

Policy and legal reform for autism spectrum disorder patients in Vietnam

Khuyen Kim Hoang

Economic Law Department, Institute of State and Law, Vietnam Academy of Social Science, Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi 10000, Vietnam;
hoangkhuynisl@gmail.com, hoangkhuventv@yahoo.com

CITATION

Hoang KK. (2025). Policy and legal reform for autism spectrum disorder patients in Vietnam. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 9(1): 6521.
<https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd6521>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 20 May 2024

Accepted: 2 July 2024

Available online: 6 January 2025

COPYRIGHT



Copyright © 2025 by author(s).

Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development is published by EnPress Publisher, LLC. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Abstract: Autism is often referred to as autism spectrum disorder that constitutes a diverse group of conditions related to brain development (which is a neurodevelopmental disorder). Autism spectrum disorder patients often have difficulty communicating and interacting socially, and are characterized by restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior and interests that have been shown to be the same in cultures of countries around the world. However, the interpretation of symptoms and recognition in terms of policies and laws in countries are not the same. Accordingly, some countries recognize autism spectrum disorder as one of the types of disability and some countries do not, including Vietnam. Currently, Vietnam's Law on Persons with Disabilities 2010 does not recognize the term "autism" in the Law. At the same time, there is a lack of legal issues related to the "autism spectrum" from the time of diagnosis such as policies on practical support appropriate to each individual's needs and interests so that they can develop and be integrated in the medical field, education and enjoyment of other benefits such as persons with disabilities. This is an overlooked term that leads to the community having a misperception of "autism" when they are not aware that autism is a disease or a disability, what causes autism and why, etc. The article points out the current situation of adjustment by policies and laws on autistic people in Vietnam. On that basis, the article focuses on analyzing the contents that need to reform those policies and laws to ensure human rights of autistic people and their families.

Keywords: autism spectrum disorder patients; policy and legal reform

1. Introduction

From the perspective of the World Health Organization (WHO), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a disorder of neurological and brain development characterized by a decline in functions related to the maturation of the central nervous system. Autism spectrum disorders include conditions such as autism, childhood dissociative disorder, and Asperger syndrome. These disorders are characterized by a diverse combination of impaired abilities in mutual social interaction as well as repetitive, stereotyped, restrictive interests and activities. This autism can be detected right from the moment a child is born, until childhood or even adulthood. This shows that autism is not diagnosed immediately but it takes a long time to be discovered. In addition, scientific evidence has shown that there are two factors leading to autism: genetics and environment. Simultaneously, it is confirmed that vaccination in children is not the cause of the risk of autism (WTO, 2023). That's why since 2 April 2007 has been chosen by the United Nations as World Autism Awareness Day, a day that highlights the importance of raising awareness and combating against prejudice in curing ASD. Besides, in May 2014, the 67th World Health Assembly adopted the resolution "Comprehensive and coordinated efforts to manage autism spectrum disorders", supported by more than 60 countries.

The resolution calls on WHO to work with Member States and partner agencies to strengthen national capacities to address autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities (WTO, 2024). These places WHO Member States in fulfilling their national legal responsibilities in developing and implementing autism disorder legislation, practice the Convention on Human Rights with Persons with Disabilities and other international and regional human rights conventions the best.

In Vietnam, according to preliminary statistics from the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs in 2009, Vietnam has about 200,000 people with autism. In 2019, it is estimated that Vietnam has about 1 million children with autism and 8 million people directly affected (**Figure 1**). In recent years, there have been no accurate statistics on the rate of autism in the community (Dung, 2021). However, in fact, the number of children with autism is increasing; the age at diagnosis is getting younger; Places for examination and treatment are only available in big cities while in remote areas there are no places at all; there is no place to care for and nurture autistic people who cannot live independently without relatives; Autistic people are a burden of their families and society (Hai, 2020). Legally, up to now there has not been any legal document recognizing autistic people as people with disabilities. Meanwhile, the 2010 Law on Persons with Disabilities mentioned many contents related to support and care for people with disabilities but did not include “autism” and instead, the phrase “other disabilities”. Since then, it has led to a series of circulars guiding the Law on Persons with Disabilities that do not mention autism.

Therefore, in the international context and the practice of building and implementing policies and laws on people with disabilities in general and autistic people in particular, pointing out the regulatory status and implementation practices of such regulations is necessary to protect the rights of autistic people in education, healthcare, information and communication, and so on.

