

Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled in Kazakhstan: Problems and Their Solutions

¹Gulnar Serikbolatovna Kazizova and ²Tatyana Petrovna Pritvorova

¹Innovative University of Eurasia, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan

²Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotrebsouz, Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Abstract: In this article the problems of the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled in Kazakhstan are described. In Kazakhstan they started to solve the social problem in question only in 2001, i.e. by job quotas, vocational rehabilitation, paying disability benefits, but the conducted measures for integrating the disabled into society gave no effective results. For comfortable living of this category of population it is necessary to improve such major areas of social and economic development of the country as education and employment in the free labor market. For today persons with disabilities are limited in their rights for free life, because they do not have any physical or financial or moral support from the government or the rest of the population. In this article the current state of their vocational rehabilitation in Kazakhstan is analyzed. The analysis of the current state of the employment of persons with disabilities showed problems that are actual both for Kazakhstan and for other post-Soviet countries. Positive recommendations on vocational rehabilitation of the disabled were defined, based on the study of international experience. Basing on these recommendations an organizational and economic mechanism of the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled in Kazakhstan and post-Soviet countries was suggested.

Key words: Vocational rehabilitation • Job quota • Medical and social assessment • Supported employment • Work curator

INTRODUCTION

This problem is important not for Kazakhstan only. And we no longer have the right to keep silent about the employment situation of persons with disabilities in the post-Soviet countries. In many international acts the right of citizens to special social services is seen as an integral part of modern social economy. Special social services for persons with disabilities are, so far, the most important part of the realization of their right to integrate into society. And their employment in the open labor market is an effective tool [1].

But in Kazakhstan and in many countries of the CIS (the Commonwealth of Independent States) countries they try to pay the least attention to this problem. Underestimating the number of people with disabilities and paying disability benefits, it is believed that the problem in Kazakhstan and in the post-Soviet countries is solved [2]. For this category of people to feel adequately

in the community they should be given the opportunity to get education in ordinary educational institutions, work in the open labor market and spend their leisure time in desired cultural institutions, rather than in isolated places.

The General Assembly of the UN (the United Nations Organization) at its 61 session adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [3]. And one of the rights of the disabled - employment in the open labor market. Employment in the open labor market is the freedom to manage funds, that is, to satisfy one's needs [4].

In "The Concept of Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan" they offer to the able-bodied population with disabilities:

- Financing of public works;
- Financing of the retraining programs;
- Help in finding jobs [5].

It is assumed that the low level of payment for public works should be the incentive to search actively for a permanent job. And the employment agency helps in finding jobs.

During the decade Kazakhstan has not yet developed effective for the state (reducing government spending) and for people with disabilities (the degree of contentment and integration into society) mechanism of employment.

Basic Part: During the last century the world has undergone major changes in the issues of disability and the disabled. These changes are based on recognizing the equality of the rights of the disabled in society and creating by states all possible conditions for their social integration. Studying the state support for people with disabilities in Kazakhstan, one can define the following legislative framework shown in Figure 1.

The main problems of the employment of the disabled, including jobs subject to quotas, are:

- The lack of professional education or a low level of qualification;
- The lack of opportunities of the vocational rehabilitation of the employee;
- Health conditions, requiring a flexible work schedule;
- The need to adapt the workplace to the specific needs of the worker;
- The lack of incentives for employers in the employment of disabled persons.

At the same time, the number of the disabled in the country who are in need of employment and are looking for a job is increasing every year.

According to the official figures of the MTiSZN RK (the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan) in 2012: 1961 disabled got permanent jobs through the employment agencies according to social programs, 550 got temporary jobs, 1097 got social jobs. 1301 persons with disabilities were sent for public works, 552 - for the professional training and retraining.

In Kazakhstan in 2012 there were 12 553 jobs under the quota, but only 4257 (33.9%) persons with disabilities got those jobs. On the whole, only 984 special jobs for persons with disabilities were created in Kazakhstan. From 11748 recommendations of IDP (individual development programs), vocational rehabilitation was only 31% fulfilled, which is not a positive feature of the labor market for the disabled.

Let us consider the structure of the social group of persons with disabilities at the regional level. Since every region in the country has its own specific socio-economic development, this issue should be studied at the regional level in order to totally focus on the results [6].

According to the MTiSZN RK (the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan) by January 1, 2013 the number of the disabled in Kazakhstan amounted to 483652, that is only 2.8% of the total population. Consider Figure 2, the structure of the disabled in the Republic of Kazakhstan by disability groups in 2011 and 2012.

