



# **Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation**

## **Summer Field Research for the Employment of People with Disability**

Report by Labour Law and Social Security Law Research Institute of Peking University

## **1. Introduction**

Organized by the International Labor Organization and coordinated by Peking University, this is one of the activities implemented under the ILO project “Promoting the Employment and Employability for People with Disability through Effective Legislation (PEPDEL) in China. Led by Prof. Ye Jingyi of Peking University Law School, students consisting of a Beijing team, a Sichuan team, and a Heilongjiang team investigated the background of these areas where employment of people with disability has been effectively facilitated, for the purpose of exploring the possibility of further improvement through academic research or legal measures.

The three research teams examined the employment situation of the Beijing municipality, Sichuan province and Heilongjiang province, studying the population of people with disability, their main types of employment and individual examples, technical vocational and educational trainings for people with disability, employment of people with disability in rural areas, and relevant supporting policies, etc.

The research, utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, is based on typical samples from a relatively large pool. Statistics have been gathered in the following ways:

- A. field research;
- B. individual interviews, group interviews, and observation during group talks;
- C. document analysis; data collection and comparative analysis, with a focus on action research;
- D. e-mail and phone interviews.

## **2. Key findings of the research**

We are glad to conclude from the research that employment of people with disability in China is progressing towards diversity and self-reliance.

Compared with the old modes of facilitating employment of the disabled, the ratio of centralized job placement has gradually decreased, and there has been comparatively less emphasis on employment in communities and employment by quota system. In contrast, self-directed employment is increasingly encouraged.

However, the following problems still exist:

- Employment rate of people with disability is still low, as the scope of available posts is considerably limited by the types and degrees of disability.
- Although China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) is offering technical vocational and educational trainings and job opportunities to those who incline to work, people with disabilities are still impeded from finding jobs by unfavorable policies, shortage of funds and market demand.
- The external environment that their job and daily life requires is yet to be improved. In addition, the pressure they feel when trying to find jobs still demands more attention.
- Job opportunities for people with intellectual and psychosocial disability and remain marginal ones. Employees are faced with low salary, harsh environment and instability.
- Attention needs to be paid to certain legal issues, such as minimum wage, labor contract, employment of women with disability and migrant workers with disability.

**Possible solutions to the above mentioned problems:**

- To secure more attention from the government, especially local government bureaus, so that they may include facilitation of the employment of the people with disability in their work routine.
- To strengthen cooperation between the CDPF and local government, and to give the former more authority in related areas, so that it may carry out its work more effectively.
- To encourage self-directed employment by improving relevant incentive and relief policies.
- To regulate the labor market of people with disability and to increase their employment rate by providing them with employment information and legal support.
- In rural areas, where the priority is to alleviate poverty, agricultural industries that the area is most suited for need to be encouraged. Where possible, centralized

agricultural bases may be established to employ persons with disabilities, both urban and rural, who are able to work there. Help for marketing their products may be offered.

- To solve problems caused by the lack of the employment security fund for people with disability by providing sufficient financial support.

### **3. Background of Research**

In May 2008, an unprecedented earthquake struck China's Sichuan province. Although the strength and courage of the Chinese people were witnessed in the aftermath, the calamity gave rise to a number of social problems, among which was the employment of the disabled. According to incomplete statistics, the number of disabled persons in Sichuan province rose by more than ten thousand after the earthquake. Having completed their rehabilitation, and having returned to their families and communities, the newly disabled were to start living a different life. In addition to the need shared by other persons with disabilities, those who were victims of the earthquake had special need for psychological counseling, professional service and re-employment. Thus, it was urgent and essential that attention be paid to the living conditions and employment situation of this special group.

Therefore, through this research project, we explored the employment situation of the disabled in Beijing municipality, Heilongjiang province and Sichuan province, witnessed its progress, analyzed its problems, and finally to proposed strategic guidance and advice for employment of people with disability.

During the summer holiday, under-graduate students from Peking University Law Faculty visited Beijing, Chengdu, Ya'an and Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province, and Daqing and several cities in Heilongjiang provinces – areas covering cities, towns, rural areas and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. We interviewed government officials, various level officials of the CDPF, enterprises, non-government organizations and other civil society, as well as disabled persons of various occupations. Statistics and interview materials obtained during the research form the basis of this report.

