



International
Labour
Organization



Department of Foreign Affairs
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

Decent Work for People with Disabilities

Inclusion of People with Disabilities in China

Women and men with disabilities can, want and deserve to be productive members of society. In both developed and developing countries, promoting inclusive socio-economic opportunities for people with disabilities requires improved access to basic education, vocational training relevant to labour market needs, and jobs suited to their skills, interests and abilities (with adaptations made as needed). Many societies are also recognizing the need to dismantle other barriers – such as making physical environments more accessible, providing information in a variety of formats, and challenging attitudes and misinformed assumptions about people with disabilities.

Current Situation



Nearly 85 million women and men in China (6.2% of the population) are living with a disability¹; approximately 44 million of which are 60 years of age or older. Men account for approximately 52 per cent of people with disabilities, and women account for 48 per cent. Additionally, the proportion of people with disabilities living in rural areas is greater (75% of the disabled population) than the proportion living in urban areas (25% of the disabled population). In 2009, the per capita income of families with at least one disabled family member was 8,578 Chinese Yuan (approximately US \$1,357) in urban areas and 4,066 Yuan (approximately

US \$643) in rural areas. Nearly 13 per cent of rural households with at least one person with a disability have a per capita income of between 684 and 944 Yuan (approximately US \$100 to US \$138)². Close to 36 per cent of people with disabilities aged 15 or older are illiterate; nationwide, the rate of enrollment of children with a disability aged 6 to 14 into primary education was only 63.19 per cent nationwide. Furthermore, about 85 per cent of the poor disabled population has never received education above the middle school level³. There are 32 million people with disabilities of working age, and by the end of 2014, there were 21.596 million people with disabilities in employment (around 67.5%), of whom 4.36 million worked in cities and towns and 17.236 million in the rural areas⁴.

¹ 6th Census, website of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, http://www.cdpcf.org.cn/sytj/content/2012-06/26/content_30399867.htm, accessed on 6 Oct, 2012
² <http://conferences.ifpri.org/2020Chinaconference/pdf/005ZhangDongmei.pdf>, accessed on 6.Oct,2012
³ Zhang Dongmei, China Disabled Persons' Federation: "Policies and effects of poverty reduction for the disabled in China", <http://www.ifpri.cgiar.org/2020Chinaconference/pdf/005ZhangDongmei.pdf> (accessed on 15 Apr. 2009).
⁴ Statistical Communiqué on the Development of the Work on Persons with Disabilities in 2014, http://www.cdpcf.org.cn/english/statistics/201507/t20150717_522174.html, accessed on 10.Sep,2015



Governmental support for people with disabilities

The Government of China has adopted and implemented a number of laws, policy standards, and initiatives pertaining to people with disabilities; of which, the most significant include:

- **The Constitution**, enacted in 1982, and amended in 1988, 1993, 1999, and 2004, provides general protection to people with disabilities.
- **The Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons**, enacted in 1991, and amended in 2000, further safeguards the rights of people with disabilities. Some of the issues addressed include: rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural life, welfare, access, and legal liability. The amendment added provisions for stable financial support, improved medical care, and rehabilitation for people with disabilities, along with favourable employment and tax measures.
- **The Rules on the Employment of Disabled Persons**, adopted in 2007, encourages social groups and individuals to support the employment of people with disabilities through various means, and bans discrimination based on ableism.
- **The Employment Promotion Law (2007)** contains an anti-discrimination provision relating to people with disabilities.
- The Government has also established a **quota system** requiring all public and private employers to reserve no less than 1.5% of job opportunities for people with disabilities. Provincial Authorities specify the exact quota level, which may vary between provinces.
- In August 2013, the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and seven other departments, including the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), created a policy for **promoting the quota system among governmental agencies** in order to increase the employment of disabled persons. This is a landmark achievement as it is the first time a national policy in China clearly requires government branches and public institutions to employ at least one person with disabilities.
- In the **12th Five Year National Programme on Disability (2011-2015)** one of the key goals was to create 1 million jobs for people with disabilities over the five year period.
- The **Regulations on Construction of Accessible Environment (2012)** requires local governments to construct various public facilities to accommodate people with disabilities.
- The **Mental Health Law (2012)** standardizes mental health care services, requiring general hospitals to set up special outpatient clinics and/or provide counselling. It calls for the training of more doctors and aims to prevent people from being involuntarily held and treated in psychiatric facilities.



Key groups and ministries responsible for people with disabilities

Established in 1988, the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) is a unified organization working to represent the 85 million people with disabilities in the country. It is a nationwide umbrella network reaching every part of the country, and has been allocated responsibility for issues related to disability by the government. The CDPF represents the interests of people with disabilities and helps protect their legitimate rights; provides comprehensive services to disabled people; and supervises affairs relating to people with disabilities. Further, it works to mainstream the issues faced by people with disabilities in employment, education, and in their social and cultural lives.

The State Council Working Committee on Disabilities has also been established to steer and coordinate disability work. It is composed of 36 members, representing ministries and social groups. The primary responsibility of the State Council Working Committee on Disability is to coordinate the relevant guidelines, policies and regulations, planning, formulation and implementation of the work of the state council for undertakings for disabled persons; to solve major problems in work for the disabled and related coordination; and to organize and coordinate important activities of UN affairs for the disabled in China. The CDPF is the Secretariat of this working committee.



