

# Master's Thesis Human Resource Studies (760991)

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## *The concept of inclusive employment: Hiring employees with a disability*

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11th December 2014

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*Theme:* New employment relations:

Impeding and stimulating factors to hire employees with disabilities



### **Abstract**

This study examines the concept of inclusive employment in the Netherlands. An inclusive employment relationship is a relationship between a regular organization and an employee with a disability. The aim was to study what factors are important to create a successful inclusive employment relationship. The target group of this study was ‘wajongeren’, which is a social group in the Netherlands that became incapacitated at a young age (<17 years old). On the first of January 2015 a new Dutch law will be in effect, the Participation law. This law obliges Dutch organizations with a workforce larger than twenty-five employees that five percent of their workforce consists of wajongeren. This implies that organizations have to cope with a challenge they are not experienced in. Therefore, this study examines Dutch organizations that are currently employing wajongeren. In order to answer the research question, twenty semi-structured interviews were executed within seventeen different organizations that had experience with a wajonger in their workforce. Focuses of the study were the HR activities these inclusive employers use, their perspective towards HR and the organizational characteristics. Results indicated that most important factors for a successful inclusive employment relationship were; a soft perspective towards HR that concentrate on the needs of the individual employee, extensive selection, an external job coach provided, careful job crafting and an open organizational culture towards employees with a disability.



### **Samenvatting**

Dit onderzoek omvat het concept van het inclusief werkgeverschap in Nederland. Een inclusieve arbeidsrelatie is een relatie tussen een reguliere organisatie en een werknemer met een beperking. Het doel was om te onderzoeken wat de factoren zijn die tot een succesvolle inclusieve arbeidsrelatie leiden. De doelgroep was wajongeren, in Nederland bekend als mensen die op jongere leeftijd (<17 jaar oud) arbeidsongeschikt zijn geraakt. Op 1 januari 2015 gaat de Participatiewet in, dit is een wet dat organisaties met meer dan vijventwintig werknemers verplicht om vijf procent van hun personeel te laten bestaan uit wajongeren. Dit betekent dat veel organisaties voor een uitdaging komen te staan waar zij geen ervaring mee hebben. Daarom onderzoekt deze studie Nederlandse organisaties die op het moment van onderzoek wajongeren in dienst hebben of hier ervaring mee hebben. Focusvelden van het onderzoek waren de HR activiteiten die gebruikt werden door de inclusieve werkgever, het perspectief op HR en de karakteristieken van deze inclusieve ondernemingen. De belangrijkste factoren voor het creëren van een inclusieve arbeidsrelatie waren; een soft perspectief richting HR dat zich concentreert op de behoeftes van de individuele werknemer, uitgebreide selectie, het inschakelen van een externe job coach, zorgvuldige job crafting en een open cultuur van de organisatie richting medewerkers met een beperking.

## **Introduction**

Decisions made by employers are critical concerning the improvement of the employment rates of employees with a disability (Kaye, Jans & Jones, 2011). To accomplish that more than half of the people on social welfare benefits will make the transition to the labor market, the Dutch government introduces the 'Participation law', which will be in effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. The Participation law will provide financial incentives for both organizations and employees to help the (re-) integration of this group of workers. UWV (2014) distinguishes 'vulnerable' groups of employees, which involves people who have faced a prolonged illness or a disability at a young age (<17), whom are called 'wajongeren'. These vulnerable workers are less likely to get employed and will be paid less (Baldwin and Johnson 2005; Hale, Hayghe, and McNeil 1998). The disability of a wajonger can be physical, psychological and intellectual.

As a result from the introduction of the Participation law, employers have to cope with multiple new standards. For example, quotas are suggested to oblige employers to hire employees with a disability. Organizations with no experience in hiring this group of workers will face new challenges with recruiting, selecting but also crafting jobs of these employees and integrate them in their organizational workforce. Suitable jobs have to be made available for the wajongeren that have to cope with some disability. Therefore, Zoer et al. (2012) propose not to think in creating jobs, but in creating appropriate activities for these vulnerable workers. Implementing the obligations arising from the Participation law will take time and effort, as adapting to a new environment always requires effort from both newcomers and employers (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006). According to Bruyere & Furguson (2011), employers have to bear in mind that a proactive approach to outline the HR strategy is more effective than reacting to specific issues or problems. Therefore, the organizations that will employ one or more wajongeren in the future will have to prepare themselves by generating knowledge in an early stadium and making a strategy. However, potential benefits for Dutch employers arising from the introduction of the new law remain unclear so far. Besides the partial financial compensation they will receive after employing a wajonger, the law seems to be imposed on the Dutch employers without additional benefits.

The challenge for organizations is to create an appropriate environment where the disability of the wajongeren is minimized and they can explore their full capabilities (Kaye et al., 2011). According to Dutch law, an employer has to act as a 'good employer' (art. 7:611 BW). A good employer has high commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) because the consensus in integrating both social and environmental concerns in business

activities (Dahlsrud, 2008). Arising from CSR, in this study the concept of ‘inclusive employment’ is introduced. Inclusive employers are defined in this study as: “Organizations that hire (and retain) employees with a disability”. This definition is derived from De Normaalste Zaak (2014), a Dutch cooperation of organizations that supports the initiative of inclusive employment. Because of the major improvements in Dutch law, the focus of this study is on the Dutch wajongeren. Thereby the wajongeren are acknowledged as the most employable type of employees with a disability. Namely, this group of workers often has labor capacity and potential (van Horssen, Blommensteijn & Rosing, 2011).

This study contributes to the literature of the labor market of people with a disability and provides employers with evidence of which role they will have to perform after the introduction of the Participation law. Existing studies were conducted before major improvements did influence the conditions of the Wajongwet in January 2010. These improvements were also focused on reducing the amount of social welfare payments for people that became occupational disabled at a young age. This former law will become part of the Participation law. However, the credibility relevance of the prior findings thus has various shortcomings.

The focus of this study is on the Dutch labor market and studies the underlying reasons for organizations to hire wajongeren that have labor capacity, but nevertheless have to cope with a certain disability. To do so, the theory of corporate social responsibility is explored and the concept of inclusive employment is (re-) defined.

An inclusive employment relationship is defined as successful when this relationship is (at least) extended once. Namely, this extension indicates that the relationship is mutual perceived as successful, so by both employer and employee. Therefore, the sample of this study will consist of employers that have experience with successfully hiring a wajonger. In order to study the conditions for a successful employment relationship, the perspective towards HR, the used HR activities and the characteristics of the inclusive employers are involved. Because of the improvements in Dutch law, the conditions of employing a wajonger are of high relevance.

Therefore, the following research question is formulated;

*“How can inclusive employment relationships become successful?”*

## **Theoretical Framework**

### ***The Participation law***

The Participation law is about to affect from January 1<sup>st</sup> in 2015. The law attempts to create an inclusive labor market where young and old people, with and without a disability will have the opportunity to participate and contribute to the society. In 2012, 53.000 of the 232.500 Dutch *wajongeren* (23,4%) were employed. Of the 335.500 Dutch employers, 16.000 organizations (4,8%) had a *wajonger* in their workforce (UWV, 2013). At the end of 2010, 9% of the questioned Dutch employers without a *wajonger* in their workforce had the intention of hiring one. Besides, 22% of the employers that already have such a vulnerable worker in service were concretely thinking of hiring another one (van Horssen et al., 2011). Main reasons they noted to avoid the employment of a *wajonger* were the financial crisis and a lack of available jobs for newcomers. (Wissink, Mallee & van Leer, 2009). Most organizations that hired a *wajonger* as an intern did not continue the employment relationship due to too much need for guidance and the lower productivity rates of the *wajongeren* (Wissink et al., 2011). Concluding, currently the amount of employers that hire employees with a disability is scarce. Furthermore, most employers that do hire a *wajonger* do not extend the contracts of this employee due to the requested guidance and lower productivity rates that are involved. However, this study focuses on the low percentage of employers that are satisfied with the employment relationship with a *wajonger*. They are questioned about their experiences with these employees and the conditions of these successful relationships because these conditions are relevant when the Participation law will be in affect. This Participation law consists a couple of key issues (UWV, 2014). Namely, after 2015 people can only get the social welfare payments from the former *Wajongwet* if they have a disability from a young age (<17) and will never be able to work again. Thereby, people that had social welfare benefits from the *Wajong* before January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 keep their rights on these benefits if they still meet the conditions of this law. Between 2015 and 2018 there will be new judgments in order to determine the labor capacity of the *wajongeren*. Next, young people with a disability that do have capacity to perform labor, can inquire at the municipality for help when looking for a job or to receive a social welfare payment. Concluding, the new obligations of the Participation law imply that the number social welfare payments provided by the Dutch government will reduce and the amount of people with a disability that needs to apply for regular jobs will increase.