#### **4. General statistics about employment of the people with disability in Beijing municipality (2009)**

In 2009, 4,054 disabled urban residents of Beijing municipality found employment, an increase of 4.7% in comparison with 2008. Among them, 572 found jobs through centralized job placement, dropping by 9.9% from 2008, 1,177 through employment by quota system, falling by 44.2%, and 2,305 through self-directed employment, twice that of 2008. By the end of 2009, disabled persons who were employed numbered 117,043, rising by 6.8% compared with the year before.

#### **5. General statistics about employment of people with disability in Sichuan province (2009)**

	Urban (persons)	Rural (persons)
<b>Employed</b>	325,719	1,793,152
<b>Unemployed</b>	56,552	386,987
<b>Employment rate</b>	85.2%	82.2%

(Source: “2009 Statistical and Analytical Report of Employment of People with Disability in Sichuan Province”)

#### **6. General statistics about employment of people with disability in Heilongjiang province (2009)**

In 2009, 7,720 disabled urban residents of Heilongjiang province found jobs, among them 2,834 through centralized job placement, 970 through employment by proportion, and 3,916 through self-directed employment and other means. By the end of 2009, the number of disabled persons who were employed reached 139,512.

#### **7. Basic Employment Forms of People with disability in Beijing Municipality, Sichuan Province and Heilongjiang Province**

In recent years, the various levels of government of Beijing municipality, Sichuan province and Heilongjiang province made efforts to facilitate employment of people with disability through various means in accordance with “People’s Republic of China

Regulations on Employment of People with Disability”. At present, there are mainly three forms of employment of people with disability, all of which have undergone a certain degree of development and innovation.

- ***Centralized employment***

Centralized employment, often organized by the local government, refers to job placement of people with the disability in social welfare enterprises. According to our research, social welfare enterprises of the above mentioned municipality and provinces are mainly in the paper-making, printing, catering, food processing and shoemaking industries. Such enterprises, usually located in urban or suburban areas, offer a higher-than-average monthly pay between 1,000 and 2,000 yuan and better social security programs. For people with disability in rural areas, however, the advantage of centralized job placement is less manifest.

With the development of the market economy, social welfare enterprises are also facing a series of challenges from the market:

- The possibility of being eliminated from the competition due to the simplicity of company structure, worn-out equipment, lack of capital, and low qualification of employees;
- Limited room for development due to restrictions on the sources of investment: as only state-owned enterprises and collectively owned enterprises are regarded as qualified applicants for social welfare enterprises, and as the state government no longer invests on social welfare enterprises, investment now comes exclusively from civil administration departments, township government and sub-district offices, for whom it is often hard to reach a consensus on the formulation of relevant policies.
- Cash-flow difficulties caused by the slack execution of tax rebates standards, due to which social welfare enterprises tend to decline even before they are completely developed.

- ***Employment by quota system***

According to our research in Beijing municipality, Sichuan province and Heilongjiang province, the ratio of employment by quota system to 1.5%, which is similar to the average of nation-wide statistics. The CDPF at various levels has facilitated this form

of development by publicizing it and organizing open job fairs for enterprises. However, in the comparatively less developed areas, where enterprises are fewer, the situation of employment by quota system is still far from satisfactory.

The system of employment by quota system still has many problems, as this form of employment is relatively new in China. For example, some employers hire “nominal” disabled workers just to fill the allotted number, paying them a salary slightly above minimum wage, while in fact no people with disability are actually at work. Secondly, the posts offered to persons which disabilities are relatively low. This is in part due to the employers' incomplete understanding of the people with disability, associating disabilities with incompetence and refusing to trust disabled persons with jobs requiring advanced professional skills or important jobs; it is also due to the fact that disabled persons are unable to undertake challenging jobs because of their generally insufficient education or trainings. Thirdly, taking advantage of the slack execution of relevant regulations, the lack of supervision, and the ambiguity of the subject of law enforcement, some enterprises neither employ disabled persons nor pay for the disabled employment fund for the disabled. In addition, in order to avoid paying for the disabled employment fund, some enterprises employ disabled persons only to pass state inspection, after which they immediately dismiss the disabled employees. To solve these problems, the state should reinforce supervision and appropriately penalize such enterprises.

