THE CRISIS
OF
UNEMPLOYMENT

A report on the crisis of unemployment for the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap
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FOREWORD

In recent years, considerable concern has been expressed by parents, teachers and practitioners in the fields of training and employment, at the diminishing number of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap who are gaining access to the current labour market. The impact of the economic recession and the technological revolution are some of the reasons put forward for this downward trend. A special effort by all concerned is necessary if this trend is to be reversed. I am very pleased to have acted as Chairman of the Committee which was formed to examine the situation and produce this report. The interest and co-operation we received from the relevant organisations and agencies is most appreciated and is encouraging for the future job prospects of the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap. I am confident that this report will stimulate much discussion and hopeful that many of the recommendations will be implemented as a matter of urgency.

John Bermingham
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To examine the employment needs of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap in the Republic of Ireland.

2. To identify courses of action to meet such needs.

3. To make recommendations on the implementation of appropriate action.
MEMBERS OF WORKING COMMITTEE

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Executive Director,
Cork Polio and General After-Care Association.

Mr. Ray Murphy (Secretary),
Senior Social Worker,
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Mr. Eamonn O Murchu,
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PREFACE

This report is a statement of concern about the impact of the economic recession and technological revolution on job opportunities for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

Handicap is described as a “disadvantage for a given individual resulting from an impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors) for that individual” (World Health Organisation—International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps 1980.)

Definitions of mild mental handicap are many. For the purposes of this report school-leavers with a mild mental handicap would typically be (a) below average general intelligence and (b) have difficulty in meeting the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected of individuals of their age and cultural group. It is important to note that they are capable of achieving vocational and social adequacy with proper education and training but will need support and guidance when under serious social or economic stress.

Like any other school-leaver they are adolescents with the same social, emotional, physical and educational needs. They are, however, disadvantaged by the functional limitations of their intellectual status and adaptive behaviours. There are approximately 450 such students leaving special education each year. They will require training and employment in the open labour market or in a sheltered setting. In 1979 in excess of 60% were gainfully employed on the open labour market. By 1983 this figure had fallen to 20% and more recent indications are that this trend will continue.

This report outlines some strategies which need to be adopted to reverse this trend.
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

EDUCATION

2.4.1 We recommend that the Department of Education make provision for a post-primary place for every pupil at present in a special class at primary level.

2.4.2 We recommend that the Department of Education facilitate special schools to avail of post-primary resources.

2.4.3 We recommend that the Department of Education carry out a detailed examination of pupil:teacher ratios in special education.

2.4.4 We recommend that curricular guidelines be drawn up for special schools and classes catering for pupils with a mild mental handicap.

2.4.5 We recommend that pre-vocational training and work experience programmes be introduced in all special schools and classes.

2.4.6 We recommend that continuous assessment of pupils' progress leading to certification be introduced. The Curriculum and Examinations Board should monitor standards and award certification.
TRAINING

3.4 We recommend that the Department of Health instruct its executive agency, National Rehabilitation Board, to enter into discussions with the mainstream training agencies, AnCO, CERT, ACOT, to make provision for the integration of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap onto their training courses.

3.5.1 We recommend that the Department of Health seek adequate budgetary provisions to ensure that the necessary resources are made available for special training, to alleviate dependency on production.

3.5.2 We recommend that an urgent review of the content of training programmes be undertaken by the Department of Health through its executive agency, National Rehabilitation Board, and that clear policy guidelines be developed which would reflect local needs.

3.5.3 We recommend that a standard training allowance be introduced for all trainees, whether on mainstream or special training programmes.

3.5.4 We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board, as a matter of urgency, undertake the review of the overall need for both training and long-term sheltered places as outlined in "Towards A Full Life".

EMPLOYMENT

4.1 We recommend that the Government adopt and implement a coherent and comprehensive policy on the employment of disabled persons.
4.3.1 We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board undertake campaigns aimed at creating awareness among employers of the skills and abilities of disabled people and promoting employment opportunities generally, as outlined in the report "Towards A Full Life" without delay.

4.3.3 We recommend that the Inter-Departmental Committee, which monitors the Public Service Quota Scheme, undertake an urgent review of the system with particular reference to insuring equal opportunity for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

4.3.4 We recommend that the Department of Health and Labour examine the respective roles of National Rehabilitation Board and National Manpower Service, with a view to maximising the effectiveness of the job placement process for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

4.3.5 We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board establish formal committees attached to each special school, vocational training unit, community workshop, comprising of parents, teachers, employers and representative of relevant statutory agencies for the purpose of locating job opportunities.

4.5.1 We recommend that the Government

(a) Make formal statutory provision for sheltered employment, taking into account consumer needs and demographic distribution

(b) Enact legislation to grant legal status to the worker in sheltered employment

(c) Instruct the Joint Labour Committees to establish a wage structure.

4.5.2 We recommend that the community workshop concept be re-examined by the National Rehabilitation Board with a view to separation of the training and employment functions.
NEW INITIATIVES

5.1 We recommend that organisations involved in the provision of employment for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap, examine the feasibility of creating new enterprises in the service area.

5.2 We recommend that the Government direct the Industrial Development Authority and the Youth Employment Agency to make their services available to organisations providing sheltered employment.

5.3 We recommend that the services of the agencies who provide advice and support to industry on product identification, quality control and marketing namely, Coras Trachtala, The Irish Goods Council, The Irish Productivity Centre and the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards be availed of by the organisations providing sheltered employment.

5.4 We recommend that the Federation of Voluntary Organisations for the handicapped urgently investigate the feasibility of establishing a co-ordinated marketing strategy between the organisations providing sheltered work.

5.5 We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board undertake a comprehensive investigation into the feasibility of developing cooperatives in conjunction with a body such as the Centre for Co-operative Studies based in University College, Cork, or other such third level institutions.

5.6 We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board encourage the job creation agencies to fund and support work enterprises involving able-bodied workers and school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

5.7 We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board investigate the job creation potential of new technology.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

Unemployment rates have doubled during the period 1979 to 1986. This has been due to three major factors:

(a) The Economic Recession
(b) New Technology
(c) The Demographic Situation

1.1.1 The Economic Recession

The impact of the recession has been felt throughout the whole of Irish society. All socio-economic groups have been affected. Many firms have had to close down, causing redundancies. Traditionally high employers, in particular, the Government, have had to trim their operations and cut down on the numbers employed. Major international corporations have found it cheaper to trade elsewhere and have moved their enterprises with the loss of many thousands of jobs. Competition from newly developing countries, themselves using modern techniques and cheaper labour has increased enormously. With fewer people working having to support those out of work, the spending power necessary to make new demands on production and, consequently, new jobs, is not available.

1.1.2 New Technology

With the advent of new technology, many traditional, labour intensive industries have become automated. The need for unskilled labour has diminished. The electro-microchip has revolutionised machinery, with a consequent loss of jobs. The demand now is for less labour-intensive industry, with more emphasis on capital investment.
1.1.3 Demography

A further factor which has contributed to our unemployment figure has been our demographic situation. Ireland has a higher number of young people coming on to the labour market than old people retiring from it. Consequently more people are looking for less jobs. This situation is likely to continue for some time to come.

The overall picture then, is one of an increasing labour pool and a diminishing number of job opportunities on the current labour market.

1.2 EFFECTS ON THE SCHOOL-LEAVER WITH A MILD MENTAL HANDICAP

The effects of new technology and the economic recession on our school-leavers are many. In particular we would like to highlight three separate but inter-related areas which we feel are the most relevant.

1.2.1 Increased Competition

There is little doubt that the small number of jobs available are going to attract a greater number of applicants. It is unreal to expect that a person without an educational qualification and who is functioning below the average at an intellectual level, is going to compete on an equal basis. The ultimate effect of increased competition is that many of our school-leavers are being edged out of the job market.

1.2.2 Impact of New Technology

While the development of new technology effects the whole population, it has had a more profound effect on the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap, in that many of the traditional employment outlets are now redundant. We refer in particular to
unskilled manual and indeed, semi-skilled jobs, where much of the work is now being done by computer and machine.

1.2.3 **Change in the Nature of Employment**

Compared with the relative certainties of the recent past, the pattern of economic activity and employment of the future is very hard to predict. There is now a greater need for initiative and flexibility by workers. Good social skills, assertiveness and confidence are fast becoming a prerequisite for the job seeker. These qualities represent, for many, the major problem areas.