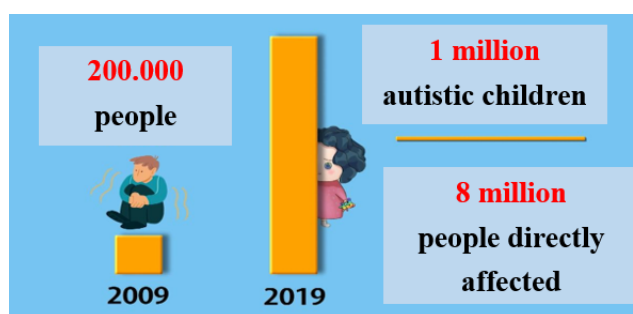


Figure 1. Rate of increase in autistic people in Vietnam from 2009 to 2019 (Dam, 2024).

2. Research overview

People with disabilities belong to the vulnerable group, so the Party and State pay special attention, care and have very specific policies. Accordingly, the development and implementation of policies, strategies, programs and laws to protect the rights of people with disabilities are gradually being completed, consolidated, updated and developed, especially related to autistic people. Through the review and the best practice of the provisions of the Convention on Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international and regional human rights

conventions. In fact, over the last period of time, in addition to the Law on Persons with Disabilities promulgated in 2010, in recent years, to better ensure the rights of people with disabilities in general and autistic people in particular, Vietnam has issued many policies and laws such as: The Secretariat issued Directive No. 39-CT/TW dated 1 November 2019 on strengthening the Party's leadership in the work of people with disabilities; the Government has issued many guiding documents on the law on people with disabilities and many programs dedicated to disabled people such as: On 5 August 2020, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1190/QĐ-TTg approving the program to support people with disabilities for the period 2021–2030; The Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs issued Circular No. 01/2019/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 2 January 2019 stipulating the determination of the level of disability by the Disability Level Determination Council (this document indirectly recognizes that autism spectrum disorder belongs to another group of disabilities—see also form No. 03 issued together with the circular); The Ministry of Finance promulgates Circular No. 03/2022/TT-BTC of the Ministry of Finance: Regulations on management and use of career funds from the state budget to programs on social work development, assistance for people with disabilities, social assistance and rehabilitation for mentally ill people, autistic children and people with community-based mental disorders in the period 2021–2030, etc. These are considered important policies initial adjusted for autistic people in Vietnam, contributing to increasingly improving the provisions of the law on autistic people in particular and people with disabilities in general. In addition, policies and laws for autistic people in some areas are adjusted by countries very early and autistic people are highly valued, such as, in the US (The Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA in 1990, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA) and the policy on education for autistic children in School Education Act of Japan (MEXT, 2006) and so on, autism is clearly defined as a form of disability and autistic people are a priority subject of social policy. Of those, the United States is a leading country in bringing an early intervention model to treat autistic children. This is the experience of countries' adjusting their laws to protect and ensure the rights of autistic people and their families.

3. Research method

The method used in this study is a qualitative research approach to the provisions of policies and laws on autistic people in particular and people with disabilities in general. Those are the guidelines and policies of the Communist Party of Vietnam in documents of the Congresses; provisions in the State's policies and laws on autistic people. Additionally, the study also uses practical documents on the implementation of policies and laws on autism. Thereby, it can be seen that the issue of developing and implementing policies and laws on autistic people has had certain successes and limitations, and since then, perfect solutions in Vietnam have been set out in the coming time. Moreover, the study uses comparative jurisprudence methods when evaluating and analyzing the provisions of the law on autistic people in some countries around the world to point out some lessons in planning guidelines and policies, and promulgating laws in Vietnam. This is extremely meaningful when

Vietnam is in the process of collecting opinions to consider amending and supplementing the 2010 Law on Persons with Disabilities from agencies and departments.

4. Content and discussion

4.1. Current situation of adjustment by policies and laws on autistic people in Vietnam

In fact, according to data from the General Statistics Office, there are about 6.2 million people with disabilities aged 2 years and older, of whom about 1 million are autistic. The rate of autistic children is estimated to be 1% of children born and is increasing (CPVOP and DSP, 2022).