In Figure 2 one can observe in 2012, compared to the previous period, the decline in the number of disabled children and the structural change was 2.1%, people with disability group I -3,2%, with disability group II- 18.3%. And the number of people with disability group III rose 23.6% accordingly.

Let us consider the structure of groups of the disabled who have processed the vocational part of individual development programs (Figure 3).

According to this diagram, almost half of the workers who are processing vocational rehabilitation are disabled from their childhood (vision, hearing, etc.), followed by group III, which has the smallest deviations in their health status.

When calculating the figures of the employment of the disabled, the following basic parameters listed in Table 1 were received.

In spite of some positive changes in the dynamics of the indicators for 2011-2012, the relative indicators of vocational rehabilitation and employment of the disabled remain low and almost don't change.

If we stick to the average values of 2011-2012, from the total number of the disabled registering for the program of the vocational rehabilitation in the MSE (medical and social expertise), 46.8% apply to the employment agency (the rest get jobs by their own means or don't find jobs at all) [7]. From those who contacted the employment agency (approximately 6162 persons for 2010-2011) for permanent employment (including social employment) approximately 50% got employed. At the same time, from the total number of contacted 2.8% were sent for training, after which about 30% of the contingent got employed (Figure 4).

A significant number of employees with disabilities get public works, about twice as many as those who get permanent jobs. Upon the whole, this suggests that employers are reluctant to accept people with disabilities to permanent jobs, so public works and social employment are more widespread forms of employment.

Table 1: The vocational rehabilitation and the employment of the disabled in Kazakhstan for 2011-2012.

Items	The number of the disabled, pers.	
	2011 r.	2012 r.
The number of the disabled at the end of the period, pers.	399780	483652
The number of the disabled who have been registered for the vocational part of IDP	15991	17895
Share of people who have ordered the vocational part of IDP of the total number of the disabled, in percent	4,0	3,7
The number of the disabled who applied to the employment agencies	7345	4979
Share of people who applied to the employment agencies of those who got the vocational part of IDP, in percent	45,9	27,8
Share of people who applied to the employment agencies of all the disabled, in percent	1,84	1,03
The number of the employed persons with disabilities:		
- for permanent jobs	2010	1961
- for social jobs	1261	1097
- for youth practice	73	74
Share of the employed persons with disabilities of the total number of those who applied, in percent	45,5	62,9
Share of the employed persons with disabilities of the total number of persons with disabilities, in percent	0,84	0,65
Sent to public works	2173	1301
Sent to the vocational training	601	552
Share of those who got the vocational rehabilitation of the number of those who applied, in percent	8,1	11,1
Share of those who got the vocational rehabilitation of the number of those who applied	0,15	0,11
Employed after completion of their training	175	156
Share of the employed after the vocational rehabilitation of the number of those who got the training	29,1	28,3
Share of the employed after the vocational rehabilitation of the total number of the disabled	0,04	0,03

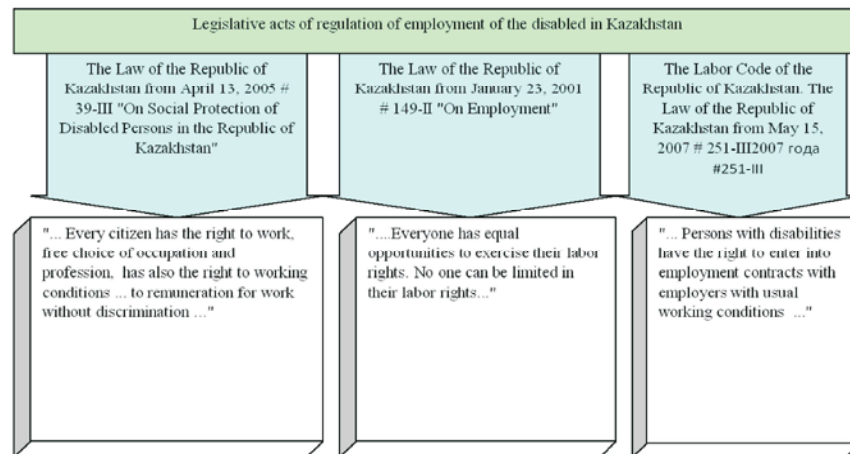


Fig. 1: The legal framework of the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in Kazakhstan

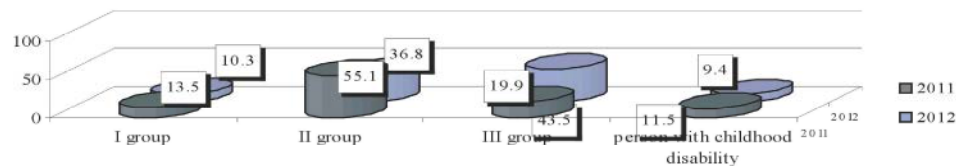


Fig. 2: The structure of the number of the disabled in Kazakhstan by disability groups for 2011-2012., in percent.