Consequently, therefore, it must be clearly stated that for many of our school-leavers, access to the labour market is becoming increasingly difficult. This poses for us the questions:

(i) How do we maximise available resources and opportunities to ensure that those who are able can compete and find jobs?

(ii) What alternative strategies are necessary to reverse the trend of unemployment?

1.3 **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

In order to examine this situation a committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. John Bermingham, Executive Director, Cork Polio and General After Care Association.

It had the following terms of reference:

(a) To examine the employment needs of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap in the Republic of Ireland.

(b) To identify courses of action to meet such needs.

(c) To make recommendations on the implementation of appropriate action.
1.4 COMPOSITION

In establishing the Committee it was agreed that it should draw upon the resources of all those concerned with the issue — parents, teachers, training agencies (mainstream and special), placement agencies, employer and trade union interests and non-Government organisations. We are grateful to the organisations who sent representatives to our meetings and those who made written submissions. (Refer Appendix 2.)

1.5 METHODOLOGY

At an inaugural meeting submissions were requested from all of those present, and, in addition, submissions were invited from special schools throughout the country under the following headings:

(a) The number of school-leavers each year.
(b) Their training needs and recent trends.
(c) Their employment needs and recent trends.
(d) Short term and long term strategies necessary to achieve change.
(e) In addition, employer groups, trade union interests and training agencies were requested to indicate:
   (i) Future trends in the job market, and
   (ii) How they saw the role of their respective agencies in meeting the needs of the target group.

Having received a large number of submissions which outlined the extent of the problem being faced by the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap, and which contained some suggestions as to how these problems might be alleviated, it was agreed to produce a report so that immediate action could be taken. The report analyses the situation under the following headings:
(a) Education  
(b) Training  
(c) Employment

Within each section there is an outline of the current situation, the problems encountered by the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap, and recommendations together with suggestions as to their implementation.
Chapter 2

EDUCATION

2.1 "Many of the certainties of previous generations will not apply in the future. This is due to changing patterns of enterprise and employment, changing interpretations of work and job, increasingly diverse and expanding opportunities for leisure, changing perceptions of gender roles and rapid developments in technology and information processing. All these factors demand an imaginative response from the education system.

There is a need, therefore, to foster confidence in young people. School programmes which consciously challenge students and reward achievement across the educational spectrum help to develop this confidence. Overcoming the fear of failure is one of the most significant contributions schools can make in preparing young people for adult life. They must be encouraged to think in terms of identifying problems and considering solutions rather than always seeking absolute right or wrong answers to problems."

2.2 The aims of education are by nature complex and varied. Our task in this particular report is confined to the area of employment and its implications for education and training. Our recommendations are, therefore, limited to improving the link between the educational process and the world of training and work. Education, pre-vocational training, work experience, retraining, adult education and employment should be available as part of a continuum to facilitate the individual with a handicap in making a full contribution to society.

2.3 CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

2.3.1 Special Schools

Educational provision for children assessed as functioning at the level of mild mental handicap was made originally through the
establisment of special schools throughout the country. There are currently thirty-three special schools for pupils with a mild mental handicap. They are managed and run in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Education by non-Governmental agencies. They have the status of national or primary schools. They are financed for their day-to-day operation by means of a special capitation grant which is adjusted in line with the capitation grant for national schools generally. Pupil:teacher ratios are lower than in mainstream primary education. The underlying philosophy of the schools can be summarised as being aimed towards the academic, psychological, social, physical and emotional development of the person; that is, to his or her own ability, to enable them play a meaningful and independent role in society. Some schools include vocational training and/or work experience as an integral part of the curriculum in addition to an academic programme. Social skills training is also accorded a high priority.

Students in special schools range in age from four to eighteen years. A total of 3,400 students are currently on the school rolls.²

2.3.2 Special Classes

In recent years there has been a demand to meet the educational needs of children with a mild mental handicap in ordinary national schools and one hundred and twenty-seven classes have been established for this purpose. A total of 1,800 children attend special classes at primary level.³ This arrangement is seen as facilitating the integration of the children with their peers.

Children who complete their primary education in special classes in national schools may be placed either in one of the sixteen special classes attached to post-primary schools or in a special school. Students at the post-primary level range in age from twelve to eighteen years.
2.4 PROBLEMS

There are a number of features relating to the special educational provision for pupils with a mild mental handicap that warrant further examination to ensure a synchronized continuum of education, training and employment in accordance with the principles of integration. Included among these are:

2.4.1 Demographic Distribution

Educational provision does not appear to have developed in a planned, co-ordinated way. There are many areas throughout the country where children have to travel long distances to avail of special education. The implications of this are that students have to travel outside their own communities to receive an education, in some instances pupils must live away from home. Students reaching post-primary age have little option but to attend special schools or drop out due to the limited number of special classes available at post-primary level. It has been indicated that the provision of such classes will be expanded.

It is not unusual for special classes in the primary sector to have pupils ranging in age from seven to fifteen years. The special classes at post-primary level have students ranging from twelve to eighteen years in the same classroom. Such a wide range of age and ability coupled with differing emotional, social, physical and psychological needs will understandably precipitate a degree of frustration. This will inevitably have consequences in the quality of education available to the pupil.

Special education at post-primary level must be made available to all pupils with a mild mental handicap.

We recommend that the Department of Education make provision for a post-primary place for every pupil at present in a special class at primary level.
2.4.2 Status

A matter of concern raised by submissions related to the fact that special schools are classified as primary schools. It was felt that special education should have distinct primary and secondary streams as is the case in mainstream education. As a consequence of the current situation students of special schools have lost out in a number of schemes such as transitionary options, the appointment of career guidance teachers and work experience programmes. It is also seen as discriminating and stigmatising to students and their parents.

We recommend that the Department of Education facilitate special schools to avail of post-primary resources.

2.4.3 Pupil:Teacher Ratios

It is a matter of concern to the committee that the pupil: teacher ratio in special education in Ireland is the highest in Europe. These ratios have not been changed since the 1960's. The changing role of special schools was outlined in the “Programme for Action in Education 1984/87” and the changing population of special schools recognised. Given that an increasing number of pupils are presenting with secondary conditions such as behavioural problems or emotional disturbance, the situation warrants urgent attention.

We recommend that the Department of Education carry out a detailed examination of pupil:teacher ratios in special education.

2.4.4 Curriculum

No curricular guidelines have been formulated for these pupils. It is essential that such guidelines be formulated immediately to ensure a co-ordinated, relevant and realistic programme to meet both the immediate and long-term needs of the pupils concerned. When
formulating such guidelines, particular attention should be paid to the following:

(a) Changed and changing employment opportunities.
(b) Implications of technological developments.
(c) Integration at all levels of post-school life; family, community, work and leisure.

It is with concern that we note that a fundamental curricular area largely ignored in the schools and classes in question is that of human relationships and education for life.

The Curriculum and Examinations Board would seem to be the appropriate agency to initiate the development of curricular guidelines. Such work would involve the special education section of the Department of Education, teachers, parents, V.E.C.'s, curriculum development units, and research departments in third level education institutions and school authorities. Curricular guidelines should be flexible enough to permit the actual delivery of education and reflect local needs.

We recommend that curricular guidelines be drawn up for use in special schools and classes catering for pupils with a mild mental handicap.

2.4.5 Pre-vocational Training/Work Experience

Submissions received highlighted the value of pre-vocational training and work experience programmes to prepare the students of special schools and special classes for the world of work. Studies undertaken on transition programmes appear to confirm this. While some schools work closely with vocational officers of the National Rehabilitation Board and local business interests, it is not standard or uniform practice. Consequently many young people are missing out on a very valuable experience which may ultimately prepare them better for the adult working world.
We recommend that pre-vocational training and work experience programmes should be introduced in all special schools and classes.

2.4.6 Assessment and Certification

Assessment and certification by a recognised statutory body are not available to pupils who pursue courses approved by the Department of Education in the special classes and special schools which cater for pupils with a mild mental handicap.

Without some form of qualification the job opportunities of the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap are greatly reduced, a matter referred to elsewhere in this report. The effectiveness of the curriculum, the process of education and the progress of the pupil can be monitored by a system of continuous assessment as envisaged by the Curriculum and Examinations Board in its report “In Our Schools”.  