However, from the perspective of regulatory law, currently, the legal system of Vietnam has not issued any legal document recognizing autism as a separate type of disability. Most of the policies and laws on autistic people and their families have been only regulated and integrated into the general system of documents and programs on social protection and social assistance; the system of programs and policies for children; the system of programs and policies for people with disabilities and children with disabilities in general in the 2010 Law on Persons with Disabilities and the 2016 Children Law (Nam and Van, 2015). Thus, now, the Law on Disability and related implementation guidance documents do not have a specific definition of autistic people. However, according to Circular 01/2019/TT-BLDTBXH of the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs dated 2 January 2019 stipulating the determination of the level of disability by the disability level determination council, in the case of a person with a conclusion of a provincial or higher health institution about autism spectrum disorders or rare diseases, this can be considered another form of disability. From the above bases, it can be seen that the current situation of adjusting and implementing legal policies towards autistic people in Vietnam is as follows:

Firstly, in the field of education. In the field of inclusive education, Article 24 of the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) affirms that people with disabilities need to be guaranteed the right to inclusive education at all levels, regardless of age, without discrimination and on the basis of equality of opportunity. Member States should ensure that: “Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on account of disability, and children with disabilities are not excluded from compulsory primary or secondary education on the basis of disability” and “persons with disabilities can access free, quality, inclusive primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the same community where they live”. This is an international legal basis that recommends than obliges countries to ensure the right to inclusive education for people with disabilities in general and autistic people in particular. To specify the current international regulations related to autistic people, including the following indirect documents regulating in the field of inclusive education: The Government issued Decree No. 46/2017/ND-CP dated 21 April 2017 regulating conditions for investment and operation in the field of education; The Ministry of

Education and Training issued a number of Circulars such as Circular No. 03/2018/TT-BGDDT dated 29 January 2018 regulating inclusive education for people with disabilities; Circular No. 20/2022/TT-BGDDT dated 28 December 2022 promulgating the Regulations on organization and operation of the Center for Support and Development of Inclusive Education. Hence, according to international standards, basically, the legal provisions fully reflect the nature of the right to inclusive education of people with disabilities in general and autistic people in particular. However, at present, the law lacks direct regulations on the establishment of Centers for Supporting Inclusive Education for Autistic People and lacks supervision regulations for the organization and operation of such Centers. Inclusive education is a form of education for children with disabilities in a normal educational environment. Article 23 of the 1989 International Convention on the Children Rights affirms: Children with disabilities are entitled to a complete life in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and create conditions for children to actively participate in the community. Inclusive education allows every student to fully participate in any common curriculum in the national education system. The provision of inclusive education aims to realize equity and participation of all students in all aspects of life and learning communities in Vietnam. Besides, in principle, organizations licensed by the state to operate under the name of Support Center for the Development of Inclusive Education will have to comply with the rights and obligations in Circular No. 03/2018/TT-BGDDT dated 29 January 2018 regulating inclusive education for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, Circular No. 03/2018/TT-BGDDT only directly regulates inclusive education centers for people with disabilities and is not a direct regulation for autistic people. This is a big reason why it is difficult to establish inclusive education support centers for autistic people, both private and state. Since there is no legal basis for establishment, organization, and operation, many private inclusive education establishments are “transformed and modified” into autism education establishments established to meet the needs of families with autistic people. The establishment of inclusive education establishments that “transform and modify” into autism education establishments leads to the consequence that educational results for autistic people do not meet the requirements of specialty and quality. Autistic people do not have access to age- and cognitive-appropriate standard curriculum; many autistic children have become victims of unscientific and violent treatments; there have been cases that children have lost their lives, suspected due to inappropriate interventions and care; the human resources do not have specialized skills in autism, the training of human resources with expertise in autism has not been focused while the needs of families and the number of autistic children not intervened early and properly are very huge (Quan, 2023). This is a loophole in terms of law making for those who take advantage of the opportunity to establish inclusive educational establishments and centers for autistic people truly. In fact, in recent years, many spontaneous training establishments for autistic children have appeared in Hanoi and the whole country. According to incomplete statistics, Hanoi currently has nearly 200 facilities teaching autistic children. How well these facilities operate depends on the mind of their founder. The results of an in-depth interview with Ms. Dinh Nguyen Trang Thu, lecturer of the Faculty of Special Education (Hanoi University of Education), said:

Parents who unfortunately send their children to bad facilities will fall into the situation of “spending money and only get worse”. The greatest loss is that autistic children lose the golden stage to intervene and support (Hien, 2019). The reason for the above situation is that the policy is incomplete, clear and the awareness of local officials in identifying children with disabilities is still limited, so some localities have refused to issue disability certificates for autistic children. Therefore, autistic children in some families do not meet the standards under current laws to be admitted to foster care and social protection centers. As a result, for the above issues, it is necessary to improve in terms of law development and supervision for the operation of specialized training facilities and centers for autistic people in the coming time.