With the introduction of the Participation law the integration of *wajongeren* in the workforce of organizations is a characteristic that will be introduced in the upcoming decade

in every market sector (van Horssen et al., 2011). Domzal, Houtenville and Sharma (2008) suggests that larger sized organizations are more likely to actively recruit and hire employees with a disability due to the availability of more jobs. Meanwhile, Van Horssen et al. (2011) note that financial services and education are the market sectors that are least willing of hiring a *wajonger*. The integration and accommodation of these employees have multiple factors to take into account. Before the Participation law can be in affect, organizations have to be well prepared. In order to understand the current intentions of the Dutch employers, Sub question 1 (SQ1) is formulated;

*SQ1: “To what extent do Dutch inclusive employers think the Participation law will result in successful inclusive employment relationships?”*

### ***HR instruments***

Lepak and Schnell (1999) note that many strategic HRM theorists (Arthur, 1992, 1994; Koch & McGrath, 1996; Kochan & Osterman, 1994; Lawlor, 1992; Levine, 1995; Pfeffer, 1995) found that making large investments in human capital foster sustainable competitive advantage. If employees are well socialized in organizations, they tend to be more satisfied, committed and productive (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Arthur (1994) found that creating committed employees is associated with high performance rates and thus important for the competitive position of the organization in the (labor) market. Important tools to create commitment and foster performances among employees are the use of HR practices. Thereby, HR practices can contribute to the successful integration of the *wajongeren*. Zoer et al. (2012) propose assessments to match work capacities and demands at the job placements of employees with disabilities. They recommend assessing both work capacities and work demands before placement of employees, as this facilitates the direct matching of work capacities and demands prior to placement. Furthermore, according to Zoer et al. (2012) attention should be given to employees’ judgments of workload and recovery and it is recommended to assess the consequences of possible mismatches in terms of health, productivity, sick leave and turnover. To understand the activities the Dutch inclusive organizations use, HR instruments used to employ a *wajonger* will be studied. Also the question whether these activities differ from which they use in employing regular employees will be part of the study. Hence, an overview of activities that enhance the conditions to sustainable inclusive employment will be formulated.

*SQ2: “Which different or additional HR activities do inclusive employers use with respect to the employment of *Wajongers* compared to regular workers?”*

### ***Perspectives on HR***

According to Bratton and Gold (2003), Human Resource Management (HRM) is “a strategic approach to managing employment relations which emphasizes that leveraging people’s capabilities is critical in achieving competitive advantage.” Achieving this was through a distinct set of employment policies, practices or programs that Purcell (1999) has qualified as HRM “bundles”. According to Ivo (2006), HRM perspectives can best be understood by defining “hard” and “soft” HRM. “Hard” HRM embraces all those elements in employment relations laying emphasis on employee’s compliance, quantitative output, managers, task and the development of the organization. “Soft” HRM will tend to favor flexibility, negotiation, performance, quality, recognition of environments and rights in employment relations (Ivo, 2006). According to Analoui (1999), soft HRM is more strategic and long term. The hard style laid emphasis on cost minimization, the leanness in production and resource-based view of labor. The soft style involved the integration of individuality, values such as trust and commitment to the business strategy of the organization. Legge (1995) referred the soft style as “developmental humanism” and the hard style as “utilitarian instrumentalism”. The question remains whether inclusive employers maintain a soft or hard style towards HR. Also interesting is whether the style of HR varies within the organization itself. Does the perspective towards HR vary towards the wajongers or the regular employees? In this study, the field of focus concerning the HR activities will specify the perspective towards HR. The activities that characterize soft HR will be distinguished from activities that reflect hard style HR. Subsequently; the activities that dominate will determine the emphasis towards the HR bundles used by the inclusive organizations.

*SQ3: “What perspective toward HR (soft/hard) is leading to create a successful employment relationship?”*

### ***Inclusive employment***

Literature on the concept of inclusive employment is scarce (Van Horssen et al., 2011). However, in general managers of organizations have low perceptions according the performance of employees with disabilities (Collela et al., 1997). In practice, this is not always reality. On the contrary, the same study note that employees with a disability have comparable or even lower accident, absenteeism and turnover rates. This evidence is consistent with the view that social responsibility can be seen as an attractive investment for organizations rather than a cost (Mc Farlin, Song & Sonntag 1991). In addition, Mc Farlin et al. (1991) note that organizations should view hiring and developing employees with a

disability as a positive “bottom-line” strategy, not just “doing good” for society to create a successful inclusive employment relationship. Employing people with a disability can help to identify an employer as socially responsible and secure any attendant public relations benefits (Yuker, 1988). In addition, according to Mc Farlin et al. (1991) this kind of social responsibility should help to improve the organizations’ competitiveness and long-term performance. Namely, by employing a *wajonger* the organization acts socially what makes the organization more attractive to the environment. Therefore, the concept of inclusive employment is hereby linked to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). According the Commission of the European Communities (2001), CSR can be defined as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.”

However, when speaking of an ‘inclusive employer’, there are multiple issues that characterize these organizations. When the Participation law will be in effect, organizations with a lack of experience in employing *wajonger* also have to integrate these characteristics to create a successful inclusive employment relationship with the *wajonger*. Therefore, the key characteristics of the inclusive employers are questioned. Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot and Golden (2003) already proposed a list of characteristics of employers that are open to people with disabilities based on their empirical study among inclusive employers (Appendix B). First they propose various organizational culture issues, the employees should feel included and respected. The employees do not always require special treatment, but they have to be understood. Hence, the ability to cope on a flexible and sensitive way with diversity is increasingly important for organizational success. Second, Gilbride et al. (2003) discussed the person-job match. This match includes aligning the capabilities of the employee with the requirements of the job. The same study proposes that an internship will be a sufficient tool to test the capabilities to the job requirements. Thus, a perfect person-job match is sufficient for a good employment relationship. Employees want to be recognized and allowed to use their talents and employers want productive, reliable employees. Third, the experience of the employer and the support issues are discussed. It is important to have the ability to supervise a diverse workforce that will be expanded by the Participation law. Hereby extensive training of the organization’s (senior) management, like how to coach or mentor the *wajonger* could play an important role. This study uses the list proposed by Gilbride et al. (2003) as a checklist to test whether the characteristics are applicable to Dutch organizations that successfully hire a *wajonger*.

Concluding, the employment of a *wajonger* is complex and challenging. A large scope of Dutch organizations will have to employ at least one *wajonger* after the introduction of the participation law to avoid financial consequences. This thesis is built on the understanding of the work environment of employers so that the barriers to employ these people can be confronted. By characterizing the focus of the employers regarding the hiring of employees with a disability, the concept of inclusive employment can be shaped. This study will question whether the characteristics that Gilbride et al. (2003) proposed are also applicable to the inclusive employers in the Netherlands on the moment of study. Therefore, in order to answer SQ4 below, a checklist will be used to determine characteristics that inclusive employers use or not. This checklist is inspired by Gilbride et al. (2003) and can be found in Appendix B.

*SQ 4: What are characteristics of inclusive employers?*

As in the theoretical framework is described, this study is focused on various characteristics of the employers that hire employees with a disability and the activities that they are using on the employment of these vulnerable workers. Figure 1 illustrates the contributing of this study. The red arrows reflect on the contribution of this study and by this way the (sub-) questions that this study will answer. This includes the influences of the Participation law (SQ1), the HR instruments that these employers use (SQ2), the different employer perspectives on HR (SQ3), and the characteristics of the inclusive employers (SQ4).

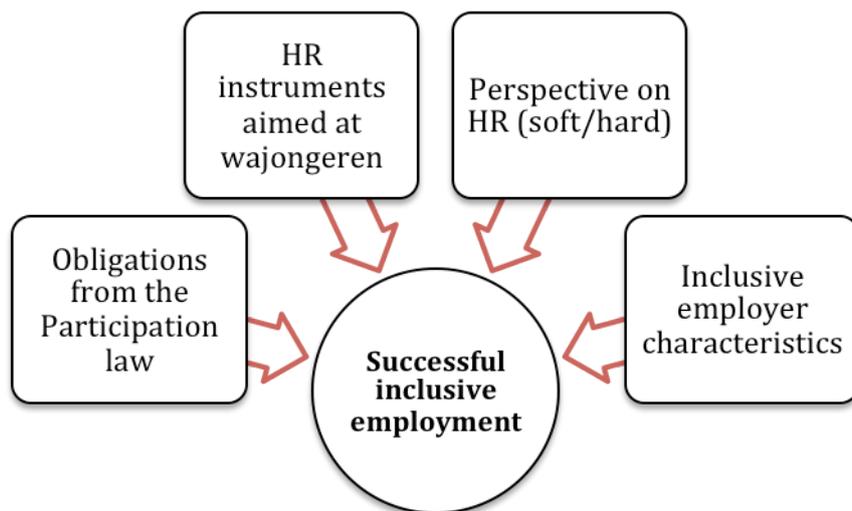


Figure 1: The concept of successful inclusive employment; the contribution of this study

## **Methods**

This study explores the concept of inclusive employment. Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted and were focused on the HR perspectives, HR activities and characteristics of the employers that had an employee with a disability in his workforce. Furthermore, the interviews are specified on Wajongeren instead of general disabilities.

### ***Sample***

This study focused on Dutch employers that are experienced in successfully employing a wajonger. Condition was that the wajongeren were monetarily paid by the organization. This implies that the study focused on regular workplaces rather than social workplaces. The aim was, to obtain a valid dataset, to conduct fifteen to twenty interviews with various employers. Eventually, twenty respondents of seventeen different organizations were interviewed. The interviews were conducted with (HR-) managers, directors or consultants of organizations that have strategic impact on employing people. Organizations that were active in different branches were included in this study with the aim to create diversity and to be able to generalize the findings of the study. Twelve inclusive employers from different branches that hired a wajonger were interviewed. Thereby, seven respondents from reintegration organizations that are helping wajongeren in their transition to the labor market were questioned. In addition, one consultant of an agency that is specialized in employing young educated persons with a disability was interviewed. The respondents had an average total workforce of 339 employees. Of that workforce, the organizations at average hired 15,5 wajongeren on the moment of study. The list of respondents is included in appendix D.

