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ANALYSIS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

Abstract: The philosophy of independent living is an important and key element in contemporary public discourse, permeating various aspects of our lives. It represents not just a set of principles and ideas but reflects fundamental rights and values that should be accessible to every individual, regardless of their physical, psychological, or cognitive characteristics.

At the core of the philosophy of independent living lies an inclusive approach. Inclusivity envisions a society in which everyone, regardless of nationality, physical or intellectual abilities, social background, feels valued, fully integrated, and has equal opportunities.

One of the fundamental principles in implementing the concept of inclusivity is the accessibility and equality of education. Undoubtedly, the integration of individuals with special educational needs (SEN) into the education system is a central topic in the global dialogue on the issues facing people with disabilities. To overcome the social barriers they encounter, it is necessary to provide not only physical adaptations such as ramps, specialized equipment, and trained personnel but also a change in societal attitudes. This is not just a matter of charity, it is a matter of protecting their rights. To realize these rights, comprehensive support from the government and society is required, including the enactment of appropriate legislation, the development of social infrastructure, digitalization of society, and more.

However, despite widespread coverage and the interest of the global scientific community in this issue, there is a substantial difference in the level and quality of research in various countries. In an attempt to assess the state of inclusive education in Kazakhstan, the authors conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of contemporary scientific research in the chosen field conducted by domestic scholars.

Key words: special educational needs, inclusiveness, limited health capabilities, education, independent life, philosophy.

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Тәуелсіз өмір философиясы жағдайында Қазақстан Республикасындағы инклюзивті білім беруді талдау

Аннотация: Тәуелсіз өмір сүру философиясы біздің өміріміздің әртүрлі салаларына еніп жатқан заманауи қоғамдық пікірталастардың маңызды және негізгі мәселесі болып табылады. Бұл тек принциптер мен идеялардың жиынтығы ғана емес, сонымен қатар физикалық, психологиялық немесе когнитивтік ерекшеліктеріне байланыссыз әрбір адамға қолжетімді болуы тиіс негізгі құқықтар мен құндылықтардың көрінісі.

Тәуелсіз өмір сүру философиясы инклюзивті көзқарасқа негізделген. Инклюзия ұлтына, физикалық немесе ақыл-ой қабілеттеріне, әлеуметтік тегіне қарамастан, әрбір адам өзін маңызды сезінетін, толық интеграцияланған және тең мүмкіндіктерге ие қоғамды білдіреді.

Инклюзивтілік тұжырымдамасын жүзеге асырудағы негізгі және іргелі қағидалардың бірі – білім берудің қолжетімділігі мен теңдігі. Ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері бар тұлғаларды білім беру жүйесіне интеграциялау міндеті мүмкіндігі шектеулі адамдардың мәселелері туралы жаһандық диалогта жетекші орындардың бірін алатыны сөзсіз. Олар бетпе-бет келетін әлеуметтік кедергілерді еңсеру үшін пандустар, мамандандырылған жабдықтар және арнайы даярланған қызметкерлер сияқты физикалық бейімделулер ғана емес, сонымен бірге әлеуметтік көзқарастардың өзгеруі де қажет. Бұл жай ғана қайырымдылық көмек емес, олардың құқықтарын қорғау мәселесі. Бұл құқықтарды жүзеге асыру үшін мемлекет пен қоғам тарапынан тиісті заңнамаларды қабылдауда, әлеуметтік инфрақұрылымды дамытуда, қоғамды ақпараттандыруда және т.б. көрініс тапқан жан-жақты қолдау қажет. Дегенмен, әлемдік ғылыми қоғамдастықтың бұл мәселеге кеңінен қызығушылық танытуына және қамтылуына қарамастан әртүрлі елдердегі

зерттеулер деңгейі мен сапасында айтарлықтай айырмашылықтар бар. Қазақстандағы инклюзивті білім берудің жағдайын бағалау мақсатында авторлар отандық ғалымдар жүргізген заманауи ғылыми зерттеулерге кешенді шолу мен талдау жасайды.

Түйін сөздер: ерекше білім беру қажеттіліктері, инклюзивтілік, денсаулықтың шектеулі мүмкіндіктері, білім беру, оқыту, тәуелсіз өмір сүру, философия.