We recommend that continuous assessment of pupils’ progress leading to certification be introduced. The Curriculum and Examinations Board should monitor standards and award certification.
3.1 School-leavers need training in order that they can take up employment. This training may be at the level of skill development aimed towards a particular job, or at the more fundamental level of training in the development of work habits and appropriate social skills. It should provide the knowledge, and shape those attitudes and abilities which are the prerequisites of employability.

3.2 MAINSTREAM TRAINING

Training is the responsibility of:
(a) AnCO — The Industrial Training Authority, established in 1967. It is organised and administered under the auspices of the Department of Labour.
(b) CERT — The training authority for the hotels and catering trade. It is a State-sponsored body, established in 1963.
(c) ACOT — The State body responsible for agricultural training and education, established in 1977.

The above agencies offer training to those young people who are assessed as being able for open employment following appropriate training and who would also be expected to meet such other entry criteria as may apply, e.g. literacy and numeracy.

Placement on mainstream courses may be through the National Manpower Service or following registration with the National Rehabilitation Board.

3.3 SPECIAL TRAINING

Special training is the responsibility of the Department of Health. It is organised primarily by non-Governmental organisations support-
ed by State aid. Funding is also available through the European Social Fund. It places an emphasis on preparation for life, development of independent living skills, social and leisure time skills, compensatory remedial education, and training, mainly in the semi-skilled areas of work. Community Workshops have been developed with dual roles of training and sheltered employment as recommended in the report “Training and Employing the Handicapped”.¹

Vocational training, specially for those with a mental handicap, is provided by a number of non-Governmental organisations. There are approximately twenty centres throughout the country.

There are also training centres which provide training to a skilled level in a range of job areas. A minority of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap attend such centres.

Access to special training centres is through registering with the National Rehabilitation Board. It is assumed that all trainees are able for ultimate placement in open employment. However, it is also accepted that some may be suitable either for further training or sheltered work.

3.4 PROBLEMS – MAINSTREAM TRAINING

It was recommended in the report “Training and Employing the Handicapped” that “as many as possible of the handicapped should be trained in association with able-bodied workers” and “training facilities at AnCO centres should be developed to the greatest extent possible for handicapped persons likely to be integrated into the labour market”.² There is little evidence to suggest that either of these recommendations has been acted upon.

It should also be noted, however, that AnCO or other mainstream agencies may not have been approached in the recent past to examine how their resources could best be utilised to benefit this
group. The committee received a submission from CERT outlining their willingness to examine this position. We have no reason to doubt that similar undertakings would be given by AnCO and ACOT.

The feasibility of a wider use of such resources as Community Training Workshops (providing basic work skills together with literacy and numeracy) and Community Youth Training Programmes (providing basic training coupled with work experience, through community associations) has been considered by the committee. The Social Guarantee Scheme operated under the auspices of the Youth Employment Agency was also considered to exploit in full any opportunities it offered our school-leavers to gain access to the labour market.

_We recommend that the Department of Health instruct its executive agency, The National Rehabilitation Board, to enter into discussions with the mainstream training agencies, AnCO, CERT, ACOT, to make provision for the integration of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap onto their training courses._

Representatives of non-Governmental training agencies should be invited to participate in these discussions. Topics should include entry requirements, course content and duration.

### 3.5 PROBLEMS - SPECIAL TRAINING

#### 3.5.1 Programme Content

The orientation and content of training programmes have not kept pace with the changing demands of the labour market. The report "Training and Employing the Handicapped" highlighted, inter-alia

(a) that training courses were dominated to a great extent by the demands of production.
(b) that training in social skills was neglected.
(c) an over emphasis on the traditional skills of woodwork, upholstery etc.³

More than ten years later, there is little to suggest that the position has changed. While it is true that marketable goods can be produced as a by-product of training, the pressure of production should not interfere with the training process. Often, however, this over-emphasis on production is due to lack of adequate funding.

We recommend that the Department of Health seek adequate budgetary provision to ensure that the necessary resources are made available for special training, to alleviate dependancy on production.

3.5.2 Concern was expressed at the lack of compensatory education within many special training centres e.g. practical academics, social skills, education for leisure. Training programmes must take account of the need to prepare people for the new pattern of work which will require that young people have self-confidence, initiative, flexibility and problem-solving capacities. It has been projected that more job opportunities may become available within such areas as catering, home repairs, environmental improvements, gardening, delivery of goods, growing and preserving food.⁴

We recommend that an urgent review of the content of training programmes be undertaken by the Department of Health through its executive agency the National Rehabilitation Board and that clear policy guidelines be developed which would reflect local needs.

The review should involve the training and placement agencies, both mainstream and special, as well as representatives of relevant Government departments (Education, Labour, Agriculture, and Industry and Commerce) and should address the issues of assessment and certification.
3.5.3 **Training Allowances**

A further issue considered by the committee was the question of training allowances. Currently those on special training programmes are in receipt of one of the following allowances: Rehabilitation Maintenance Allowance (R.M.A.), Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance (D.P.M.A.), or Supplementary Welfare Allowance, all paid by the Department of Health, and Unemployment Assistance or Disability Benefit, paid by the Department of Social Welfare. The primary method of payment to a person in special training is the Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowance. This was considered to be discriminatory and stigmatising in that it officially labels the trainee as “substantially handicapped in undertaking work”\(^5\).

*We recommend that a standard training allowance be introduced for all trainees, whether on mainstream or special training programmes.*

It was noted that a working group is currently meeting under the auspices of the Department of Health and is considering this matter.\(^6\)

3.5.4 **Availability**

Planning is continuing on the expansion of existing centres and the provision of new workshops by Health Boards and non-Governmental agencies.\(^7\) It is evident, however, from submissions received that there is not an equal distribution of training places on a geographic basis, a fact adverted to in the report “Towards A Full Life”.\(^8\) The committee welcomes the recommendations of that report concerning the future planning of services, the assessment of need for places and their geographic distribution as it will lead to a more co-ordinated, planned development.

*We recommend that The National Rehabilitation Board, as a matter of urgency, undertake the review of the overall need for both training and long-term sheltered places outlined in “Towards A Full Life”.*\(^9\)
Chapter 4

EMPLOYMENT

4.1 POLICY

The lack of an overall Government policy has hampered the development of specific measures at local level to promote and support the employment of disabled persons.

The drafting and implementation of a national policy is urgently required to reverse the downward trend in employment and its adverse effects on disabled people in Ireland.

Relevant guidelines for policy formulation are readily available. Two recently published documents in particular should form the basis for Government policy.

(a) The International Labour Organisation, of which Ireland is an active member, has made specific recommendations on vocational rehabilitation and employment for disabled persons\(^1\) — Convention 159 and Recommendations 168 are reprinted in full in Appendix 3.

(b) The Council of the European Communities has made detailed recommendations to member States concerning the employment of disabled people\(^2\). An extract from this memorandum — "Model code of positive action to promote the vocational training and employment of disabled people" — is reprinted in Appendix 4.

**We recommend that the Government adopt and implement a coherent and comprehensive policy on the employment of disabled persons.**

Such a policy should embrace the philosophy and practices set down by the International Labour Organisation and the Council of the European Communities.

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4.2 JOB OPPORTUNITIES ON THE CURRENT LABOUR MARKET

There are a number of characteristics which describe the current labour market:

★ Due to Ireland's demographic features there are more people coming onto the labour market each year than retiring from it. This trend is likely to continue for some time to come.

★ Over the past four years our unemployment rate has doubled to a current level of 18.3%.

★ The advent of new technology has resulted in more emphasis being placed on capital intensive industry with less emphasis on labour. There is now a strong trend towards the development of high technology industries e.g. electronics, pharmaceutical.

★ There is greater demand for the skilled worker. Those seeking unskilled and semi-skilled employment are experiencing greater difficulties in finding jobs. This is borne out by the Department of Labour survey of school-leavers conducted each year.

★ The worker now being sought by employers at many levels should be flexible, creative, be able to act on his/her own initiative, have a positive attitude to work and have well developed, positive social skills, in addition to the particular work skills necessary to carry out specific jobs.

