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Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine

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Abstract: The main directions of Ukraine's social policy towards the disabled are presented in the article. Topical issues of integration of persons with disabilities into society are covered. The meaning of the concept of "social stigmatization" is revealed. The authors analyze and define the tools of social stigma in the legislation of Ukraine on issues of social integration of persons with disabilities. It has been proven that stigma in some cases deprives a person of full status, becomes a source of prejudice, discrimination, social isolation of the stigmatized, causes low self-esteem and feelings of depression, forms a negative social identity, and complicates psychosocial adaptation. Certain steps have

already been taken to ensure the protection of persons with disabilities by creating appropriate conditions for them in society and equal opportunities for the realization of vital needs, abilities, and creative potential. The article defines a system of measures aimed at improving the lives of persons with disabilities, restoring their social status, achieving material independence, and comprehensive integration into society. The authors also propose measures to remove obstacles caused by stigmatization in the way of integration of persons with disabilities into society.

Keywords: discrimination; persons with disabilities; social integration; stigma; stereotype.

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Introduction

In the modern world, there is a need to integrate persons with disabilities into society by overcoming not only physical but also symbolic barriers in their lives. At the present stage of development of Ukrainian society, the socio-psychological aspect of the relationship between persons with disabilities and a healthy part of society acquires special significance. Modern society can be divided into two groups in relation to persons with disabilities. The former consider the integration of such persons into society unnecessary and treat persons with disabilities extremely negatively, believing that “persons with disabilities should live with persons with disabilities”, “healthy persons will never understand persons with disabilities”. Others are in favor of integrating persons with disabilities into society, believing that “everyone should be equal and we must understand each other”, and this is possible only if we live together. Persons with disabilities often feel a negative attitude towards themselves on the part of society. And the percentage of depressed persons increases depending on the severity (degree) of disability and the degree of external manifestation of the disease. The integration of a person into society implies his or her full inclusion in all spheres of society, destigmatization of a person on any grounds (age, sex, race, health, religion, behavior, etc.). The integration of persons with disabilities into society becomes especially important, as they are very often “excluded” from society (Filipović & Matejić Đuričić, 2018).

In recent years, the social policies of many developed countries towards persons with disabilities have undergone significant changes. Attitudes towards persons with disabilities, as those who need constant care, support and assistance, and who cannot live an active social life, have changed towards them as full members of society who have equal rights on an equal footing with other citizens of the country. The changes in society that have taken place in recent decades, in turn, should lead to changes in the formation of public policy, which should become more focused on measurable results and goals. Along with progressive laws, there should be positive changes in the public consciousness regarding persons with disabilities. The phenomenon of stigmatization and excessive assistance, which provoke the growth of indifference, hostility and even cruelty, must be eliminated in the

minds of people. Instead, the priority should be to create a positive image of the disabled.

Theoretical Framework or Literature Review

Analysis of scientific publications (Stacy, Lindsey & Tsai (2020); Davey & Gordon, 2017; Kuznetsova, Yalcin & Priestley, 2017; Ochoa Oliva, Reyes Martinez & Sandoval-Bringas, 2019; McCausland, Carroll, Mccallion & Mccarron, 2018; Venema, Vlaskamp & Otten, 2018; Raine, 2018) indicates the presence of current issues regarding the social integration of persons with disabilities. However, despite the large number of studies, the degree of study of the problem cannot be considered sufficient. Therefore, it needs further research in terms of determining the impact of excessive assistance and social stigma on the social integration of persons with disabilities.