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Анализ инклюзивного образования в Республике Казахстан в контексте философии независимой жизни

Философия независимой жизни является важным и ключевым моментом современной общественной дискуссии, пронизывающим различные сферы нашей жизни. Она представляет собой не просто набор принципов и идей, но отражает фундаментальные права и ценности, которые должны быть доступными для каждого человека, независимо от его физических, психологических или когнитивных особенностей.

В основе философии независимой жизни лежит инклюзивный подход. Инклюзивность подразумевает общество, в котором каждый, независимо от национальности, физических или умственных способностей, социального бэкграунда, чувствует свою значимость, полноценно интегрирован и имеет равные возможности.

Одним из базовых и фундаментальных принципов в реализации концепции инклюзивности является доступность и равенство образования. Несомненно, задача интеграции лиц с особыми образовательными потребностями (ООП) в образовательную систему занимает одно из ведущих мест в глобальном диалоге о проблемах людей с ограниченными возможностями здоровья (ОВЗ). Для преодоления социальных барьеров, с которыми они сталкиваются, необходимы не только физические адаптации, такие как пандусы, специализированное оборудование и обученный персонал, но и изменение общественных установок. Это не просто вопрос благотворительной помощи, это вопрос защиты их прав. Для реализации данных прав необходима комплексная поддержка со стороны государства и общества, выражающаяся в принятии соответствующего законодательства, развитии социальной инфраструктуры, информатизации общества и др. Однако, несмотря на широкое освещение и интерес мирового научного сообщества к данной проблематике, существует значительная разница в уровне и качестве данных исследований в различных странах. В попытке оценить состояние инклюзивного образования в Казахстане авторы проводят всесторонний обзор и анализ современных научных исследований в выбранной области, проведенных отечественными учеными.

Ключевые слова: особые образовательные потребности, инклюзивность, ограниченные возможности здоровья, образование, обучение, независимая жизнь, философия.

Introduction

The philosophy of independent living is a comprehensive concept of self-determination, self-expression, and the inherent right of every individual to fully integrate into society. Rooted in the idea of self-determination, it empowers people with disabilities to make choices that align with their preferences and needs. Accessible education stands as one of the key factors defining independent living.

As we celebrate the 95th anniversary of higher education in Kazakhstan, it prompts essential questions about the achievements and successes in this field, the quality and accessibility of higher education, and its prospects for development. According to the analysis presented in the “Concept of Development of Higher Education and Science in the Re-

public of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029” (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Approval of the Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029”, 2023), the coverage of inclusive education in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan is incomplete, accounting for only 60% of the total number of universities. The Kazakhstani education system aligns itself with global educational trajectories and trends that prioritize equal opportunities for all citizens, creating real conditions for the inclusion of people with disabilities and mental peculiarities in the educational process. Student-oriented learning, as the fundamental principle of educational processes, also aims to differentiate and adapt methods of interaction with learners with special educational needs.

Attaining quality and accessible education is one of the key factors of the philosophy of independent living, laying the foundation for further successful integration into society. The philosophy of independent living encompasses practical solutions for the integration of people with disabilities, as well as the level of civil freedoms and human rights. Independent living is more than an individual goal; it entails changing social relations. The philosophy of independent living advocates for equal opportunities for everyone, self-determination for every individual, regardless of their race, gender, age, or health status. It encompasses a wide spectrum of civil and political rights and freedoms for people with disabilities, enabling them to fully integrate into society.

Rationale for Topic selection, Objectives and tasks

According to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan” individuals with disabilities possess all the fullness of civil, socio-economic, and personal rights and freedoms, including the right to access information and quality education (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, 2005). Since the year 2000, Kazakhstan has been developing new principles in educational policy concerning people with disabilities, one of which is the development of inclusive education. This principle is reflected in and supported by various legislative acts, such as the Law on Education, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by Kazakhstan in 2015, the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2016), and the Law “On Social and Medical Pedagogical Correctional Assistance for Children with Disabilities” (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education”, 2016; Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, 2015; Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Social and Medical Pedagogical Correctional Assistance for Children with Disabilities”, 2002).

