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Egypt

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Inception Report on Intellectually Disabled in Egypt

Right To Live Association for the Intellectually Disabled

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In Egypt basic compulsory free education is guaranteed by the constitution to all Egyptian children within the age from 6-13 years . Its duration is nine years and is divided into two stages : First stage (Primary) is 6 years duration and Second stage (Preparatory) is 3 years duration.

In order to solve the problem of drop-outs from the school system, classroom schools for girls 8 -14 years old were created in areas deprived from schools. In these schools , the curricula of primary education is taught, in addition to vocational training.

The one classroom school consists of a building including one study room where all girls with different educational levels and different ages attend. (from EFA 2000 Assessment: country report)

The Laws for the Persons with Intellectual Disability

The declaration of the Rights of Intellectually disabled persons adopted in 1971, secured the rights of the disabled. Its first statement declares: "The mentally retarded person has to the maximum degree of feasibility, the same rights as other human beings, which includes the right to educational, medical , and economic security, as well as rights corresponding to particular needs in the medical and educational fields and a decent standard of living. The second declaration states "disabled persons have the rights to respect for their human dignity".(in Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons, UN Doc. 1975 in Lababidi, 2002).

Social Rehabilitation Law No.39 stated: **Every** disabled citizen has the right to benefit from rehabilitation services... Any trained disabled person should be given a license to enroll at manpower offices to enjoy the right provided for him under the provision of medical fitness in case of public services because of his defect, as indicated in the rehabilitation certificate. In 1975, the quota of disabled was increased from 2% to 5% of workers in any business with over 60 employees whether in public or private sector. -

(Lababidi,2000).

2- Intellectual Disabilities in Egypt : Data on Disability: Current Situation

There are no comprehensive data on disabilities currently available. According to the Central Authority For Public Mobilization and Statistics, -there are approximately two million persons with disabilities in Egypt, which represents about 3.5% (2002) of total population. According to other statistics in 2000, the total number of disabled in Egypt is between 3.85 - 4.7 million and 73.3% of disabled persons in Egypt are mentally disabled (from Youth and Special Needs, 2003).

Present Services :

The government of Egypt places a high priority on disability, with governmental and non governmental organizations working together to solve disability issues. However, current services cover only 10% of the total number of persons with disabilities.

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Types of Services Provided :

Services Provided by the Ministry of Health and Population :

No specific section or department is responsible for the planning and managing disability related services. This Ministry is responsible for the following services and items :

- eliminating the causes of disabilities
- early detection and treatment through necessary check ups, operations and medical rehabilitation

- participation in the planning and preparation of medical rehabilitation programs
- therapeutic and rehabilitative services.

Services Provided by the Ministry of Education: (MOE)

The MOE established special schools for intellectually disabled. These schools are free of charge and are situated in the major cities in the greater Cairo area. They accept students with mild intellectual disability.

Also, some private schools under the supervision of MOE have opened ' classrooms in their schools to serve intellectually disabled children. Those schools charge fees, and usually accept mild cases. They follow the curriculum set up by the MOE and also provide vocational training.

However, there is an unfair geographical distribution of services provided to intellectually disabled individuals. Most of the services are situated in Cairo, although 64% of the mentally challenged live in rural areas and countryside.

Most of the current programs depend on institutionalization rather than on integration. Also most of the programs depend on curative aspects rather than preventative aspects. There is a shortage of research works in all aspects including causes, trials, and evaluations of the different rehabilitation programs. We have shortage of professional manpower such as specialized doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, teachers... which is a major barrier against the spread of the rehabilitation programs in Egypt. Lack of personal motivations as people still have an emotional barrier against dealing with mentally challenged.

Services Provided by The Ministry of Social affairs : (MOSA)

The MOSA prepares policies to care for the persons with disabilities and issues licenses to non-governmental organization (NGOs) which

provide rehabilitation services, physical therapy, special needs education and other social services for persons with disabilities (from Youth and Special

It also establishes Rehabilitation Offices in all governorates which provide Vital services to disabled persons above 15 years of age. This includes vocational training, provision of free membership cards for transportation and recreational places (cinema, etc.) and pension provision to those above 20 years who display financial need.

The Role of NGO's

There are now many associations for students with mental disabilities : These associations are under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs. They offer services for students with all levels of intellectual disability from severe to mild cases. They get trained in daily living activities to be independent as much as possible, each one according to his ability. They provide vocational training and some associations provide residential care.