- ***Self-directed employment***

At present, the proportion of self-directed employment of the people with disability has far exceeded that of centralized job placement and employment by quota system. This fact reflects the economic development in China in recent years and signifies a gradual change in the disabled persons' conception of employment. Self-directed employment, which is a flexible form of employment as it covers various aspects of the economic life, has been strongly encouraged in recent years in the above mentioned provinces and municipality. By offering a variety of free technical and vocational training programs to the disabled, local governments and CDPFs have equipped disabled persons with professional skills required for their jobs. In addition,

venture capital and micro loans have been offered, taxes deducted, for those who wished to start their own businesses.

The persons we interviewed for this project include government officials, officer of the CDPF, business executives, persons working at sub-district offices, blind masseurs, restaurant owners, directors of TVET training centers for the people with disability, employees of art troupes of the disabled, and persons with disabilities working in various areas. According to our research, the followings job areas, which offer relatively higher pay and more available posts, are among those welcomed by the disabled.

Area of employment	Average monthly pay	Supplementary information
<b>Blind person massage</b>	Around 2000 yuan	An area actively bolstered by the government, its employment rate is 100% at present. However, qualification of the masseurs is uneven. There is also competition coming from nondisabled masseurs.
<b>Fine darning</b>	4000-5000 yuan (busy season)	Though highly paid, this industry demands skilled craftsmanship, good eyesight and dexterous handicraft. For this reason, it is not a common job for the disabled.
<b>Shoe repair and polishing</b>	700-2000 yuan	This area of employment takes two forms. Those who work individually on sidewalks, facing a low-end market, are generally not well paid, nor do they have a regular income. Others who work for midmarket chain stores or workshops, a specialized and standardized industry with a larger business scale, receive a higher pay. The latter has a high potential as a form of employment for the disabled.
<b>Embroidery</b>	1000-1500 yuan	Actively supported by local CDPFs, embroidery links traditional craftsmanship with employment of the disabled. With its fine craftsmanship and high aesthetic value, it has become a fast developing industry, as is exemplified by “Shuya Fang”, an embroidery workshop in Chengdu, Schuan province
<b>Handicraft making</b>	1500-2000 yuan	Products such as toys and cloisonné jewelry, which require less professional skills, are made in traditional workshops. Not yet industrialized,

		the scale of this business remains relatively small.
<b>Cargo-loading</b>	Around 1000 yuan	A form of heavy manual labor, this occupation tends to wear out the body of disabled persons, and thus the career life is usually short.
<b>Passenger transport in electric tricycles</b>	1000-1500 yuan	This occupation was developed on the basis of a document issued by the CDPF, which stipulates electric tricycle passenger transport as a form of makeshift employment for the disabled. However, as municipal governments decided to transform the urban scene, the number of licenses guaranteed to electric tricycles for passenger transport has been considerably reduced. The outlook of this occupation is rather grim.
<b>Catering</b>	Around 800 yuan	A traditional component of the service industry, catering offers a large number of posts to the disabled.
<b>Art troupe of the disabled</b>	800-1000 yuan	At present, the only officially registered art troupes of the disabled in the researched areas are those in Chengdu and Mianyang, Sichuan Province. Open to the public for both part-time and full-time employment, it is a relatively new form of employment.
<b>Cleaning / Warehouse keeping</b>	800 yuan	Exhausting and unstable.
<b>Graphic and video design</b>	2000-3000 yuan	Actively supported by various levels of the CDPF, it is a “sunrise industry” which has seen a group of young professionals equipped with the knowledge of the information technology at training centers organized by the CDPF.
<b>Household electric appliances maintenance</b>	1500-2000 元	The CDPF offers regular training programs in this area. After several years of training and apprenticeship, most workers can manage to fix appliances on their own.
<b>Newsstands</b>	800-1500 yuan	This form of employment is offered by the social welfare system.
<b>Individual business</b>	800-3000	Usually in the forms of small commodities and low-cost businesses, this industry has a large number of business owners, although among them there is a big discrepancy in income. As local governments and CDPFs are offering much support and subsidies, the prospect of the

industry is promising.

\* According to iTongji.cn, the average monthly salary of Beijing municipality in 2009 was 4,037 yuan, while the minimum wage was 900 yuan per month. The average monthly income of Sichuan province was 1,932 yuan, while the minimum wage was 650 yuan per month. The average monthly income in Heilongjiang province is 1,862 yuan, while the minimum wage was 600 yuan per month.