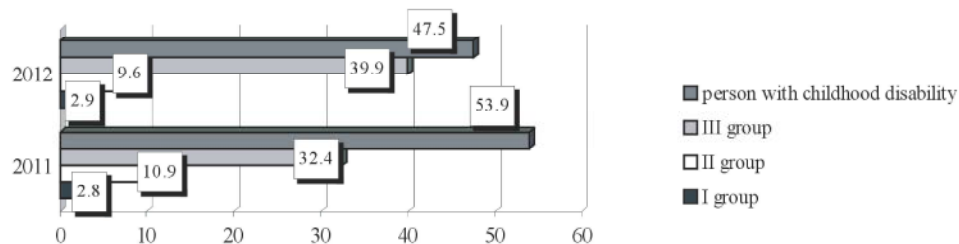


Fig. 3: The structure of the group of the disabled, who have ordered a vocational part of the individual development programs for 2011 - 2012, in percent.

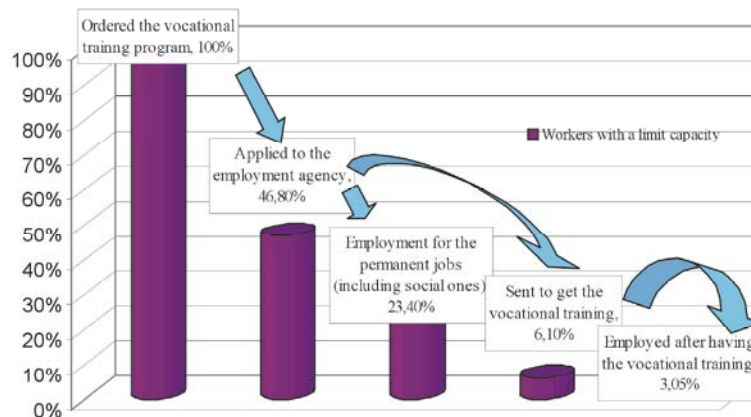


Fig. 4: The correlation of people with disabilities who want to find jobs with the employed through the employment agency, including those after the vocational training, average for 2010-2012, in percent.

Table 2: The analysis of the employment of the disabled according to the quota in Kazakhstan in 2011-2012.

Items	The number of the disabled, pers.	
	2011r.	2012r.
The number of the disabled working according to the quota	3995	4257
The amount of the established quota of jobs (3% of all workers)	12427	12553
The amount of the disabled sent to work according to the quota	130	128
From them employed:	117	62
including:	9	21
- at special workplaces		
- with permits of the departments of employment	98	23
The number of unfilled quota jobs	8432	8296
The effectiveness of quotas, share of filled jobs, %	32,15	33,91

In 2011-2012 social employment has become the leading form of permanent employment.

Evaluation of current practices in the employment of people with disabilities through job quotas in the amount of 3% from the number of jobs [8] allows us to make the conclusion about low results of practicing quotas (Table 2).

Judging by the data of Table 2, one can observe little impact of the mechanism of job quotas on the employment of the disabled. The impact of quotas, estimated by us as percentage of filled vacancies for the period, is 32% on the average. A similar situation exists in many countries of the former Soviet Union.

If we evaluate the employment, based on the total number of disabled people, it is rather insignificant (Figure 5).

It is impossible not to note the low activity level of the disabled in the area of employment. According to the expert polls conducted by us, it is due to both subjective and objective reasons. Judging by the existing order of rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities

in Kazakhstan, the leading state subjects are the Regional department of medical-and-social expertise and the employment agency (Figure 6).

The confirmation of disability and the degree of disability, as well as determining the need for additional forms of assistance and care, are made by means of medical-and-social expertise by territorial divisions of the Control and Social Protection Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan the MTiSZN RK (the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan). Currently, medical and social expertise in the Republic of Kazakhstan is carried out by 132 departments of medical and social expertise. The main document, regulating the activity of the territorial departments of health and social expertise, is "The Rules of Conducting Medical and Social Expertise" [7].