However, the absence of necessary conditions for the full participation of this category of students, meeting their individual needs and capabilities, as well as the application of insufficiently effective teaching methods, result in the majority of people in this category being unable to receive a good education, pursue a profession, and prepare for life in society. The situation is exacerbated by the annual in-

crease in the number of this category among young people. As of July 28, 2022, the number of individuals with disabilities in Kazakhstan is 707,980 (Information Portal, 2022), whereas in 2010, there were 680,000 (Government Resolution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019). Of these, 26,000 people (approximately 1.6% of the total population of the country) have hearing impairments. Moreover, the majority of these individuals are adolescents aged 16 to 18 living in rural areas (Information Portal, 2022). There is also a gap between the number of students with special educational needs (SEN) in secondary general educational institutions (95,497 as of December 2020) and students with SEN in secondary vocational and higher educational institutions (2,900 and 3,520, respectively) (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2020). This fact may indicate that over 80% of students with SEN do not choose to continue their education and do not have a profession, thus remaining largely disconnected from society. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing problems in the implementation of inclusive education.

Based on the above, the aim of this article is to analyze inclusive education in the Republic of Kazakhstan through the lens of the philosophy of independent living as a process of conceptualizing the issue of disability, aimed at establishing a fair and adequate attitude towards people with disabilities and the proper structuring of the overall social space.

From the article’s goal, the main research tasks and hypotheses were formulated:

- analysis of the concept of “the philosophy of independent living” in the global scientific literature;
- examination of the philosophy of independent living as a process of conceptualizing the issue of disability;
- analysis of the problems and state of inclusive education in Kazakhstan through the lens of contemporary scientific research by domestic authors.

Hypotheses of the research:

The philosophy of independent living is necessary for conceptualizing the issue of disability and establishing an adequate attitude in society towards people with limited health capabilities and special educational needs. In Kazakhstan, there is a lack of clear categorization and detail in matters of inclusive education, as well as a gap between the actual situation and official data on the practice of inclusive education.

Research methodology

In working on the article, the authors relied on the following legal documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan: the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, the Law “On Education”, the State Program for the Development of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2025, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by Kazakhstan in 2015, Convention against Discrimination in Education (Law “About the ratification of the Convention on Combating Discrimination in Education”, 2016), as well as the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Social and Medical Pedagogical Correctional Assistance for Children with Disabilities” (2002).

Furthermore, the authors of the article employed methods of comparative research, conceptual analysis, and hermeneutical analysis of philosophical and scientific texts to define the concepts of “inclusive education”, “independent living” and “philosophy of independent living”.

The authors of the article conducted a search for scientific articles by domestic scholars in the National Academic Library of Astana, on the Google Scholar platform, and on Science Direct in both Russian and English languages using key phrases “inclusive education, Kazakhstan”, “philosophy of independent living”, and “special educational needs” with a time frame spanning from 2000 to 2023. Google Scholar was the primary source among electronic search engines, as it presented the highest number of publications in both Russian and English.

For example, using the key phrase “inclusive education, Kazakhstan”, the Science Direct platform yielded 725 sources, among which only 2 publications corresponded to the desired phrase. One of these publications examines the psychological aspect of inclusive education, which does not fall within the scope of this research (Baimenova, Bekova, Zhubakova, 2015).

Results and discussion

The research topic proposed by the authors has been discussed in global science from various perspectives. Among the key aspects of the discussion on the philosophy of independent living, the works of the following authors can be highlighted: Nossek P., Narita Y., Dart Y., Dart J., and Kristeva J. In the study of inclusive education in Kazakhstan, the au-

thors placed the main emphasis on the works of the expert, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, and professor at Abai KazNPU, Z.A. Movkebayeva (2019).

Furthermore, the authors of the article also participated in discussions on the researched topic at the following scientific forums and platforms: in 2015 at the VII Russian Philosophical Congress (Abdina, 2015), from 2016 to 2018 at international and republican scientific conferences (Uyzbayeva, 2016, 2017, 2018; Abdina, 2016, 2018), and in 2018 in a Scopus-indexed journal (Abdina, Zhanarstanova, 2018).