Social stigma has been studied by philosophers, sociologists and scientists. This is reflected in the emergence of different definitions of this concept. E. Chapman (2000), J. Crocker, B. Major (1989), I. Hoffman (1963), R. Parker, P. Aggleton (2003), K. Chan, C. Lam (2017) believe that stigma determines the attitude to a person or a certain group of people from neutral (silence) to negative (exile, violence). The term “stigma” (from the Latin stigma – “brand”, “label”) means a social stigma that causes social isolation or becomes an obstacle to a full social life. American psychologists M. Stafford and R. Scott understand stigma as a characteristic of persons that contradicts the norm of society, where “norm” refers to the general belief that a person should behave in a certain way at a certain time (Stafford & Scott, 1986, p. 80-81). Scientists explain the difficulty of studying the phenomenon of stigma by the presence of a significant number of its types: old age, paralysis, cancer, drug addiction, mental illness, shortness of breath, blackness, alcoholism, smoking, crime, homosexuality, unemployment, Jewish membership, overweight, blindness, epilepsy, receiving social assistance, illiteracy, divorce, ugliness, stuttering, female gender, poverty, disability, deafness, etc. (Stafford & Scott, 1986, p. 77).

B. Major and L. O’Brien, in the article “The social psychology of stigma” (Major & O’Brien, 2005), associate the definition of stigma with some trait that is associated with negative evaluations and stereotypes that are known to and shared by members of the same culture. Stigmatic, unworthy of respect, depending on the specific environment or culture, can be considered

such human characteristics as skin color, disease. Stigma reduces the objectivity of the assessment of specific people (stigmatized), and can sometimes hinder their integration into society. Quite often the presence of stigma leads to discrimination, when beliefs are translated into action. Stigma affects the social identity of individuals, devaluing it in the eyes of others, and it not only affects the feelings, thoughts and behavior of these individuals, but also has a negative impact on their living conditions and health.

Thus, stigma is a certain characteristic feature of a person that discredits him or her in the eyes of others. It is a physical or social sign (for example, disability or criminal reputation), a sign that is perceived in the social environment as humiliating. Stigma indicates a sign or label that was applied in a certain way to the human body and was intended to characterize it as “defective” in moral terms. Stigma occurs when an individual or group differs from the dominant social norm and is negatively evaluated by society, subject to moral exclusion from others who evaluate them (Goffman, 1963; Williams, Brumback, Cook, Cook, Ezenwa & Lucero, 2021; Ng, Lam, Tsang, Yuen, Chien, 2020; Pelleboer-Gunnink, van Oorsouw, van Weeghel, & Embregts, 2021).

There are two types of stigma: external and internal. External stigma is directed outwards, a person becomes the object of stigmatization by other people. External stigma can take many forms: physical violence, moral humiliation, accusation, condemnation, ignoring, and so on. This is not a tolerant attitude of others to a person who is different from others. I. Goffman connects the concept of “stigma” with physical defects, defects of individual character, which arise as a result of mental illness, alcoholism, imprisonment, drug use, unemployed status of the individual, low social status, in particular, associated with unemployment, inability to receive education, belonging to an individual race, nationality or religious group. He believes that stigma manifests itself when a person differs from the dominant social norm by certain criteria, and when society gives him or her a negative assessment. The consequence of this is that the identity of the individual is evaluated through the prism of this parameter, and the person is dehumanized in the eyes of those who evaluate. The scientist points to the low status of the “stigmatized” and warns of the danger they may pose to “hostile” society (Goffman, 1963, p. 15).

Internal stigma is the result of a person’s inner experiences and forms the perception of himself or herself as a carrier of undesirable qualities. It can manifest itself as a feeling of inferiority, helplessness and lead to loss of control over one’s life and to the inability to establish social contacts (Khazem, Anestis, Gratz, Tull & Bryan, 2021; Colic, Dababnah & Milacic-Vidojevic, 2021). The emergence of internal stigma is provoked by the attitude and actions of others, and at the same time the internal stigma reinforces the external. This is confirmed by J. Crocker, B. Major and S. Steele in the work “Social Stigma”. Scientists say that stigmatization occurs when an individual has some specific feature that distinguishes him or her, and he or she believes in its existence. They believe that stigmatization can threaten identity and define the following functions: increase one’s self-esteem by stigmatizing others; support for a positive social identity, which in turn leads to justification of discrimination against the out-group; legitimization of inequality of the status of this or that group (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998).

