

COUNTRY REPORT

1. Name of Training Course: THE GROUP TRAINING COURSE IN MENTAL RETARDATION IN FY 1996
2. Name of Participant: JORGE GOMEZ PATIÑO
3. Name of Country: Colombia
4. Name of your Organization: SANTA JUANA INSTITUTE.

5. Organization chart:

Participants are requested to outline their function of the organization and their own job.

The entities I work for perform the following functions:

a. Universidad Pedagógica Nacional: In charge of training teacher who specialize en different knowledge areas. One of their programs is "Special Education", aimed at teachers taking care people requiring special educational atention. For the last five years I have been a Professor at this University and have participated in the organization of investigation projects carried out with mental retarded people, confined in a Stated owned institution. I have also taken part in University program change.

b. Instituto de Educación Especial Santa Juana (Santa Juana Special Education Institute), founded 15 years ago for mental retarded people. Today, it counts with 120 studentes, and its aim is to rehabilitate special people. Here we work with children from pre-school age trough vocational levels. In my capacity of Director, I have been concerned with the possibility of bettering the quality of our services: we work in the fields of language, occupational and psychological therapies, and of special education. From this standpoint, I am charge of designing, planning, implementing, evaluating and supervising programs.

6. The current situation and trends in rehabilitation services.

Participants are requested to outline the status of educational, welfare/social and medical systems and services, financial aids and voluntary activities for people with mental retardation in their own country.

Special Education in Colombia dates back to 30 years and its objective is to organize institutions and coordinate services in looking to achieve the goal of having these population receive the benefits it deserves.

The local National Education Ministry counts with a Special Education Division, in charge of supervising the activities of the institutions therein registered. This office counts with programs that provide monetary help for the education of the poor sector. Scholarships extended by the Government cover 50% of total monthly costs.

The Government also has an Educational Secretariat in the Special District of Santafé de Bogotá, in charge of supervising educational institutions and offering teaching services for special persons. These services cover a low economical resources population and the Secretariat subsidizes all of the educational expenses.

There are private special education institutions in Colombia, which cover most of the country's needs, that is to say, they take care of 65-75% of our special population.

There is no particular organism in Colombia grouping private institutions and there does not exist an association of professionals in the country devoted to Special Education. There is just the FIDES, a Kennedy Foundation office, in charge of selecting special people to attend the U.S.A. Olympic Games for Special People.

There are some Private International Organizations who help to institutions. This help is given through the Embassies of each country who offers to help.

7. Participants are requested to state their own philosophy on rehabilitation services for people with mental retardation and problems to solve when making the philosophy an actuality.

Through my process to become a professional devoted to Special Education, I have arrived at the conclusion that the service one renders must be the result of the respect for the

counterpart and of the acknowledgement that the person with the special needs has potential and all types de possibilities to become constructive within his knowledge scope.

From this standpoint, we look for the individual to be more and more operative with his life surroundings, in aiming at his performance to get closer to what his medium demands from him.

To achieve it, we must think of the individual as a whole, but basically as a human being with affections, sensibility, creativity and who counts with the faculty of thought development. Obviously this process is different in each case and structural integrity varies, and this does not mean that we would deny anyone the possibility of having access to whatever the might need.

8. Participants are requested to describe community-based rehabilitation programmes provides for people with mental retardation in their country, if any.

Rehabilitation programs by the Government, to the carried out from the community, are very scarce. It would be worthwhile to mention that there have been some experiences in the social integration field wich have been achived, although these are isolated cases.

Other experiences have arisen from private institutes, wich just take care of their population and that is it. As an example, the Santa Juana Institute, wich I represent, works with families in the fields of sexual education, vocational formation, training on personal values; nonetheless, these are programs we carry out for our population. Cultural-wise, programs integrations has been difficult.

9. Service delivery system and relevant laws and regulation.

Participants are requested to draw an organization chart or flow chart (starting from sections at the lowest level) for every agency in their country wich is responsible for service delivery system.