The areas listed in the table above cover, in fact, only a small portion of the existing forms of self-employment of the disabled. In reality, there is a greater variety in the forms of self-employment, which has played an important role in solving the problem of employment of the disabled, as well as in generating wealth for the society. There is reason to believe that it will play an ever more important role as the economy continues to develop. However, it has to be acknowledged that among the areas covered by this form of employment, there have not been many competitive businesses, which is perhaps due to the insufficiency of education and professional skills of the disabled persons, and the shortage of capital. Another important factor that has impeded the disabled from self-directed employment is the slack execution of relevant regulating policies. In addition, the attendance of social insurance among the disabled is low, as most of them are unable to afford it, so their sustainable livelihoods are not ensured. Therefore, in order to guarantee the development of self-employment of the disabled and their life quality in the future, it is essential that the government takes the initiative to offer more guidance, by quickly implementing relevant tax and credit policies, organizing more training programs and increasing the funding.

- ***Employment of the people with disability in rural areas***

Although the rural-urban development divide has been gradually narrowed as China rapidly develops towards a moderately prosperous society, employment of the people with disability rural residents is still facing serious problems. A large number of disabled rural residents are not yet alleviated from poverty, making up 1/3 of the population under the poverty line, whereas those who are above the poverty line are likely to fall under again. Because of the economic structure and geographical

conditions in rural areas, few disabled rural residents are employed in social welfare enterprises through centralized job placement, nor are they benefiting from employment by proportion. More attention needs to be paid to the employment of this ignored population, and feasible solutions need to be put forward. As the major concern about the disabled in rural areas is their alleviation from poverty, the government and CDPF at various levels have mainly focused on poverty relief and technical and vocational trainings.

To alleviate poverty, the government at various levels has taken into consideration the disabled rural residents who are below the poverty line when making poverty relief plans, devising, completing and implementing special supportive policies. In order to help disabled rural residents find employment and to increase their income, efforts have been made for them to be employed in crop farming, livestock breeding, various trade or handicrafts manship.

Technical vocational and educational trainings are frequently organized by various levels of the CDPF, who initiated training programs in crop farming and livestock breeding. Such programs are more helpful and sustainable than simply offering money and supplies to the disabled, which used to be a common practice. During the investigating of Sichuan province's Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, we found that small-scale collective farming, such as loquat farms, pig farms and tartary buckwheat farms, was a promising industry. Making good use of the combination of land and human resources, with much support from the local government, these farms have made quite good profits.

## **8. Measures Facilitating Employment of the People with Disability**

From interviews with CDPF and government officials on laws, regulations and policies about employment of the disabled, we have summarized the main forms of support for employment of the disabled, which are as follows:

- ***Employment fund for people with disability***

According to "People's Republic of China Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities", employment fund for people with disability is to be paid by government

institutions, enterprises, public institutions, and urban and rural collective economic organizations, whose number of disabled employees fail to meet the proportion set up by the local government, in areas where the policy of quota system employment is implemented. The sum to be paid is calculated in accordance with local laws and regulations, on the basis of the difference between the actual number of disabled employees and the number set up by the local government, together with the average annual income of the area in the previous year. Government institutions, organizations, enterprises, public institutions and urban and rural collective economic organizations are to make active efforts to create jobs for the disabled, and to gradually reach the required proportion, in accordance with “People’s Republic of China Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities”.

According to our feedback from the CDPF, employment security fund for the disabled has become a major source of their budget, providing steady financial support for its programs, such as free professional trainings, employment assistance, job fairs and funds for starting one’s own business. In less developed regions, however, the employment security fund for the disabled is less effective, as the sum collected from government institutions, organizations, enterprises, and public institutions is closely associated with the local economy. As enterprises, the major source of the fund, are relatively few in these two areas, the sum of the fund is consequently small, the help it provides thus rather limited. Therefore, in order to facilitate employment and guarantee the welfare of the disabled, it is highly important to balance the effect of the employment security fund for the disabled in unequally developed regions.

- ***Technical Vocational and Educational Trainings***

In the spirit of “teaching a man how to fish is better than giving him the fish”, an old Chinese slang, aid to the disabled is no longer simply provided to improve their living and medical conditions, but is offered in the form of various vocational trainings. The purpose is to encourage their self-reliance, increase their self-confidence, and extend their life scope, which is perhaps of more help to the improvement of their lives. Considering the general insufficiency of education and physical impairment of the disabled, the following types of free training programs have been gradually formed to

maximize efficiency of the training and to meet the requirement of available jobs:

- (1) blind people massage;
- (2) fine darning;
- (3) software operation and 3D animation design;
- (4) household electric appliances maintenance;
- (5) embroidery.

