

## R99 Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955

Recommendation concerning Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled

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The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its Thirty-eighth Session on 1 June 1955, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, which is the fourth item on the agenda of the session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation,

adopts this twenty-second day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and fifty-five, the following Recommendation, which may be cited as the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955:

Whereas there are many and varied problems concerning those who suffer disability, and

Whereas rehabilitation of such persons is essential in order that they be restored to the fullest possible physical, mental, social, vocational and economic usefulness of which they are capable, and

Whereas to meet the employment needs of the individual disabled person and to use manpower resources to the best advantage it is necessary to develop and restore the working ability of disabled persons by combining into one continuous and co-ordinated process medical, psychological, social, educational, vocational guidance, vocational training and placement services, including follow-up,

The Conference recommends as follows:

### I. Definitions

#### 1. For the purpose of this Recommendation--

(a) the term **vocational rehabilitation** means that part of the continuous and co-ordinated process of rehabilitation which involves the provision of those vocational services, e. g. vocational guidance, vocational training and selective placement, designed to enable a disabled person to secure and retain suitable employment; and

(b) the term **disabled person** means an individual whose prospects of securing and retaining suitable employment are substantially reduced as a result of physical or mental impairment.

## II. Scope of Vocational Rehabilitation

2. Vocational rehabilitation services should be made available to all disabled persons, whatever the origin and nature of their disability and whatever their age, provided they can be prepared for, and have reasonable prospects of securing and retaining, suitable employment.

## III. Principles and Methods of Vocational Guidance, Vocational Training and Placement of Disabled Persons

3. All necessary and practicable measures should be taken to establish or develop specialised vocational guidance services for disabled persons requiring aid in choosing or changing their occupations.

4. The process of vocational guidance should include, as far as practicable in the national circumstances and as appropriate in individual cases--

(a) interview with a vocational guidance officer;

(b) examination of record of work experience;

(c) examination of scholastic or other records relating to education or training received;

(d) medical examination for vocational guidance purposes;

(e) appropriate tests of capacity and aptitude, and, where desirable, other psychological tests;

(f) ascertainment of personal and family circumstances;

(g) ascertainment of aptitudes and the development of abilities by appropriate work experiences and trial, and by other similar means;

- (h) technical trade tests, either verbal or otherwise, in all cases where such seem necessary;
- (i) analysis of physical capacity in relation to occupational requirements and the possibility of improving that capacity;
- (j) provision of information concerning employment and training opportunities relating to the qualifications, physical capacities, aptitudes, preferences and experience of the person concerned and to the needs of the employment market.

5. The principles, measures and methods of vocational training generally applied in the training of non-disabled persons should apply to disabled persons in so far as medical and educational conditions permit.

6.

(1) The training of disabled persons should, wherever possible, enable them to carry on an economic activity in which they can use their vocational qualifications or aptitudes in the light of employment prospects.

(2) For this purpose, such training should be--

(a) co-ordinated with selective placement, after medical advice, in occupations in which the performance of the work involved is affected by, or affects, the disability to the least possible degree;

(b) provided, wherever possible and appropriate, in the occupation in which the disabled person was previously employed or in a related occupation; and

(c) continued until the disabled person has acquired the skill necessary for working normally on an equal basis with non-disabled workers if he is capable of doing so.

7. Wherever possible, disabled persons should receive training with and under the same conditions as non-disabled persons.

8.

(1) Special services should be set up or developed for training disabled persons who, particularly by reason of the nature or the severity of their disability, cannot be trained in company with non-disabled persons.

(2) Wherever possible and appropriate, these services should include, inter alia:

- (a) schools and training centres, residential or otherwise;
- (b) special short-term and long-term training courses for specific occupations;
- (c) courses to increase the skills of disabled persons.

9. Measures should be taken to encourage employers to provide training for disabled persons; such measures should include, as appropriate, financial, technical, medical or vocational assistance.

10.

(1) Measures should be taken to develop special arrangements for the placement of disabled persons.

(2) These arrangements should ensure effective placement by means of--

- (a) registration of applicants for employment;
- (b) recording their occupational qualifications, experience and desires;
- (c) interviewing them for employment;
- (d) evaluating, if necessary, their physical and vocational capacity;
- (e) encouraging employers to notify job vacancies to the competent authority;
- (f) contacting employers, when necessary, to demonstrate the employment capacities of disabled persons, and to secure employment for them;
- (g) assisting them to obtain such vocational guidance, vocational training, medical and social services as may be necessary.

11. Follow-up measures should be taken--

- (a) to ascertain whether placement in a job or recourse to vocational training or retraining services has proved to be satisfactory and to evaluate employment counselling policy and methods;

(b) to remove as far as possible obstacles which would prevent a disabled person from being satisfactorily settled in work.

