1. **Current Developments in Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Turkey**

In all over the world benefitting from the education and employment opportunities and getting the supports needed are basic prerequisites for a life worthy of human dignity. In the framework of the disability policy in Turkey, the right of education, health, employment, social security and participation of persons with disabilities into social life as equal citizens are legally guaranteed. Turkey has guaranteed basic rights of persons with disabilities by signing international conventions and by constitutional and legislative regulations at the national level. Although there are various problems in practice, significant developments have been experienced in the employment of persons with disabilities through some good practices in recent years.

In this framework, in addition to the quota/quota-levy scheme that is regulated by the Labour Law numbered 4857, State Personnel Law numbered 657 and the relevant secondary legislation, recently self-employment and supported employment methods have gained importance as good practices.

* 1. **Supported Employment**

Supported employment model starting from the 1980s has provided positive results in the employment of persons with disabilities all over the world. This model has started to be implemented in Turkey through some projects. One of these projects was “Join Work Join Life Project, implemented in Ankara, Istanbul, Samsun, Manisa, Sakarya and Gaziantep provinces between 2014 and 2018 by the General Directorate of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly under the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services.

The Project aims at employing persons with disabilities without a vocational education background in line with their individual characteristics and thus fulfilling the workforce needs of the local businesses. Project activities also intend to make persons gain occupational skills in real occupational surroundings and to train job coaches that will guide persons with disabilities to be employed. The Project covers a pilot scheme on developing a supported employment model in Turkey. Starting in 2014, the project was realized in two phases, the first phase was completed in July 2016 and the second phase in July 2018.

In the first phase of the project, a modelling study was carried out in Ankara, Istanbul, Sakarya, Samsun and Gaziantep provinces to develop the supported employment model in Turkey. It is aimed to train job coaches who will guide persons with disabilities, their families, colleagues and employers to be employed in areas suitable for their abilities and skills. In this context, with the support of 60 job coaches, it was aimed to employ 300 persons with disabilities in the above-mentioned provinces in the open labour market, and 447 persons with disabilities were placed in jobs by exceeding the initially targeted figures.

Within the scope of the preparatory work in the first phase of the project, a wide literature review was carried out for the selection of the job coaches, the preparation of the training package to be given to the job coaches, the development of the professional competencies draft, and the model and necessary material of the work in the field. At the end of this stage, a training package was prepared, the selection of job coach candidates among individuals with job and occupational counselling certificates was completed, and job coaching training was provided to the selected candidates for not less than 60 hours. The content of the training programmes is designed to improve the level of knowledge of job coach candidates and to provide them with the skills they will need in the field. In these training programmes, it was mainly focused on the issues of disability and employment, legislation on employment, behavioural regulations in individuals, skills training, job analysis, communication/ cooperation, documentation/ evaluation and problem-solving. Job coaches who completed their training started to work in the mentioned provinces and worked for the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market with the aim of matching the business world and the person with disability effectively.

In the second phase of the project during the period between 2016 and 2018, it was aimed to test the efficiency of the model developed in the first phase, by measuring the impact through placements under different conditions in various provinces and identifying the factors that affect the effective use of the model in country conditions. The second phase of the project, which was aimed at 300 placements with 15 job coaches in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir provinces, resulted in 450 placements.

* 1. **Self-Employment**

In recent years self-employment has become one of the prominent methods in the employment of persons with disabilities in recent years. This method has become widespread with the provision of grant support from the Fund, which consists of fines collected from employers who do not fulfil their obligation to employ persons with disabilities. In order to benefit from this grant, persons with disabilities should attend to the Entrepreneurship Training Program organized by the General Directorate of Employment Agency and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development and Support Administration and apply through a project.

In this context, the following supports will be provided for the projects that will be prepared according to the application guide published in the announcements section of the website of the General Directorate of Employment Agency and submitted to the Institution:

**Establishment Operations Support:** up to 650 $ (for expenses such as official transactions, approvals, permits, licenses and insurance for the establishment of the workplace in return for documents)

**Business Expense Support:** up to 1.950 $ in total per year (for a period of 12 months after the contract signature date, not exceeding 60% of the operating expenses (water, electricity, communication, heating, promotion and rent) in return for documents)

**Establishment Support:** up to 5.750 $ including taxes (For costs such as machinery, equipment, software, hardware, intermediate material, consumables, office equipment related to the main field of activity of the enterprise for 12 months from the date of signing the contract)

In this context, a total of 13 million dollars grant support has been provided since 2014. This support, which was $ 6.250 per person in 2019, increased to $ 8.125 in 2020.