### ***Instruments***

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used. The interviews were developed in such way that all the variables described in the theoretical framework were measured. Thirteen respondents were interviewed face-to-face, seven interviews were held by telephone. With the permission of the respondents, the interviews were audio-recorded. Also a topic guide was used in order to create structure and to prevent a biased coding process in the analysis of the data. Multiple questions for each theme were formulated in order to answer the (sub-) questions as complete as possible. The complete interview list is included in Appendix A.

### *Procedure*

Prior to the interviews, the employers were contacted by e-mail or phone, to explain the main themes and goals of the study and the question to what extent they want to contribute to the study. Respondents were contacted in cooperation with the Research Institute for Flexicurity, Labour Market Dynamics and Social Cohesion of Tilburg University, referred as ReflecT. ReflecT has access to a pool of regular companies that already hire people with a disability, like the Normaalste Zaak that is mentioned earlier. Also the social business-oriented social network service LinkedIn was used to contact respondents. When they agreed to participate in the study, an appointment was arranged to conduct the interview. The interviews had duration of approximately one hour. One single interviewer conducted them from the end of April to July 2014.

### *Analysis*

The audio-recordings of the interviews were literally transcribed. After the transcription, a member check was carried out. This implies that the transcripts were sent to the interviewee in order to check whether the transcripts correspond with the interviewee's answers and thoughts. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is the "most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314), because it enables respondents to correct errors of fact and to provide additional information when desired. In addition, to increase the internal validity, the answers of the interviewee will frequently summarized during the interview in order to understand the responds and thoughts correctly. To analyze the data, the coding process of Dougherty (2004) was used; in his study he distinguished open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) note that open coding involves "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (p.61). Primary aim of the open coding phase is therefore to condense the raw data into preliminary categories, by coding respondents' quotes and by subsequently sorting and grouping the emerged codes. Therefore, in the open coding phase, the codes were added to the transcripts. The codes linked the different paragraphs or sentences to a category.

In the axial coding phase, categories were related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The codes used in the axial coding phase are included in appendix E.

In this phase the raw data was ordered, condensed and synthesized. This matrix-based analytical method allows for a systematic analysis of qualitative data. Namely, it results in

condensed raw data that is arranged per respondent and per theme or subtheme (Spencer et al., 2003b). For example, categories within this study could be factors that stimulate hiring employees with a disability across factors that restrain this employment. Other possible categories of codes were using soft or hard HR activities, advantages and disadvantages of the Participation law and the use of wage subsidies or not with their reasons.

Finally, the selective coding process served to identify the core category or categories, to relate them systematically to the other categories and to validate the relationships by testing hypothetical relationships between the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). First, the central relationships between the categories per respondent were identified by reading through the synthesized data in the matrix per row (i.e. respondent) and across columns (i.e. subthemes). Second, the core categories were determined by classifying categories that were (1) central in a way that all other major categories could be related to them, (2) they appeared frequently in the data, preferably in most of the single cases, and (3) the reasoning behind the relations with other major categories was logical and consistent (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The third step in the selective coding process was systematically building the storyline by relating all remaining categories to the selected core categories and by systematically validating these suggested relationships. At this stage, a second member check was carried out. The second member check was primarily used to confirm the quotes and results that are used regarding a form of summarizing the analysis. When a quote of a respondent was used, the interpretation was checked on correctness.

## Results

This section presents the main results for each of the categories that emerged from the axial coding phase. The categories are based on the four sub questions of this study. All original Dutch quotes of the respondents that were used are included in appendix C.

### *The participation law*

This section, concerning the participation law, answers sub-question 1:

*SQ1: “To what extent do Dutch inclusive employers think the Participation law will result in successful employment relationships?”*

The participation law will be in effect as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2015. According to the quota arrangements, every organization with more than twenty-five employees will have to cope with this law by employing a minimum of one employee with a disability. All the respondents were familiar with the Participation law. Some of them were vaguely familiar with the fundamentals and some had engrossed themselves deeper in the obligations of the law. The introduction of the Participation law provokes a variety of affective responses among employers. These responses include positive responses as well as negative responses. The main intentions of the participation law are perceived positively. This implies that the employers are in favour of the introduction of a law where employees with a disability will be participating more in society. However, a director and former job counsellor of a Dutch reintegration firm that helps *wajongeren* in their transition to the labor market calls the introduction ‘a courteous pursuit’, but the advantages of the law contradictory:

“What pinches is that on the one hand the intention of the law is a financial cut, but on the other hand an idealistic image. It is clear that it is an economic measure. On the one hand we are looking at the interest of people with disabilities and how they can have a meaningful and interesting day. On the other we have to take the economic perspective into account as well. [N.4.1]”

Other negative responses from the respondents imply that a lot of obligations, which the law requires, are still uncertain. That whilst the interviews were taking place in the summer of 2014 and the law will be in effect as of January first, 2015. Furthermore, a financial saving measure is the first priority of the law, whereas respondents think that people with a disability should be central to create successful employment relationships. How these people give meaning to their day and ‘participate’ in the society. In addition, another respondent manages a reintegration firm specialized in employing *wajongeren* with communicative

disorders thinks the law is not entirely valid.

“The participation Act is for people with a social service background or Wajong. So there is a limitation as not everyone with a disability could benefit from the Participation Act claim. Therefore, this may be in conflict with that disability convention.” [N.3.2]

In order to answer the research question, respondents were asked to reflect on the viability of the law. Most of the respondents think that there is a need for change in the inclusive labor market, but the law does not cover all employees with a disability. The quota regulation is doubtful, because of the selected target groups.

An experienced coach of a Dutch diversified technology company noted:

“The quota targets can’t be successful. Our philosophy is to give every person a chance, but by this way the focus will be on the target groups of the law in order to meet the obligations.” [N.7.1]

A job counsellor of an agency, specialized in employing young disabled employees, underlines this point:

“The quota regulation is madness, in this way they can only reach the lowest target group, but companies have a lot less profit from them. It should be a reflection of society.” [N.2.1]

According to most respondents, the organizations that are in preparation of the obligations of the Participation law are recruiting the ‘best bits’. This means people with a particular disability, but only the ones that are highly educated or possess a high labor capacity.

An HR project manager of a large network company thinks ‘invisible unemployment’ could occur when the quota will actually be in effect. This implies that the wajonger is adopted in the organization, but only on paper. In reality, he or she does not have to show up at work. In this way, the person with a disability does not ‘participate’ at all, while that should be the main intention of the law. As illustrated by the words of a HR project manager:

“Organizations don’t want the financial penalty. To avoid this, they adopt a person with a disability in the target group and also pay him, but he can stay at home. I don’t think this is the purpose of the law, because in this way the employee does not participate at all. We have to prevent that at all times” [N.13.3]

This respondent thus indicate that managers of organizations think that hiring a wajonger on paper is less expensive than risking financial consequences by avoiding obligations from the Participation law. In addition, the respondent of the network company that employs more than hundred people with a distance to the labor market mention how he hopes that his organization can be an example to other organizations, how everyone should participate in society.

“We can’t solve the unemployment, but if more organizations copy us and our formula will work as an oil slick, we are convinced that problem will be solved. At least, there is a bigger chance. We can’t

## | INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

change everything, but we can be an example towards companies we do business with, but also organizations in our environment.” [N.13.1]

The role that the Dutch municipalities will receive after the Participation law will be in effect is unclear for almost all the respondents. Most respondents do not have faith in the municipalities because of a lack of knowledge in the municipalities’ workforce.

A consultant of a disability employment plan noted:

“The role of the municipality is vague. We are active in several municipalities, so soon we will also have to communicate with different municipalities. This creates confusion.” [L.7.1]

The mentioned confusion appears at every firm that is located in different municipalities. Namely, every location has to communicate with different contact persons. This can lead to different agreements about the same issues. Hence, confusion will occur because some arrangements will differ between municipalities. Another respondent thinks this change in authority towards municipalities will take time because their personnel will have to cope with persons and their abilities without knowledge of their capacity:

“ I don’t think this is realistic for the short term. Hence, there are no guarantees that the assistance of the municipalities is more superior than before.” [N.11.1]

Concluding, the respondents think that the main intentions of the law are positive. Namely, with the introduction of the law more *wajongeren* will make the transition to the labor market. However, in order to create actual inclusive relationships, the quota arrangement should be adjusted so that hiring a *wajonger* is more interesting for the organizations. Hence, risking the financial consequences that follow from the law will not be a remedy for the high unemployment rates of *wajongeren* in the Netherlands. On the contrary, they should be rewarded to participate in the inclusive economy.