3. My Organization The Right To Live Association for the Intellectually Disabled (RTLTA) :

The Right to Live Association is a non-profit organization for mentally disabled children and adults. It was established in 1981 by parents and families of persons with special needs and it is the first association in Egypt to work in the field. RTLTA began in 1981 in Delivrande School as a recreational club for mentally handicapped youngsters. The Association gained an excellent reputation and as time passed on, there was a growing demand for further expansion. In 1984, a piece of land was purchased and a four phase project was set up to create a center that would include a school to train and

habilitate youngsters and youths, vocational workshops, sheltered productive workshops and a Center to train the teachers in the field of special education. The first phase was finished and work began in this new center in November, 1987.

The Association currently enrolls 150 students and provides them with basic training in daily living skills, some basic academic skills, each according to his abilities, vocational training as well as many .

extracurricular activities, like sports, music and art. Many art exhibitions are held for their works and they participate in national and international sports competitions, including the Special Olympics. In addition to the activities on the Association's premises, the Association places great emphasis on community based activities, in order to reach as many people as possible.

The Association's Activities can be classified into two categories.
Activities on the premises of the Association

Work done by the Association for the benefit of the community and intellectually disabled persons

a- Activities within the Association : The RTLA is composed of :
The School - Afternoon Training and Recreational Program- Pre-Vocational Training - Vocational Training (Sheltered Productive Workshops - Fanning Project - Residential Home - Training Center for Personnel Working in the field of Special Needs Education - Employment Services.

b- Activities extending outside the Association's Premises for the Community

The Association has undertaken a number of projects and programs outside the Association `s premises to help the community and intellectually disabled (LD.) persons. These projects include Symposiums and lectures for persons working in

the field and refresher courses for graduates of the center - awareness campaigns - counseling services - integration activities - trying to find employment opportunities for intellectually disabled persons using 5% allowance provided by the government - changing national legislation pertaining to I.D persons - providing consultation services to governmental schools for special needs.

My experience and work

I have been working at RTLA since 1988 as a speech therapist. I have an intellectually disabled brother (31 years old) who is working in the bamboo sheltered productive workshop at RTLA. Currently I am the Technical director of the Training Center for Workers in the Field of Intellectual Disability. And I am the Speech and Alternative Augmentative Communication Consultant AAC. I work with about 70 students speaking and non-speaking . The speech services offered are for those with speech disorders as stutterers, delayed language, dyslalia, omission, substitutions.

And for non-speaking students , we use the alternative augmentative communication (AAC) . I use AAC with the students who can express only sounds but not words or who have some vocabulary which is not clear. The alternative means used are tangible symbols, pictures, sign language and Blissymbols that the nonspeaking student use to express himself and communicate with persons surrounding him..

I work with all levels of intellectual disabilities from severe to mild cases. These include autism, cerebral palsy, down syndrome, and brain damage . I trained some teachers in the speech and AAC therapy in order to follow- up the communication and speech programs in the classes. The speech team includes ten members who help many of the school students with speech disorder or communication problems. Part of my work is to train parents and siblings how to apply the programs. We provide the parents with

speech programs and communication boards to continue at home . I give training courses in Sign language and Blissymbols in RTLA to train the teachers. I am also the technical director for the Center for Training Workers in the Field of Intellectual Disability. I provide a course about the alternative means of communication , which is part of the curriculum assigned to students at RTLA Training Center.

4- Community Base Based Rehabilitation -I was one of the specialists who participated in CBR programs that took place in many cities in Egypt in Alexandria, Port Said, Menya, Assiout, Sohag and Kenna. This program is financed by either the government or the NGO's. The goal of the program is to train the staff and parents to work with their children with intellectual disability. Several specialists and consultants give lectures to the staff , who take over and train the parents in their homes with the very simple cheap materials. „

5- Situation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

The united nations declared 1981 to be the international year for disabled individuals. From this started the idea of the international movement in 1982 to ensure social and economic rights of the handicapped and providing the standard of living that equals that of the nonhandicapped.

As a result of the UN declaration and worldwide awareness, Egypt responded to the challenge and President Mubarak declared 1988-1999 the Decade for the Protection and the Welfare of the Egyptian Child, coinciding with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The National

Council for the Motherhood and Childhood, established in 1988, advocated for the rights of the child , woman and handicapped. After the World Summit for Children in 1990, the commitment has been to improve the quality of life for women and children and those with disabilities. "Egypt was the only country to launch a decade for its children and conduct a comprehensive review of the objectives of the World Child Summit" (Childhood and Motherhood Newsletter,no.35,2000 in Lababidi,2002)

Education

A study by the Association for the Health and Environmental Development ft found that 12,000 children are enrolled in regular special education schools for disabled children.