Secondly, in the medical field. Autism in children or autistic adults is currently a matter of concern to society because of its wide impact on the individual, family, community and society levels. Autistic children, if not detected early to take timely interventions, can have negative consequences throughout life. Recognizing the consequences of autism, the Ministry of Health issued the following documents: Decision No. 1607/QĐ-BYT dated 17 March 2021 on the trial implementation of the document “Guidelines for diagnosis and intervention of children with autism spectrum disorders”; Decision No. 2254/QĐ-BYT of the Minister of Health, dated 7 May 2021 stipulating the promulgation of the Toolkit for Early Detection of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Children, only in children but not yet regulated in autistic adults; Decision No. 4485/QĐ-BYT dated 20 September 2021 of the Minister of Health approving the Plan to implement the Prime Minister’s Decision No. 1929/QĐ-TTg dated 25 November 2020 on approving the community-based social assistance and rehabilitation program for mentally ill people, autistic children and people with mental disorders in the period 2021–2030; Decision No. 1862/QĐ-BYT dated 6 July 2022 of the Minister of Health promulgating the document “Guidelines for diagnosis and intervention of children with autism spectrum disorder”. With the above legal document system, it has partly guaranteed the right to detect, examine, care and treat diseases of autistic people. In particular, the above regulations have partly ensured social security and improved the quality of medical examination, treatment and rehabilitation for autistic people. Although there are supportive policies, the implementation process still faces many difficulties and limitations when the number of children diagnosed with autism is increasing, the age of diagnosis is getting younger and younger while early detection is still limited and places of visit and examination are often concentrated in big cities (Ngan, 2023). The reason for the above situation is that Vietnam has a higher proportion of people living in rural areas than urban areas, so the awareness of families about the need for periodic screening of the disorder at 12, 18 or 24 months for babies as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics is less realized. Moreover, parents in Vietnam often only take their children to the doctor if they see that they show speech delay and hyperactivity, do not have the habit of taking their children to regular check-ups both physically and mentally. On the other hand, medical equipment is not modern and the team of pediatricians does not really have the knowledge to monitor the development of autism despite physical examination and treatment for children (Vinh, 2022).

Third, in the field of creating jobs. Currently, Vietnam does not have any specialized documents on job creation such as vocational training support for autistic people. This is a legal gap when ensuring labor and employment rights for autistic people in general and autistic adults in particular. Because of legal inadequacy, employment support services for autistic adults are limited and meager. Additionally, the wrong career orientation method makes the employment support mechanism for autistic adults ineffective when they do not know how to provide vocational training and support them to be able to live independently. The reason for the above situation is because of the incorrect perception and misunderstanding of many people in society about autism. They assume that autism is an incurable disease. Meanwhile, autistic adults themselves have many strengths such as high observation ability, artistic aptitude and high concentration. It is important that employers can understand the talents of autistic people so that they can excel in the work environment. Therefore, adult autistic people are facing lots of difficulties to find a suitable job for themselves. In fact, in Vietnam, there are no complete statistics on adult autistic people and their employment from competent state agencies. However, according to data published by the General Statistics Office in January 2019, there are about 6.2 million people with disabilities aged 2 years and older (accounting for about 6.5% of the population), in which there are about 1 million autistic people, including adult autistic people (CPV, 2022). Besides, from the point of view of the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, currently finding jobs and maintaining jobs for adult autistic people is a challenge regardless of their gender. Even if they have professional training, they may still have difficulties in communication. For example, they perform poorly in job interviews, have trouble interacting with colleagues or even feel undervalued at work (Mai, 2024). However, it is not because of these challenges that there has been a lack of economic models for adult autistic people in Vietnam during the past. Accordingly, there are some training companies for autistic people to practice a number of jobs such as writing invoices, working as waitresses at restaurants, laundry-related jobs, etc. so as to orient adult autistic people to have sustainable jobs and master their lives (Ha, 2024).