★ There is a high degree of competition for all jobs. Highly qualified school-leavers are now applying for unskilled and semi-skilled work.
Qualifications are important. Those leaving school without qualifications have a significantly lesser chance of finding employment than those with qualifications. "Those leaving school without qualifications had the highest unemployment rate. Employment among those in this category was 32.9%, a decrease of 13.4%, while the level of unemployment rose significantly to 67.8%, an increase of 17.5% over the previous year." Put briefly, there are more people looking for fewer jobs. The type of employment available to all school-leavers has shifted in favour of those with qualifications. There has been an increase in competition and those without qualifications are more vulnerable. It is inevitable given the above characteristics that the future labour market will become more specialised. It is unlikely that full employment will be achieved in the near or medium term. Consequently, the unqualified school-leaver will continue to experience difficulty in gaining access to the labour market.

4.3. PROBLEMS

4.3.1 Increased Competition

Inevitably a shrinking job market and the consequent unemployment will increase competition for any available employment outlets. The school-leaver with a mild mental handicap is very vulnerable to this trend. Three independent studies undertaken on school-leavers from special schools up to and including school-leavers of 1979 found that approximately 60% were engaged in employment on the open labour market. A 1985 study undertaken on the school-leavers for the years 1980-1983 from one of these schools indicated that 19% were working in the current labour market. This represents a sharp decline. Submissions received by the Committee from a variety of schools throughout the country have also reflected this downward trend. Demand for unskilled and semi-skilled workers has diminished markedly and seems likely to continue. This has been caused, in part, by the increasing development of automation. In the past, school-leavers with a mild
mental handicap have found employment at this level. Recent figures from one school indicate that of those school-leavers in employment, in 1985, 92% were employed in unskilled and semi-skilled manual operations. An Economic and Social Research Institute study pointed out that the job likely to be held by the unqualified or poorly qualified worker, that is, at a semi- or unskilled level, will be insecure, consequently increasing the risk of unemployment among this group.

In the absence of evidence to indicate a decrease in the level of ability of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap in more recent years it is concluded that these difficulties are due mainly to increased competition. Their skills and abilities will need to be marketed in a more positive way to overcome these difficulties.

We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board undertake campaigns aimed at creating awareness among employers of the skills and abilities of disabled people and promoting employment opportunities generally, as outlined in the report "Towards A Full Life", without delay.

4.3.2 Qualifications

A study carried out at the Economic and Social Research Institute highlighted the fact that young people without qualifications are more likely to be unemployed than those who have qualifications. The absence of formal qualifications within the special education system for the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap has already been referred to. This lack of a properly structured, officially recognised assessment and certification procedure limits access to the labour market.

Recommendations have already been made on assessment and certification (2.4.6) and content of training programmes (3.5.2).
4.3.3 Public Service Quota

This scheme, introduced in 1981, requires that 3% of the workforce of all Government departments, Local Authorities, Vocational Education Committees and State Boards and Enterprises will be recruited from among the disabled. A special inter-departmental committee under the chairmanship of an official of the Department of Labour has responsibility for monitoring the scheme. Special competitions confined to persons with a disability registered with the National Rehabilitation Board is the primary means of recruitment. Given the embargo on recruitment within the public sector and the filling of only one vacancy in every three, coupled with the absence of any legislative framework which would ensure that the quota was rigorously applied, the target of 3% is unlikely to be achieved.

In the short term, even if the target is realised, the number of school-leavers with a mild mental handicap likely to gain employment under this scheme will have little impact on the unemployment rate amongst this group each year. The Civil Service, which has been the main source of public service employment within the quota system failed to recruit any persons classified as having a “Mental Handicap” during 1984.10 Representing as it does a further possibility to exploit job opportunities within confined competition, there is a considerable degree of concern that even this number of potential jobs is no longer available.

The committee welcomes the proposal in the report “Towards A Full Life” whereby the Inter-Departmental Committee is to be asked to review the operation of the scheme, particularly in relation to its uneven operation.11

We recommend that the Inter-Departmental Committee, which monitors the Public Service Quota scheme, undertake an urgent review of the system with particular reference to ensuring equal opportunities for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.
4.3.4 Placement Services

People with a disability seeking employment are entitled to avail of the placement services provided for the population in general, such as the National Manpower Service. The National Rehabilitation Board operates a vocational service which provides vocational assessment, counselling and placement services to persons with a disability, including school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

Increasing difficulties in finding employment for persons with a disability have placed enormous strains on the resources of the National Rehabilitation Board. A decrease of 43% in placements was recorded between 1981 and 1984, though this trend has since been halted. Similar trends are evident in the National Manpower Services. Consequently, it may be necessary to examine the respective roles of both services, in order to utilise fully the particular strengths and resources of each agency. The National Manpower Service has access to the full range of notified job vacancies throughout the country while the National Rehabilitation Board has a pool of expertise in meeting specific needs of school-leavers with a disability.

We recommend that the Departments of Health and Labour examine the respective roles of National Rehabilitation Board and National Manpower Service with a view to maximising the effectiveness of the job placement process for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

4.3.5 Job Finding

Even though most school-leavers with a mild mental handicap are registered with the main placement agencies, many find work through other channels e.g. personal contact, answering advertisements, family or friends, or through contacts arranged by special schools or vocational training centres. Recent studies indicated that only a small percentage found their jobs through the placement agencies. Another study by the Youth Employment Agency
indicated that only 13.8% of those in semi-skilled or unskilled manual occupations found their jobs through placement agencies.\(^1\)

It is important, therefore, that there be much closer contact at local level between parents, education and training services and employers to exploit available resources to the fullest. Education and training services in particular may need to develop the job-finding capacities of the school-leavers with a mild mental handicap and take account of this in programmes and curriculum time.

*We recommend that the N.R.B. establish formal committees attached to each special school, vocational training unit, community workshop, comprising of parents, teachers, employers and representatives of relevant statutory agencies for the purpose of locating job opportunities.*

### 4.4 SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT

The absence of a properly structured system of sheltered employment has been highlighted over the past ten years. There is a need for a continuum of employment provision, ranging from open employment on the current labour market to sheltered or supported employment. There is a wide variety of non-Governmental agencies who organise and operate sheltered workshops and community workshops throughout the country. The report “Training and Employing the Handicapped” recommended that the community workshops “would provide sheltered employment for those handicapped persons who have difficulty in obtaining or retaining open employment”.\(^1\)\(^5\) It was further recommended that the workshop should be conducted in accordance with business principles.\(^1\)\(^6\) It was stated that sheltered employment should, inter alia:

- Have a realistic wage.
- Build up self-confidence and work motivation.
- Help the workers to adjust socially, adapt to work environment and work disciplines, and develop work capacities.
NEW INITIATIVES

Contribution: To measures outlined in the previous chapter, there are a number of areas which the committee feels should be pursued as new initiatives.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, it has been projected that more job opportunities will become available within such areas as littering, environmental improvements and the service industry in general. To exploit this situation it will be necessary to develop job creation projects in these areas, providing a range of employment opportunities.

We recommend that organisations involved in the provision of employment for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap examine the feasibility of creating new enterprises in these service areas.

The resources and expertise of the Industrial Development Authority and the Youth Employment Agency, who have primary responsibility for job creation, are not readily available to organisations providing sheltered employment.

We recommend that the Government direct the Industrial Development Authority and the Youth Employment Agency make their services available to organisations providing sheltered employment.

It is essential that the special circumstances of sheltered employment, which severely limit the possibility of commercial profitability be taken into account by these agencies.

The aim of any new initiatives must be that they be labour intensive, the achievement of economic viability must be pursued. To this, product identification, quality control and marketing strategies are of vital importance.

★ Have an industrial atmosphere which would include tempo, accuracy, punctuality and efficiency.

There was, however, no reference made to the need for legislation to facilitate such developments.

4.4.1 Responsibility

The overall responsibility for the development of sheltered outlets appears to rest with the Department of Health. It carries out this function through its executive agency the National Rehabilitation Board. This responsibility derives from the recommendation of the report "Training and Employing the Handicapped" that "the National Rehabilitation Board should within the policy laid down by the Minister for Health be the executive agency responsible for the approval and supervision of community workshops and the provision of financial assistance to them".

The report "Towards A Full Life" envisages that the Health Boards, in partnership with the non-Governmental sector will evaluate and expand the provision of workshops.

The same report also acknowledged that — as disability ranges from near normality to complete incapacity it is necessary to consider opportunities across the whole spectrum from open employment to sheltered employment.

4.4.2 Current Situation

With the exception of the Workshop for the Blind in Rathmines, the proposed development of a network of sheltered employment outlets has not taken place. For some persons with a disability the existing workshops have filled the gap but this "employment" does not have any legal status and remuneration consists of state allowances. The dignity, security and independence of persons with a disability who cannot achieve open employment requires
that they have a proper contract of employment and a living wage. The necessary legislative framework and funding which would allow for both of these essential elements does not exist.