### ***HR instruments***

In order to employ a *wajonger*, it is useful to know what different HR instruments are in use by the inclusive employers. Therefore, data is gathered in order to answer SQ2:

*SQ2: “Which different or additional HR activities do inclusive employers use with respect to the employment of Wajongers compared to “regular” workers?”*

### ***Recruitment & Selection***

The process of recruitment and selection is considered as very important. Hence, this is a separate category to examine what other activities are used in employing persons with a disability. There was no explicit difference found on recruiting *wajongeren* or regular

employees. The majority of the respondents obtain to recruit the *wajongeren* by registration on their own website, or through the UWV. Usually, as in regular jobs, a vacancy is placed on the website where the *wajongeren* can take the initiative to respond. Because of the oversupply of employees in the (inclusive) labor market, the recruitment of a *wajonger* is not a complex process. In the Netherlands, there are multiple platforms, often through the UWV and municipalities, where the *wajongeren* can upload their individual profile. By this way, they are simple to contact.

However, the selection of the *wajongeren* is of a higher priority. Not only the realization of the personality fit with the organization and personnel, but also the organization must have the instruments to cope with the disability. Depending on the organization and their activities, some workplace adjustment or work time arrangements might be needed, but also the tasks within the function. The necessary adjustments have to be possible for the organization to execute; otherwise this employment is not interesting for this organization. Next to the workplace adjustments, the coaching of the employee has high priority. A job counsellor of an agency, specialized in helping young disabled employees in their transition to the labor market underlines the importance of creating a successful fit;

“The art is to create a good match. The best man in the best place, so that they are able to use their talents. The employer is informed about limitations and that he is able to handle the employee. For example; how can he approach the employee the best way? What can the employee handle in terms of workload? How can I use the employee’s talents best? If the match is successful than this is a good introduction for the employee towards work. [AH.2.2]

An experienced coach of *wajongeren* in a project at a Dutch multinational illustrates that transparency during the selection is of high importance, from both the employee and the organization.

“Do not falsely educate if someone does not have the required skills, abilities or knowledge than be open about it. When you’re being honest the employer will not feel cheated. This could refrain him from participating a next time. It burdens the candidate as well. So in short, be open about what the candidate can and cannot do and what information you provide.”[AH.7.1]

### *Integration*

After the recruitment and selection phase, when the employee is adapted to the organization, the employee has to integrate into the social workforce of his new employer. This implies that the *wajonger* has to adapt in a team of employees despite of his disability, what often has its nature in the communication. There are multiple factors that are important for having a successful transition of *wajongeren* into the social workforce of the organization.

## | INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

First, the employees of the organization have to be open to their new colleague. They have to support that their employer hires an employee with a disability. To create this support, the employees have to receive information in an early stadium regarding the new colleague. No details are necessary here, but the essential point that the employees have to bear in minds, have to be provided. It is of high importance that this provided information is accurate and reliable. One respondent is calling this phenomenon ‘managing expectations’.

A consultant of a reintegration firm that helps employees with a communicative disability with their transition to the labor market thinks the creation of mutual respect between organization and wajonger is the key to success. In addition, she has a suggestion how to create this mutual respect;

“I notice that letting colleagues experience how it is to cope with the disability (fe. Deafness) is very successful in practice. Actually, you should repeat this after half a year so that you can sit together with the team once more. That makes more impression than the words I say. Furthermore, regularly communicating about the disability can help.” [AC.4.1]

An HR consultant notes that information has to be provided from the perception of the capacity of the employee instead of the disability of the employee. An experienced coach at a Dutch multinational thinks because this focus is often on the disability instead of the capability, the strengths of a wajonger are underestimated. Therefore, she states:

“The label that hangs on a person should not be decisive because this does not indicate anything about the capabilities of this person.” [G.7.1]

However, the challenge is to get the wajonger out of his comfort zone and a suggestion of an effective way to do that is to treat him or her like every other colleague. A director of a raspberry nursery garden that currently employs six wajongeren successfully underlines this thought and thinks it is important to treat every individual equally:

“Treat them equally, regardless how they are. Do not immediately place that sticker on them. Try to make them easy, that is the best way to get them out of their comfort zone. Anyone can work, but everyone on his own way. Their ability is often higher than they think” [AH.11.1]

In addition, the guidance of the employee during the integration is of high importance. The intensity of the coaching varies per individual, but the employee always has to have at least one reliable contact person in the organization. Hereby, the wajonger can discuss his start-up problems so these can be corrected in an early stadium.

A director of an assembly services company that employs multiple wajongeren suggests introducing the wajonger in a small group when he starts working. When acclimatized, this small group can be expanded over time by introducing new colleagues:

“In every company, you have small teams that perform certain activities. You have to integrate the wajonger in such a small team instead of introducing him to all the employees. The group should have a maximum of ten employees. Those are his colleagues and suggest two contact persons who he can ask everything. These contact persons should keep an eye on him. However, the most important thing is that the wajonger is accepted within his team and organization. When all members are cooperative and positive, is a successful match is what follows.” [AH.15.1]

### *Coaching*

Coaching the wajongeren is, especially during the first period at the organization, of a high priority. As mentioned in the previous section, the integration in the organizations’ workforce and the habituation to performing the daily tasks, requests some intensive guidance. Respondents suggest that on the job by intern colleagues, as well as off the job coaching are important. Within an internal mentoring relationship where the employee has a mentor, some kind of affinity of the attendant is required. This affinity is often generated when the mentor has someone with a disability in his direct environment. However the internal guidance is very important for a wajonger, external job coaching can also be requested at the UWV. The intensity of this coaching relationship is dependent on the amount of working hours. The percentage of required job coaching is between five and fifteen per cent of the amount of working hours. A project manager HR at a large network company mentions a former dialogue with a wajonger regarding the jobcoach experience:

We had a conversation with the candidate, team leader, practice supervisor and the coach. The candidate mentions that the coach was not only present for him, but also for the other participants in the conversation. The jobcoach is there to help, how they can cope with an employee with a disability.” It was good to hear. This is me. This is my quality. Maybe I have some handles, those are on me. How can we make this successful?” [W.13.1]

A director of an assembly services company suggests that the job coaching has to be performed by an extern jobcoach, because of the content regarding the private situation of the wajonger. According the respondent, the job coaching goes beyond the tasks and organization:

“Our employees have an external jobcoach. That is a condition we impose. The philosophy beyond is that despite the fact we have supervisors and basically they can do the coaching themselves, our target group that are mildly mentally handicapped, often involved in situations regarding their home-situation. Money, housing, drug use are things that become involved. Hence, we want an extra extern person there that looks at the private situation and thus is known. This extern coach will talk with the supervisor and can discuss me as an employer what I should do different regarding the employment of the wajonger and thus discuss the importance of the treatment of a wajonger in our workforce. If I am performing the job coaching myself, it is like a butcher approving his own meat. That is not what we want and how it

should go. Coaching has to be available, together with a pleasant working environment, than it will work” [W.15.1]

The previous quote suggests that the job coaching has to be performed by an external coach, while on the job, so by composing and directing regarding the daily tasks should be coached by the supervisor or direct experienced colleague. Depending on the capabilities and development of the wajonger, the amount of job coaching hours can reduce over time. Some employers state that they have various arrangements with municipalities regarding the job coaching of their employees. How the introduction of the Participation law affects these arrangements regarding job coaching is unclear. In short, the coaching of a wajonger is of high importance. This process starts with the selection and first meeting. The jobcoach plays a role of informant of the employer regarding the capabilities and disabilities of the wajonger.

### *Job crafting*

An important and challenging factor in an inclusive employment relationship is assigning tasks to a wajonger. The respondents were asked what the leading factors are in composing the daily tasks of a wajonger. Most respondents concurred that tasks should be allocated to a person. This implies that the wajonger is central and his tasks should be composed as a result of his capabilities and motivation. His capabilities are important because the tasks should suit his qualities as a person. He has to be capable of executing his daily activities. A simple metaphor here is that a person in a wheelchair is not appropriate for a job in catering activities. A director of a reintegration firm of people with a communicative disorder proposed to make a cross-section of all activities an organization performs, and then associates with the profile of the wajonger. His organization has a large database of unemployed wajongeren, and tries to introduce or return them to the labor market.

“When we go to an organization to introduce our wajongeren, we say that they should make a cross-section in their business activities; which tasks are we performing? What activities could we accommodate to people with a disability? Often this is an opposite effect for an employer, but the most effective way to make it successful.” [AD.3.1]

The owner of a secondment company with employees with a form of autism also notes that careful job crafting will lead to a success.

“You create job carving where you look at someone’s capabilities and someone’s disabilities. You need to do this, not everyone can do everything he is selected for. That is simply not true. For our people, we know that in advance and we keep that in mind. It is not hard, but the will has to be present. So this is how we look at work. What are the activities and who can perform them best.” [AH.12.2]

A consultant of a large Dutch multinational, that has a special unemployment plan of people with a distance to a labor market, underlines that approach. With their unemployment plan, they have an own perception of employing *wajongeren*.

“For our profile, certain capacity is needed. When after the assessment it appears the person does not have this capacity, means this function is not appropriate for them. However, this does not mean that we cannot place them at all within our plan. We have to map what could be an appropriate workplace for that person. At the moment, we employ two persons doing archive work, what is working perfect. No pressure, no deadlines. However, they are active in a work environment, have a good relationship together, and are seen as an integral member of the team. You can also create new functions. Especially within (...) we have enough activities needed to be done, but the department actually does not have time for but are important to be realized.” [AH.6.1]

The creation of functions rather than select applicants to available functions mentioned by the respondent is a result of an individual approach. This approach is regularly called ‘job crafting’. The activities of a team are mapped and evaluated or someone with a disability can realize activities. A project manager HR of a large network company that employ more than hundred persons with a distance to the labor market also indicates that job carving is the tool to create a sustainable employment relationship.