4.2. Some complete solutions and contents of policy and law reform for autistic people in Vietnam today

4.2.1. Some solutions to improve the current situation of law adjustment on autistic people in Vietnam

Firstly, in the field of inclusive education. From the experience of developing laws for autistic people and the mechanism for implementing policies for autistic people in the United States, there is a big motto “No child is left behind”, “autistic children are entitled to special education benefits according to their disability “At once, in fact, the United States is also a country that also applies many effective employment policies for autistic adults. A specific example is Microsoft, a large corporation at the forefront of recruiting autistic workers (MVC, 2023). Therefore, Vietnam needs to amend and supplement the Law on Persons with Disabilities in the direction of affirming autism spectrum disorder as a form of developmental disability. This is the basis for detailed guidance documents on the Law on Persons

with Disabilities to specify rights and ensure rights for autistic people and their families. In addition, the amendment and supplementation of documents under the law on inclusive education is the legal basis for inclusive education support centers for autistic people to be legally established and have sufficient conditions in terms of facilities and human resources to operate. Simultaneously, this is a place of trust for families with autistic people, which will prevent autistic children from becoming victims of unscientific interventions, or experimental subjects of delusional, illusory individuals who still participate the intervention.

Secondly, in the medical field. Currently, the Government of Vietnam has approved the community-based social assistance and rehabilitation program for mentally ill people, autistic children and people with mental disorders for the period 2021–2030. The program offers solutions for autistic children to receive medical assistance, educational assistance, vocational guidance, occupational therapy, livelihood support, culture and sports; develops a network of social assistance establishments providing care and rehabilitation education for autistic children. Because the general awareness of autism intervention is a long-term process, there is no time limit. Thus, the Ministry of Health needs to promulgate and design methods to support treatment for autistic people, helping autistic people develop in the community without having to shrink in the space of facilities at home, inclusive education centers or specialized health facilities. Moreover, it is necessary to focus on the training of specialized doctors specializing in treating autistic children and training programs for parents to become “family doctors” treating autistic relatives.

Thirdly, in the field of employment. In order to eliminate the perspective and stereotypes, autistic people, especially autistic adults, become a burden on their families and society. Concurrently, it is a basis to help autistic people express their abilities and responsibilities towards their families and society. Starting from the above views, the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs needs to have specific and detailed regulations on training, vocational training and employment support for autistic adults. Accordingly, it is necessary to have a legal document regulating the promulgation of separate training, education, training and coaching programs for adult autistic persons; regulations on conditions for establishment and operation of economic models of vocational training, vocational training, training, and professional labor models for autistic people; adopt policies to attract and give incentives on tax, credit and land to economic organizations operating for autistic people; regulations on policies to attract and give incentives to teachers participating in vocational training and coaching for autistic people; regulations on the mechanism of coordination between economic organizations and sponsorship centers of people with disabilities and local authorities in creating jobs for adult autistic people; have a mechanism to promote domestic and foreign research and cooperation activities so that economic models operate with good efficiency and expand further, etc.

4.2.2. Content of policy and law reform for autistic people in Vietnam today

It can be said that autism spectrum disorder affects the lives of all family members and initiates a difficult life for families of autistic people such as parents of autistic children find stress, anxiety, spousal conflicts leading to the breakdown of marriages, unstable work, etc. This shows that reforming legal policies related to

autistic people and their families is necessary.

