

PREFACE (IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY)

According to WHO statistics, more than 600 million citizens of the world suffer from a disability caused by physical, mental or social reasons. Around 80% of this population live in the third world countries and one third of them are minors. In Iran, about 10% of the population is differently abled, with a significant portion being minors. The differently abled, like every member of the society, must be able to prosper from equal rights and opportunities, but are constantly facing numerous challenges in family, society, occupation and cultural arenas.

Communities' often false understanding of the differently abled, has hindered their possibilities to freely participate in social activities and building an independent life, because the public mostly views their disabilities before their abilities.

Who are the children with physical and motion disabilities?

Generally, the physically disabled are those who face mobility challenges caused by body impairment. This impairment may be caused by neural disorder, myeloid damage, ostial or muscular disorder, etc. and surface as organ failure and/or irregularity in moving organs (hands and feet). It should be noted that a physical disability does not necessarily mean a terminal disability in carrying out regular activities. In other words, a disabled person is someone who, due to physical impairment, is merely not able to perform his routine daily activities in a normal fashion and is faced with limitations when performing such actions. Therefore, rehabilitation becomes a multidimensional, comprehensive medical process. For the same reason, tasks carried out by professionals allocated to this purpose needs to be customized according to the child's specific impairment.

Most of these services, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy is presented concurrently and in conforming fashion. Because, a baby who is suffering from physical disability is not able to freely move body organs, deprived of exploring and familiarizing with his/her surroundings and therefore faced with interrupted and slow mental growth. As a result, it is crucial to have a mental health team, working conjointly and synchronized with the physical therapist team, in order to diagnose type and degree of disorder, determine medication plan and rate of progress for the disabled kid and his/her family throughout the healing process. With this in mind, rehabilitation process cannot be summarized merely as working with children. Instead, since kids are part of a family and they play a key role in physical and mental growth of the child, educating the appropriate behavior towards the child and helping to enhance families knowledge and understandings of their child's physical and mental, forms another crucial portion of the activities of SPHCY and has shaped the training workshops to be a reinforcing part of the rehabilitation services.

Occasionally, after passage of time since the commencement of medical treatment, a child's progress may be interrupted due to family's uncoordinated actions. Also, when the child enters school's age and faces other kids, or at puberty's age when sensitivity is at its peaks, a feeling of not belonging or being different can emerge in the differently abled child or youth and may cause disorders in medical and rehabilitation efforts.

Therefore, presenting rehabilitation counseling to families, focusing on ways to assist differently abled children or youth by using powerful tools such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech therapy (that employs expertise and experience of professional speech therapists focused on improving speech organ and its operation to aid and hopefully cure communication difficulties of the differently abled children) on a timework basis.

In response to suggestions and recommendations presented in the first round of URR, the following measures were introduced:

- a) Cooperation and participation of public and non-public organizations, including SPHCY, acting in the field of active rehabilitation of children with the purpose of promoting life quality through creating appropriate condition for educational rehabilitation
- b) Request for sharing international experiences by other non-public institutes acting in rehabilitation field
- c) Call Iran's government to provide more opportunities for NGOs which are professionally working in this field
- d) In the way of creating a new society, city managers, designers, architects and city makers should allocate a considerable part of their power to those who are unable to appear in city without the use of special facilities.

Key words: children, handicapped, rehabilitation

INTRODUCTION:

Society for the Protection of Handicapped Children and Youth (SPHCY) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization or NGO institution. Concentrating on providing free rehabilitation services to children and adolescents, SPHCY began its activity in 1999 and received its activity permit in 1999 under registration number 11203 and now it has more than 17 years of record.

Dealing with handicap phenomenon demands a view beyond nationality, sexuality, religious and race boundaries. SPHCY is about to provide absolutely free rehabilitation services including occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech-language pathology, water therapy, art therapy, play therapy and so on and modify the incorrect perception of the society about handicap phenomenon and provide handicapped people with equal opportunities in the community.