“The question is how to employ these people with disabilities in a sustainable way. A range of tools is created by (...) how to look at functions/activities so that multiple levels and target groups can participate in the organization. If you take tasks/activities of a team together, there always are activities of other levels. The do-things. Those can be accommodated to the *wajongeren*. It is a challenge to give substance to the assigning of tasks. With taking responsibility to the organization into account, but with stimulating effects.” [AE.13.1]

In short, an individual approach is proposed composing tasks to a *wajonger*. Most important facets are what activities motivate him or here. Second, he has to be capable of doing his work. Therefore, an extended profile of a *wajonger* has to be composed. On the basis of this profile, a set of activities can be constructed.

Concluding, various HR activities are mentioned by the respondents in order to create a successful inclusive employment relationship. First, the selection phase is of high priority to assure the *wajonger* and the organization mutual fits each other. Second, the integration of the *wajonger* in the workforce of a regular company will be a challenge. Because many regular organizations do not have experiences with this, an external job coach would be a useful tool. Thereby, the hand of an individual approach should select the tasks the *wajonger* will be performing in the organization. Functions have to be created by the capacities of the *wajonger*, while the disabilities should be minimized.

### ***HR perspectives***

Previous section discussed the HR instruments performed by the inclusive employers. On the bases of the activities on the field of HR that are used, the perspective of the employers towards HR is studied in order to answer SQ3:

*SQ3: What are the different perspectives towards HR among inclusive employers?*

Main focus was to look at the differences of perceptions towards regular employees and the *wajongeren*. Questioned was whether the respondents had a soft or hard style towards HR. The respondents were questioned regarding the different use of HR instruments by employing the *wajongeren*. Differences between employing *wajongeren* and regular workers were found regarding the recruitment and selection phase, and the instruments used during the integration of the employees in the workforce of the organization.

The respondents were questioned regarding their motives of employing a *wajonger*. They were conscious that socially motives dominate above strategic motives. This indicates that there is a lot of space of individualism and development what are features of a soft style of HR. According to a HR consultant of a reintegration firm, the willingness of giving an opportunity to a *wajonger* contributing to society is sufficient to create a successful employment relationship.

“The willingness remains important. Otherwise you hear afterwards only those things that did not go well. This counts especially for the cases where the financial picture dominated.”[AH.4.1.]

However, the employment of a *wajonger* can be seen in the lines of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), most employers insist that the *wajonger* needs a certain capacity to do his or her job. Namely, the *wajonger* needs to be able to perform the activities he is assigned to. Although supporting the concept of CSR, the employment relationship should be financially responsible for the organization. Most inclusive employers will go for the best applicants when hiring a *wajonger*. However, multiple respondents mentioned that the ‘label’ of a *wajonger* does not directly indicate his capacity. That is why the inclusive employers offer paid work instead of work experience places. This indicates that inclusive employers have a soft style towards HR. Namely, the purpose of an inclusive economy is that the *wajongeren* perform a job instead of a long-term internship or attending at work experience places. Thereby, for performing a job it is normal to receive regular income.

A manager of a Dutch cycle centre insists that the abilities of a large group of *wajongeren* are underestimated by other organizations. However the respondents state that the *wajongeren* do not always generate financial profits, this does not imply that there are not strategic

advantages of hiring a wajonger. Namely, multiple respondents mention the low absenteeism rates of a wajonger.

One experienced consultant of an agency that employs young educated employees with disabilities state that the absenteeism rates can have a positive influence the other colleagues.

“A employee with a disability attains work with so much joy, with a kind of pride. Therefore, the organization receives a lot in return. For instance, these employees never report themselves sick.

This can reduce the overall absenteeism rates of the organization.” [AH.2.1]

Additionally, they mention that this should not be the main reason, because this could affect the employment relationship in a negative way. One respondent thinks the benefits may not be seen in the financial section, but are moreover enrichment for the organization.

“Our people, but perhaps also the young people with an intellectual disability will never reach the production level. Perhaps almost, but I think the pace and quality will always be lower. Unfortunate, but does not necessarily mean it is cheaper because you receive a lot in return. Maybe not on financial terms, but it is a enrichment for an organization to employ people with a disability.” [W.3.1]

Another advantage that is mentioned by a respondent is that it could have a positive effect on the workforce. Alongside of the reducing absenteeism rates, a project manager HR of a large network company that employs more than hundred persons with a distance to the labor market indicates that the employee satisfaction is increased after he introduced an disability employment plan. He states that this employment perhaps does not have a financial business model, but a social business model what indicates a soft style towards HR.

“What we see when we receive the data from the employee satisfaction survey, is that the employees generally like to work for such a company now we see how important it is to integrate this in our business activities. It is not always easy to execute, but we realize other people live with much more difficulties. Well, that works positively for the organization. So that can be considered as our business model.” [AH.13.1]

Concluding, characteristics of both soft and hard style towards HR were found in the data but the soft style is clearly dominant. The soft style of HR was reflected by the socially motives and supporting CSR by hiring a wajonger. Also providing an external jobcoach to a wajonger indicates a high emphasis on individualism and offering space for development. Thereby, offering paid work to a wajonger instead of offering an internship does not indicate towards cost minimization what is a characteristic of a hard HR perspective. The only responding what points to a hard style of HR are the low absenteeism and turnover rates among the wajongeren what results in lower costs.

### *Inclusive employment characteristics*

The respondents were questioned regarding organizational characteristics that were distinguished in work cultural issues, job matching issues, employer experiences and support issues. Therefore, the main success factors of a successful inclusive employment relationship were studied in order to answer SQ4:

*SQ 4: What are characteristics of inclusive employers?*

The motivation of the *wajonger* himself is considered as the most important success factor of an inclusive employment relationship. By extensive recruitment and selection, this motivation can be questioned and associated with potential tasks and/or functions. This is necessary to build a successful employment relationship, because there is lot of effort needed from the employer but from the employee as well. A director of a company in professional services that employs more than twenty *wajongeren* was asked for the key to success and subsequently he underlined the importance of the intrinsic motivation of the *wajonger*.

“The motivation to perform work. The rest can be learned. Pace is not important. Sometimes someone appears because he needs an application from the UWV but is not actually motivated to work. Someone we do not need in our organization because he is not motivated to do something. He must be willing to provide a daily schedule and then we always work something out. It also happens that someone is overqualified for our activities, we are namely limited in our activities and sometimes we think than an applicant is capable of doing other activities. This is in consultation with the jobcoach, but the point is that he can do challenging work.” [G.15.1]

The respondents also noted that various sources from the employer are necessary. First, managerial support is indicated as essential and at the same times a threat if there is a lack of this source of support. A job counsellor of an agency, specialized in employing young disabled employees, underlines the importance of management support and clear communication.

“The trick is that every business at every level created a foundation. Without support from management you will not make it. That is very important. This needs to be a good line of communication to deal with the bumps and prejudice that you will encounter. That way we can create jobs for a lot of people and be able to put their talents in use at any level.” [W.2.1]

The most important issue of openness in communication what was noted is the transparency of the disability. The *wajonger* has to be open about his disabilities from the start of the employment relationship. The use of job coaching could play a role to eliminate the possible threats of the employer finding out some disabilities after the *wajonger* starts working in the organization. Subsequently, the support of the future colleagues of the *wajonger* is essential. The organizational culture must support the introduction of an inclusive employment

relationship, otherwise this is considered as a large threat. Thereby the lack of open organizational culture and focus on short-term targets are noted as threats. As mentioned earlier, inclusive employment is more strategic and long term focused. Furthermore, integration of a wajonger in the organization works more effectively if his direct colleagues support him and are available to answer his questions. If there is a lack of this support, this is also considered as a large threat. A director of a raspberry nursery garden with six wajongeren in his workforce states:

“The colleagues have to support the employment of a new employee with a disability. If there are a few employees that do not fully support this concept of inclusive employment, it is not going to be a success.”[*W.11.2*]

Another respondent notes that the employer needs to be aware of all the rules regarding the employment of a wajonger. The respondent thinks that a central contact person from a municipality could be a remedy here.

Subsequently, a healthy work-life balance of the employee is considered essential. Home support is included in this factor. Often the private situation can negatively influence the capabilities at the workplace. Hence, according to multiple respondents the wajonger has to be mentally capable of doing work. The organization has to be aware of the history of the employee and together with the job coach estimate the psychological status of the wajonger. Possible treats to success that are mentioned are a lack of good guidance and as a result falling back into old habit like drug addiction or high debts.

As discussed before, the recruitment and selection phase is of high importance and thereby one of the biggest challenges. A consultant of a reintegration firm notes the multiple difficulties that are included at their activities as a mediator.

