

# CHINA

## Organizational Partnership for Supporting the Disabled in China

*Yunying Chen*

China National Institute for Education Research

46 Beisanhuan zhonglu, Beijing 100088

Tel. & Fax 86-10-62389395

Email. [iks.chenyunying@cnier.ac.cn](mailto:iks.chenyunying@cnier.ac.cn)

[yychenchina@yahoo.com.cn](mailto:yychenchina@yahoo.com.cn)

website: [www.specialneeds.org.cn](http://www.specialneeds.org.cn)

[www.cosn.net](http://www.cosn.net)

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This paper intended to share issues relate to partnership of various stakeholders who not only safeguard the human right of the disabled but also responsible of services provision in meeting individual needs of the disabled. The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China protects human right of the people. Hence the national goal of supporting the disabled focuses on equal right of every aspect of human freedom and development as well as optimum social inclusion. Following the principles of the Constitution, the Law on Protection of the Disabled address details of right of the disabled in domains of rehabilitation, education, labor and employment, culture and leisure, social security, free environment, and safety, property and marriage for their optimum social inclusion and community services related to these domains should be available and accessible to them. The content of this paper including the following themes, they are definition of special education, population of disability, structure of organization, shared responsibility and collaboration, equal right and participation, and various program development.

### **Structure of Organizational Coordination and Collaboration**

In China, the People Congress represents the top legislation making organization in the protection of human right and implementation of people’s right in legislation are the government major responsibility and governed by the State Council.

The State Council of the People's Republic of China, namely the Central People's Government,

is the top executive organization of the State power and administration. The WCDSC is chaired by Vice premier Mr. Hui Linagyu, the deputy of the committee involve six very important leaders in government, they are the president and vice president of China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), and vice minister of four ministries, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ministry of Labor Protection, and Ministry of Health. Under these Chairing posts a secretary general from a post of vice president of CDPF collaborate 33 governments sectors, including every aspects of human life, such as information, construction, culture, industry and commerce, Tax, poverty control, etc.; as well as non government sectors such as the Disabled Person Federation, the Women federation, the Youth Federation, the Ethnic Federation, etc.

The WCDSC responsibilities are to collaborate broad issues concerning the disabled on decision making of issues for development, policy, legislation and regulation, planning and programming and implementation of the planned program; problem solving of major issues of the disabled, collaborating with United Nations work related to the disabled in China. CDPF play an important role in organization and collaboration in this committee and Office of Secretariat is a daily responsibility in CDPF.

Under coordination and collaboration in WCDSC, Each of five organizations responsible for different needs of the disabled in domains of rehabilitation, education, labor and employment, culture and leisure, social security, free environment, and safety, property and marriage for their optimum social inclusion and community services.

### **Equal Participation of the disabled**

Special Education is defined as education to the disabled. The definition of the disabled is made in the Law on Protection of the disabled and identified in six categories- hearing impairment, visual impairment, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, physical disability, and multiple disabilities. According to the first national survey on the disabled population of 1987, there are 60 million persons with disabilities in China across all ages and categories of conditions, among whom 20.57 million are persons with hearing disabilities, 11.82 million are persons with mental disabilities, 8.77 million are persons with physical disabilities, 8.77 million are persons with visual disabilities, 2.25 million are persons with mental illness and 7.82 million are persons with multi-disabilities. The school age children are about six millions. The second National survey is undertaking and the outcomes will be available by year 2007.

The government has concerned rights of the disabled and provided special assistance and protection to them. The Constitution of China makes statements that the state ensures the disabled enjoy the same civic rights as the able-bodied. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons in December 1990. This law, guided by the principles of "equality," "participation" and "co-enjoyment," stipulates that the disabled enjoy equal rights with other citizens and are protected from infringement. It also states that measures of support and help shall be taken to develop undertakings for the disabled,

promote their equal participation in social life and guarantee their share of the social and cultural development of society. Many important laws such as the Criminal Law, the Criminal Procedure Law, the General Principles of the Civil Law, the Civil Procedure Law, the Marriage Law, the Inheritance Law, the Electoral Law, the Military Service Law and the Compulsory Education Law, have special provisions ensuring the rights and interests of the disabled.