These training programs are mainly offered in urban areas. Taking Chengdu city for example, 10,000 to 20,000 persons are trained at the city's training center annually. The duration of the training is three to six months, which generally guarantees the mastery of a particular skill. If a person fails to acquire the skill within the scheduled period, the training is continued until he or she has completed acquired the skill.

- ***Technical vocational and educational trainings on the knowledge of farming in rural areas***

Although economy in rural areas has been developing in recent years, the income of disabled rural residents remains relatively low due to their insufficiency of labor force or of education. The problem may be solved by organizing training programs on the knowledge of farming, which will enable the disabled to do the farm work that suits their physical conditions.

- ***Job fairs and recommendation system***

For the purpose of eliminating the information asymmetry between surplus disabled laborers and enterprises in need of labor forces, irregularly scheduled job fairs are organized each year by local CDPFs in the researched areas in cooperation with the local government. The job fairs have also attracted public concern about employment of people with disability.

According to incomplete statistics, 20 to 30 job fairs for the disabled are hosted annually by the CDPFs of the municipal level, each job fair offering from 100 to 500 posts, the hiring rate of which is approximately 25%. Although these jobs usually require simple manual labor, there is reason to believe that there will be a higher demand on more specialized laborers such as masseurs, software engineers and those who specialize on fine darning.

In addition, local CDPFs also recommend to employers disabled persons who have completed their training, for the purpose of securing for them more favorable posts with a higher pay. University graduates students with disability, who are the most competitive and who best meet the demand of the job market among disabled job seekers, are the major objects of recommendation. The successful transformation of the employment problem into labor force will lead to a win-win situation of both personal value and social wealth.

- ***Start-up fund***

To encourage the disabled to start their own businesses, the CDPF has taken a portion of the employment fund for the people with disability to offer to those who have the intention to start their own businesses, while also supporting them with tax exemption or other favorable policies, such as providing them with free leased shops or helping them with marketing. The start-up fund, both as an encouragement and a subsidy, may serve as a good initiative for the disabled to establish their own businesses. According to incomplete statistics, the sum of start-up fund annually offered to the disabled in a city is two to three million yuan; the amount is still likely to increase.

- ***Jobs offered as social welfare***

Launched in recent years, jobs offered as social welfare refer to jobs created by the government and offered to the disabled. For example, since 2008, local disabled residents have been hired as keepers of newsstands, which sell newspapers and magazines as well as sundry goods, have been set up in Suining and Zigong in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Offering the disabled workers with a decent pay and social security subsidies, the newsstand plan has been applauded by both the disabled and the public, and is to be implemented elsewhere on a national scale. An estimated 3000 newsstands will be set up this year within whole China.

## **9. Problems in employment of people with disability in the researched provinces and municipality**

- Jobs of the disabled is generally unstable, not well paid, and on a lower level of the social stratum.

- Employment assistance and security systems are relatively weak due to the lack of financial support from the government.
- Because they are often less educated, the disabled are less competitive in the job market, nor are they aware of their rights when looking for a job.
- Discrimination still exists as a barrier between enterprises and the disabled, for which the public has not shown enough concern.
- The cooperation between the government and the CDPF is yet to be improved.
- In face of the limited types of jobs currently available to the disabled, the disabled need to broaden their conception of employment.

## Solutions

- More attention is required from the government, especially the local ones. It is best if they include employment of the disabled in their work routine.
- In order for the CDPF to carry out their work more effectively, cooperation with the government needs to be improved. In addition, they should be endowed with more authority on facilitating employment of the disabled.
- The disabled should be encouraged to start their own businesses. In order for them to do so, relevant incentive and relief policies should be enhanced.
- In order to increase the hiring rate, job fairs for the disabled need to be improved to provide more employment information and legal assistance to the disabled.
- More technical vocational training programs should be organized to equip the disabled with knowledge and skills for a greater variety of jobs.
- In rural areas, where the priority is to alleviate poverty, agricultural industries that best suit the area need to be encouraged. Where possible, centralized agricultural bases may be established to employ persons with disabilities, both urban and rural, who are able to work. Help for marketing their products may be offered.
- In order to solve financial problems caused by the shortage of employment fund, the government needs to offer more financial support to impoverished areas and rural areas.