#### IV. Administrative Organisation

12. Vocational rehabilitation services should be organised and developed as a continuous and co-ordinated programme by the competent authority or authorities and, in so far as practicable, use should be made of existing vocational guidance, vocational training and placement services.

13. The competent authority or authorities should ensure that an adequate and suitably qualified staff is available to deal with the vocational rehabilitation, including follow-up, of disabled persons.

14. The development of vocational rehabilitation services should at least keep pace with the development of the general services for vocational guidance, vocational training and placement.

15. Vocational rehabilitation services should be organised and developed so as to include opportunities for disabled persons to prepare for, secure and retain, suitable employment on their own account in all fields of work.

16. Administrative responsibility for the general organisation and development of vocational rehabilitation services should be entrusted--

(a) to one authority, or

(b) jointly to the authorities responsible for the different activities in the programme with one of these authorities entrusted with primary responsibility for co-ordination.

17.

(1) The competent authority or authorities should take all necessary and desirable measures to achieve co-operation and co-ordination between the public and private bodies engaged in vocational rehabilitation activities.

(2) Such measures should include as appropriate--

(a) determination of the responsibilities and obligations of public and private bodies;

(b) financial assistance to private bodies effectively participating in vocational rehabilitation

activities; and

(c) technical advice to private bodies.

18.

(1) Vocational rehabilitation services should be established and developed with the assistance of representative advisory committees, set up at the national level and, where appropriate, at regional and local levels.

(2) These committees should, as appropriate, include members drawn from among--

(a) the authorities and bodies directly concerned with vocational rehabilitation;

(b) employers' and workers' organisations;

(c) persons specially qualified to serve by reason of their knowledge of, and concern with, the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled; and

(d) organisations of disabled persons.

(3) These committees should be responsible for advising--

(a) at the national level, on the development of policy and programmes for vocational rehabilitation;

(b) at regional and local levels, on the application of measures taken nationally, their adaptation to regional and local conditions and the co-ordination of regional and local activities.

19.

(1) Research should be fostered and encouraged, particularly by the competent authority, to evaluate and improve vocational rehabilitation services for the disabled.

(2) Such research should include continuous or special studies on the placement of the disabled.

(3) Research should also include scientific work on the different techniques and methods which play a part in vocational rehabilitation.

## V. Methods of Enabling Disabled Persons to Make Use of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

20. Measures should be taken to enable disabled persons to make full use of all available vocational rehabilitation services and to ensure that some authority is made responsible for assisting personally each disabled person to achieve maximum vocational rehabilitation.

21. Such measures should include--

(a) information and publicity on the availability of vocational rehabilitation services and on the prospects which they offer to the disabled; (b) the provision of appropriate and adequate financial assistance to disabled persons.

22.

(1) Such financial assistance should be provided at any stage in the vocational rehabilitation process and should be designed to facilitate the preparation for, and the effective retention of, suitable employment including work on own account.

(2) It should include the provision of free vocational rehabilitation services, maintenance allowances, any necessary transportation expenses incurred during any periods of vocational preparation for employment, and loans or grants of money or the supply of the necessary tools and equipment, and of prosthetic and any other necessary appliances.

23. Disabled persons should be enabled to make use of all vocational rehabilitation services without losing any social security benefits which are unrelated to their participation in these services.

24. Disabled persons living in areas having limited prospects of future employment or limited facilities for preparation for employment should be provided with opportunities for vocational preparation, including provision of board and lodging, and with opportunities for transfer, should they so desire, to areas with greater employment prospects.

25. Disabled persons (including those in receipt of disability pensions) should not as a result of their disability be discriminated against in respect of wages and other conditions of employment if their work is equal to that of non-disabled persons.

## VI. Co-operation Between the Bodies Responsible for Medical Treatment and Those Responsible for Vocational Rehabilitation

26.

(1) There should be the closest co-operation between, and the maximum co-ordination of,

the activities of the bodies responsible for medical treatment and those responsible for the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons.

(2) This co-operation and co-ordination of activities should exist--

(a) to ensure that medical treatment and, where necessary, the provision of appropriate prosthetic apparatus, are directed to facilitating and developing the subsequent employability of the disabled persons concerned;

(b) to promote the identification of disabled persons in need of, and suitable for, vocational rehabilitation;

(c) to enable vocational rehabilitation to be commenced at the earliest and most suitable stage;

(d) to provide medical advice, where necessary, at all stages of vocational rehabilitation;

(e) to provide assessment of working capacity.

27. Wherever possible, and subject to medical advice, vocational rehabilitation should start during medical treatment.

## VII. Methods of Widening Employment Opportunities for Disabled Persons

28. Measures should be taken, in close co-operation with employers' and workers' organisations, to promote maximum opportunities for disabled persons to secure and retain suitable employment.

29. Such measures should be based on the following principles:

(a) disabled persons should be afforded an equal opportunity with the non-disabled to perform work for which they are qualified;

(b) disabled persons should have full opportunity to accept suitable work with employers of their own choice;

(c) emphasis should be placed on the abilities and work capacities of disabled persons and not on their disabilities.