Key international standards on disability and their status

- *International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958, (No. 111)*. Status: ratified January 12th, 2006.
- *ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983, (No. 159)*. Status: ratified, February 2nd, 1988.
- ILO Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99)
- ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168)
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and Optional Protocol*. Status: ratified UN Convention August 1st, 2008. Optional Protocol has not been signed.

Organizations for persons with disabilities

- State Council Working Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- China Disabled Persons' Federation

Organizations of persons with disabilities

- China Association of the Deaf
- China Association of the Blind
- China Association of Physical Handicapped
- China Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families
- China Association of Persons with Mental Disabilities and their Families



The role of the ILO

Of the estimated 85 million people with a disability in China, approximately 38 per cent are of working age. The right of people with disabilities to decent work, however, is frequently denied. People with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, face enormous barriers to equal opportunities in the world of work. Compared to non-disabled persons, they experience higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity and are at greater risk of insufficient social protection which is a key to reducing extreme poverty. Including people with disabilities more effectively into the labour market promotes more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

The ILO has a longstanding commitment to promoting social justice and achieving decent work for people with disabilities. The ILO's two stream approach to disability inclusion promotes disability-specific programmes and initiatives aimed at overcoming particular barriers to employment and works to ensure the inclusion of disabled persons in mainstream services and activities, such as skills training, employment promotion, social protection schemes and poverty reduction strategies. ILO efforts to include people with disabilities are reflected in China's Decent Work Country Programme which establishes the core framework for the delivery of ILO's work in China.

Some of the ILO tools and approaches to promote disability inclusion and accessibility in employment include:

The ILO Code of Practice: Managing Disability in the Workplace (2002)

- The ILO Global Business and Disability Network – a global network of multinational companies, national employers' organizations, business networks and disabled people's organizations with the mission of raising business awareness about the positive relationship between the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and business through knowledge sharing, product and tools development, training, and network facilitation.
- Supported Employment (SE) – a “place, train and support” model which provides individual job matching, coaching and training support to people with disabilities in mainstream jobs. The network of SE coaches in across China has now grown to approximately 480.
- Media Guideline for the Portrayal of People with Disabilities – guidelines that provide practical advice to a variety of media sources on how to promote positive, inclusive images of women and men with disabilities and stimulate a climate of non-discrimination and equal opportunity – in all levels of the economy and society – for disabled persons.
- Disability Equality Training (DET) - an effective tool used to promote attitudinal change among decision-makers and service providers, and to stimulate and support the development and implementation of disability inclusion strategies in a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental settings.

Technical cooperation on disability inclusion in employment in China:

Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities in Employment through Legislation in China project. The PROPEL-China project is part of the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme, for the promotion of disability employment in China and in other countries. The project has three central focuses which include:

1. Improving the capacity of governments and organizations to create an enabling environment for the employment of persons with disabilities.
2. Improving the capacity of the media to report on the right and ability to work of persons with disabilities, specifically intellectual disabilities
3. Improving the access of persons with disabilities to skills training and work experience programmes

As part of *the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), a UN Joint Programme in China*, of which the ILO, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF are participants, supports the promotion of the rights and entitlement of persons with disabilities. The ILO action delivers several sessions of Disability Equality Training (DET): Effective Way to Generate Attitudinal Change Towards Disability to representatives of the Chinese Enterprise Confederation (CEC), public law firms, UN agencies, and civil society.



Joint activities further extend to work with the Embassies of Sweden, Germany and USA to promote rights and interests of people with disabilities.

What has been achieved -

Since 2010, several key objectives in combatting discrimination and fostering skill building have been met by the PROPEL-China initiative.

The provincial governments of Hunan, Jilin, and Beijing (along with the city governments of Guangzhou and Dongying) have issued policies on supported employment of people with disabilities. The Central government also announced the Policies on Assistive Employment for Persons with Disability on 9th July 2015, and states that each district and county should establish Assistive Employment Centers before 2020.

Employment support:

- Local business and disability networks in Chongqing, Dalian, Beijing, Wuhan and Shanghai established through the cooperation of the China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) and the China Disabled Persons' Federation
- 480 supported employment job coaches, who have already begun to support disabled people as they enter into the labour market.

Advocacy:

- Good practices and experiences sharing seminar on supported employment initiatives involving people with intellectual disabilities in China in August 2013 by the ILO in collaboration with the China Association of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Relatives (CAPDIR).
- The launch of the China Disability Month
- The 2015 Youth with Disabilities Leadership and Advocacy Capacity Building Camp.
- CAPDIR's three-year plan to advocate supported employment of men and women with intellectual disabilities and autism in China, starting in 2014

Legal research:

- Emerging legal issues in the field of employment, as viewed from a disability standpoint – these results were regularly shared with the public and policy makers.

The way forward

Productive and decent work enables people with disabilities to realize their aspirations, improve their living conditions, and participate more actively in society. Not only does the employment of people with disabilities benefit individuals and families, employing people with disabilities brings greater inclusivity, enriches the labour market and promotes more sustainable development within a country. Ensuring that a disability perspective is considered in all aspects of policy and labour legislation, in the effective implementation and enforcement of existing disability laws and policies, and in the provision of equal employment opportunities and training are central factors that will contribute to the socio-economic inclusion of people with disabilities and to the overall reduction of poverty in China.

For further information:

Zhou Haibin
National Programme Coordinator on
Disability, ILO/Irish Aid Partnership
Programme, PROPEL Project, China
zhouhaibin@ilo.org
+86 10 6532 5091-131



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