## Appendix: Abstracts of Interviews

### **1. Beijing Enamel factory**

Location: Beijing Enamel factory

Time: late August, 2010

Interviewer: Yuan Lin

#### *Background information:*

Established in January, 1956, its nameplate inscribed in the calligraphy of Guo Moruo, a celebrated Chinese poet, Beijing Enamel factory is the only China's Time-Honored Brand in the enamel making industry. Combining research and manufacture of enamel products with commerce and tourist visits, it is not only the leading enterprise in the industry, but also an "Important Foreign Affairs Reception Site of Beijing Municipality" and "National Model of Industrial Tourist Attraction". "Jingfa" enamel, its main product, is sold across China and exported to many countries and regions around the world. In November, 2010, it underwent a reform and was turned from a state-owned enterprise to a limited liability company.

#### *Findings:*

As a long established state-owned enterprise, Beijing Enamel Factory has long been making efforts to find placement for the disabled. More than sixty disabled persons had been employed before the 1980s, and although for various reasons, some of them left the factory before retirement, there are still 30 disabled persons among the retired workers of the factory at present. Its current employees include 15 disabled persons, some of whom bear the title of "China Arts and Crafts Master", while others have become senior technicians or executives of the factory. After the factory's reform in 2002, leaders of the factory have attached greater importance on the placement of disabled workers. Having taken a number of specific measures, the factory was appraised several times as an "outstanding enterprise in placement of the disabled":

- Managers and directors were brought together to the full realization of the urgency, essentiality and significance of finding placement for the disabled. After the reform in

2002, they held several meetings in accordance with the spirit of relevant documents, seeking for ways to better place the disabled in such aspects as recruitment, induction, training, pay and welfare and management.

- The recruitment was carried out conscientiously, offering various posts to the disabled according to the nature of their disability, and giving priority to those who were economically disadvantaged. At each job affair, the human resources department listened to the disabled persons' expectations about the job, and placed them in posts as close to their expectations as possible.

- To improve the disabled employees' professional skills, specific apprenticeship programs were carried out. Most disabled persons hired in recent years have hearing or speaking deficiencies. The company has arranged for them to be apprenticed to nationally acclaimed masters to personally pass on the skills. Ceremonies were held as kick-offs of such mentoring relationships.

- The factory fully respects the disabled employees' civil rights and personal dignity. For years, they have been treated equally as other employees in matters of status and promotional opportunities, as well as in the adjustment of salary, welfare distribution, annual leaves, etc. Furthermore, the company has guaranteed them equal chance for competition. Through their personal endeavor, the disabled employees may hope to obtain the titles of junior, intermediate or senior technician, or to become municipally or nationally acclaimed arts and crafts masters.

- The factory has taken the initiative to help the disabled employees with problems in their daily life as well as in their work, so that they may feel the warmth coming from the factory as if it were their family.

#### *Interview with a master*

Master Mi Zhenxiong was recruited into Beijing Enamel Factory in 1958, when he started learning the art of wire pinching. In 1962, he began to learn painting by himself, and in 1984 he was enrolled in the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts to study painting. Starting off as an ordinary worker, he later became workshop supervisor. Specializing in both pattern design and in the craft of wire pinching, he created many remarkable works such as "Juxiong Vase", "Taolong Vase", "Zhushou

Vase” and “Qunxian Zhushou” which, at the same time preserving the tradition and introducing innovations, made significant contribution to the development of the craftsmanship of cloisonné-making in Beijing. Although he is now in his fifties with physical disabilities, Mr Mi is still at work after being re-employed from his retirement. Having visited the workshop where Mr Mi teaches his pupils, instructs and participates in the design, and having seen in the showroom some of his best works, we were convinced that Master Mi Zhenxiong has set an extraordinary example as a disabled person who has made great achievement in his career.