First, reform in the field of education. It is necessary to ensure that the separate inclusive education system provides an effective and meaningful education for autistic people. The need for an inclusive education system with sufficient standards in terms of facilities, quality, and human resources participating in training to ensure the rights of autistic people is an urgent issue in Vietnam today. Accordingly, the reform of the separate inclusive education system must ensure that are enrolled in curricula that are appropriate to their age, awareness and higher than that they are not excluded from and discriminated against in the educational environment, mainstream training. In other words, the curriculum for autistic children when learning in separate inclusive settings must be essentially the same as their peers without disabilities in the mainstream setting. In addition, the curriculum for autistic children is built on the principle of inclusive education and specially designed to flexibly serve many different autistic students but must closely follow the students' curriculum in a formal educational environment. Normally, children with autism spectrum disorder respond well to highly structured educational programs that include a team of professionals engaged in teaching and a variety of activities to improve social communication and behavioral skills. In addition, when developing and designing curricula for autistic students, it is necessary to collect opinions of organizations representing parents of autistic children and a team of doctors with professional knowledge about autistic children for reference before promulgating. This is a mandatory requirement to show that any policies and laws related to autistic children are motivated by professional knowledge or evidence-based on autistic people. According to Australia's experience (DDLS, 2020) in supporting separate education for autistic people, they believe that it is better for autistic students to study in mainstream integrated environments than to study in segregated environments that are reserved for them. That is because participating in studying in mainstream inclusive environments will help form relationships with many other normal students. If autistic people study in segregated environments, it will limit the formation of social skills to develop and maintain relationships with other students. Furthermore, autistic children living in segregated environments will only maintain relationships with other autistic children, without the opportunity to integrate into the community.

Second, reform in the medical field. Currently, in the world and in Vietnam, there is no standard treatment for autism spectrum disorder. Nevertheless, there are a lot of ways to help minimize symptoms and maximize the abilities of each autistic person. Autistic people will develop their abilities and capacities if they receive appropriate therapies and interventions. However, not every treatment for autism is effective for every autistic child and autistic adult. It takes a long time to choose appropriate treatment methods for each patient such as early intervention, behavioral approaches, nutritional therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy, social skills training, parent therapy, drug treatment and so on. Therefore: (1) Policies and laws must be designed based on the goal of maximizing treatment potential by reducing autism spectrum disorder symptoms and supporting development and learning in autistic people. (2) It is necessary to pay attention to the principles of developing health policies for autistic people. Accordingly, those constructive

principles must be based on the motto that there is no cure for autism but there are some methods that can help improve social communication, learning and quality of life for autistic children and adults; some people may need little or no support while the majority of others need intensive treatment. (3) Policies and laws need to pay attention to telemedicine services provided by health care providers specifically for autistic people. These service providers must have specialized training in treatment and in-depth knowledge when working with autistic people. Specially in remote and rural areas that do not have access to specialized medical facilities for autistic people who can be provided with telehealth services. (4) It is necessary to improve regulations on health insurance for autistic people. According to Clause 6, Article 5 of Decree 20/2021/ND-CP stipulating social assistance policies for social assistance subjects, only people with severe disabilities and people with especially severe disabilities are eligible for monthly social allowances and are granted free health insurance cards. Therefore, not every person with a disability will be granted a health insurance card paid for by the state budget, but only people with severe and specially severe disabilities will be entitled to this policy. People with mild disabilities (the level of reduction in working capacity is less than 61%) will not be paid or issued health insurance cards by the State. If they want to participate in health insurance, people with mild disabilities or their families can buy a household health insurance card. With the above regulations, autistic people are still required to buy health insurance as prescribed to ensure health insurance benefits. Additionally, health insurance policies for autistic people must include psychological care, psychiatric care, therapeutic care, and support for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders. Consequently, health insurance is very important in ensuring human rights for autistic people. Accordingly, for autistic adults, they can access health care services they need, support the payment of medical examination and treatment costs for them at an appropriate level.

Third, employment reform. For autistic adults, having the opportunity to work and protecting equality in employment opportunities plays a vital role in contributing to protecting the rights of autistic people in the workplace. This is an international standard on anti-discrimination and treatment of people with disabilities, including autistic people in various aspects related to employment. Therefore, employment legislation for autistic people must: (1) Ensure the same legal rights to employment as any individual, including the right to be treated equally before the law and to be protected from discrimination and treatment. Thus, labor laws need to provide solutions to protect labor rights and social security rights of autistic people. For instance, regulations prohibit employers from making decisions on hiring, firing, salary, etc. based on autism spectrum disorder. Autistic adults have the right to be evaluated based on qualifications and skills rather than just their neurodiversity. It is necessary to empower autistic adults to have opinions and participate in affirming their legal rights. They need to be informed, connected to resources and support networks to help them get suitable jobs, and help them develop self-advocacy skills. (2) Policies and laws on social security for autistic people need to recognize the unique needs and rights of autistic people. Some related strategies include: Developing specialized training programs for law enforcement officers on how to interact with autistic individuals; Providing funding for research on best practices in

supporting adults with autism in areas such as employment and housing; creating stronger legal protections against abuse and neglect of people with disabilities; Recognizing alternative forms of communication as valid means of expression for non-verbal autistic people. (3) Employers can support autistic employees by providing flexible working hours, work locations that can be at home and remote work. Employers can also provide training to managers and colleagues on how to interact with autistic people in the workplace.