The term “stigma” is associated with concepts such as “stereotype”, “prejudice”. Thus, M. Biernat and J.F. Dovidio, expanding the context of the concept of “stigmatization”, in the article “Stigma and stereotypes” note that “stereotype” and “stigmatization” are not identical, emphasizing that stereotypes arise in relation to socially identified (defined) groups (Biernat & Dovidio, 2000). J.C. Phelan, B.G. Link and J.F. Dovidio in the article “Stigma and Prejudice” note that stigma and prejudice have more in common than differences, and perform three main functions: exploitation, dominance, strengthening social norms (Phelan, Link & Dovidio, 2008).

Methodology

The purpose of the article is to reveal the concept of “excessive assistance” and its place in the state policy of Ukraine, as well as to identify instruments of social stigma in the legislation of Ukraine on social integration of persons with disabilities, their impact and consequences. Analyzing the legislation, it can be noted that there are socio-political tools for targeted addressing issues of state policy in the field of social security in Ukraine: certain categories of recipients of state aid, system of payments, benefits and restric-

tions, wage supplements, pensions and other benefits. This is determined by more than 45 laws and other regulations in Ukraine. Of these, the rights of citizens to benefits and compensations on a professional basis are regulated by 22 laws, presidential decrees and resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Relevant benefits to citizens on social grounds are provided on the basis of 23 legislative acts. However, this approach of the state does not contribute to the wider involvement of persons with disabilities in public life, the realization of their rights as citizens of the country. The study of data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine allows the development of the concept, planning and evaluation of disability policy and issues in the country.

Results and Discussion

In order for persons with disabilities to be maximally involved in socio-political life, it is important to analyze statistical data and keep records of disability indicators in accordance with the political processes of the state and national legislation. This provides an opportunity to compare them and monitor the dynamics of data on the involvement of persons with disabilities and the participation of persons with disabilities in socio-political life at the national and international levels.

After analysing the statistics, it becomes clear that the percentage of persons with disabilities in the total number of people in the country is significantly influenced by political processes and decisions made by various branches of government. This is due to the fact that the processes caused by political decisions such as emigration, labor migration, military conflicts lead to an increase in the percentage of persons with disabilities. Today, more than 1 billion people (15% of the world's population) have some type of disability. In Ukraine, the number of persons with disabilities in 2020 was more than 2,7 million people – this is 6.5% of the total population against 5.3% in 2001.

Analyzing the period from 2001 to 2020, in 2006 the lowest number of persons with disabilities was recorded in Ukraine. Then there is a rapid increase in the number of persons with disabilities in 2011 due to the economic crisis in 2008-2009. In the context of the economic crisis in Ukraine, labor migration was

observed. The form of employment of migrants often takes place outside the legal field, when there is no social protection, medical examination, proper working and living conditions. This leads to a sharp deterioration in health, or even disability, and as a result, the above conditions make it impossible to continue working abroad and force them to return. The events in the country in 2013-2014, related to the armed conflict in Donbass and the annexation of Crimea, led to a sharp decline due to the lack of statistics in these regions. But in fact the total number of persons with disabilities in the country has increased.

Persons with disabilities are classified into groups in Ukraine. In 2020 more than 2.7 million persons had disabilities, including group I – 222.3 thousand persons, group II – 900.8 thousand persons, group III – 1416.0 thousand persons and 163.9 thousand children with disabilities.

Such a large number of persons with disabilities has identified the main direction of social policy of the Ukrainian state towards persons with disabilities, which consists of a system of measures aimed at improving their lives, restoring social status, achieving material independence and comprehensive integration into society. Programs for social protection of the disabled are included in the priority state programs.

Ukraine has identified and declared at the legislative level: “Ukraine shall be a sovereign and independent, democratic, social, law-based state. An individual, his life and health, honour and dignity, inviolability and security shall be recognised in Ukraine as the highest social value. Human rights and freedoms, and guarantees thereof shall determine the essence and course of activities of the State. The State shall be responsible to the individual for its activities. Affirming and ensuring human rights and freedoms shall be the main duty of the State.” (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996). Therefore, the state should take this into account in strategic policy planning and promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, while providing social protection and creating conditions for such persons' rights on an equal footing with other citizens.