30. Such measures should include--

- (a) research designed to analyse and demonstrate the working capacity of disabled persons;
- (b) widespread and sustained publicity of a factual kind with special reference to--
  - (i) the work performance, output, accident rate, absenteeism and stability in employment of disabled persons in comparison with non-disabled persons employed in the same work;
  - (ii) personnel selection methods based on specific requirements;
  - (iii) methods of improving work conditions, including adjustment and modification of machinery and equipment, to facilitate the employment of disabled workers;
- (c) the means whereby increased liability of individual employers in respect of workmen's compensation premiums may be eliminated;
- (d) the encouraging of employers to transfer workers whose working capacity has undergone a change as a result of a physical impairment to suitable jobs within their undertakings.

31. Wherever appropriate in the national circumstances, and consistent with national policy, the employment of disabled persons should be promoted by means such as--

- (a) the engagement by employers of a percentage of disabled persons under such arrangements as will avoid the displacement of non-disabled workers;
- (b) reserving certain designated occupations for disabled persons;
- (c) arranging that seriously disabled persons are given opportunities for employment or preference in certain occupations considered suitable for them;
- (d) encouraging the creation and facilitating the operation of co-operatives or other similar enterprises managed by, or on behalf of, disabled persons.

## VIII. Sheltered Employment

32.

(1) Measures should be taken by the competent authority or authorities, in co-operation, as appropriate, with private organisations, to organise and develop arrangements for training and employment under sheltered conditions for those disabled persons who cannot be made fit for ordinary competitive employment.

(2) Such arrangements should include the establishment of sheltered workshops and special measures for those disabled persons who, for physical, psychological or geographical reasons, cannot travel regularly to and from work.

33. Sheltered workshops should provide, under effective medical and vocational supervision, not only useful and remunerative work but opportunities for vocational adjustment and advancement with, whenever possible, transfer to open employment.

34. Special programmes for the homebound should be so organised and developed as to provide, under effective medical and vocational supervision, useful and remunerative work in their own homes.

35. Where and to the extent to which statutory regulation of wages and conditions of employment applying to workers generally is in operation it should apply to disabled persons employed under sheltered conditions.

#### IX. Special Provisions for Disabled Children and Young Persons

36. Vocational rehabilitation services for disabled children and young persons of school age should be organised and developed in close co-operation between the authorities responsible for education and the authority or authorities responsible for vocational rehabilitation.

37. Educational programmes should take into account the special problems of disabled children and young persons and their need of opportunities, equal to those of non-disabled children and young persons, to receive education and vocational preparation best suited to their age, abilities, aptitudes and interests.

38. The fundamental purposes of vocational rehabilitation services for disabled children and young persons should be to reduce as much as possible the occupational and psychological handicaps imposed by their disabilities and to offer them full opportunities of preparing for, and entering, the most suitable occupations. The utilisation of these opportunities should involve co-operation between medical, social and educational services and the parents or guardians of the disabled children and young persons.

39.

(1) The education, vocational guidance, training and placement of disabled children and young persons should be developed within the general framework of such services to non-disabled children and young persons, and should be conducted, wherever possible and desirable, under the same conditions as, and in company with, non-disabled children and young persons.

(2) Special provision should be made for those disabled children and young persons whose disabilities prevent their participation in such services under the same conditions as, and in company with, non-disabled children and young persons.

(3) This provision should include, in particular, specialised training of teachers.

40. Measures should be taken to ensure that children and young persons found by medical examination to have disabilities or limitations or to be generally unfit for employment--

(a) receive, as early as possible, proper medical treatment for removing or alleviating their disabilities or limitations;

(b) are encouraged to attend school or are guided towards suitable occupations likely to be agreeable to them and within their capacity and are provided with opportunities of training for such occupations;

(c) have the advantage of financial aid, if necessary, during the period of medical treatment, education and vocational training.

## X. Application of the Principles of Vocational Rehabilitation

41.

(1) Vocational rehabilitation services should be adapted to the particular needs and circumstances of each country and should be developed progressively in the light of these needs and circumstances and in accordance with the principles laid down in this Recommendation.

(2) The main objectives of this progressive development should be--

(a) to demonstrate and develop the working qualities of disabled persons;

(b) to promote, in the fullest measure possible, suitable employment opportunities for them;

(c) to overcome, in respect of training or employment, discrimination against disabled persons on account of their disability.

42. The progressive development of vocational rehabilitation services should be promoted with the help, where desired, of the International Labour Office-- (a) by the provision, wherever possible, of technical advisory assistance;

(b) by organising a comprehensive international exchange of experience acquired in different countries; and

(c) by other forms of international co-operation directed towards the organisation and development of services adapted to the needs and conditions of individual countries and including the training of the staff required.

## **Cross references**