“The biggest challenge is to find a place that each individual, with different educational backgrounds, traits and competencies can develop and function the same as a normal person without disability would. There should not be a big difference between colleagues. So even for people with a higher education, it will still be hard to find the right spot.”[*W.4.1*]

## **Discussion**

The principal purpose of this research was to acquire more insight into the employment of employees with a disability, so-called inclusive employment. The study focused on the characteristics of employers that are required to foster an inclusive employment relationship. Twenty respondents of seventeen different organizations participated in a semi-structured interview. Data were gathered on the obligations of the participation law, the perspectives towards HR, organizational characteristics and HR instruments in order to answer the research question. The responses with regard to the obligations of the participation law were fairly comparable. Positive responses were recognized towards the need for change regarding the high unemployment rates for Dutch youth with a disability. Other organizations have to be triggered to participate in hiring employees with a disability. Hence, the main intentions of the law are supported, namely the intention of the government to reduce the disability unemployment rate in the Netherlands. However, negative responses were substantiated towards the quota system and the future determining role of the municipalities. Large-sized organizations that have a large workforce saw difficulties in the short-termed realization of the law. They think it is too ambitious when a large organization has to integrate five per cent of employees with a disability without being experienced in that field. For example, for a workforce of 2000 employees, it is unrealistic to oblige the organization to employ hundred employees with a disability. However the quota is highly questioned, also the role of the municipalities is risky. In the example of organizations with a large workforce, they will have to cope with different municipalities and therefore various arrangements and contact persons. Therefore, it is suggested to link every organization with one central contact person of one municipality, so that the complex paperwork is not an obstruction of hiring an employee with a disability.

As the second subcategory, namely the HR instruments of the inclusive employers, differences in employing regular workers and *wajongeren* were found. Namely, to compose tasks and integrate the *wajonger* into the workforce, extensive selection and coaching are necessary. The recruitment of a *wajonger* was proved not to be an intensive process because of the large databases of *wajonger* profiles are available at the UWV together with municipalities and agencies. In the selection phase, transparency of the disability was perceived as important. To make the right workplace adjustments, the employer needs to be aware of all the disabilities. Thereby, an external job coach is provided by the UWV and is suggested to gain control over the work-life balance and satisfaction of the *wajonger*.

When studying the different HR perspectives, the motives of hiring people with a disability proved unanimous on social terms. To create a successful inclusive relationship, the financial situation must not overrule the social motives. A director in automotive design describes the essence clearly when he states that everyone should participate, but the employment relationship has to be financially responsible for the organization. In the theoretical framework the division in soft and hard style towards HRM was made. The soft style is more strategic and long term that moreover involves the integration of individuality. The hard style lays the emphasis on cost minimization, the leanness in production and resource-based view of labor. However the soft style toward HR dominates, characteristics of both perspectives were found in the data. This implies that employers have both a soft and hard perspective towards HR. The soft style of HR is recognized in the socially responsible motives of hiring the *wajongeren*. Employing persons with a disability is considered in the lines of CSR and therefore a soft perspective towards HR. In addition, the fact that employers offer paid work to the *wajongeren* instead of preferring work experience places, is a characteristic of a soft style towards HRM because cost minimization would prefer differently. Hence, from a business perspective and hard style towards HR, the employment relationship has to be financially responsible for the organization. The employees' competencies have to be of value to the organization. In order to be responsible for the employer, financial compensation and productivity is important. A *wajonger* cannot reach the productivity of his co-workers, but he needs to have capacity to reasonably perform his work. However an inclusive employment relationship has its foundations on social motives, the employment cannot be too expensive for the employer to label it as successful. Therefore, hard style HRM activities are necessary. The focus is perhaps not on cost minimization in terms of paying a minimum wage (Analoui, 1999), but moreover on leanness of production and a resource based view of labour. Furthermore, to create a successful employment relationship with a *wajonger*, the full capacity of an employee has to be achieved using some soft HR instruments. The data is in line with the study of Arthur (1994), who found an HR system emphasizing that commitment is associated with higher productivity. The respondents state that commitment and satisfaction of an employee with a disability is essential for his performance, in combination with self-esteem. By providing job coaching, on the job guidance, managerial support and mutual respect, the *wajonger* can develop and reach his full capacity. Furthermore, the employee has to be intensively accompanied not only during the start of his activities, but also afterwards. The disability of a *wajonger* is namely sustainable, so it has to be coped with during the full employment relationship. The use of a job coach is hereby very

important, for the organization as well as for the employee himself. This is regarding his own tasks, but also a work-life balance and private life what has to be in control.

With respect to the integration of the employees with a disability, the theory by Zoer et al. (2012) is partly supported. The data supports his theory that attention should be given to employees' judgements of workload and recovery.

Subsequently, the identification of three key characteristics of Gibrade et al. (2003) of employers that are open to hiring and accommodating persons with a disability is recognized by the data. Gilbride et al. (2003) identified work culture issues, person-job match and the ability to supervise a diverse workforce as key characteristics of inclusive employment.

Respondents mentioned the work culture issues with respect to the integration of an employee with a disability into the workforce of an inclusive organization. The social work atmosphere of the organization has to be open for a diverse workforce. Furthermore, regarding multiple respondents, the co-workers of the employees have to be open for the employment of a colleague with a disability. Also the inclusive employment relationship has to be supported on managerial level. In order to create mutual respect, an open organizational culture is needed. The wajonger needs to step out of his comfort zone and therefore a fixed contact person together with a job coach is helpful.

### *Limitations*

The first limitation of this research is that it was conducted cross-sectional, so on one moment in time namely summer 2014. Second, the sample size of twenty employers can be considered as limited. With a larger sample size, there could be studied more opinions and insights of inclusive employers. In addition, the sample of twenty employers all contains employers that already had employees with a disability in their personnel. Even though their experiences with the employment of wajongeren were included in this research, there is a lack of data of organizations that are not hiring wajongeren. The underlying reasons of these employers whether they are not hiring personnel with a disability is therefore excluded in the data. Furthermore, organizations could be included that are not considering to hire, but are risking the financial penalty as a consequence of the introduction of the participation law. In other words, the opinions of inclusive employers could be considered as 'one side of the story'. In addition, interviewer effect could bias the data, which is also considered as a limitation.

### *Recommendations for further research*

For future research, the use of a longitudinal design is recommended since the Participation law will be in effect next January 1st (2015). Longitudinal research could measure whether the employment rates among *wajongeren* are reducing. Longitudinal studies measure changes over time and the validity usually increases since both the past and present are measured. By this way the effect of the Participation law can be monitored. Subsequently, organizations that do not have employees with disabilities in their personnel should be asked whether or not they want to hire *wajongeren* in the future.

The most interesting part is their underlying motives behind their decisions whether or not hiring an employee with a disability. Thereby the experiences of the organizations that will start hiring *wajongeren* could be questioned and evaluated.

Future researchers are also recommended to combine different methods. The use of quantitative research methods will help to maintain a larger sample within a smaller timeframe.

### *Practical implications*

As mentioned before, the participation law will be in effect as of January first 2015. The quota that is suggested however, is judged by the respondents as too ambitious to realize on the short term. By this way, instead of the organization supporting the concept of inclusive employment voluntarily it is obliged to employ employees with a disability. This study implicated namely that the organizational culture and the personnel has to be open for an employee with a disability to create a successful inclusive relationship.

Therefore, recruiting employees with a disability should be made more interesting for the Dutch organizations. With organizations risking a financial penalty, is not a remedy for the problem of disability unemployment. In order to achieve this, the quota should be exchanged for arrangements where organizations are supported to employ *wajongeren* instead of financial punishment when they don't. With organizations choosing the financial penalty, the problem of disability unemployment is not solved. Therefore, it is suggested that organizations do not receive a form of punishment, but a reward when hiring a *wajonger*. The motives of hiring employees should be from a social view, where the employee with a disability is central instead of the possible financial benefits.

This is the base of creating an organizational culture that is sufficient to create a successful inclusive employment relationship. When thinking about the most important factors to integrate a *wajonger* in the workforce, the entire workforce needs to be informed about the consequences for the organization and their own. Subsequently, the employer needs to acquire

knowledge about the rules and disabilities of a wajonger. Especially because the municipalities presumably have a lack of knowledge on this field and are not capable of answering all questions. Moreover, in creating an appropriate function for the wajonger, the recruitment and selection phase is an intensive process. First, all activities performed by an organization has to be mapped, subsequently activities must be selected that could be performed by someone with a disability. Thereafter, a profile must be sketched and the right wajonger should be selected. Recruiting a wajonger is not an intensive process, as earlier mentioned. Therefore, the UWV, reintegration firms or agencies specialized in detaching young employees with a disability can be contacted. They have a large database available where the right person can be selected. Disadvantage of this approach can be that the applicants with a relatively high capacity are selected, but the ones with a lower capacity remain unemployed. The challenge therefore is to select the right employee but prevent both under and over qualification. Regarding the integration of a wajonger in a regular workforce, a small team must be composed in order to let the wajonger step out of his comfort zone. A special form of job carving should be appropriate for creating a function and informing regular employees of the disabilities should create an open culture. To conclude, the inclusive employment relationship is strategic and long-term focused, but moreover very challenging.

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## | INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

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## | INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

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## **Appendix A: Interview list**

*RQ: “How can inclusive employment relationships become successful? Which HR perspectives can be distinguished and what HR practices do inclusive employers use?”*

### Background interviewee

- age
- education
- short explanation about working life

### General information about organization

- What is the organization’s history on hiring Wajongers?
- What are the underlying motives of hiring Wajongers?
- What are the experiences with Wajongers?
- What are the experiences regarding the guidance of the Wajongers?
- Does the organization have a source of support in hiring the Wajongers?
- What does the organization do different in integrating Wajongers than they do with regular workers without a disability?