Main objectives of SPHCY have been:

1. Providing social work services
2. Creating necessary opportunities and mechanisms in order to make preventive actions about post-occurrence disorders (secondary prevention)
3. Providing handicapped children with equal opportunities to let them benefit from minimum life needs in social, economic, cultural, health and therapy fields
4. Consulting with the families of handicapped children and providing them and the kids, with psychological services
5. Participating in the process of national and regional notification of handicap phenomenon within NGO framework
6. Taking part in United Nations millennium development goals
7. Executing development projects and developing free rehabilitation equipment and facilities
8. Scientific support and encouragement of local communities. Helping to build a common concern in other provinces about the necessity of building other associations similar to SPHCY aimed at supporting handicapped children
9. Cooperating with government and related institutes in the fields of decision making, compiling and implementing rules which are beneficial to handicapped people and modifying current procedures.
10. Distribution of education packages including books, instructions, CDs, brochures and so on among addressees.
11. Providing participation structures as well as a network consisting of public stakeholders aimed at strengthening and supporting identified capacities. Motivation and sustainable development of referral system. Benefiting from referrals to professional centers
12. Thinking globally and acting in nationally in order to let all compatriots in need to benefit from national and humanitarian resources with no discrimination

BASIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Participation in the process of realizing United Nations millennium development goals
2. Continuing efforts for making educational facilities for students with special needs (Sri Lanka)
3. Supporting children especially the differently abled (Indonesia)
4. Making actions and continuing efforts to support handicapped people and sharing experiences
5. Increased access to health and educational services (Cuba)

RECOMMENDATION STATUS IN PAST, CURRENT AND IDEAL FUTURE

Comparison of the differently abled with average individuals reveals that the formers have not benefited from the same rights. Under the influence of common, but unfortunately false view to the handicap phenomenon, the differently abled are looked with disdain compared with others.

Visions and social clichés about the differently abled of a society root in a sophisticated nature. People generally look them with a kind of fear and enmity. Since physical health is a positive factor in a society, people still have pitiful view to handicapped people and prefer to avoid them.

Handicapped people appear as dependent and deprived people in daily social interactions who are not able to do fruitful activities in their lives.

In summary, sophisticated perception of handicapped people has resulted in separating them from others and preventing them from playing their active role as a social actor. However, they are always labeled by different social classes and non-handicapped people with labels like inactive people, lacking in willpower, dependent, incapable, dimwitted and so on.

Most handicapped people are potentially able to become independent. Our support degree will improve the effects of a deficiency and disability. If mobility problems of those who have physical impairment are compensated by assisting equipment like proper transportation or ease of access systems, they may never feel a difference. This is true about people with communication problems as well. Therefore, they will need no social support or protection. They only wish to have equal opportunities. For example, most passageways which are the results of incorrect or malformed design of public passages and transportation systems are the products of discriminations against handicapped people which in turn restrict their access to appropriate opportunities which they deserve.

PROGRESSES

Legislation sector

The Act of Supporting Handicapped Rights was approved on May 5th, 2004 by Islamic Consultative Assembly without the comments of the Guardian Council within the principles of law 94 of Iran's constitution and was notified by the president of the Ministry of Health.

This Act has 16 articles and several provisions.

Studying the act gives the impression that the responsibilities of each organization towards handicapped people have been correctly designated and defined. Yet after almost 10 years of its approval, a main part of this act has not been implemented. The reasons may be traced in improper pre-studies, lack of necessary budget and a supervising system or organization. In any case, Iranian Welfare Organization joined university professors, specialists, members of fractions to support rights of the differently abled. Also a number of NGOs have introduced a new plan to the Ministry of labor and social welfare aimed at reviewing the mentioned act.

Executive Field

Iranian Welfare Organization is responsible for the followings according to allocated provisions by the

country's annual budget:

- a) Providing rehabilitation, supportive, educational and job learning services for the handicapped people with the cooperation of their families, non-public sectors (private sector, cooperatives and charity institutes) and through allocating subsidies to non-public centers as well as families of handicapped people.
- b) Expansion of special care, education and rehabilitation centers for the differently abled (destitute, orphans, unidentified handicapped and those with behavioral abnormalities), with the cooperation of non-public sectors by paying credits to the centers.
- c) Provisioning and delivery of rehabilitation aid tools required by handicapped people
- d) Development of training, supporting and production workshops and providing them with professional rehabilitation services for their empowerment purposes.