Thus, the Law of Ukraine “About bases of social security of persons with disability in Ukraine” establishes: “Discrimination on the basis of disability is forbidden” (About bases of social security of persons with disability in Ukraine. Law of Ukraine of March 21, 1991). The terms “reasonable adaptation” and

“universal design” are used in the value given in the Convention on the rights of persons with disability (United Nations Organization, 2006), and the term “discrimination on the basis of disability” is used in the value given in the Convention on the rights of persons with disability and the Law of Ukraine “About the principles of prevention and counteraction of discrimination in Ukraine” (About the principles of prevention and counteraction of discrimination in Ukraine, 2012). “Discrimination on the basis of disability” means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation “Reasonable accommodation” means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 2. About the principles of prevention and counteraction of discrimination in Ukraine, 2012).

The analysis of the legislation shows that the social policy of Ukraine is aimed mainly at the material support of persons with disabilities (pensions, benefits, one-time benefits). This in turn puts this social group in the subsidy category. And in reality, persons with disabilities today belong to the most socially vulnerable categories of the population; the state of observance of their rights indicates a lack of participation of persons with disabilities in the economic and social life of society. It is known that a significant part of the disabled is poorly provided for. The small amount of social assistance from the state and the special needs of such persons do not allow maintaining a socially acceptable standard of living. Families of persons with disabilities who live in poverty for a long time are characterized by unhealthy food, inaccessibility of modern medical care, psychological stress, early death, forced refusal to give birth to children, inability to give them a normal education, lack of opportunities for rest and more.

The Government of Ukraine is aware of the complexity of the socio-economic situation in the country

and has identified improving the quality and standard of living of Ukrainian citizens as one of its development priorities. It has identified key priorities and is actively implementing reforms that make it possible to implement the principles of social justice and ensure the continued improvement of the well-being of the population. Thus, the government has formed the following priorities: comprehensive reform of the wage system, introduction of European standards in the field of social and labor relations, reform of the pension system, targeted provision of state social assistance, decentralization of social services and their development at the level of territorial communities (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2017).

One of the indicators for assessing the stability of the state’s economy is the ratio of expenditures on social benefits to the share of gross domestic product. Thus, the assessment of the stability of the state economy is considered stable when the share of gross domestic product accounts for no more than 10 percent of social benefits. Analyzing economic indicators, we can conclude that persons with disabilities in the case of employment at the expense of the tax burden provided by the legislation of Ukraine, even receiving the minimum wage almost fully compensate the state for social costs, in addition to benefiting society. It can also be noted that there is an increase in the total income of a person with disabilities due to pensions and salaries, which causes an increase in the solvency of the population and leads to business development, improving the overall state of the economy. Thus, by encouraging the employer to involve persons with disabilities in labor relations, the state removes this category from the subsidy and, as a result, ensures the stability of the economy. These measures lead to overcoming some goals of sustainable development, namely “Overcoming Poverty” and “Reducing Inequality” (On Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine for the period till 2030).

The question of whether persons with disabilities should work can be considered such perspectives: moral, legal, and economic (Aichner, 2021; Lindsay, Cagliostro, Leck & Stinson, 2019; Lindsay, Osten, Rezai & Bui, 2021). In Ukraine, social groups, which include able-bodied persons, working pensioners and persons with disabilities, receive the same minimum wage in the amount of UAH 4,723.00, but persons who have lost their ability to work also receive a pension of UAH

1,638.00. The net income of one person, excluding payroll taxes, is UAH 3,802.01 per able-bodied person, and those who lost their ability to work will receive UAH 5,440.01. (3802.01 + 1638.00). In this regard, in the case of employment of retirees and persons with disabilities, we see an increase in the purchasing power of the population, which contributes to business development and as a consequence of the state economy.