### Participation law/ Institutional context (SQ1)

*SQ1: How are Dutch organizations currently preparing for the consequences of the Participation law and thus the integration of employees with disabilities in the organization?*

- Are you familiar with the Participation law?
- What are your thoughts about the Participation law?
  - \* Positive/Negative; For organization/ General
- How are you preparing for the obligations arising from the Participation law?

### HR Perspectives (SQ2)

*SQ2: What are the different perspectives towards HR among inclusive employers?*

- What is the organization’s perspective on HR activities? (Hard/Soft)
- Where does the organization concentrate on concerning HR activities?
- What HR practices does the organization use in integrating employees?

## | INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

- Do you use different resources regarding Wajongers in comparison with regular employees?  
(Recruitment/Selection)
- Is your company making use of wage subsidy? Is this necessary to avoid losses?
- What is the organization's experience regarding guidance of the Wajongers?

### Inclusive employment (SQ3+ SQ4)

- *SQ 3: Which HR activities do inclusive employers use?*
- *SQ 4: What are characteristics of inclusive employers?*
  
- Are you joining the cooperation of inclusive entrepreneurship (fe Normaalste Zaak)
- Are you supporting the idea of inclusive employment? Why?
- To what extent is your organization active on inclusive employment?
- What do you acknowledge as the main characteristics of inclusive employment?
- What are key points in considering hire a Wajonger or not?
- How do you introduce a Wajonger into your workforce?
- What can lead to sustainable employment of a Wajonger?

**Appendix B: Checklist characteristics (Gilbride, Stensrud, Vandergoot and Golden (2003))**

Work cultural issues

1. Employees include people with disabilities with all workers and treat them equally
2. Employers welcome diversity; they are egalitarian and inclusive.
3. Employers' management style is more personal and flexible
4. Employers focus on a worker's performance, not his or her disability.
5. Senior management expects and rewards diversity.
6. Employers are comfortable providing accommodations to all their employees.
7. The organization provides "cafeteria style" benefits.

Job match

1. The employer focuses on the consumer's capabilities and effectively matches the worker with the job requirements.
2. The employers obtain input from people with disabilities on their ability to perform job duties, and he or she includes people with disabilities in all accommodation discussions.
3. The employer focuses on essential, rather than marginal functions.
4. The employer offers internships, and they often lead to jobs

Employer experiences and support issues

1. The employer has the ability to supervise a diverse workforce
2. The employer views the community rehabilitation program (or other rehabilitation agency) as a partner and as an on-going employment support resource.

### **Appendix C: Used quotes in Dutch language**

*SQ1: In welke mate denken inclusieve werkgevers dat het introduceren van de participatiewet zal gaan leiden tot succesvolle inclusieve arbeidsrelaties?*

“Het is duidelijk een bezuinigingsmaatregel. Kijk, wij kijken in het belang van de mensen met een beperking, hoe zij ook een volwaardige invulling van hun dag kunnen geven. Aan de andere hoek wordt gekeken hoe kunnen we zo goed mogelijk miljoenen besparen.” [N.4.1]

“De participatiewet is voor mensen met een sociale voorzieningsachtergrond of een Wajong. Daar zit dus een bepaalde beperking op als het gaat over dat niet iedereen met een beperking aanspraak zou kunnen maken op de participatiewet. Dus zou die in strijd kunnen zijn met dat gehandicaptenverdrag. Wat ze ermee gaan doen, geen idee.” [N.3.2]

“Ik ben bang dat je straks geneigd bent dat je kandidaten kiest die onder die quotumwet valt. Dan heb je kandidaten die niet in doelgroep horen die komen dan helemaal onderaan. Wij staan open voor iedereen, niet alleen die in het quotum vallen. Dus opletten dat niemand buiten de boot valt.” [N.7.1]

“De quotum is te zot voor woorden, daarmee spreken ze alleen de allerlaagste doelgroep aan, maar daar kunnen bedrijven een stuk minder mee. Het moet een afspiegeling van de maatschappij zijn. Met de quotum valt weer veel buiten de boot.” [N.2.1]

“Kiezen voor de boete. Die willen we niet, dus we nemen iemand aan en betalen je ook, daar krijgen ze dan subsidie voor. Maar je mag gewoon thuis blijven. Dus schijnwerkloosheid. Niet ingeschreven als werkloze, maar je hebt ook geen werk. Belangrijker nog, je participeert helemaal niet. Lijkt me niet dat dat de bedoeling is. Dat moet je ten alle tijden zien te voorkomen.” [N.13.3]

“Wij lossen het probleem van de werkloosheid niet op. Maar als alle bedrijven ons kopiëren en dit als een olievlek gaat werken, krijg je grotere kans. Wij kunnen niet alles doen, maar we kunnen wel een voorbeeld geven. Aan bedrijven waarmee wij zaken doen, maar ook richting bedrijven in onze omgeving.” [N.13.1]

“Rol van de gemeente is vaag. Wij zijn actief binnen verschillende gemeente, dus zullen straks ook moeten communiceren met verschillende gemeente. Dit verwerkt verwarring.”

[L.7.1]

"Ik denk niet dat zoiets op korte termijn te realiseren is. Er zijn geen enkele garanties dat hulp via de gemeente beter is dan eerst." [N.11.1]

SQ2: “Which different or additional HR activities do inclusive employers use with respect to the employment of Wajongers compared to regular workers?”

### *Recruitment & Selection*

" Kunst om een goede match te creëren, de juiste mens op de juiste plek zodat deze helemaal in zijn kracht kan zijn. Een baan die passend is bij zijn opleiding/omstandigheden. Dat de werkgever op de hoogte is van zijn beperkingen/ziektebeeld. Openheid. Hoe kan ik de werknemer het beste benaderen? Wat is de belastbaarheid? Hoe kan ik de medewerker het best in zijn kracht zetten. Als het je lukt om een goede match te maken en de werkgever aan een goede kandidaat helpt, is dit een goede toeleiding naar het werk.” [AH.2.2]

"Vooral geen valse voorlichting geven. Als iemand ergens niet goed in is, daar open over zijn. Dat een werkgever niet het gevoel krijgt dat hij is belazerd. Weerhoudt hem van een volgende keer. Ook vervelend voor kandidaat dat dit gebeurt. Dus open in informatievoorziening en helder in beperking." [AH.7.1]

### *Integration*

“ja informatie verschaffen, ik merk dus dat het laten ervaren, wat het betekent om slechthorend te zijn. Dat dit heel goed werkt. Eigenlijk na een half jaartje nog een keertje, dat je weer even met zijn allen bij elkaar gaat zitten. Want dat maakt meer indruk dan woorden die ik zeg. En blijven praten met elkaar er over.” [AC.4.1]

"Het labeltje wat aan iemand komt te hangen mag niet bepalend zijn. Zegt namelijk niks over de capaciteit." [G.7.1]

"Behandelen hoe ze zijn, niet meteen dat stickertje opplakken. Probeer het ze makkelijk te maken, dat is de beste manier om ze uit hun comfort zone te halen. Iedereen kan normaal

werken, alleen op zijn eigen manier. Ze kunnen vaak veel meer dan ze zelf denken"

*[AH.11.1]*

“In alle bedrijven heb je zeg maar groepjes die bepaalde werkzaamheden doen. Dus je moet ze integreren in een kleiner groepje. Niet in een keer in het geheel van die is die en dit zijn de collega's van jou. Dat gaat niet werken. Dus je integreert hem in een groepje van 10. Binnen dat groepje werk je. Dat groepje zijn collega's daar mag je alles aan vragen. En deze twee dat zijn jou contactpersonen, daar kun je alles aan vragen. En die twee houden hem ook een beetje in de gaten. Wat ook heel belangrijk is, of hij geaccepteerd wordt binnen de groep of binnen het bedrijf. Dat is heel belangrijk. Dan ben ik ervan overtuigd dat het bijna altijd slaagt. Niet introduceren met we krijgen iemand die dat niet kan dat niet kan en dat niet kan. Maar juist van we krijgen nu een nieuwe medewerker die kan dit en dit en dat. Nou en dan gaat het. " *[AH.15.1]*

### *Coaching*

"Toen hebben we een gesprek gehad met teamleider en persoon die loonadministratie doet, dus praktijkbegeleider zou worden. En de coach van de kandidaat. En de kandidaat zelf. Daar gaf de kandidaat snel aan van nou de jobcoach is er niet alleen voor mij, maar die is er ook voor jullie. Jobcoach is er ook om jullie te helpen, hoe jullie om moeten gaan met mij. Dat vond ik wel heel mooi dat iemand dat zelf verteld. Dit ben ik. Dit kan ik. Ik heb misschien die handvaten nodig, die zitten aan mij . hoe gaan we daar samen een leuke tijd van maken."

