

## **Inclusive vocational training system for the persons with disabilities in Korea**

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After the 1988 Seoul Paralympics Games, the Koreans realized the importance of inclusive training system for the persons with disabilities.

Following the games, Korean citizens strongly recognized that the persons with a disability need a free from physical barriers for social integration. Though we have a high level of recognition of inclusive training system for the disabled, it would be useless until we provide the facilities for the disabled.

Especially, it is very hard for the severely disabled to travel in the Korean transportation system. If she (he) is in the lower brackets of income, it is impossible to travel on time. For example, if the disabled want to travel to the inclusive vocational training center, he needs someone to help him get on a bus or a train.

Since the 1988 Paralympics, public facilities and transportation for the disabled have been improved very rapidly. It has become legalized to establish a ramp in a new building and to provide a voice-guiding system near a traffic light for the visually impaired person. The penetration rate of vehicles for the physically disabled has also become very high though many of the disabled live in a middle or lower standard of living due to lack of facilities in the Korean public transportation system.

Unfortunately, the enrollment rate of the disabled is below 2 percent in inclusive vocational training institutes in Korea. There are several reasons for the low enrollment of the persons with disabilities. A major reason is a psychological factor that arises from the persons with disabilities very deeply.

The faculty members in the training center had little knowledge about the disabled. This creates misunderstandings: the disabled are very impatient, they do not mingle with others, and they are not neat.

In fact, the disabled do not like to be sympathized by their instructors or fellows. Instead, they prefer providing sympathy to other disabled people without hesitation.

There are 15 different types of disabilities and 6 grades in each type of disability in

Korea. The instructor doesn't know this, which makes it difficult to successfully accomplish the goal of the inclusive vocational training system for the persons with a disability.

Recently, high-tech companies such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai want to hire the disabled who have a college or university degree.

It is very hard for the disabled to get a job in a big company because of lack of high level of education or vocational training.

Colleges and universities in Korea have introduced a special quota admission system that grants a certain number of the disabled job opportunities. Ten years ago, the physically handicapped were denied admission to universities especially in the case of medical and engineering majors.

Now, the persons with disabilities can select a certain college or university depending on his/her own choice. Obviously, severely disabled candidates would not apply to a university which is not equipped with proper facilities for the disabled.

Most universities and colleges in Korea were built more than 30 or 40 years ago. The old buildings and roads were not designed for the physically or visually disabled students at that time. Also, there was no legal system in which schools should provide proper facilities for the disabled. Unlike in the past, nowadays, the main building at a campus is equipped with facilities.

Still, many of the old buildings like students' union buildings or sports utilities are not properly equipped, either. Obviously, in this situation the disabled students cannot be guaranteed fair education service. As a result, this makes it very hard for the disabled to join inclusive education or training. It is quite natural that using sports utilities for health and recreation leads to high quality of school life.

In the United States, when the elevator is out of order, a university administrator immediately notifies a student with a disability that his classroom is moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of that building. I had a very impressive experience that my classroom was changed to a huge conference room because an elevator was mechanically repaired. The students in that class were only 8 while the conference room could accommodate 400 persons.

Mentally retarded people have been also accepted at the college or university since the new education system was launched. There is no budget problem for improving facilities for the mentally retarded at the campus.

After graduation, a few persons with retarded get a job compare with the other types of disabilities. College didn't provide special education care to the student with mentally retarded. They were accepted from school without basic learning ability.

That is the major reason to providing specialized training service from KEPAD(Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled). Though Korea has inclusive vocational training system, the persons with a disability wants to learn the training service from KEPAD.

There are 5 vocational competency development center under the KEPAD that provides special vocational training service by differentially. Their new systems are following.

- \* Operating various training courses by the demand and ability of the client (the disabled)
- \* Open the training courses any time whenever labor market changes
- \* Providing a special course for preparing take the examination of government officer
- \* Ready made training system by the need from industry
  - Period: 3 month to 2 years
- \* Providing training service by the types of disabilities who has very difficulties for getting a job
- \* Special lecture of Changing awareness and perception for the disabled
  - Having experiences as a simulated situation like a disabled person