The problems and state of inclusive education in Kazakhstan have been reflected in the regulatory framework of several documents. Initially, issues related to the education of individuals with special educational needs were addressed in general legislative acts and did not have a clear categorical apparatus. For instance, in the Law dated June 21, 1991, “On Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, which has since become invalid, general principles of social support for disabled individuals, their physical access to various residential buildings and social infrastructure objects were discussed. However, in the field of education, only the right of disabled individuals to education was mentioned, considering their special needs and providing equal opportunities with other students (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, 1991). However, in the mentioned Law, there is no more detailed specification of measures and mechanisms to ensure equal access, and there is no concept of inclusion as such. Although in the 1999 Law “On Education” (which is invalid now), the concept of “inclusion” was also absent, it introduced the idea of distance education, which, firstly, makes education more accessible to various categories of citizens and, secondly, promotes the principle of independence as enshrined in the tenets of the philosophy of independent living.

In 2007, a new version of the “Law on Education” introduced a categorical framework where inclusive education is defined as “a process ensuring equal access to education for all students taking into account special educational needs and individual opportunities” (The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “on Education”, 2007). This definition does not specify how equal access is ensured and how special educational needs and individual capabilities are considered. It does not describe the specific mechanisms and strategies that should be applied

to implement inclusive education. Additionally, this definition of inclusive education only mentions equal access to education, but it does not specify the need to include children with special educational needs in the mainstream educational environment or the necessity to overcome discrimination and stigma against children with special educational needs (Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Approval of the State Program for the Development of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020”, 2010; Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Approval of the National Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2025”, 2018).

The entire body of Kazakhstani scientific literature dedicated to inclusive education can be divided into several groups:

A. Works dedicated to inclusive education in general educational institutions – kindergartens and schools (Artyushina, 2008; Kalashnikova, 2012; Maksimenko, 2012; Tkachuk, 2009). Despite the relatively extensive coverage and close attention to the problems of adapting children with special educational needs (SEN) in these institutions, there are still issues that require further examination. Firstly, in domestic scientific literature, there is no clear terminology in the field of inclusive education. Inclusion, which implies the inclusion of children with SEN in the socio-educational environment, goes far beyond the previous understanding of a barrier-free environment primarily for children with disabilities. Furthermore, for the former, it may involve “integrated learning”, while for the latter, it may refer to “inclusive education”. These two concepts are not equivalent. As noted by Movkebayeva Z.A., differentiation should be made between these terms, as certain categories of children with SEN (e.g., migrant children, children from refugee families, orphans, children with social adaptation difficulties, etc.) can be integrated into general education on a common basis, whereas other children can be integrated into general education only with special conditions (Movkebayeva, 2016a). In integrated learning, the individual educational needs of students remain unmet because integration occurs in an environment that does not take into account the characteristics of this category of children, and pedagogical practice changes minimally (Movkebayeva, 2016a).

The unification of categories can lead to shortcomings in teaching methods for different groups of students. Inclusive education should contribute to the successful adaptation and inclusion of all children in the educational process, regardless of their

health status, social, economic, national-territorial, and other factors.

At the same time, creating a barrier-free environment, improving the material and technical base of schools, and methodological development with a focus on inclusive education play a crucial role. However, the concept of inclusive education is not limited to these aspects. Among the key recommendations for enhancing inclusive culture in preschool and school education, the authors emphasize the need for more active awareness-raising activities regarding inclusion, not only among the teaching staff and school administration but also among parents and children (Mamyranova, Kappasova, 2020; Chukotaev, Nurtazina, 2014).