#### *Interviews with technicians*

Disabled employees are working in their workshop on the second procedure of enamel making. Among them are persons with physical disabilities and hearing difficulties, whom, we have learned from interviews, were quite satisfied with their salary and working environment. From the person in charge of employment of the disabled in the factory, we heard two touching stories. At one time, a mother accompanied her disabled son to a job fair, pleading repeatedly for the factory to employ her son, explaining that with herself laid off, and her husband in poor health, it was very hard for her family to get by. Her son, 24 years old, had been to a dozen job fairs, but no employer was willing to hire him. Having heard that Beijing Enamel Factory, a long established state-owned enterprise, was known for its generosity towards the disabled, she had come to adjure them to help her family. After seriously considering her request, the factory decided to hire her son. Although the factory was originally looking for a janitor, the directors decided, after a discussion, that the young man should receive training in order for him to be a technician, a decision intended for his better future development. Eventually the young man was arranged to be working at the wire pinching procedure. Shortly after, several of his classmates, having heard of his good news, came to the factory hoping to find jobs. They were subsequently arranged to do wire pinching or cloisonné dotting, processes which require high technical skills.

There are more examples. Li Li, a person with hearing and speaking difficulties, was apprenticed to Mr Dai Jialin, a Nationally Acclaimed Master of Arts and Crafts.

Despite the difficulty of communication, Master Dai taught Li the art of cloisonné dotting through handwriting and various other means. Thanks to Master Dai's patience, confidence and persistence, Li Li soon learned the art of cloisonné dotting. Zuo Hong, another worker with hearing and speaking difficulties, was pupil to Nationally Acclaimed Master of Arts and Crafts Mr Zhong Liansheng, who is now also the chief engineer of the factory. Under Master Zhong's guidance, Zuo, who began as a cloisonné dotting technician, has become a pattern designer. The cloisonné works she designed, "Tender Night" and "Summer Lotus", won respectively "Choicest Work" and "Outstanding Work" of Chinese Arts awards and Crafts at the 9th and 10th "Tiangong Yiyuan – Baihua" Exhibition of Works of Masters of Chinese Arts and Crafts and International Exhibition of Choice Art Crafts in 2008 and 2009.

## **2. Peking University "National Training Program for Directors of Local CDPFs"**

Location: Room 217, Building of the Department of Economics, Peking University

Time: early September, 2010

Researcher: Yuan Lin

### *Introduction:*

Co-hosted by Peking University Institute of Population Research, the Department of Organization and Cooperation and the Research Center of the CDPF, the "National Training Program for Directors of Local CDPFs" is a major project of China Education and Training Base for the Cause of the Disabled at Peking University in the first half of the year 2010. The program is intended to help directors of the cause for the disabled to broaden their perspective, extend their knowledge, and exchange their experience, for them to better carry out their work with increased competence. Together the directors discussed the significance of the cause for the disabled, explored its direction of future development, and the difficulties that might be encountered on the way. The discussions were held on the general background of the "Twelfth Five-Year Plan", seeking to relate the cause for the disabled with the construction of the "two systems". The main purpose of the program was to improve the overall qualification of those who are working for the cause of the disabled in

China, provide an intellectual foundation for its sustainable development, and to speed up construction of the “two systems”, so as to contribute to the development of the cause for the disabled and the construction of the harmonious society in the new era. The program is the first in China to offer a systematic training for directors of the cause for the disabled since the establishment of the CDPF, and also the first of its kind held at Peking University. Planned to offer training to more than 300 directors of local CDPFs across China, the program will be held in three sessions. The first session, which has been successfully completed, was highly regarded by the CDPF as well as by the trainees, and received a favorable feedback from the society in general.

### **3. China Disable Persons’ Federation Employment Service Center**

Location: China Disable Persons’ Federation Employment Service Center

Time: early September, 2010

Researcher: Yuan Lin

#### *Introduction:*

An institution directly under the CDPF, the Employment Service Center for people with Disability is directed by the executive council of the CDPF, and under the guidance of the education and employment department of the CDPF. Its main function is to direct, advise and organize programs for training and employment of the disabled in China, and to administer the industry of blind person massage. Its main responsibilities include: to assist the government with their decision-making in the formulation and implementation of laws, regulations, policies, plans and administrative measures concerning employment of the disabled; to undertake the planning and organization of professional trainings for the disabled in China; to be responsible for the development and service of employment of the disabled; to instruct the local CDPFs on the registration of unemployed disabled persons; to establish a professional qualification system for the disabled; to take charge of the development of the disabled persons’ professional skills and the corresponding evaluation system; to host nationwide competitions and awards of professional skills of the disabled; to be in charge of the standardization of career centers of the CDPF;

to supervise the management and use of the employment security fund for the disabled; to administer the business of blind person massage; and to superintend the work of the China Blind Masseurs Society.