The Law of Ukraine defines and gives legal status to categories of state aid recipients. There is a conditional social separation (identification) of society. These processes take place due to legal instruments regulated by the Civil Protection Code, laws of Ukraine and other legislative acts. It should be noted that the legal status of certain categories fixed by the legislation, such as: “Hero of Ukraine”, “Honored Coach of Ukraine”, “Large Family” is perceived positively by society. At the same time, other categories, such as “persons with disabilities”, “HIV-infected person”, “rehabilitated person”, “offender”, “ex-prisoner” is not always perceived positively by society. This also applies to members of their families. That is, the process of emergence of the legal status of certain categories of citizens provided by law and the specific (negative) attitude of society to these categories, which characterizes the social identity of groups or individuals, defines the concept of “social stigma”.

Analyzing scientific sources on the problem of stigma, we can conclude that stigma causes a decrease in self-esteem and feelings of depression, forms a negative social identity and complicates psychosocial adaptation (Someki, Torii, Brooks, Koeda, Gillespie-Lynch, 2018; Zhou, Wang & Yi, 2018). In addition, the problem of stigmatization is relevant for different social categories. Among the stigmatizing labels are those that have an informal status enshrined in public opinion (“alcoholics”, “drug addicts”, “homeless”, “criminals”, “prostitutes”, “homosexuals”), but there are also those that are recognized by law and provide not only the legal status but also a number of benefits and restrictions (“AIDS patients”, “mentally ill”, “persons with disabilities”, “Chernobyl victims” and others). The inclusion of other categories in the list of stigmatized groups and ingrained in the public consciousness stereotypes of behavior with these categories requires, in our opinion, additional explanation, as the phenomenon of social stigma and tools of stigmatization (in some cases, given that Ukraine is a socially oriented

state, which is dominated by a culture of humanism, where a person is defined as the highest social value that provides social assistance to citizens in difficult situations), we propose to consider the phenomenon of “social stigma” as a necessary tool that narrows the field of knowledge about a person or social group, paying attention only to its difference from others, and is a conditionally forced measure used to systematically and targetedly implement public policy in the social sphere.

Overcoming stigma should be aimed at forming an accurate unbiased understanding of people, their nature, should reduce anxiety and insecurity in people, and most importantly – should be based on respect for the individual, his or her rights and freedoms. It should also be noted that discrimination against persons on the grounds of health and disability is unacceptable. According to the adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, all human rights must be guaranteed regardless of state of health.

Stereotyping is an integral part of social culture. But at the same time the formation of stereotypes gives rise to certain conservatism in the activities and thinking of people. Sometimes hostility to the new is subconsciously determined by the instinct of self-preservation, which tries to protect itself from possible shocks associated with the destruction of established stereotypes. Stereotypes have a very strong influence on persons’ consciousness and are very widespread, the limits of which are difficult to even estimate. Stigmas have only a negative side. This is a biased attitude towards a certain category of people (social class) or things based on a cluster of stereotypes and institutions. There are also common ones, such as the fear of meeting and communicating with HIV-infected, mentally ill, persons with physical disabilities, drug addicts, which are explained by the concept of “stigma”. The need for stereotypes and stigmas is explained by the fact that people need an understanding of negative attitudes towards individuals, justification of discrimination against them (Biernat & Dovidio, 2000).

The phenomenon of social stigma is associated with a number of processes and phenomena, including: “social identification of groups”, “separation of society”, “categorization”, “sticking social labels”, “social rejection”, “loss of social status” and so on. Analysis of works on social stigma (Chen, 2021; Richard, & Hennekam, 2021; Kuper, 2021) shows that most of them

in modern life are associated with physical manifestations (illness or disability). Stigmatization of persons with disabilities often manifests itself in a “mild” form, when others show patronage, considering them inferior. Along with positive behavioral stereotypes about persons with disabilities, negative, degrading attitudes are also common. The most common socio-psychological problems of persons stigmatized on the basis of “disability” are contempt for others, underestimation of their capabilities, which in turn affects their daily lives.

The state guarantees low-income citizens the opportunity to live at a satisfactory level, having access to the same basic services as the rest of the population, due to the benefits provided by law. Thus, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, which conducted an inventory of the benefits system, showed that in Ukraine it is quite developed, includes various types of benefits, compensations, social guarantees, covers almost a third of the population of Ukraine registered in the Unified State Automated Register of Persons, who are entitled to benefits on social grounds and enjoy various benefits.