*[W.13.1]*

"De mensen die bij ons werken hebben allemaal een externe jobcoach. Stellen we ook op als voorwaarde. De filosofie erachter is kijk we hebben hier ook wel werkbegeleiders lopen en in principe redden die het zelf wel. Maar de doelgroep is licht verstandelijk gehandicapt komen natuurlijk snel in situaties die met thuissituatie te maken hebben. Geld, wonen, drugsgebruik, van alles komt daarbij kijken. Vandaar dat we gezegd hebben dat we daar een extra iemand tussen hebben willen staan die naar die privé situatie kijkt en daarmee dus bekend is. Die gaat met begeleider praten. Maar ook iemand die tegen mij als werkgever zou kunnen zeggen wat ik hier niet goed doe. Dus het belang van de wajonger durft te bespreken. Kijk als ik die job coaching zelf ga doen zie ik het als een slager die zijn eigen vlees keurt. Ik bepaal zelf wat goed is en die gehandicapten moeten maar mee. Dat willen we niet. Begeleiding moet er zijn, prettige werkomgeving waar de wajonger zich goed voelt, dan gaat het vanzelf." *[W.15.1]*

*Job carving*

“En dan gaan wij naar de werkgever en zeggen we van moet je eens een doorsnede maken in je bedrijf; welke taken zijn er allemaal, kunnen we daar dingen uitplukken, die we dan vervolgens weer onderbrengen bij iemand met een beperking. Is soms een tegengestelde werking voor werkgevers.” [AD.3.1]

“je maakt job carving waarbij je zegt, wat kan iemand wel en wat kan iemand niet. Dat hoor je anders ook te doen, maar je denkt altijd dat mensen alles kunnen waarvoor ze geselecteerd zijn. Dat is dus gewoon niet waar. Bij onze mensen weten we dat van tevoren en houden we daar goed rekening mee. Is niet moeilijk, moet je willen. Zo is dus hoe we naar het werk kijken. Wat is het en wie kan dit het beste doen” [AH.12.2]

“Hangt van functie af. Voor test engineer heeft iemand bepaalde capaciteit nodig. Als uit assessment blijkt dat iemand deze niet heeft, is dat voor die functie niks. Betekent niet dat we die niet in WGP kunnen plaatsen, maar moeten kijken waar een geschikte werkplek is. Nu 2 wajongeren die archiefwerk doen. Werkt prima, geen deadlines, druk. Wel in werkomgeving. Samen goede band. Worden gezien als voorwaardig teamlid.

Je kunt ook functies creëren. Vooral binnen Philips, genoeg te doen. Zijn taken die eigenlijk gedaan moeten worden, waar afdeling zelf geen tijd of zin voor heeft. Wel belangrijk dat het een keer gedaan wordt.” [AH.6.1]

“Hoe gaan we duurzaam die mensen in bedrijf halen. En duurzaam in ons team job carving/job crafting. Er is een TNO scala van tools ontwikkeld hoe je anders kan kijken naar functies/werkzaamheden zodat er meerdere niveaus en doelgroepen in je bedrijf kunnen participeren. Activiteiten binnen ons bedrijf zijn veelal HBO en wetenschappelijk. Er liggen natuurlijk ook wel taken/werkzaamheden als je die van een heel team bij elkaar gepakt die ook wel van een ander niveau zijn. Gewoon de doe dingen. Die kan je dan onderbrengen. Dus stimuleren, maar met verantwoording voor de organisatie.” [AE.13.1]

*SQ3: “What perspective toward HR (soft/hard) is leading to create a successful employment relationship?”*

"De bereidwilligheid blijft belangrijk. Anders hoor je achteraf ook alleen maar wat er niet goed ging. Dit geldt vooral voor gevallen waar het financiële plaatje overheerst" [AH.4.1]

"Een werknemer met een handicap gaat met zoveel plezier naar zijn werk, een soort van trots. Daar krijgt een bedrijf zoveel voor terug, ze melden zich ook nooit ziek bijvoorbeeld. Hierdoor kan het ziekteverzuim van andere collega's dalen. [AH.2.1.]

“Kijk, bij onze cliënten en dat geldt misschien ook wel voor jongeren met een verstandelijke beperking, die zullen nooit op productieniveau aanhaken. Misschien wel in de buurt, maar ik denk dat het tempo altijd wel wat lager ligt. Kwaliteit net altijd iets achter blijft. Is jammer, maar niet per definitie goedkoper zijn want je haalt er heel veel uit. Misschien niet financieel, maar wel in het gezicht naar buiten. En het is een verrijking voor een bedrijf, om mensen met een beperking in dienst te hebben" [W.3.1]

"Wat we nu zien als we medewerkers onderzoek krijgen, over algemeen heel mooi vinden om voor zo'n bedrijf te werken waardoor we nu zien hoe belangrijk het is om dit als bedrijf te doen. Het is niet altijd makkelijk maar andere mensen hebben het nog veel moeilijker. Nou goed, dat gaat dan voor je werken. Ja dat is dan het verdienmodel." [AH.13.1]

*SQ 4: What are characteristics of inclusive employers?*

“Het gaat erom of ze de wil hebben om iets te doen. Tempo is niet belangrijk. De rest kun je ze wel leren. Er komt ook weleens iemand die komt hier ik moet dit en moet dat van het UWV maar wil het eigenlijk niet, daar hebben wij niks aan want die is ongemotiveerd om iets te doen. Hij moet graag een dag invulling willen en dan komen we er bijna altijd uit. Het komt ook voor dat iemand te goed is voor onze groep. Wij zijn natuurlijk wel beperkt in onze werkzaamheden en soms denken we dan van nou jij kan veel meer. Gaat in overleg met job coach natuurlijk en gaat het erom dat hij een baan vindt waar hij een uitdaging in ziet. “  
[G.15.1]

"De kunst is dat bedrijven op elk niveau een stukje draagvlak creëert. Zonder de steun van de manager ga je het niet redden. Dat is heel belangrijk. Er moet goed gecommuniceerd worden om alle hobbels en vooroordelen weg te nemen. Zo kunnen we veel mensen aan een baan helpen en in hun kracht zetten. Op welk niveau dan ook." [W.2.1]

“Die moeten natuurlijk ook open staan voor zo'n jongen. Als er enkele collega's zijn die er niet achter staan, wordt het al een moeilijk verhaal.” [W.11.2]

"De grootste uitdaging is voor ons, dat allemaal verschillende individuen met een andere opleidingsachtergrond/karakertrekken/competenties dat je die dus op een plek ziet te krijgen waar zij net zo kunnen functioneren als iemand zonder beperking. Het moet niet zo zijn dat daar een heel groot verschil is met een collega. Dus ook voor mensen die hoger opgeleid zijn, is het nog moeilijker om die op de juiste plek te krijgen omdat daar hele andere competenties gevraagd worden dan dat ze vaak in zich hebben door hun beperking. " *[W.4.1]*

**Appendix D: Kenmerken respondenten/organisaties**

<b>Branche organisatie</b>	<b>Functie respondent</b>	<b>Aantal medewerkers</b>	<b>Aantal jongeren</b>	<b>Jobcoaching (extern)</b>
Uitzendbureau*	consulent		5	ja
Reintegratiebureau (WP)*	directeur	19		ja
	consulent	19		ja
Multinational elektronica	consultant	10**	10	ja
	coach	10**	10	ja
Autobedrijf	directeur	90	10***	nee
	manager	90	10***	nee
Adviesbureau*	eigenaresse	2		nee
Frambozenbedrijf	eigenaar	6	4	ja
Detacheringsbedrijf	eigenaar	30	25	ja
	HR project			
Energiebedrijf	manager	6000	90	ja
Communicatiebedrijf	eigenaar	11	3	nee
Dienstverlening	eigenaar	25	20	ja
Horeca	project manager	80	15	ja
Reintegratiebureau (USG)*	contractmanager	320		ja
Productiebedrijf	bedrijfsleider	26	5	nee
Fietsenwinkel	eigenaar	20	1	nee
Kwekerij	eigenaar	15	2	nee
Marketingorganisatie	consultant	5	1	ja
Reintegratiebureau (WM)*	eigenaar	18		ja

\* Uitzendbureaus, reintegratiebureaus zijn continu in beweging dus aantal jongeren niet te noemen.

\*\* Binnen WGP

Philips

\*\*\* Ruwe schatting

## **Appendix E: Codes**

### **Organisatie**

- 1.1 Achtergrond/karakteristieken organisatie
- 1.2 Geschiedenis wajong
- 1.3 Motieven
- 1.4 Achtergrond respondent
- 1.5 Overig
- 1.6 Uitspraken organisatie

### **Participatiewet**

- 2.1 Bekendheid/voorbereiding
- 2.2 Mening
- 2.3 Andere werkgevers
- 2.4 Quotum
- 2.5 Gemeenten
- 2.6 Overig
- 2.7 Uitspraken PW

### **Wajongeren**

- 3.1 Beperkingen/Capaciteit
- 3.2 Doelgroep
- 3.3 Begeleiding
- 3.4 Succesverhalen
- 3.5 Jobcoaching
- 3.6 Succesfactoren
- 3.7 Bedreigingen
- 3.8 Overig
- 3.9 Uitspraken wajongeren

### **HR activiteiten**

- 4.1 Traject algemeen
- 4.2 Werving
- 4.3 Selectie
- 4.4 Metrics
- 4.5 Training/Development
- 4.6 Integratie
- 4.7 Samenstelling taken
- 4.8 Job carving
- 4.9 Verdienmodel
- 4.10 Overig
- 4.11 Uitspraken HR activiteiten