A. The second group of works comprises studies focused on the professional activities of educators in inclusive settings (Movkebayeva, 2013; Oralkanova, 2014; Aubakirova, 2017; Rymkhanova, 2019). In these studies, the primary emphasis is placed on the preparation of teachers in general educational institutions, while higher education institutions remain outside the scope of this field. Moreover, even in the sphere of professional teacher training in schools, there are gaps in the area of inclusive education where it is essential to enhance the overall “inclusive competence” of future teachers. Most Kazakhstani universities have a separate discipline dedicated to pedagogical preparation in inclusive conditions. However, the training of specialized personnel should not be limited to a short period or a specific course. It should be an ongoing process. As noted by Zhomartova A., “teachers need to be prepared for diversity in the classroom, not for specific categories of students”, and this preparation process should be part of their entire “university education journey”, rather than confined to a single discipline (Zhomartova, 2021). Teachers should be prepared not only to work with students with SEN but also to “know the methods and technologies for organizing joint activities of students with SEN and students with typical development” (Aubakirova, 2017). This is necessary to prevent the psychological and emotional isolation of students with SEN. Additionally, there is a lack of a comprehensive approach to psychological-pedagogical training in inclusive conditions in various directions – tutors, distance learning, psychological-pedagogical support, etc. (Rymkhanova, 2019). Practice shows that in order to work as a tutor in a school institution, it is sufficient to complete professional development courses that last several days. However, this is insufficient for acquiring the necessary skills in working

with children with special educational needs (SEN), as each child with SEN requires an individualized approach that demands continuous, ongoing education.

Another important factor influencing the development of inclusive education in Kazakhstan is the gap between official and real statistics. As noted by Dinara Zakieva, a deputy of the Majilis of the Republic of Kazakhstan VII convocation, “conditions for inclusion were created in no more than 10% of schools, while the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan indicated 78.8%” (Zakieva, 2022). Attempts to adjust official statistical data can only worsen and slow down the pace of inclusive education development in the country. More attention should be paid not only to the official number of schools with inclusive learning conditions but also to the actual implementation of the culture of inclusion. Additionally, the financial aspect can also contribute to manipulations regarding inclusion. Per capita financing for children with disabilities is twice as high as for children in the general education group. Consequently, schools may have a financial interest in enrolling children with disabilities. The allocated funds should be directed towards creating conditions for the inclusive education of such children, but there is insufficient information about the actual distribution of funds to create an inclusive environment.

In the aforementioned parliamentary inquiry, D. Zakieva notes that “in the visited schools, which are designated in the Ministry of Education’s list as schools where conditions for inclusion have been created, there is no speech therapist, no pedagogical assistant for a child who is already studying in the school and requires the assistance of a specialist...” (Zakieva, 2022).

A. The third research group includes an analysis of inclusive education issues in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. While the primary focus is on school education, insufficient attention is given to inclusive conditions in universities. Moreover, students with SEN should also be provided with all necessary conditions for quality higher education. These conditions should not be limited to just creating an accessible environment (such as ramps and elevators), but also include “the availability of visual information for the hearing-impaired, educational literature, and the creation of individual programs”, among other things (Kuderinova, 2021).

It’s worth noting that according to the The National Report on the State and Development of Education System of the Republic of Kazakhstan

for 2019 (National Report, 2019), students with disabilities are underrepresented in higher education institutions. The Report states that “the number of disabled individuals in Groups I and II, and disabled individuals from childhood receiving higher education under the quota, amounted to 709 and 521 people, respectively”. According to the Report’s data, 100% of the country’s universities have created barrier-free access for individuals with disabilities. However, there is no analysis of the actual problems faced by these students during their education, there is a lack of data on the categories of these students, the actual conditions created for them, and whether the approach is merely nominal.

Additionally, the dissertation research of Al-mukhambetova B.Zh. is of interest, where the subject of the study is hearing-impaired students in universities and colleges (Almukhambetova, 2021). The focus of the research is the psychological and emotional state of these students, with the task of developing a research model and the main directions for improving the emotional state of this category of students. The end product is the development of a program to ensure an optimal level of emotional well-being for hearing-impaired students in universities and colleges.

A study conducted in 2021 by Movkebayeva Z.A. and Akhmetova A.E., in which 75 universities participated, allows us to assert the insufficient conditions in universities for implementing inclusive education, especially for students with visual impairments and musculoskeletal disabilities (Movkebayeva, Akhmetova, 2021).

Earlier, in 2019, the educational center “Bilim-Central Asia” conducted a study analyzing the situation in higher education institutions regarding the education of students with disabilities. The main objective was to identify obstacles and reasons for young people with disabilities to be denied access to higher education (Kaminskiy, 2021).