The report "Towards A Full Life" referred to difficulties in setting remuneration levels for persons in sheltered employment. It recommended the establishment of a working group which would investigate the question of having a single source of payment for sheltered employees. It did not refer to the question of contracts of employment.

Recent developments include projects in which able-bodied and persons with a disability work side by side. Funding for such operations has been made available on a joint basis e.g. from the Health Boards and the Youth Employment Agency or other such arrangements. In one instance these developments have involved the establishment of a co-operative.

4.5 PROBLEMS

Submissions received by the Committee referred to a number of problems, the primary ones being:

4.5.1 The absence of statutory provision for the planned development of sheltered work, the absence of a contract of employment and the absence of a proper wage structure.

We recommend that the Government:
(a) Make formal statutory provision for sheltered employment, taking into account consumer needs and demographic distribution.
(b) Enact legislation to grant legal status to the worker in sheltered employment.
(c) Instruct the Joint Labour Committees to establish a wage structure.

The responsibility for the development of such initiatives rest jointly between the Departments of Health and Social Welfare.

4.5.2 The situation whereby the transition from the position of the sheltered employee was not recognised either in terms of status and increased responsibility.

We recommend that the community work with the Government in re-examining such aspects of the development of sheltered employment with a view to the separation of the training and the training.

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The report "Towards A Full Life" envisages that the Health Boards, in partnership with the non-Governmental sector will evaluate and expand the provision of workshops.18

The same report also acknowledged that — as disability ranges from near normality to complete incapacity it is necessary to consider opportunities across the whole spectrum from open employment to sheltered employment.19

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(b) Enact legislation to grant legal status to the worker in sheltered employment.

(c) Instruct the Joint Labour Committees to establish a wage structure.
The responsibility for the development of such legislation should rest jointly between the Departments of Health and Labour.

4.5.2 The situation whereby the transition from being a trainee to a sheltered employee was not recognised either in monetary terms or in terms of status and increased responsibilities.

We recommend that the community workshop concept be re-examined by the National Rehabilitation Board with a view to the separation of the training and employment functions.
Chapter 5

NEW INITIATIVES

In addition to measures outlined in the previous chapter, there are a number of areas which the committee feels should be pursued as new initiatives.

5.1 As mentioned elsewhere in this report, it has been projected that more job opportunities will become available within such areas as catering, environmental improvements and the service industry in general. To exploit this situation it will be necessary to develop job creation projects in these areas, providing a range of employment opportunities.

*We recommend that organisations involved in the provision of employment for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap examine the feasibility of creating new enterprises in the service area.*

5.2 The resources and expertise of the Industrial Development Authority and the Youth Employment Agency, who have primary responsibility for job creation, are not readily available to organisations providing sheltered employment.

*We recommend that the Government direct the Industrial Development Authority and the Youth Employment Agency to make their services available to organisations providing sheltered employment.*

It is essential that the special circumstances of sheltered employment which severely limit the possibility of commercial profitability, be taken into account by these agencies.

5.3 While the aim of any new initiatives must be that they be labour-intensive, the achievement of economic viability must be pursued. To do this, product identification, quality control and marketing strategies are of vital importance.
We recommend that the services of the agencies who provide advice and support to industry on product identification, quality control and marketing, namely, Coras Trachtala, the Irish Goods Council, the Irish Productivity Centre and Institute of Industrial Research Standards, be availed of by organisations providing sheltered employment.

5.4 In addition, the feasibility of developing a co-ordinated approach to marketing by the organisations currently involved in the provisions of sheltered work, should be urgently investigated to exploit in full the sales opportunities in the market place.

We recommend that the Federation of Voluntary Organisations for the Handicapped urgently investigate the feasibility of establishing a co-ordinated marketing strategy between the organisations providing sheltered work.

We suggest that to do this the Federation should consult with the Irish Marketing Institute, Coras Trachtala and other relevant agencies.

5.5 Co-operatives may offer a wide range of employment opportunities for the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap. They could provide a highly appropriate and supportive work environment. They tend to be small-scale so the individual needs of the worker can be more readily taken into account. Workers are mutually dependent and share decisions so that a worker with a handicap would be less likely to be marginalised, patronised or exploited.

We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board undertake a comprehensive investigation into the feasibility of developing co-operatives in conjunction with a body such as the Centre for Co-operative Studies based in U.C.C. or other third level institutions.
5.6 A number of developments, which have already been referred to in the report, have taken place on a joint basis between able-bodied and people with a disability. Concepts such as the Sheltered Industrial Group Schemes, the Enclave concept, and jointly funded projects organised under the auspices of the Youth Employment Agency and Health Boards should be investigated. Able-bodied people should be encouraged to work in sheltered workshops, enabling the sheltered workshop to become more viable and self-sufficient.

We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board encourage the job creation agencies to fund and support work enterprises involving able-bodied workers and school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

5.7 There is an absence of research and information on how advances in new technology can be utilised in the creation of employment opportunities for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

Specialists in the education and training of persons with a mental handicap stress the importance of an individualised approach, multi-sensorial stimulation, careful structuring of materials and consistent reinforcement. It is now evident that computer aided learning and inter-active videos can satisfy these requirements and with the further development of appropriate software could provide an excellent means for education and training. The committee feels that these developments offer further job opportunities to the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap by (a) improving the general learning and training possibilities for the individual and thus increasing the chances of obtaining a job in the current labour market and/or (b) extending the employment possibilities to include operating technological equipment in the work situation.
We recommend that the National Rehabilitation Board investigate the job potential of new technology for school-leavers with a mild mental handicap.

The committee is aware of the work of the Social Integration Project for Handicapped Persons, Irish District, based in the Midland Health Board region, which is an E.E.C. assisted project. The purpose of the project is to promote the social and economic integration of disabled people. The project has developed an employment task force and employment working group in an effort to enhance the employment opportunities of persons with a disability. This innovative approach is in line with the many recommendations contained in this report.
THE FUTURE

In compiling this report the Committee has endeavoured to highlight the many factors which inhibit the development of the necessary continuum between education, training and employment. Our underlying philosophy is that of enhancing the quality of life of the school-leaver with a mild mental handicap. It is generally accepted that meaningful employment is an essential ingredient of this.

The process of rehabilitation is long-term, demanding long-term planning and the allocation of considerable resources. The committee hopes that the many recommendations made in the report will be implemented, without delay. It is our intention to remain active as a monitoring body and to be available to be part of this process.
Appendix 1

REFERENCES

CHAPTER 2


5. Ibid 4.1.

6. "In Our Schools" — Chapter 6, pages 36/37.

CHAPTER 3


2. Ibid 5.7, 5.8.

3. Ibid 5.4.


6. "The working group was established in line with recommendation 5.5.1 of the report "Towards A Full Life".

7. "Towards A Full Life".

8. Ibid 5.40.

9. Ibid 5.43.

CHAPTER 4

Recommendation 168 — Recommendation Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons).


5. (i) "Whatever Happened To Them?", a study of post school adjustment of past pupils of St. Augustine' School, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

(ii) "Community Integration", a comparative study of past pupils of a special school and an ordinary school. (A. M. Dooley Groarke, Brothers of Charity Services, Woodlands Centre, Renmore, Galway, Ireland.)

7. Ibid.

8. Study carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute: Cross-tabulation of 1982 Survey of Youth Employment and Transition from Education to Working Life.

