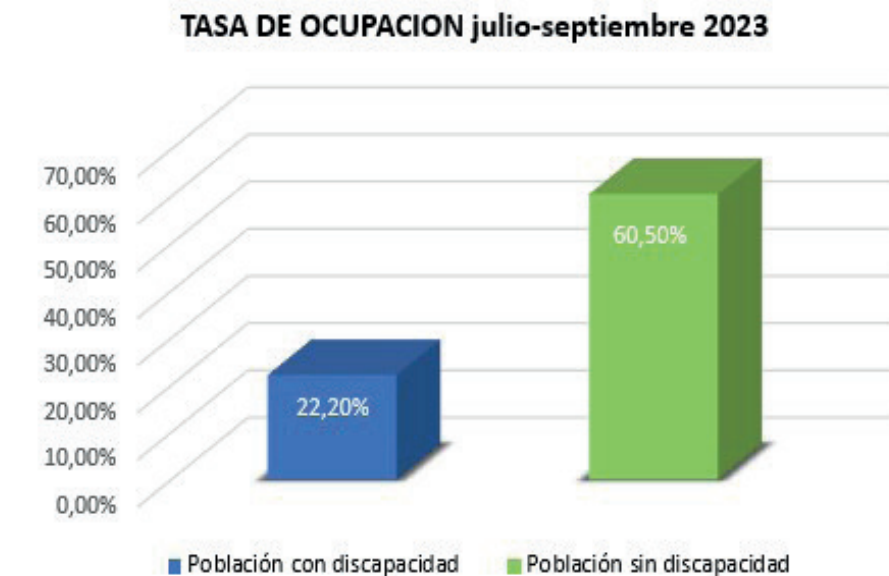


Figure 4. Occupation Rate for People with Disabilities

To deepen the analysis of population rates, it was decided to specify in detail the number of people with disabilities linked to the labor scenario. To this end, table 3 identifies the number of employed persons with

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disabilities, the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities, and the laws or support programs that stood out during that year.