*Findings:*

The day we visited the job center, there was a job fair especially held for deaf persons by the Beijing branch of the CDPF, as it was the International Day of the Deaf that day. 15 companies came to the job fair, each accompanied by a specialist in sign language to help the companies communicate with the applicants. It turned out that what the applicants cared about most when looking for a job was not much different from what ordinary people did, such as the amount of the salary, the numbers of working days each week and the length of annual leave.

At the job fair, a deaf interviewer from the Peking University Pharmaceuticals attracted much attention. It was understood that the company selected her as the interviewer because, graduated from Beijing No.3 School for the Deaf as a worker specialized in the packaging of pharmaceuticals, she had many years of work experience. According to the Career Center, 15 companies attended the job fair, which is 30% higher than last year. The available posts included such areas as ticket sales, gardening, central operation of fire alarms, database engineering and human resources. This year, 87 disabled university graduates visited job fairs of this kind, 86 of which were employed.

From our talk with several disabled applicants after the fair, we learned that the jobs they found were usually temporary, most of them involving manual labor, and requiring extra working hours and days – sometimes they had to work more than eight hours a day, six days a week, which confirmed the information we acquired in previous interviews.

#### **4. Chengdu Art Troupe of the Disabled**

Time: 27 August, 2010

Location: Chengdu, Sichuan Province

Interviewees: performers in the troupe, respectively named Shu (male), Wang (male)

and Zhou (female)

*Findings:*

When I arrived at the Chengdu Art Troupe for the Disabled to conduct interviews, the main members of the art troupe were at a performance in Tibet. Having seen pictures of the troupe and read relevant introductions, I visited the staff dormitory, which was not much different from an average university dormitory. Five disabled performers, all in their teens or twenties, were watching television together; the atmosphere was much more joyful than I had imagined. After the interview, I took photos with the performers and invited them to dinner.

From the interview, I learned that three of these performers come from Qingchuan County, Sichuan province, which suffered severely during the earthquake. They were amputated after the earthquake and, having completed their treatment, were employed as performers in the Chengdu Art Troupe of the Disabled with the help of the local government.

- Shu, male, 30 years, former dancer of the art troupe, now backstage staff

Amputated after a traffic accident, when he was 20 years old, Shu, with the help of the local CDPF, entered a blind person massage parlor to study massage. After studying there for two years, however, unsatisfied with the low pay and the monotony of the job, he decided to quit and look for new jobs. He told us that as a disabled person, the difficulty of finding a job on one's own was more than one could imagine. Having looked for jobs for six months without success, on one occasion he became acquainted with a person who professed himself to be a "businessman" engaged in the medical business. The man invited Shu to do business with him, but after Shu gave him the money which he had taken pains to find, the man disappeared altogether. Shu was so frustrated by the experience that he even thought of committing suicide. During the interview, Shu remarked how the lack of legal knowledge served as an impediment to a disabled person when he was trying to find his place in the society. Since then, whenever a training program on legal issues was hosted by the CDPF, he participated with enthusiasm. As a result, he has acquired much knowledge about labor contracts, business contracts and criminal liabilities.

Generally speaking, Shu was content about his present job. The greatest advantage of working in an art troupe for the disabled is that there is no discrimination; instead, it sought to develop their creativity and career potential. However, it still has disadvantages such as low pay and the pressure of career change. In answer to the question about his plan about the future, he said that he would do his best to stay in the art troupe to do administrative or backstage work. In addition, his deepest wish was to find a wife who was willing to go through life with him, and to start up his own family.

- Zhou, female, 15, from Qingchuan country, dancer

When Zhou, a gentle and lovely girl, laughed in her wheelchair at a TV program, I had the impression that she seemed like a carefree little girl living next door, rather than a disabled person amputated two years ago because of the earthquake.

Having lost her left leg in the earthquake, she was sent to Guangzhou to receive treatment, and came home after six months. About the abrupt change that happened to her body, she admitted that it was very hard to accept it at first, as she would never be able to walk or hop again, but there were many people around to offer their help, and the government, which promised to offer free artificial limbs to victims of the earthquake throughout their lifetime, gave her a high-quality artificial leg.

Life in the art troupe was busy and refreshing. Xiaozhou liked performing and visiting places, but she would also like to study in her spare time. But that, she laughed, was a luxury to her.