9. Ibid.


15. Training and Employing the Handicapped, 6.1.


Appendix 2

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions were received from the following:

- AnCO
- CERT
- The Confederation of Irish Industries
- Federated Union of Employers
- Holy Angels School, Glenmaroon, Dublin
- The Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Mr. Henry Leonard, St. Augustine’s Parents’ and Friends’ Association
- Catherine McAuley School, Limerick
- Mother of Fair Love School, Kilkenny
- The National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland (N.A.M.H.I.)
- The National Rehabilitation Board
- North Western Health Board
- Mr. Paul Niall, Scoil Chiarain, Glasnevin, Dublin
- Our Lady of Fatima Special School, Wexford
- Parents, Galway County Association for Mentally Handicapped Rehabilitation Institute
- Scoil Chiarain, Glasnevin, Dublin
- Social Integration Project for Handicapped Persons, Irish District, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
- St. Augustine’s School, Blackrock, Dublin
- St. John’s School, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
- St. Mark’s Special School, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- St. Mary’s Special School, Delvin, Co. Westmeath
- St. Theresa’s School, Blackrock, Dublin
- St. Ultan’s School, Navan, Co. Meath
- Sunbeam House, Industrial Centre for the Mentally Handicapped, Co. Wicklow
- Youth Employment Agency
- Vocational Training Centre, Cork Polio and General After-Care Association, Bonnington, Montenotte, Cork

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Appendix 3

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

Convention 159 –
Convention Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons)

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 Sixty-ninth Session on 1 June, 1983, and

Noting the existing international standards contained in the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955, and the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975, and

Noting that since the adoption of the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955, significant developments have occurred in the understanding of rehabilitation needs, the scope and organisation of rehabilitation services, and the law and practice of many Members on the questions covered by that Recommendation, and

Considering that the year 1981 was declared by the United Nations General Assembly the International Year of Disabled Persons, with the theme “full participation and equality” and that a comprehensive World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons is to provide effective measures at the international and national levels for the realisation of the goals of “full participation” of disabled persons in social life and development, and of “equality”, and

Considering that these developments have made it appropriate to adopt new international standards on the subject which take account, in particular, of the need to ensure equality of opportunity
and treatment to all categories of disabled persons, in both rural and urban areas, for employment and integration into the community, and

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

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of an international Convention,

adopts this twentieth day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and eighty-three the following Convention, which may be cited as the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention 1983:

Part 1: DEFINITION AND SCOPE

Article 1
1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "disabled persons" means an individual whose prospects of securing, retaining and advancing in suitable employment are substantially reduced as a result of a duly recognised physical or mental impairment.
2. For the purposes of this Convention, each Member shall consider the purpose of vocational rehabilitation as being to enable a disabled person to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment and thereby to further such person's integration or re-integration into society.
3. The provisions of this Convention shall be applied by each Member through measures which are appropriate to national conditions and consistent with national practice.
4. The provisions of this Convention shall apply to all categories of disabled persons.
Part 2: PRINCIPLES OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
EMPLOYMENT POLICIES FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Article 2
Each Member shall, in accordance with national conditions, practice any possibilities, formulate, implement and periodically review a national policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons.

Article 3
The said policy shall aim at ensuring that appropriate vocational rehabilitation measures are made available to all categories of disabled persons, in the open labour market.

Article 4
The said policy shall be based on the principle of equal opportunity between disabled workers and workers generally. Equality of opportunity and treatment for disabled men and women workers shall be respected. Special positive measures aimed at effective equality of opportunity and treatment between disabled workers and other workers shall not be regarded as discriminating against other workers.

Article 5
The representative organisations of employers and workers shall be consulted on the implementation of the said policy, including the measures to be taken to promote co-operation and co-ordination between the public and private bodies engaged in vocational rehabilitation activities. The representative or organisations of and for disabled persons shall also be consulted.

Part 3: ACTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Article 6
Each Member shall, by laws or regulations or by any other method consistent with national conditions and practice, take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to Articles 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this Convention.
Article 7
The competent authorities shall take measures with a view to providing and evaluating vocational guidance, vocational training, placement, employment and other related services to enable disabled persons to secure, retain and advance in employment; existing services for workers generally shall, wherever possible and appropriate, be used with necessary adaptations.

Article 8
Measures shall be taken to promote the establishment and development of vocational rehabilitation and employment services for disabled persons in rural areas and remote communities.

Article 9
Each Member shall aim at ensuring the training and availability of rehabilitation counsellors and other suitably qualified staff responsible for the vocational guidance, vocational training, placement and employment of disabled persons.

Part 4: FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 10
The formal ratifications of this Convention shall be communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration.

Article 11
1. This Convention shall be binding only upon those Members of the International Labour Organisation whose ratifications have been registered with the Director-General.
2. It shall come into force twelve months after the date on which the ratifications of two Members have been registered with the Director-General.
3. Thereafter, this Convention shall come into force for any Member twelve months after the date on which its ratification has been registered.
Article 12
1. A Member which has ratified this Convention may denounce it after the expiration of ten years from the date on which the Convention first comes into force, by an act communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration. Such denunciation shall not take effect until one year after the date on which it is registered.
2. Each Member which has ratified this Convention and which does not, within the year following the expiration of the period of ten years mentioned in the preceding paragraph, exercise the right of denunciation provided for in this Article, will be bound for another period of ten years and, thereafter, may denounce the Convention at the expiration of each period of ten years under the terms provided for in this Article.

Article 13
1. The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall notify all Members of the International Labour Organisation of the registration of all ratifications and denunciations communicated to him by the Members of the Organisation.
2. When notifying the Members of the Organisation of the registration of the second ratification communicated to him, the Director-General shall draw the attention of the Members of the Organisation to the date upon which the Convention will come into force.

Article 14
The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations full particulars of all ratifications and acts of denunciation registered by him in accordance with the provisions of the preceding Articles.

Article 15
At such times as it may consider necessary the Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall present to the General Conference a report on the working of this Convention and shall examine the desirability of placing on the agenda of the Conference the question of its revision in whole or in part.
Article 16
1. Should the Conference adopt a new Convention revising this Convention in whole or in part, then, unless the new Convention otherwise provides:
   (a) the ratification by a Member of the new revising Convention shall *ipso jure* involve the immediate denunciation of this Convention, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 12 above, if and when the new revising Convention shall have come into force;
   (b) as from the date when the new revising Convention comes into force this Convention shall cease to be open to ratification by the Members.

2. This Convention shall in any case remain in force in its actual form and content for those Members which have ratified it but have not ratified the revising Convention.

Article 17
The English and French versions of the text of this Convention are equally authoritative.

Recommendation 168
Recommendation Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons)

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 Sixty-ninth Session on 1 June, 1983, and

Noting the existing international standards contained in the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955, and

Noting that since the adoption of the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955, significant developments have occurred in the understanding of rehabilitation needs, the scope and organisation of rehabilitation services, and the law and practice
of many Members on the questions covered by that Recommendation, and

Considering that the year 1981 was declared by the United Nations General Assembly the International Year of Disabled Persons, with the theme “full participation and equality” and that a comprehensive World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons is to provide effective measures at the international and national levels for the realisation of the goals of “full participation” of disabled persons in social life and development, and of “equality”, and

Considering that these developments have made it appropriate to adopt new international standards on the subject which take account, in particular, of the need to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment to all categories of disabled persons, in both rural and urban areas, for employment and integration into the community, and

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

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation supplementing the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955

adopts this twentieth day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and eighty-three the following Recommendation, which may be cited as the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Recommendation, 1983.

55
1. DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

1. In applying this Recommendation, as well as the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955, Members should consider the term “disabled person” as meaning an individual whose prospects of securing, retaining and advancing in suitable employment are substantially reduced as a result of a duly recognised physical or mental impairment.

2. In applying this Recommendation, as well as the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955, Members should consider the purpose of vocational rehabilitation, as defined in the latter Recommendation, as being to enable a disabled person to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment and thereby to further such person’s integration or reintegration into society.

3. The provisions of this Recommendation should be applied by Members through measures which are appropriate to national conditions and consistent with national practice.

4. Vocational rehabilitation measures should be made available to all categories of disabled persons.

5. In planning and providing services for the vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons, existing vocational guidance, vocational training, placement, employment and related services for workers generally should, wherever possible, be used with any necessary adaptations.

6. Vocational rehabilitation should be started as early as possible. For this purpose, health-care systems and other bodies responsible for medical and social rehabilitation should co-operate regularly with those responsible for vocational rehabilitation.
2. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

7. Disabled persons should enjoy equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of access to, retention of and advancement in employment which, wherever possible, corresponds to their own choice and takes account of their individual suitability for such employment.

8. In providing vocational rehabilitation and employment assistance to disabled persons, the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women workers should be respected.

9. Special positive measures aimed at effective equality of opportunity and treatment between disabled workers and other workers should not be regarded as discriminating against other workers.

10. Measures should be taken to promote employment opportunities for disabled persons which conform to the employment and salary standards applicable to workers generally.