The MSE (medical and social expertise) specialists develop an individual program of development, which includes a number of measures of social and medical, social and pedagogical and also social and psychological problems. An individual rehabilitation program is developed within a month.

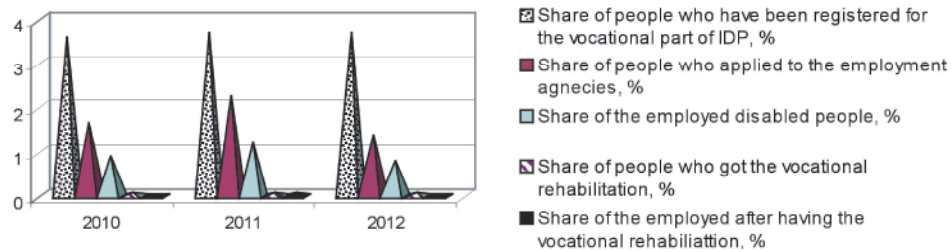


Fig. 5: Share of the disabled, actively trying to get a job, in the total number of the corresponding social group

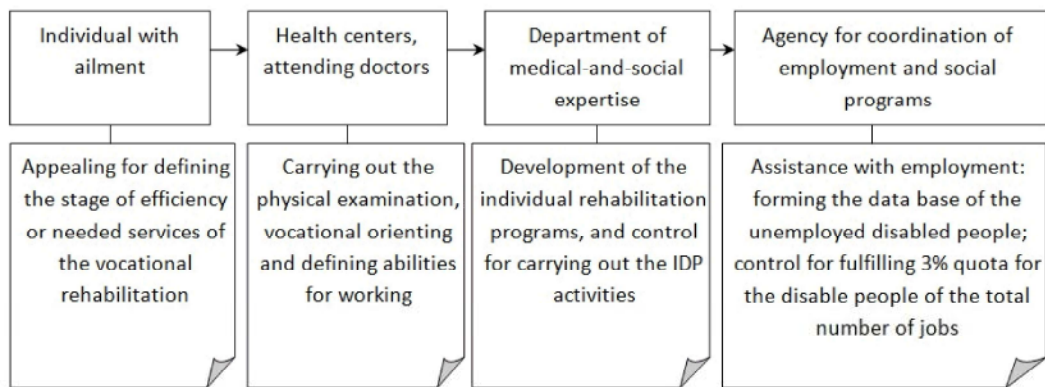


Fig. 6: The process of rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities in Kazakhstan

Next, the agency assists in the employment of the disabled in accordance with the recommendations of the medical and social expertise (assistance in finding temporary work, permanent employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship). Besides, the agency is working on employment quotas for disabled persons at the rate of three percent of the total number of jobs and creation of special jobs for people with disabilities [9].

In general, it should be noted that the current employment system of disabled people in a market economy has a number of problems and needs to be improved:

- The main objective of VTEK (the Medical Labor Commission of Experts) is to determine the limits of professional activities on the basis of biological criteria or physiological defects of persons with disabilities [10].
- Professional orientation is carried out by a physician, though the one should only explain about the limited capabilities of the disabled in further employment. In general, professional orientation should be performed by a specialist - a labor physiologist together with a physician.
- The MSE (medical and social expertise) staff is limited, as a rule: five workers, including three

specialists [11]. There is a need to expand staff, at least twice: a labor physiologist, a social worker, a psychologist, a visiting nurse, a medical receptionist, a driver of a special car. In addition, there is a shortage in the departments of the MSE (medical and social expertise) in almost all regions of Kazakhstan, there are more than 15-20 thousand people with disabilities for each MSE (medical and social expertise) department and in the countryside the situation is getting worse. Therefore, the individual program of rehabilitation is made only by request of a disabled person and the vocational part of rehabilitation is represented only by the descriptive contraindications to work.

- There is no assessment of professional abilities of a person and no specific guidance about appropriate professions (jobs).
- A weak set of economic instruments to stimulate employers to hire the disabled. In Kazakhstan they use 3% job quota for the disabled and sanctions for non-compliance are rather high. For example, in accordance with Article 87-1 of the Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Administrative Offences" a fine may be imposed on an official for violating the law on social protection of disabled persons, on a legal personality - the subject of small

and medium-sized businesses - 70-200 MRP (minimal calculation index), on a legal personality - the subject of big business - 200-400 MRP. However, this quota mechanism doesn't work and filling quotas is less than 20% for those jobs that don't require adaptation [12].