A.A separate category of research can be dedicated to studies on inclusive distance education. This is driven by contemporary global trends in the field of education, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and society’s increasing demand for accessible educational platforms for individuals with disabilities. According to Khamitova D. (Khamitova, 2021), “distance education for people with disabilities erases boundaries and barriers”, which is undoubtedly true. This also fosters independence and liberty, ultimately leading to integration and participation in the educational environment – principles that are embodied in the philosophy of in-

dependent living. However, there is still a lack of practical recommendations for integrating individuals with hearing impairments, who have their specific needs and requirements, into the educational process. Zhomartova A.D. (Zhomartova, 2021) also addresses the issue of preparing future educators for inclusive education in an information technology-driven environment, without distinguishing between categories of individuals with disabilities. This category of research focuses on the study of information technologies that support inclusive education.

It is quite clear that matters concerning inclusivity and inclusive education form a fundamental component of the philosophy of independent living. This philosophy encompasses a comprehensive system of societal, political, legal, and various other aspects designed to enhance the overall well-being and quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The challenges mentioned earlier necessitate their resolution and examination within the broader framework of the principles of the philosophy of independent living.

In the mid-20th century, the struggle for civil rights gained significant momentum worldwide. The fight for racial equality paved the way for other apparent social issues that were consciously or unconsciously pushed away from public discussions and decision-making. A gradual reevaluation of the problems related to people's health limitations began. Philosophers and scholars attempted to draw the public's attention not only to physical issues but also to much more significant questions regarding the full participation of people with disabilities in society (Fundamental Principles of Disability, 1975; Strasbourg Resolution, 1989; Ratzka, 1992).

By the end of the 20th century, the necessity for the philosophy of independent living became evident, as did the need to conceptualize disability issues, declare the rights of people with disabilities, establish fair and equitable treatment of individuals with disabilities, and properly structure society as a whole. Advocates of the philosophy of independent living argue that disability is not a medical problem but an issue of unequal opportunities.

If we turn to the research on the philosophy of independent living, one of the seminal works on this subject written at the end of the previous century is the scientific essay "A Philosophical Foundation for the Independent Living & Disability Rights Movements" (Nosek, Narita, Dart, Dart, 1982). This essay reflects a philosophical perspective on independent living, conducts research on the nature of independent living, presents philosophical concepts

from various cultures, and draws lessons from the authors' personal experiences. The significance of this research lies in the fact that such discourses have allowed the concept of independent living to acquire universal identity and its own set of values. Consequently, a foundation is laid for discussing various aspects of independent living and forming the groundwork for the philosophy of independent living.

In the 21st century, the philosophy of independent living continues to evolve at a higher intellectual level. A significant step in the development of the philosophy of independent living and the conceptualization of issues faced by individuals with disabilities is the inclusion of the renowned French philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva in this discourse.

In his article "The Rhetoric of Difference: Julia Kristeva and Disability" (Grue, 2013), Jean Grue notes that in recent years, the philosopher Julia Kristeva has taken up the issue of disability both in her academic capacity and as an advisor to the French government on political and legislative matters. This not only reflects the expanding research interests of Julia Kristeva but also signifies the increasing recognition of disability as a subject for interdisciplinary studies.

Julia Kristeva's approach aims to bridge the gap between individuals with disabilities and those without disabilities, putting an end to the marginalization and isolation of people with limited abilities. This approach is particularly evident in Julia Kristeva's letter to the President of the French Republic on people with disabilities (Kristeva, 2003) and her article "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity, and... Vulnerability" (Kristeva, 2010).

Julia Kristeva's approach is of significant interest from both the perspective of disability theory and disability policy due to a question that remains simultaneously unresolved and central to these fields: what is the relationship between disability as an individual or overarching marker of identity and disability as a context-dependent, variable attribute? How should disability theory and disability policy be formulated to preserve the common characteristics of individuals with disabilities without ignoring their differences? (Grue, 2013). This is not about answering this question but rather about posing the question itself, which is a significant step in advancing the philosophy of independent living.