To achieve comprehensive development of all programs for Special Education in Egypt, specific committees have been identified to assist with the ongoing review of educational services offered to students. They include:

- Consultive Committee to be chaired by the Minister of Education to formulate objectives and strategies for Special Education programs in - Egypt.**

- General Technical Committee composed of competent persons interested in or specialized in Special Education, in addition to intellectuals and academic professors.**

- Specialized Technical Committee to study aspects of the educational and pedagogical process and integrated care that should be provided**

- Committee for developing interior missions for upgrading Special Education teachers.**

The First National Conference on Special Education was held in October in 1995. It adopted fundamental principles on which the development processes of Special Education are based.

The Project For Developing the Schools for Special Needs and How it started: In June , 1999. there was held the conference around "New Trends in the Intellectual Education for Individuals with Special Needs" The participants were teachers, administrators, workers in the specialized ministries from education and health. In 1999, the pilot study started in summer in five governmental schools for special needs for improving the school administration, curriculum, educational strategies. ,

The five schools were chosen under the supervision of the ministry of education in five areas in Cairo. The project was overseen by team of special educators consultants who set up programs and follow up the work in the schools and guide the staff in these schools. They go to supervise the different activities as music, art, physical education, workshops like carpentry and agriculture. Currently, the project expanded and includes now 12 schools (Lababidi,2002).

To continue the progress realized, President Mubarak launched the Second Decade for the Protection and Welfare of the Egyptian Child (2000-10). The document extends the goals of the first decade to address educational and health issues, social, cultural and legislative issues with the emphasis on improving the state of children with special needs.

Vocational Training

Vocational training are provided for the LD in sheltered workshops in many NGO's. They learn practical skills that would help them in the future to find jobs and become more independent. These workshops are carpentry, cooking, farming, pottery, carpet weaving, bamboo, candle making , arts and computer skills. Students become employed in the Sheltered Productive Workshops after they finish training in the prevocational workshops and they receive wages for their work This happens in the RTLA and in other NGO's.

Employment

According to the law no. 39 , 5% of the employees hired in a company (private or governmental) should have a disability. But what happens is that the I.D are almost excluded out of the jobs. But in the RTLA , some of the students had better chances to be employed with in a company or in an ordinary school. Besides that , the RTLA employs students from outside its premises .

NGO's .

These associations are under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs. They offer services for students with all levels of intellectual disability from severe to mild cases. The LD. get trained in daily living activities to be independent as much as possible, each one according to his ability. The associations provide training on pre-vocational training for skills that help the LD to work in vocational workshop.

The First Directory in Egypt issued in March 2005. It was issued by Caritas Egypt. It includes the name of all centers for the disabilities, health educational and vocational services in Cairo, Giza and Kaliobyia. What is significant about this directory is the support it had from the Ministry of International Cooperation and the Italian Embassy. This directory reflects changes in attitude on Governmental level and it reveals more awareness of the persons with special needs in Egypt.

6- The problems to be solved:

-The services offered cover a very small percentage of the intellectually disabled in Egypt especially in deprived areas.

* the number of NGO's should increase and the services provided by the government

* the number 7 staff should increase to be spread all over

the country

- The high prices of most of the services which can not be afforded by many families , there should available services are low prices.
- Number of small clinics should increase to spread all over the cities - Employment opportunities are very limited for the disabled, most persons with LD are refused or mistreated.
 - * business men should become more aware of the problem of employing the I.D, know their abilities, problems , how to treat LD - The pension for the disabled is cut every second year after the death of the father and there is a need for a law to let him have pension for his life time
- * law should be issued to provide the I.D the pension for life after the loss of the father

- the mass media is not sufficient for public awareness about intellectual disabled persons, their abilities, their rights to be part of the society presence of classes for the disability in each ordinary school for the non-disabled to be aware in all school stages of thus group.

group of specialists need to move to poor families to offer service equipments as wheelchair, hearing aids are expensive and should be given free of charge

- intellectual disability is not part of school and university curriculum. LD should take part in all school levels and in all university curricula - residential homes are needed for the elder people with I.D to have safe life after their parents'loss and for those whom the family can not handle due to bad behavior manners.

- Train staff to take care and supervise the residential

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