NGOs Sector

Non-public organizations report handicapped people statistics. More than 50% of the organizations have been established in recent decades. The growth rate of the organizations implies that non-public organizations could bear parts of social and governmental loads and they have the capacity to prepare public participation infrastructures. The process of empowerment seeks for public participation in different social affairs and creating equal opportunities.

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

Legal challenges

The hurdles against implementing the comprehensive law of handicapped rights as well as the law of the world convention for handicapped rights, which was approved in 2008 in Iran's Islamic Consultative Assembly, revealed the necessity of reviewing the laws. According to agreements, previous government was bound to send the bill to the assembly but it has not been received yet. It seems that the approval of this bill and transferring it to the assembly is among the preferences of the new elected government hoping to overcome the hurdles of implementing the law considerably so that handicapped people can see the improvement of conditions from different points of view in practice.

Executive Challenges

Lack of a demographic database for the differently abled is one of the challenges in rehabilitation field. Meanwhile, the statistics reported by Iran's Statistic Center are not definite for different reasons. Lack of a comprehensive database has even prevented the recorded statistics to facilitate the process.

Social Challenges

Most handicapped people prefer to stay near their parents and family. At first look, it may seem a positive situation as this may prevent them from real world's unpleasant experiences while in most cases this results in their insulation. Such a communication style and sever dependency put them in a circle in which they viewed as people who need guides and helps of their parents, relatives and friends.

In fact, handicapped people surrender to non-presence in society condition so that compared with other people they appear less in public spaces and feel that they have a limited opportunity to benefit from a happy and independent life in the society. When handicapped and healthy people decide to communicate with each other, both become apprehensive about how to interact. The healthy side thinks that how he/she should establish a friendship relation with a handicapped and completely dependent person. In fact, both become apprehensive by the roles which should play in this relation [Lansdil, 1990].

Bernis Fischer, a philosopher in education theories, and his coworker Mrs. Robert Galler, who is a psychologist and activist in handicapped rights field, discuss about their personal experiences regarding establishing friendship relationships with handicapped people. They argue that how the friendship relations are established based on non-stated agreements while disability has no role in this communication at all. However, handicap phenomenon could make differences in friendship relationship but surely this is related to some incorrect concepts about handicap as well as some

people's fear of that whether handicap is an epidemic disease.

SUGGESTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

SPHCY suggests the following items to remove the mentioned problems:

- ✓ Making a database for the differently abled and elderly based on 2011 census statistics and following a national study on disability outbreak in Iran.
- ✓ Formation of national council of handicapped people
- ✓ Trying to approve the bill of reviewing the comprehensive law of supporting handicapped rights
- ✓ Implementing the law of the comprehensive convention of handicapped rights
- ✓ Providing Iran's differently abled with health assurance as well as free rehabilitation services
- ✓ Enabling urban and rural environments as well as inside homes for handicapped people
- ✓ Complete provisioning (100%) of required rehabilitation aid tools
- ✓ Supporting and covering all villager handicapped people based on society-oriented rehabilitations services approach
- ✓ Preparing a 70% occupation opportunity for ready to work handicapped people
- ✓ Development of daily educational and professional rehabilitation centers in non-public sectors
- ✓ Serious support of rehabilitation-related researches carried out in universities and research centers
- ✓ Public awareness about the differently abled and changing the negative views.
- ✓ Reducing the rate of mentally disabled children hospitalized in centers by 15-20%
- ✓ Conducting continual socio-psychological therapies and rehab services for chronic mental patients
- ✓ Providing all families of handicapped children with family social work services
- ✓ Provisioning of equipment and capabilities in order to provide children with free educational, cultural and healthcare services