"The Independent Living (IL) philosophy is based on the assumption that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights, options, and

control over choices in their own lives, as do people without disabilities”, note Paul K. Longmore and Julia Sain in “The History and Philosophy of Independent Living” (Longmore, Sain, 2004).

In the United States, there are numerous organizations that provide widespread assistance to individuals with disabilities. One of them, the Florida Independent Living Council, clearly formulates the concept of the philosophy of independent living in action. Here’s what they write: “Independent living philosophy in action means that when an architect designs a building, it should be conceptualized so as to be easily accessible to all, not simply to those who are able to climb stairs or open doors without alternative methods of entry. As a culture, we should expect that buildings that serve the public must accommodate all of the public. This has radical implications for how we shape our physical environment” (Independent Living Philosophy & History).

If we translate the philosophy of independent living into our Kazakhstani reality, we will see a rather discouraging picture. Yes, now buildings are being constructed with mandatory ramps for wheelchairs or ramps are added to existing buildings. But how effective are they really? To answer this question, as a practical assignment, master’s students in the field of “Standardization and Certification” were tasked with conducting a small study on ramps in one of the districts of Astana (the assignment was aimed at assessing the research competencies of the master’s students and was not documented). It turned out that most of the examined ramps do not meet the standards, meaning that it is impossible for wheelchair users to enter the building without assistance, as the incline is too steep. In some cases, it is impossible to use these ramps because their small size does not accommodate the width of a wheelchair. Why does no one notice these discrepancies? Because in our culture, people with disabilities tend to stay at home rather than test public spaces, as should be the case in a society of equal opportunities.

Our compatriots, upon traveling abroad, often share their impressions that there are many more disabled individuals in Europe, leading them to conclude that the Kazakhstani nation is much healthier than the European one. More accurately, our public spaces are less accommodating to the active lives of people with disabilities. Even more dishearteningly, our mentality does not embrace equal opportunities for both disabled and non-disabled individuals. In other words, we tend to shy away from acknowledging our disabled citizens and prefer them to stay at home and not be a “sight for sore eyes”. Therefore,

we assert that Kazakhstani society needs to adopt an adequate understanding of the philosophy of independent living, implement its conceptual foundations, and establish effective social relationships.

One of the key solutions to this problem is the full-scale implementation of inclusive education, its improvement, and comprehensive coverage throughout the country, providing more accessible information to all segments of the population about the principles of inclusion, as well as increasing not only the quantity but also the quality of domestic scientific research in this field.

Conclusion

As a result of the conducted research, a number of tasks were accomplished, and the hypotheses were confirmed.

Firstly, the problems and the state of inclusive education in Kazakhstan were analyzed through the lens of contemporary scientific research by domestic authors in this field. Secondly, an analysis of the concept of “philosophy of independent living” in global scientific literature was conducted. Thirdly, the philosophy of independent living was examined as a process of conceptualizing the issue of disability.

Regarding the formulated hypotheses, it was demonstrated that the Philosophy of Independent Living is necessary for the conceptualization of the issue of disability and for establishing an adequate attitude within society towards individuals with disabilities and special educational needs. The authors concluded that to address the issues of individuals with disabilities and special educational needs in Kazakh society, it is essential to disseminate the foundations of the Philosophy of Independent Living, which not only addresses the practical problems of disability but also raises more critical questions about the conceptualization of these issues. In other words, the Philosophy of Independent Living should encompass not only individuals with disabilities and their families but also the entire culture, including its legal, mental, physical, and spatial aspects. Kazakhstani society needs to adopt an adequate perception of the Philosophy of Independent Living, implement its conceptual foundations, and build effective structural relationships within society.

The second hypothesis was also confirmed since there is a lack of clear structuring and detailing of the categorical framework in matters of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. Additionally, there is a gap between the actual situation and official data on the prac-

tice of inclusive education. The authors concluded that Kazakhstani legislation needs a clearer delineation of the categorical framework in matters of inclusive education, distinguishing between such different concepts as “integration” and “inclusion.” Furthermore, a new approach to the training of teachers working in the field of inclusive education is needed, where the level of inclusive competence should be continuously raised.

The existing gap between official and actual data on the creation of inclusive conditions in general educational institutions was also highlighted.

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