5. Conclusion

Policy and legal reform for autistic people aims to address the challenges facing autistic people and their families, to promote their rights, opportunities, quality of life and to create an inclusive society where no one is left behind. Through the development and promulgation of policies and laws along with the organization of management and supervision of the implementation of policies and laws, it is to help the State perform the social security function for autistic people in ensuring equal access to education, employment, healthcare and other important aspects of life. These values are means to combat discrimination and promote social inclusion of autistic people in any country. Additionally, reforming policies and laws on autism is empowering autistic people to assert themselves in contributing to the decision-making process that directly affects their lives in particular and provides a platform to raise public awareness about autism in general. It is important for policymakers and members of society to recognize the challenges and efforts of autistic people and their families towards creating a more inclusive legal environment, and to meet the needs of autistic people more.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Anh, N. (2023). Autistic people also need to work. Available online: <https://vov.vn/xa-hoi/nguoi-tu-ky-cung-can-duoc-lam-viec-403518.vov> (accessed on 26 May 2023).
- Congress. (2010). Law on Persons with Disabilities. Congress.
- CPVOP, DSP. (2022). Social assistance and rehabilitation for autistic youth and people with mental disorders. Communist Party of Vietnam Online Newspaper (CPVOP) in collaboration with the Department of Social Protection (DSP), Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs in Hanoi, December, 2022
- CPV. (2022). *Raising awareness and responsibility for caring for and helping autistic children and people with mental disorders*. Retrieved December 19th, 2022 from: <https://dangcongsan.vn/thoi-su/nang-cao-nhan-thuc-trach-nhiem-ve-cham-soc-tro-giup-tre-tu-ky-va-nguoi-roi-nhieu-tam-tri-627925.html>.
- Dung, H. (2021). Some proposals to improve policies and laws for autistic children on Autism Day April 2nd. Available online: <https://truongchinhtri.edu.vn/home/thong-tin-nghien-cuu-trao-doi/huong-den-ngay-tre-tu-ky-2-4-hoan-thien-chinh-sach-phap-luat-doi-voi-tre-tu-ky-1146.html> (accessed on 1 April 2021).
- Dam, H. (2024). *Accompanying care and education for autistic children to integrate into the community*. Retrieved April 2nd, 2024: <https://dangcongsan.vn/xa-hoi/dong-hanh-cham-soc-giao-duc-de-tre-tu-ky-hoa-nhap-cong-dong-662352.html#:~:text=T%E1%BA%A1i%20Vi%E1%BB%87t%20Nam%2C%20trong%2010,th%E1%BB%83%20sinh%20s%E1%BB%91ng%20%C4%91%E1%BB%99c%20l%E1%BA%ADp>.