The current system of benefits is a consequence of the necessary at that time management decision (in the early 90's) in the construction of the newly created state to protect the least protected segments of the population and thus prevent a decline in their living standards. But the diversification of privileged categories has led to the fact that one person may have several legal statuses. It can also be noted that a significant number of benefits are provided on a professional basis, which only increases social tension and solves two fundamentally different tasks: grants benefits to certain categories of the population and support for socially vulnerable groups.

The ideology of reforming the system of benefits, which the Government is working on today, envisages a gradual departure from the provision of benefits by professional status and the transition to targeting. Noting that working citizens should receive decent wages, and benefits should be received only by citizens who have special achievements before the Motherland, benefits on social grounds (unable to work, low-income, participants and invalids of war, persons with disabilities, pensioners, war veterans, veterans labor, children of war, rehabilitation persons, victims of political repressions, families of victims, combatants,

war invalids, liquidators of the Chernobyl catastrophe, large families), beneficiaries on professional grounds (judges, prosecutors, servicemen, police officers), tax police, fire brigade personnel, security officers, rural educators, rural health workers, rural cultural workers, rural library workers, plant protection specialists, military veterans, law enforcement veterans, miners).

Targeted state assistance to individuals and categories of citizens includes the concept of “excessive assistance”. This phenomenon and its consequences were studied by A. Meneghetti (2011). In his view, it is a way of providing help or support. Typically, this concept is used to oblige the governments of socially oriented states to help their citizens meet basic needs when people cannot do it on their own, cannot afford their basic expenses related to housing, health care, education, and so on.

Considering the negative impact that excessive assistance in the form of social assistance can have on the development of the person who uses it, one should pay attention to the consequences. Such assistance and the inevitable dependence on it contribute to the growth of poverty at the national level. Without feeling like an ordinary member of society, receiving social assistance and benefits, often a person does not take on work obligations, pay taxes, get used to situation and does not strive for success. We agree with A. Meneghetti (2011), who argues that excessive assistance establishes relationships of dependence that undermine the dignity of the individual. The survival of a person or a social group depends on the state, more precisely on the governments and officials who administer them. According to the philosopher, excessive assistance will inevitably lead to an increase in the number of people cared for and increased tax pressure on those who create the real well-being of society (Meneghetti, 2011).

A. Meneghetti in his work “System and Personality” (“Sistema e personalità”) argues that excessive assistance provides citizens with resources to meet some of their needs, but does not contribute to their liberation from dependence on the state. The author emphasizes that in order to get feedback (in the form of votes in elections) it is convenient and necessary for governments to develop plans to help the poor, making them conditional on the hope of continuing to receive benefits in the form of benefits. The Italian philosopher defines “excessive assistance” as a system of “extra state

guardianship”, which puts forward the need for social assistance and forms a “maintenance psychology”. As a result, excessive assistance removes from the subject the responsibility for the need for growth and development, thereby destroying the desire for supremacy in all those who are helped (Meneghetti, 2014).

A. Meneghetti emphasizes the need for the government to create real jobs and social reintegration platforms that would allow the most disadvantaged people to access vocational training and a living wage so that they can meet their own needs. The philosopher believes that excessive assistance does not allow people to realize their own intellectual potential, to gain the necessary experience. There is a problem of people who are impressed by irresponsibility, superficiality, the possibility of obtaining undeserved benefits, even at the cost of crime, and, as a consequence, “power falls into the hands of its unworthy people” (Meneghetti, 2011).

We agree with the opinion of A. Meneghetti and believe that excessive assistance causes moral and social degradation of people, the destruction of their intellectual potential. The phenomenon of excessive assistance is extremely dangerous, because persons with physical disabilities do not think about finding a job, recovering, adapting to live a full life, hoping that they will not be allowed to disappear through state aid and charity. Moreover, they believe that everyone owes them and take help for granted. Total support for defects, physical and intellectual, kills any personal initiative to improve the quality of one’s own life.