In accordance with these laws, every five year, the government initiate specific policies, rules and regulations to protect the rights and interests of the disabled, for example, the China Five-Year Work Program for People with Disability, the Several Viewpoints on Developing the Education for People with Disability, the Program for the Implementation of Three Rehabilitation Projects for People with Disability, the Circular on Tax Exemption for Private Business Run by Disabled People and the Circular on Tax Exemption for Social Welfare Production Units. Guiding by the major principle of the National Law, local laws and regulations, different level of the government has taken concrete measures to provide the disabled with preferential assistance, treatment and care and safeguard the right and interests of the disabled.

### **Rehabilitation Program**

In order to help the disabled recover or remedy their capacities and enhance their participation in social life and ability to enjoy their rights, the State Council in 1988 approved the National Program of Three Projects for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled. Since then, the three rehabilitation project had cured cataracts, rectified sequel of polio, and training of hearing and speech abilities of deaf children. In year of 2004, 569,000 cataract operations have been performed with a success rate of 97.9 percent of visual recovery; 160,000 polio sequel have been rectified with an effectiveness rate of 98.7 percent, enabling many young disabled to improve their limb functions, enter schools or get jobs; and 10,000 hearing impairment children under seven have received speech training, with an effectiveness rate of 80 percent.

A national network of community rehabilitation centers in both urban and rural regions is being set up. About 2,300 grass-roots community rehabilitation centers, 750 handicapped-children' care centers and training classes, and 1,300 work-rehabilitation centers for the mentally and intellectually handicapped have appeared in cities and towns. By year 2004, many pre-school program and care centers, along with a variety of disabled service programs for training, rehabilitation, welfare, match-making with social security funding.

### **Educational Program**

Equal participation in social life and integration in education are well examined and documented in several legislation and regulation, they are:

- Education Law of the People's Republic of China
- Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees
- Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China

- Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China
- Vocational Education Law of the People's Republic of China
- Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China

China has made great efforts to develop education for the disabled by opening special classes in ordinary schools and setting up special education schools. Twenty-seven provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, as well as 70 prefectures and cities have set up.

In the past three years various kinds of special education schools have increased annually by 20 percent, and the special classes in ordinary schools have doubled. The number of blind, deaf and mentally retarded pupils attending these special schools and classes increased by 30 percent every year. The number of disabled youth receiving higher education is constantly increasing. In the last two years about 4,700 self-taught disabled persons won college diplomas through special examinations.

The government, attaching great importance to vocational education for the disabled, has established for them 28 vocational education centers. The special education schools also offer professional skill training courses. The Shanghai Technical School for hearing impaired offers woodwork, metalwork and fine arts courses. Its graduates are employed in 16 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, and many of them have become engineers or assistant engineers.

The state has a preferential policy in developing education for the disabled. China's financial departments provide subsidies for special education. Apart from tuition-fees exemption and scholarships for the disabled students receiving compulsory education, there are also prizes to encourage and support self-taught disabled youths.

### **Shelter employment**

The government supports many welfare enterprises or shelter workshop in which the disabled are employed. Supports are in various ways and mechanism: production, management, technology, funding, taxation and marketing. With the help of the government's preferential policy, welfare enterprises increased rapidly from 1,022 in 1979 to 42,000 in 1990. In the 1980s the number of the disabled people working in these enterprises increased by 67,000 each year, bringing the total to 750,000. Government organs and other institutions and enterprises also employ some handicapped people. At the same time, the country encourages the handicapped to open individual businesses.