- DDLS. (2020). Support and life outcomes for autistic people. Available online: <https://4073d2.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/autism-inquiry-submission.pdf> (accessed on 4 June 2020).
- Hai, T. (2020). Early detection and health care for children with autism are needed. Available online: <https://quochoi.vn/hoatdongdbqh/pages/tin-hoat-dong-dai-bieu.aspx?ItemID=50782> (accessed on 24 December 2020).
- Hien, H. (2019). Let autistic children have a better life. Available online: <https://hanoimoi.vn/de-tre-tu-ky-co-cuoc-song-tot-dep-hon-529426.html> (accessed on 13 November 2019).
- Hang, T. (2023). Complete policies on social assistance and rehabilitation for autistic children. Available online: <https://vov2.vov.vn/doi-song-xa-hoi/hoan-thien-chinh-sach-tro-giup-xa-hoi-phuc-hoi-chuc-nang-doi-voi-tre-tu-ky-44817#:~:text=%5BVOV2%5D%20%2D%20C%5%A9ng%20gi%E1%BB%91ng%20nh%C6%B0,vi%E1%BB%87t%20nh%E1%BA%A5t%20c%E1%BB%A7a%20Nh%C3%A0%20n%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Bc> (accessed on 15 September 2023).
- Kim, Y. (2020). Brigham Young University, Coming Out of the Shadows: Understanding Autism in Korean Culture. Available online: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10331&context=etd> (accessed on 9 December 2020).
- Mai, H. (2024). Providing job opportunities to help autistic people live meaningful lives. Available online: <https://hanoionline.vn/trao-co-hoi-viec-lam-giup-nguoi-tu-ky-song-co-y-nghia-229926.htm> (accessed 2 April 2024).
- MVC. (2023). Unique Microsoft hiring program opens more doors to people with autism. Available online: <https://news.microsoft.com/stories/people/kyle-schwaneke.html> (accessed on 15 February 2023).
- MEXT. (2023). Basic Act on Education in Japan (Act No. 120 of 22 December 2006). Available online: <https://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/lawandplan/title01/detail01/1373798.htm> (accessed on 15 November 2023).
- Ngan, N. (2023). Health care for autistic children and people with mind disorders: need practical solutions. Available online: <https://daibieunhandan.vn/doi-song-xa-hoi/cham-soc-suc-khoe-cho-tre-tu-ky-nguoi-roi-nhieu-tam-tri-can-giai-phap-thiet-thuc-i350707/> (accessed on 21 November 2023).
- Nam, D. T., & Van, V. H. (2015). Policies towards autistic children in Vietnam today. Available online: <http://vci.vnu.edu.vn/upload/15022/pdf/576369607f8b9a31d08b4606.pdf> (accessed on 21 November 2023).
- Nhat, H. (2024). Education and times, Unique working model for autistic people. Available online: <https://Giaoducthoidai.vn/mo-hinh-lam-viec-doc-dao-danh-cho-nguoi-tu-ky-post683363.html> (accessed 19 May 2024).
- Ozdemir, N. K., & Koç, M. (2023). Career adaptability of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. Available online: https://link-springer-com.translate.google.com/article/10.1007/s12144-021-02649-9?error=cookies_not_supported&code=5d49181f-4780-4cdb-936a-72b87be90f11&x_tr_sl=en&x_tr_tl=vi&x_tr_hl=vi&x_tr_pto=sc (accessed on 15 September 2023).
- Quan, H. (2023). Education for autistic needs to overcome gaps from the policy early. Available online: <https://cand.com.vn/giao-duc/giao-duc-cho-tre-tu-ky-can-som-khac-phuc-nhung-lo-hong-tu-chinh-sach-i679647/> (accessed on 2 January 2023).
- The Secretariat. (2019). Directive No. 39-CT/TW dated 1 November 2019 on strengthening the Party's leadership in the work of people with disabilities. The Secretariat.
- The Prime Minister. (2020). Decision No. 1190/QĐ-TTg approving the Program to support people with disabilities for the period 2021–2030. The Prime Minister.
- The Ministry of Labor. (2019). War Invalids and Social Affairs issued Circular No. 01/2019/TT-BLĐTBXH dated January 2nd, 2019 stipulating the determination of the level of disability by the Disability Level Determination Council). The Ministry of Labor.
- The Ministry of Finance. (2022). Circular No. 03/2022/TT-BTC regulations on management and use of career funds from the state budget to programs on social work development, assistance for people with disabilities, social assistance and rehabilitation for mentally ill people, autistic children and people with community-based mental disorders in the period 2021–2030. The Ministry of Finance.
- United Nations. (2007). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. United Nations.
- United States Congress. (1990). Disabilities Act (ADA). United States Congress.
- Vinh, T.Q. (2022). Awareness of “cold mother” autism and its sequelae in Vietnam. Available online: <https://www.vietnamplus.vn/nhan-thuc-ve-tu-ky-ba-me-tu-lanh-va-di-chung-o-viet-nam-post781377.vnp> (accessed on 2 April 2022).
- WTO. (2023). Autism. Available online: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/autism-spectrum-disorders?gclid=CjwKCAiAiP2tBhBXEiwACslfnlIfE32wb0J_2_75JKE_UK1KIUK4EnJlahj6DzCpVIQbyrEZG-6fRoC3SgQAvD_BwE (accessed on 15 November 2023).

WHO. (2014). Comprehensive and coordinated efforts for the management of autism spectrum disorders. Available online: https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA67/A67_17-en.pdf (accessed on 21 May 2014).