11. Such measures, in addition to those enumerated in Part VII of the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955, should include:

   (a) appropriate measures to create job opportunities on the open labour market, including financial incentives to employers to encourage them to provide training and subsequent employment for disabled persons, as well as to make reasonable adaptations to workplaces, job design, tools, machinery and work organisation to facilitate such training and employment;

   (b) appropriate government support for the establishment of various types of sheltered employment for disabled persons for whom access to open employment is not practicable;

   (c) encouragement of co-operation between sheltered and production workshops on organisation and management
questions so as to improve the employment situation of their disabled workers and, wherever possible, to help prepare them for employment under normal conditions;

(d) appropriate government support to vocational training, vocational guidance, sheltered employment and placement services for disabled persons run by non-governmental organisations;

(e) encouragement of the establishment and development of co-operatives by and for disabled persons and, if appropriate, open to workers generally;

(f) appropriate government support for the establishment and development of small-scale industry, co-operative and other types of production workshops by and for disabled persons (and, if appropriate, open to workers generally), provided such workshops meet defined minimum standards;

(g) elimination, by stages if necessary, of physical, communication and architectural obstacles should be taken into account for new public buildings and facilities;

(h) wherever possible and appropriate, facilitation of adequate means of transport to and from the places of rehabilitation and work according to the needs of disabled persons;

(i) encouragement of the dissemination of information on examples of actual and successful instances of the integration of disabled persons in employment;

(j) exemption from the levy of internal taxes or other internal charges of any kind, imposed at the time of importation or subsequently on specified articles, training materials and equipment required for rehabilitation centres, workshops, employers and disabled persons, and on specified aids and devices required to assist disabled persons in securing and retaining employment;

(k) provision of part-time employment and other job arrangements, in accordance with the capabilities of the individual disabled person for whom full-time employment is not immediately, and may not ever be, practicable;

(l) research and the possible application of its results to various types of disability in order to further the
participation of disabled persons in ordinary working life; appropriate government support to eliminate the potential for exploitation within the framework of vocational training and sheltered employment and to facilitate transition to the open labour market.

12. In devising programmes for the integration or reintegration of disabled persons into working life and society, all forms of training should be taken into consideration; these should include, where necessary and appropriate, vocational preparation and training, modular training, training in activities of daily living, in literacy and in other areas relevant to vocational rehabilitation.

13. To ensure the integration or reintegration of disabled persons into ordinary working life, and thereby into society, the need for special support measures should also be taken into consideration, including the provision of aids, devices and ongoing personal services to enable disabled persons to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment.

14. Vocational rehabilitation measures for disabled persons should be followed up in order to assess the results of these measures.

3. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

15. Vocational rehabilitation services in both urban and rural areas and in remote communities should be organised and operated with the fullest possible community participation, in particular with that of the representatives of employers', and disabled persons' organisations.

16. Community participation in the organisation of vocational rehabilitation services for disabled persons should be facilitated by carefully planned public information measures with the aims of:
(a) informing disabled persons, and if necessary their families, about their rights and opportunities in the employment field; and
(b) overcoming prejudice, misinformation and attitudes unfavourable to the employment of disabled persons and their integration or reintegration into society.

17. Community leaders and groups, including disabled persons themselves and their organisations, should co-operate with health, social welfare, education, labour and other relevant government authorities in identifying the needs of disabled persons in the community and in ensuring that, wherever possible, disabled persons are included in activities and services available generally.

18. Vocational rehabilitation and employment services for disabled persons should be integrated into the mainstream of community development and where appropriate receive financial, material and technical support.

19. Official recognition should be given to voluntary organisations which have a particularly good record of providing vocational rehabilitation services and enabling disabled persons to be integrated or reintegrated into the worklife of the community.

4. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IN RURAL AREAS

20. Particular efforts should be made to ensure that vocational rehabilitation services are provided for disabled persons in rural areas and in remote communities at the same level and on the same terms as those provided for urban areas. The development of such services should be an integral part of general rural development policies.

21. To this end, measures should be taken, where appropriate, to:
   (a) designate existing rural vocational rehabilitation services or, if these do not exist, vocational rehabilitation services in urban areas as focal points to train rehabilitation staff for rural areas;
   (b) establish mobile vocational rehabilitation units to serve disabled persons in rural areas and to act as centres for the
dissemination of information on rural training and employment opportunities for disabled persons;
(c) train rural development and community development workers in vocational rehabilitation techniques;
(d) provide loans, grants or tools and materials to help disabled persons in rural communities to establish and manage cooperatives or to work on their own account in cottage industry or in agricultural, craft or other activities;
(e) incorporate assistance to disabled persons into existing or planned general rural development activities;
(f) facilitate disabled persons’ access to housing within reasonable reach of the workplace.

5. TRAINING OF STAFF

22. In addition to professionally trained rehabilitation counsellors and specialists, all other persons who are involved in the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons and the development of employment opportunities should be given training or orientation in rehabilitation issues.

23. Persons engaged in vocational guidance, vocational training and placement of workers generally should have an adequate knowledge of disabilities and their limiting effects, as well as a knowledge of the support services available to facilitate a disabled person’s integration into active economic and social life. Opportunities should be provided for such persons to update their knowledge and extend their experience in these fields.

24. The training, qualifications and remuneration of staff engaged in the vocational rehabilitation and training of disabled persons should be comparable to those of persons engaged in general vocational training who have similar duties and responsibilities; career opportunities should be comparable for both groups of specialists and transfers of staff between vocational rehabilitation and general vocational training should be encouraged.
25. Staff of vocational rehabilitation, sheltered and production workshops should receive, as part of their general training and as appropriate, training in workshop management as well as in production and marketing techniques.

26. Wherever sufficient numbers of fully trained rehabilitation staff are not available, measures should be considered for recruiting and training vocational rehabilitation aides and auxiliaries. The use of such aides and auxiliaries should not be resorted to as a permanent substitute for fully trained staff. Wherever possible, provision should be made for further training of such personnel in order to integrate them fully into the trained staff.

27. Where appropriate, the establishment of regional and subregional vocational rehabilitation staff training centres should be encouraged.

28. Staff engaged in vocational guidance, vocational training, placement and employment support of disabled persons should have appropriate training and experience to recognise the motivational problems and difficulties that disabled persons may experience and, within their competence, deal with the resulting needs.

29. Where appropriate, measures should be taken to encourage disabled persons to undergo training as vocational rehabilitation personnel and to facilitate their entry into employment in the rehabilitation field.

30. Disabled persons and their organisations should be consulted in the development, provision and evaluation of training programmes for vocational rehabilitation staff.
6. THE CONTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYERS' AND WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

31. Employers' and workers' organisations should adopt a policy for the promotion of training and suitable employment of disabled persons on an equal footing with other workers.

32. Employers' and workers' organisations, together with disabled persons and their organisations, should be able to contribute to the formulation of policies concerning the organisation and development of vocational rehabilitation services, as well as to carry out research and propose legislation in this field.

33. Wherever possible and appropriate, representatives of employers', workers' and disabled persons' organisations should be included in the membership of the boards and committees of vocational rehabilitation and training centres used by disabled persons, which make decisions on policy and technical matters, with a view to ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation programmes correspond to the requirements of the various economic sectors.

34. Wherever possible and appropriate, employers and workers' representatives in the undertaking should co-operate with appropriate specialists in considering the possibilities for vocational rehabilitation and job re-allocation of disabled persons employed by that undertaking and for giving employment to other disabled persons.

35. Wherever possible and appropriate, undertakings should be encouraged to establish or maintain their own vocational rehabilitation services, including various types of sheltered employment, in close co-operation with community-based and other rehabilitation services.
36. Wherever possible and appropriate, employers’ organisations should take steps to:

(a) advise their members on vocational rehabilitation services which could be made available to disabled workers;

(b) co-operate with bodies and institutions which promote the reintegration of disabled persons into active working life by providing, for instance, information on working conditions and job requirements which disabled persons have to meet;

(c) advise their members on adjustments which could be made for disabled workers to the essential duties or requirements of suitable jobs;

(d) advise their members to consider the impact that reorganising production methods might have, so that disabled persons are not inadvertently displaced.