Studying the international experience, it can be noted that there are different models and views of social policy. Thus, in the United States, any state effort to organize the social protection of citizens does not go beyond the philosophy of the liberal individualism model. The culture and social experience of US citizens have always been determined by the ideas of subsidiarity, self-organization, self-help. In American society there has always been a widespread idea that the state should not be assisted, but should provide support to the needy by providing tax benefits. This addressed a dual challenge: to support the most vulnerable, paying for social services, education, and to strengthen civil society structures dealing with social issues. Due to this approach, the American model is an extreme manifestation of the liberal-individualist model, which combines the welfare of society, the

welfare of the state, corporate social programs and non-profit social organizations.

In our opinion, excessive assistance, aimed primarily at defined social groups, inevitably leads to an increase in the number of people cared for and an increase in the tax burden on those who create the real well-being of society. In turn, this forms the mentality of the consumer and a superficial attitude to the processes aimed at obtaining well-deserved benefits, and also leads to the formation of “clip thinking” in society. Thus, in the most developed countries of the world there is a new trend in the fight against poverty, namely: investing in sustainable opportunities and in a favorable social environment instead of simply offering resources, promoting sustainable human and social development instead of practicing assistance programs, establishing partnerships relations between individuals and public organizations, companies and the government at all levels to implement innovative programs of investment in human and social capital, rather than just waiting for the state to provide them.

Conclusions

It can be noted that the integration of persons with disabilities into society, their social protection is one of the priority policies of developed countries in both social and educational spheres, as the level of social protection of disabled persons and children with disabilities, creating equal conditions for education and training, tolerance and openness of society to persons with disabilities reflect the level of culture and spiritual development of society. Certain steps have already been taken to create appropriate conditions and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to realize their vital needs, abilities and creative potential; a system of measures aimed at improving their livelihoods, restoring social status, achieving material independence and comprehensive integration into society has been identified.

However, in reality, persons with disabilities belong to the most socially vulnerable categories of the population and social life of society. Recently, there have been reforms in the activities of public authorities and local governments, which pay attention to the social integration of persons with disabilities. Thus, based on the current direction of development of Ukraine,

the processes of reform in the legislative sphere, the formation of management tools and decisions on their adoption, which are used in modern public policy, we can conclude that today public policy aimed at social integration of persons with disabilities is in a state of development.

But we note that principles of social protection are used instead of social integration in the formation of social policy. The reason for this is the insufficient number of practical management tools for the social integration of persons with disabilities in various spheres of public relations. However discrimination against persons on grounds of health and disability is unacceptable. All human rights must be guaranteed, regardless of their state of health. But the legislation traces the tools of social stigma. Despite the fact that this concept is considered in this paper as a coercive measure used to systematically and targetedly implement public policy in the social sphere, it still has negative consequences for stigmatized individuals and social groups.

The public opinion about persons with disabilities still has a negative connotation. State support, based mainly on the payment of benefits and subsidies to these social groups, leads to an increase in the number of persons cared for, increasing the tax burden on workers, creating conditions for the formation of persons with disabilities “maintenance psychology”, consumer mentality, superficial attitude to socio-political processes of the state, “clip thinking”, aimed only at meeting the original biological needs. As a result, provocation of ignorance, lack of desire to develop, poverty, aggressive behavior towards responsible performers of their social responsibilities. All this affects the economic condition of the state.

We also note that the modern system of benefits that has signs of excessive assistance, introduced at the beginning of the formation of the Ukrainian state, formed spontaneously; social programs are largely uncoordinated, there is duplication, as a result, covers almost a third of the population, leads to excessive budget spending, causes a constant shortage of financial resources to provide benefits, ie it is outdated and needs to be reformed. It is also argued that one of the indicators for assessing the stability of the state economy is the ratio of expenditures on social benefits to the share of gross domestic product. Thus, the assessment of the stability of the state

economy is considered stable when the share of gross domestic product accounts for no more than 10% of social benefits. Today, according to statistics from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 21% of national GDP is spent on state social programs, which is not an indicator of economic stability.