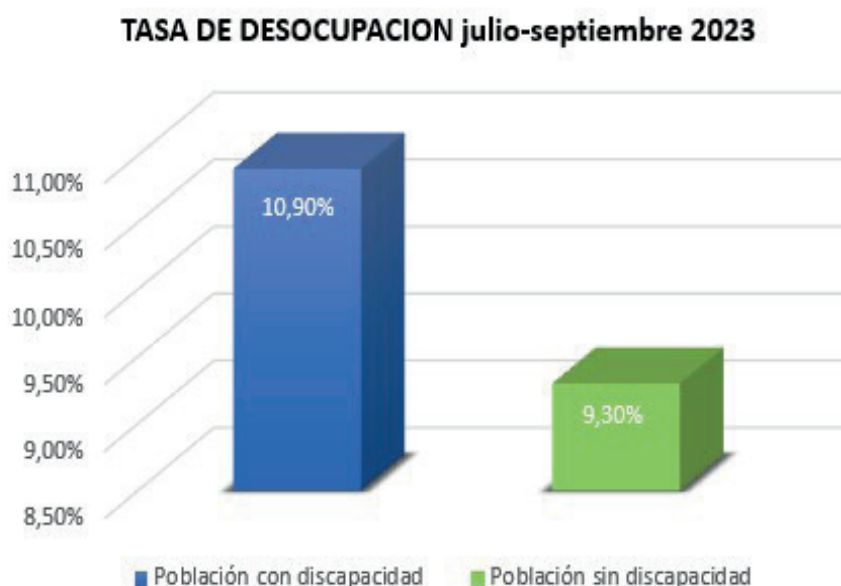


Figure 5. Unemployment Rate for People with Disabilities

Table 3. Analysis of the number of disabled people employed				
Year	Number of disabled people employed	Unemployment rate for people with disabilities	Laws or support programs	Comments
2018	95,000	17,2 %	Law 361 of 1997	In 2018, Colombia had 95,000 people with disabilities employed, but the unemployment rate among this group was high, at 17,2 %.
2019	100,000	16,5 %	Law 361 of 1997	In 2019, there was a slight increase in the employment of people with disabilities, but the unemployment rate remained high.
2020	110,000	15,8 %		In 2020, the number of employed persons with disabilities increased, and the unemployment rate decreased slightly, possibly due to inclusion programs.
2021	120,000	14,7 %	Program for	The year 2021 showed an improvement in labor inclusion, with an increase in employment and a decrease in the unemployment rate. This suggests progress in inclusion.
2022	130,000	13,9 %		

Over the last five years in Colombia (2018-2023), there has been a positive trend in the labor inclusion of people with disabilities. In 2018, 95,000 people with disabilities were employed, although the unemployment rate in this group was significantly high, reaching 17,2 %. In 2019, there was a slight increase in employees to 100,000, but the unemployment rate remained high at 16,5 %.

However, a notable improvement can be seen from 2020. In that year, the employment of people with disabilities increased to 110,000, and the unemployment rate decreased to 15,8 %. This positive trend continued in 2021, with 120,000 people with disabilities employed and an unemployment rate of 14,7 %. In 2022, the employment of people with disabilities increased to 130,000, and the unemployment rate fell further to 13,9 %, possibly due to the expansion of inclusion programs.

Despite this progress, data for 2023 is not yet available. It is necessary to obtain and analyze updated information to understand the most recent trend in the labor inclusion of people with disabilities in Colombia. Laws and support programs have supported a progressive improvement in this area in recent years.

This exhaustive analysis not only provides a detailed view of the labor inclusion of people with disabilities but also highlights the importance of inclusive policies. The results of this study can serve as a basis for

formulating strategies that promote equal opportunities in the workplace, positively impacting the lives of people with disabilities in Colombia.

DISCUSSION

The integration of people with disabilities in Colombia constantly evolves, and experts' and authors' opinions encourage this ongoing conversation. Law 361 of 1997 on the social and labor inclusion of people with disabilities is considered a fundamental step towards a society that promotes equity and the active participation of those with disabilities.⁽⁴¹⁾ Continuing challenges remain, with the lack of adequate infrastructure and the urgent need to increase public awareness to effectively address the specific needs of people with disabilities being ongoing issues.^(47,48,49)

Various studies highlight the success of companies that have adopted inclusive policies. They suggest that hiring people with disabilities is ethical and a significant driver of team morale and productivity, highlighting the connection between inclusion and sustainable business growth.^(27,31,42,50)

In the analysis of specific disparities in access to services and opportunities for people with disabilities, it is emphasized that rural areas face particular challenges.^(51,52,53) The scarcity of resources and services presents unique obstacles to the effective implementation of inclusive measures. Addressing these regional disparities is essential to achieving more equitable inclusion at the national level.^(54,55,56)

Implementing inclusive education is a fundamental pillar.^(57,58) Inclusive schools should be developed from an early age to form an egalitarian society. These institutions not only offer a more diverse educational environment but also contribute to overcoming social and cultural barriers and preparing future generations to accept diversity.^(57,58,59)

CONCLUSIONS

Since 2019, labor inclusion of people with disabilities has been a fundamental objective in Colombia to promote equal opportunities and diversity in the workplace. Companies must establish inclusive labor policies and practices that guarantee equal opportunities for all, including people with disabilities.

Work facilities and tools should be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities. Collaborating with organizations and agencies specializing in placing people with disabilities in jobs can be an effective strategy for finding diverse talent and promoting inclusive hiring.

Employee training and awareness are essential to creating an inclusive and respectful work environment. Employees should receive training on how to interact effectively with people with disabilities.

Information and communication in the company must be accessible to everyone, providing documents in accessible formats and electronic communications. Finally, companies must constantly monitor their workplace inclusion policies and practices to ensure that they meet the objectives and make adjustments as necessary.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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