37. Wherever possible and appropriate, workers’ organisations should take steps to:

(a) promote the participation of disabled workers in discussions at the shop-floor level and in works councils or any other body representing the workers;

(b) propose guidelines for the vocational rehabilitation and protection of workers who become disabled through sickness or accident, whether work-related or not, and have such guidelines included in collective agreements, regulations, arbitration awards or other appropriate instruments;

(c) offer advice on shop-floor arrangements affecting disabled workers, including job adaptation, special work organisation, trial training and employment and the fixing of work norms;

(d) raise the problems of vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons at trade union meetings and inform their members, through publications and seminars, of the problems of and possibilities for the vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons.
7. THE CONTRIBUTION OF DISABLED PERSONS AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

38. In addition to the participation of disabled persons, their representatives and organisations in rehabilitation activities referred to in Paragraphs 15, 17, 30, 32 and 33 of this Recommendation, measures to involve disabled persons and their organisations in the development of vocational rehabilitation services should include:

(a) encouragement of disabled persons and their organisations to participate in the development of community activities aimed at vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons so as to further their employment and their integration or reintegration into society;

(b) appropriate government support to promote the development of organisations of and for disabled persons and their involvement in vocational rehabilitation and employment services, including support for the provision of training programmes in self-advocacy for disabled persons;

(c) appropriate government support to these organisations to undertake public education programmes which project a positive image of the abilities of disabled persons.

8. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION UNDER SOCIAL WELFARE SCHEME

39. In applying the provisions of this Recommendation, Members should also be guided by the provisions of Article 35 of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952, of Article 26 of the Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964, and of Article 13 of the Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors’ Benefits Convention, 1967, in so far so they are not bound by obligations arising out of ratification of these instruments.
40. Wherever possible and appropriate, social security schemes should provide, or contribute to the organisation, development and financing of training, placement and employment (including sheltered employment) programmes and vocational rehabilitation services for disabled persons, including rehabilitation counselling.

41. These schemes should also provide incentives to disabled persons to seek employment and measures to facilitate a gradual transition into the open labour market.

9. CO-ORDINATION

42. Measures should be taken to ensure, as far as practicable, that policies and programmes concerning vocational rehabilitation are co-ordinated with policies and programmes of social and economic developments (including scientific research and advanced technology) affecting labour administration, general employment policy and promotion, vocational training, social integration, social security, co-operatives, rural development, small-scale industry and crafts, safety and health at work, adaptation of methods and organisation of work to the needs of the individual and the improvement of working conditions.
Appendix 4

MODEL CODE OF POSITIVE ACTION TO PROMOTE THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

1. JOB CREATION

Measures should ensure that disabled people are given a full and fair opportunity to benefit from concerted job creation projects, such as regional development programmes, local employment initiatives, actions to promote the setting up of co-operatives or of smaller medium-sized enterprises, etc.

New employment opportunities for disabled people should be created by means of national initiatives both in the new technology sector itself and in the use of new technologies as aids to make employment possible in other fields. Projects to enable disabled people to take on telework are to be promoted and supported.

Equally, projects are to be promoted and supported which train and prepare disabled people to create their own business, or which find new employment opportunities for them in the media or in services on behalf of other disabled people.

Other sectors are to be identified (such as tertiary services, including tourism and catering; intensive agriculture or horticulture, forestry, etc.), which both have a good future and are suitable for people with various disabilities, and schemes implemented for creating new jobs for disabled people in these fields.

Action should be undertaken at national level to ensure that new telephone systems are adaptable to the needs of blind operators. Representatives of disabled people are to be consulted as to other specific risks to employment resulting from new technological developments, and appropriate action taken. Special national plans
are to be drawn up for the re-employment of mentally handicapped workers who lose their jobs because of changes in the character of the employment market. More opportunities will be created for part-time employment for disabled workers.

2. INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYERS

Funds from public sources are to be made available to cover or contribute to the special costs to an employer of taking on a disabled worker. The eligible expenditures should include adaptations to machinery or equipment, provisions of access facilities and additional staff costs, and the grants should apply both when a worker is re-employed after incurring a disability and for new recruitments. In the latter case, a contribution should also be made from public funds to the worker's salary over a given period of induction training.

3. PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT IN THE WORK PLACE

In all regions placement services with an explicit responsibility to help suitably trained disabled people to find a job should be set up, and the necessary training programmes for placement officers implemented. These services should also be responsible for following and supporting the disabled person in the job, at least for an initial period.

Trade Unions are to be encouraged to give any necessary support to disabled workers and to ensure that their interests are properly catered for in representative structures.

4. SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT

The situation in each Member State should be reviewed in regard to sheltered employment and sheltered occupation, and plans drawn up for the future of this sector. On the quantitative side, plans should assess future demand and the need to develop or reduce such provision. On the qualitative side, the review should take into
consideration the following approaches:

- improving the quality of less successful workshops or centres so that they approximate to the best;
- introducing new forms of activity (for example, in the computer sector) which are both more interesting and commercially more successful;
- increasing the amount of genuine training available in workshops;
- developing the transitional role of workshops, i.e. their function as assessment and personal development centres coming between basic education or a period of unemployment and entry to the open labour market;
- reducing segregation by developing sheltered posts or groups within normal enterprises, or mixed co-operatives.

5. SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS

Measures are to be implemented to ensure that disabled workers who lose their jobs or who cannot find employment after vocational rehabilitation do not find themselves thereafter, simply because of their disability, financially worse off than other workers in similar circumstances.

Measures are also to be taken to ensure that benefit systems do not act as disincentives to part-time employment, to trial periods of employment or to the gradual take up of a job or return to it, whenever any of these patterns is desirable from the disabled worker's and employer's point of view.

6. TRANSITION, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A high priority should be given to improving the availability and quality of vocational preparation and training for disabled people, with particular regard to these factors:

- giving equal consideration to the needs of workers who
incur disability through accident or disease, and to young people whose disability is congenital or was incurred in childhood or adolescence;
— adapting the content of the training courses available to match more realistically the opportunities in the labour market;
— ensuring that training establishments maintain direct links with local representatives of the social partners;
— improving training methods, in particular by developing the use of new technologies as training aids, by introducing modular training and, where appropriate, distant learning facilities;
— encouraging experimentation in course structure and building design so as to facilitate the co-ordination of theoretical and practical training;
— eliminating barriers, by reducing entrance requirements, relaxing age-limit regulations, allowing take-up of courses whenever desired during the year ("staggered" entry), and accelerating official recognition of new courses;
— encouraging disabled trainees to take a more active part in planning their own training programmes;
— enabling disabled trainees to enrol in integrated training courses in normal establishments wherever possible and desirable;
— guaranteeing continuity throughout the transition or rehabilitation process by promoting interprofessional cooperation and the creation of multi-disciplinary teams.

7. **ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE**

In all regions provision is to be made of effective educational and vocational guidance services, with a clear responsibility to meet the needs of disabled people. Where this need is met by a general, rather than specialised, guidance service, measures are to be taken to ensure that staff are trained so as to understand and deal with the special needs of people with disabilities.
Studies are to be undertaken to identify the most effective assessment methods, and these methods introduced as widely as possible. Priority is to be given to the principles that the disabled person himself (and, where appropriate, his family) should participate actively in assessment, and that every client should be encouraged to opt for the best level of training and highest vocational goal of which he is capable.

8. **THE SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENT**

Measures are to be taken to ensure that disabled people live in an environment which makes it possible for them to benefit from further education and training, and to make their full contribution to the economy. Existing legislation is to be effectively implemented and where necessary new legislation introduced to promote suitable housing (wherever possible integrated in the open community), adequate transport to places of training and work and access to and within the workplace, especially in the office sector.

9. **CONSULTATION, CO-ORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION**

National, regional and local authorities should review their systems of consultation, co-ordination and participation including in this review the public services and agencies, the voluntary organisations, independent professionals, the social partners and the media as well as disabled people and their families. Particular priority should be given to the active involvement of disabled people, whether in a representative or personal capacity, in the taking and implementation of decisions concerning them.

10. **INFORMATION AND ADVICE**

For the benefit of disabled people, their families and the professionals (whether case-workers or administrators) concerned, a system of information and advice should be developed. This system should cover technical aids and other questions of
importance to disabled people; it could consist of specialised centres, or of services developed in already existing centres with wider functions; and it should be extended below the national level to regional and local levels over time as resources permit.

Co-ordinated action is also to be undertaken to inform and advise politicians, the social partners and the general public about the capacities and the needs of disabled people. In particular, video programmes on disability problems could be made widely available through appropriate channels such as interest groups and the social partners' training systems.

10. **RESEARCH**

Social research in this field should be encouraged and co-ordinated both in order to analyse needs and possibilities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of measures undertaken. National data bases of all such research should be established.

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