The principles of overcoming stigma in the Law of Ukraine are imperfect. Thus, the defined list of grounds on which discrimination is prohibited is inexhaustible and illustrative. The concepts of “indirect discrimination” and “harassment” defined by the Law are also difficult to identify in practice in the actual assessment of situations. We believe that overcoming stigma and discrimination should be aimed at forming an accurate unbiased understanding of people, their nature and causes, should reduce anxiety and insecurity in people, and most importantly – should be based on respect for the individuals, their rights and freedoms. Reducing stigma is a necessary step to effectively support.

At the state level, we propose to implement a number of systematic measures to overcome stigma, namely the introduction of regular information programs to debunk myths and social stereotypes, as well as demonstrate tolerance, modeling behavior, which should become the norm in society for stigmatized individuals and groups. However, given that final decisions are made by civil servants, it is very important that officials adhere to ethical standards in decision-making in the public sector, taking into account the needs and requests of all stakeholders, addressing existing issues efficiently, effectively, encouraging citizens to take active citizenship, giving the individual the opportunity to feel a productive and responsible part of society.

NGOs play an important role in providing social assistance to persons with disabilities. The activities of non-governmental organizations of persons with disabilities are an important factor in helping to develop culture, education, health care, solving problems, socialization and involvement in active social life. Therefore, the executive bodies of social protection should be focused on the best interaction with public organizations of persons with disabilities and various charitable organizations.

The main purpose of any association of persons with disabilities is to establish a process of personal rehabilitation, integration of such persons into society,

gradual provision of equal opportunities for this category, promoting protection of their rights. At the same time, there should be a process of changing the nature of interaction between public authorities and NGOs. After all, the integration of persons with disabilities needs takes place not only in society, but also in public organizations themselves, where healthy people work alongside persons with certain physical and mental disabilities, which allows for more effective cooperation in solving their problems. The main motives for persons with disabilities for joining public organizations are the opportunity to change their lives, the opportunity to feel their importance in society. However, sometimes completely different motives activate such persons before joining such an organization. This is the satisfaction of the need to communicate and the desire to enjoy the benefits and opportunities of a member of a public organization. The participation of persons with disabilities in traditional public organizations increases the chances of integration of them into society. After all, the attitude of healthy people to persons with disabilities can be improved through direct communication and joint activities, knowledge of a person's personal characteristics, abilities and problems. This means long-term contact, which provides an opportunity for mutual assistance.

The state is obliged at the legislative level to expand the rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities, to create more favorable conditions for their participation in community life, in discussing issues and making decisions (persons with disabilities should be at the center of these stages of social processes). Appropriate conditions must be provided for receiving quality education, career guidance services, and involvement in official labor relations. It is necessary to take a set of joint measures at all levels, including the activities of local governments, national and international level to ensure the implementation of joint practical action by public authorities, legislative and executive, and by public institutions, namely:

- analyze the current legal framework, analyze the mechanisms of control and enforcement;
- develop a clear action plan (national strategy and national standards for social services in the field of disability) defining a clear division of responsibilities, specific deadlines for the implementation of these measures and responsible persons;

- work out the issues of information collection, coordination mechanisms, monitoring and reporting by sectors;
- work out the issues of involving persons with disabilities in the control over the quality of provided services, introduction of standards for services;
- on a regular basis to develop a system of measures for cooperation with international, national, local public institutions in order to identify priority areas of change that affect social policy and the formation of socio-political life of persons with disabilities;
- inform the population about disability as a phenomenon;
- distribute TV programs using sign language translation and subtitles;
- develop an action plan to provide micro-financing for the needs of persons with disabilities to engage in entrepreneurial activities and to involve this category in formal employment;
- reform inpatient facilities for persons with disabilities and transfer funding to support services that will enable persons with disabilities to live in isolation from society;
- strengthen state supervision over the observance by employers of the quota for employment of the disabled and the provision of appropriate working conditions;
- create conditions for changing negative stereotypes and attitudes towards persons with disabilities in Ukrainian society based on the achievement of social solidarity and social justice and promote the establishment of the general principle: "Look at me as an equal".

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