The practice of the employment of disabled persons in Kazakhstan shows that mainly in the open labor market the disabled are offered low-paying, low-skill jobs (a janitor, a cleaning woman, a watchman). One of the reasons is the lack of ability to get the necessary vocational training for people with special needs. There is a problem of availability of secondary vocational education and higher education for the disabled. Almost all the educational institutions of Kazakhstan lack even minimum conditions necessary for teaching the disabled. The training programs are not adapted to the needs of people with special educational needs [8].

- There is no network of professional rehabilitation centers, where the disabled can get counseling, vocational training, employment in the "workshop" in the centers in a complex, followed by the adaptation to the open market.

The institutional mechanism of vocational rehabilitation operates in accordance with Article 7 of the Law "On Employment" of Kazakhstan [6].

However, this mechanism gives low results in the employment of people with disabilities. The main problem of the use of quota mechanism is low penalties for non-compliance and weak control of its implementation. In reality, a very small number of people with disabilities in all countries where quotas are used have been employed through this mechanism [9].

We offer the organizational and economic mechanism of expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities that includes the reform of the vocational rehabilitation in the Republic of Kazakhstan and addresses the challenges described above (Figure 7).

Figure 7 shows that the government organs of administration ensure reforming of the existing structures (medical and social expertise, employment agencies, higher education institutions), create centers of the vocational rehabilitation and provide financial support for the vocational rehabilitation centers, subsidize the disabled during the course of training and the employer to create (adapt) the workplace.

To launch our organizational and economic model it is necessary to reform medical and social expertise, expand its staff with the purpose of primary professional orientation. Introducing the International Classification of Functioning into the work of the MSE (medical and social expertise) will make it possible to assess the degree of disability of the disabled.

The level of disability must be established on the basis of such criteria as medical criteria, education, vocational rehabilitation, work experience and job skills, age.

Further there may be two variants of the vocational rehabilitation according to the suggested scheme.

Variant 1: If the vocational rehabilitation has a high level of working capacity from 60 to 100% (similar to our group III), the disabled may apply to the employment agency. Having an appropriate level and professional skills, one can find a job in the overall program "Employment 2020" in the open labor market or in a specialized enterprise (Figure 8).

This model corresponds to five-step process of "Supported employment" of the European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) [13].

The implementation process of employees in usual organizations takes place step by step. People start from the contract for an internship that lasts for three months and then they can get "an operational contract" lasting from three months to one year, which can be extended once and then get a permanent contract. About 85% of beginning workers at the end of the process get a permanent contract.

In the offered model the curator is a worker of the employment agency, but in practice it is acknowledged that non-state structures perform these functions better. In this case, non-governmental organizations receive funding from the state on the basis of a tender and get the functions of an accompanying person. [10]

Practice shows that the non-governmental communities, providing sign language translation services, already perform similar functions for people with hearing disabilities within the service of sign language translation [13].

Variant 2: If the disabled person doesn't have experience, the necessary level of professional education, or needs to retrain, this person needs to be offered a full range of services, including, if necessary, taking part in special programs of professional orientation and education.