### **Culture and Recreation**

The government's cultural departments at all levels actively organize and support cultural, sport and recreational activities of the disabled, enriching their life and guaranteeing their equal cultural rights. Today, there are in China 1,770 centers for the disabled to carry out activities such as calligraphy, painting, photography, stamp collecting, track and field, ball games, chess, art performances and quizzes. The China Sports Association for the Disabled, established in 1983, has joined seven world

handicapped sports organizations. At international games China's handicapped athletes have won nearly 400 medals, and set many world records.

### **Welfare Program**

By means of welfare measures such as aid, relief, subsidy, provisions, insurance and special care, the government has ensured and improved the livelihood of the disabled. There are 1.4 million disabled who are unable to work and have no legal providers and living resources. In rural areas, these people are protected under the five-guarantee system -- the guarantees of food, clothing, housing, medical treatment and burial expenses -- or live in welfare homes, while in urban areas, they are provided with regular relief or collective living facilities. Throughout China there are almost 40,000 welfare facilities capable of accommodating about 80,000 handicapped people. Governments at all levels offer preferential conditions for the handicapped by reducing or exempting taxes and fees in their work, education, medical care and living, cultural and recreational expenses. Customs duties have been reduced or exempted for special goods and equipment imported for the use of the handicapped. The blind can travel by public bus, trolley, underground and ferry free of charge.

### **Free environment**

China is gradually expanding the building of obstacle-free facilities so that the handicapped can participate in social life more easily. Slope passages and handrails have been built for the convenience of the handicapped on streets and in shops, hotels, theaters, libraries, airports and other public places in Beijing, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Shenyang and Guangzhou.

### **Advocacy and International Campaign**

The government and the Disabled Persons' Federation have paid attention to eliminating discrimination against and prejudice toward the disabled. Great efforts have been made to create a social environment in which the disabled are respected and helped. Tens of thousands of people, under the banner of "society for the disabled and vice versa," participated in activities such as the Day of the Disabled, Helping-the-Disabled Day and Humanitarian Publicity Week. The "Young Pioneers' Helping-the-Handicapped Activities" involving more than 10 million children have been going on for the past five years. Activities such as "building families for the handicapped and being friends to them" have been widely attended. China has set May 19 of each year as the legal "national day for helping the handicapped."

China has actively participated in the international community's efforts to secure the rights and interests of the handicapped. In 1982, when the United Nations General Assembly designated the ten year period from 1983 to 1992 as the "United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons," the Chinese government accepted its World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. The China Organizational Committee of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, with the participation of 22 governmental departments and the China Disabled Persons' Federation, was formed to lead and

co-ordinate the work. In 1987, upon approval by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the Chinese government accepted the Convention Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) passed by the International Labor Conference in 1983. Both the government and the organizations of the disabled in China have been praised by the United Nations and the international community for their endeavors and achievements in guaranteeing the human rights of the disabled. In 1988 UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar awarded the "Peace Messengers Award" and "Special Award" to China's organizations of the disabled.

### **Conclusion**

We are at the awakening stage of social development. Social changes has been undertaken for more than three decades in many ways, such as value and belief, life style, attitude toward people, etc., so as to the disabled . We have worked hard to support the disabled of their entitling right and to the promotion of their quality life. However, as the needs of people unfold along the progress of science and the understanding of human being, we are far from fulfilling the needs of the disabled in enjoying modern China today. Community inclusion, job placement, and information with no barrier are the most difficult areas and have become the national program for the coming five years priorities .

As a quoted Chinese saying “thousands miles of journey started from the first step -千里之行始于足下”. The first step of China in supporting the disabled has gain public support and international recognition while the president of Deng Pufang receive UN Award of Humanism. Our ancestor had long for and educate people for “a harmony world- 世界大同” , the special education field and people of china believe that “we are one family – 特殊教育, 天下一家”. By working toward the shared vision and one goal for equal right we may create a better world and a comfortable home for everybody.

On behalf of our “family” let me welcome all of you to Special Olympic of 2007 in shanghai.

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