

CASE STUDY

# Ensuring Persons with Disabilities Get a Decent Job



Persons with disabilities receive specialized training to get them ready for the workforce. Photo credit: Korea Employment Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

*The Republic of Korea provided vocational training for disabled people in addition to imposing a hiring quota for both public and private employers.*

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## Overview

In 1990, the Republic of Korea enacted the Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act that introduced a quota system for the employment of persons with disabilities, and established the Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled with the mandate to implement the quota. It also imposed levies on employers that did not meet the hiring quota for disabled people.

Despite this, however, employment among people with disabilities remained low. Employers cited two reasons: (i) applicants did not have the skillsets for the job or (ii) there were no disabled people who applied.

To address the problem, the government provided targeted vocational training to equip disabled people with the skills that employers needed. At the same time, it revised the law and expanded the range of

private companies and public sector organizations placed under the quota system.

## Challenges

Despite a mandatory requirement to hire people with disabilities and imposing penalties on those who fail to comply with the quota system law, many companies did not meet the hiring requirement.

Reports also show the negative perception of persons with disabilities is a disincentive for their employment.

Employers said disabled people did not have the skills they needed. At the same time, training programs for people with disabilities were limited.

## Solutions

The Republic of Korea revised the law to facilitate the implementation of the quota system by expanding the range and hiring quota of private companies and public sector organizations covered, and providing incentives for employers.

The government—using mid- to long-term program plans—strengthened the training system and established training centers that focused on people with disabilities. The Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled provided trainings that meet the skills demands of businesses and public organizations. Skills training-oriented vocational schools were converted into comprehensive vocational competency development centers, and the role and function of the training systems were refocused to foster customized human resources development for people with disabilities. It also included rehabilitation services and supported training systems, specialization training by type of disabilities, and job training for the intellectually disabled.

Customized training was also introduced. The whole process—from curriculum design to trainee selection, training and employment—involves the employers since it is closely related to actual performance of duties. This way, trainees adjust to the workplace smoothly, and it has led to higher satisfaction among employers and employees.

The Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled also supported other training organizations that provided vocational training to increase access and meet the various demands of people with disabilities.

In order to change the negative perception on people with disabilities, the government started a Vocational Skills Contest for the Disabled. Held annually, it encourages skills development of persons with disabilities and works to improve social perception on disabilities. The contest is also part of activities to improve the recognition of business owners and a nationwide public relations activity.

# Results

In one of Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled's Vocational Competency Development Centers, the **employment rate** of the trainees has risen to 91.3% in 2013 from 78.8% in 2005.

The average 65.7% **participation training rate** of persons with severe disabilities went up. They also made up the majority of trainees who completed the training.

As of 2013, the **getting-a-job rate** of public training institutes (Korea Polytechnics) is 76.4%, which showed that public institutes do better compared to the 59% rate of private training institutes.

Additional **research results** showed that the vocational competency development program contributed successfully to the employment of people with disabilities.

- Those who received vocational training are 2.6 times more likely to get a job than those who are not trained.
- Those who received customized training are 5.1% more likely to be employed than those who received general training.
- Average wages of persons with disabilities who received vocational training are 13.2% higher than those who have not received vocational training.

Job satisfaction—a marker of successful employment—of those who received vocational training is 13.2% higher than those who are not trained.

# Lessons

## **Create mid- to long-term program plans**

To implement the programs systematically, the government created mid- to long-term program plans. Using the plans, the government was able to expand the infrastructure of vocational training for persons with disabilities, and strengthen the program simultaneously.

## **Cooperation between ministries is a must**

While the Ministry of Employment and Labor was in charge of the training and employment plan, the program was created jointly with other ministries.

## **Use levy funds to boost program budget**

Money from the levy—which was imposed on employers that failed to meet the hiring quota—should be used to support the training program. The contributory charge system equalizes the economic burden of the employers that do and do not hire persons with disabilities, and encourages them to employ disabled people.

## **Build a training system**

Following a national survey, the Republic of Korea built a training system that answers both the demands of employers and the training needs of persons with disabilities by supporting both general

and customized training programs.

## Resources

K-Developedia. [Vocational Training of Persons with Disabilities in Korea.](#)



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