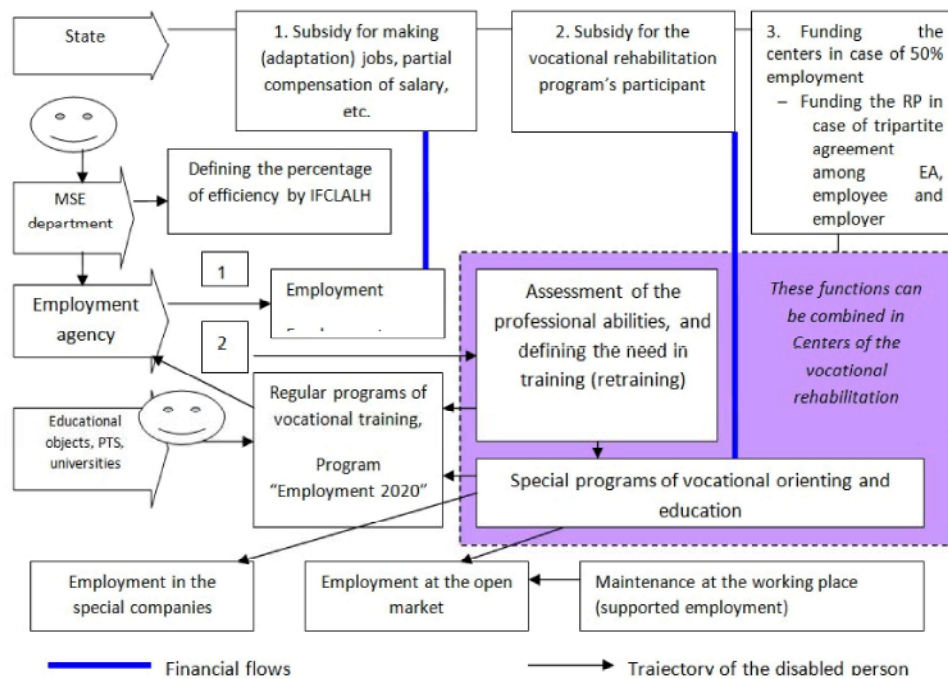


Fig. 7: Organizational and economic mechanism of the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities

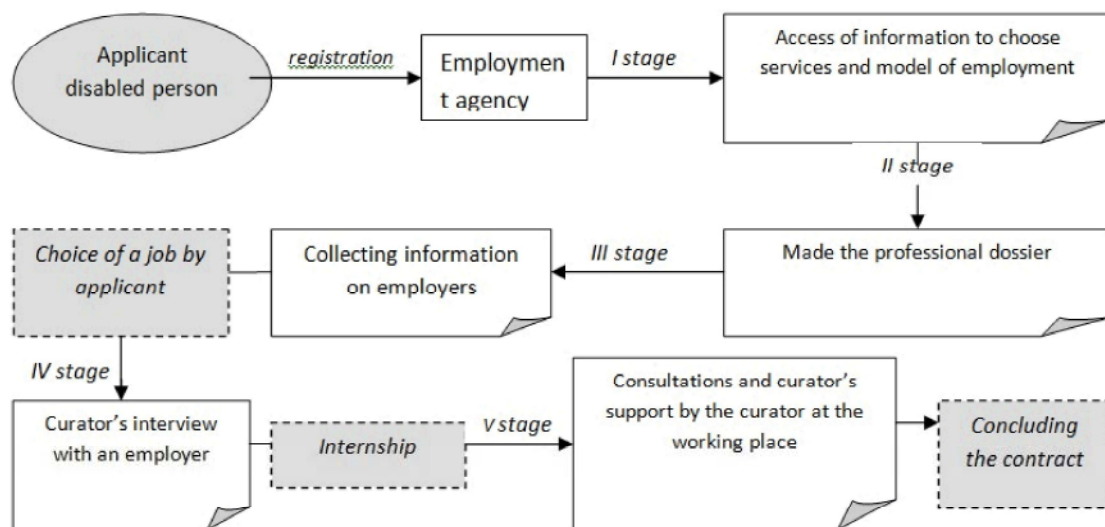


Fig. 8: Model of "Supported employment" for a disabled person with a high level of working capacity - 60-100%.

CONCLUSIONS

Full variant of the system of "Supported employment" aimed at the integration of persons with disabilities into the open labor market includes professional orientation, training for work, education, work search, employment counseling and ongoing support in the workplace [14].

For the second stage of the path to employment, in our opinion, vocational rehabilitation centers, that are able to carry out a full scope of necessary functions, including adapted training, are necessary.

In the Republic of Kazakhstan it's necessary to create a network of vocational rehabilitation centers, which, according to international experience, provide: assessment of professional skills, professional

orientation, defining the need in vocational training, implementation of special programs of professional orientation and education, employment, counseling people with disabilities during the process of work with the help of experts - employees of the center, i.e. actual accompanying of the disabled in the workplace or "supported employment" [15].

It should be noted that the functions of vocational orientation, education and accompanying in the workplace, in this case, can be presented as a complex in one place - at the Center of the Vocational Rehabilitation. This will help to save financial and labor resources, time investments, which is certainly more preferable for people with disabilities. In this case, the work load of the curator in the process of accompanying the disabled in the workplace, according to international experience, should be not more than 10 people.

During the time of the vocational rehabilitation program the disabled should be paid benefits in the amount of not less than 1 minimum salary and compensation for transport costs, if the Center does not offer the opportunity to stay. The duration of paying benefits should not be more than 180 days.

The vocational rehabilitation centers and services of individual accompanying the disabled and support in the workplace, which are carried out within six months or one year by workers of social centers (because they conduct the vocational rehabilitation and know all the positive sides of their charges) or by private agencies are, according to international practice, an effective form of supporting the employment of the disabled [15].

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