



A normal school for Children with special Needs

Integration is an opportunity to improve the quality of education. It should not be at the expense of other children. Care should be taken that integration always brings benefits for each school and class through the improvement of teaching and management skills and a new attitude that stresses the teacher's responsibility to enable learning to take place irrespective of a child's disability.

The education offered to children with special needs is based on the standard kindergarten and primary school curricula. Children are expected to take part in all normal school activities with the least amount of change or any extra help that is possible. This is only possible by finding out a way that a child may take part in an activity that would otherwise be not possible or difficult, making small changes in the activities that will enable a child to take part as any others.

Every year that a child with disability is denied the chance to learn, the task of inclusion becomes more difficult. When help is given from early childhood, children have the best chance of reaching their potential; also the task for both families and teachers becomes very much easier. It is also vital, that those planning projects should be absolutely about the service that they try to build.

Inclusive Education needs to be implemented everywhere if it needs to be a service for all children.



Early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community intervention, especially for the poor, disadvantaged and children with disabilities plays an important role. Steps need to be taken to provide equal to every category of persons with disability as an integral part of the educational system. The objective should be to integrate the persons with disability with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.

We are at a point where the question is no more on whether or not there should be an integration of children with special needs but on how to implement the integration effectively and successfully. It is very important to acknowledge that every child can be helped to receive education with support if the community comes forward to do so. Early stimulation and education serve to prevent a disability from acquiring severe forms, as the child is helped to become more competent and a positive self-esteem is developed.

STATEMENT BY JAVED ABIDI ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD DISABILITY DAY 2005

Ten years ago, when our Parliamentarians passed 'The Disability Act 1995' I was one of the privileged few who witnessed this historical moment from the Visitor's Gallery of Rajya Sabha.

The last ten years have been like a Magnum Opus, with its due share of heroism, tragedy, and even a few comical moments as well. The Legislation gave the Indian disabled people the power to 'Act'. And act they did. They got united, they raised their voice and they came out in the open and demanded their due share. The two landmark victories were to get enumerated in the National Census and to be able to cast our vote in an accessible way in the General Elections. In other words - first, the Nation was forced to recognise that we existed and then, it was made to realise that we did not merely exist but that we were citizens too!

To have a law with no one to implement has been the tragedy of the Indian disability sector. First, for as long as 3 years, the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (C.C.P.D.) was not even appointed! And then, in recent years, while the office has a decorative head, she/he is more a puppet in the hands of the Ministry of Social Justice than the watchdog that she/he is supposed to be.



Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit releasing blue and yellow balloons to mark World Disability Day.

If we want 'The Disability Act 1995' to not merely exist on paper but to get enforced, we will have to free the office of the C.C.P.D. from the shackles of the Ministry of Social Justice.

In fact, we need a radical paradigm shift. If we want the entire issue of disability to be not viewed from the 'Welfare' looking glass, then we definitely need to take away this subject matter to another Ministry. The dream scenario would be to have a Ministry of our own - the Ministry of Disability Affairs! But for some more reason, if that is not possible, then for sure the subject matter of disability should be shifted from the Ministry of Social Justice to the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Ministry of Social Justice has been headed by a person either representing the S.C./S.T. or the Minorities. The Minister's heart beats for the vote bank that she/he represents. But if you are a S.C./S.T. Minister, you can't possibly neglect the Minorities (even in the B.J.P./N.D.A. Era!); and if you are a Minority Minister, then for sure you can't ignore the interests of the S.C./S.T. The remarkable tragedy however is that both can neglect the disabled.

Javed Abidi

(Javed Abidi is the Executive Director of National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People and Convenor Disabled Rights Group)

Merits and Difficulties of executing CBR PROGRAMME in urban areas

Jayanth Kumar, CBR coordinator



Recently AIFO has facilitated one week CBR training programme for the staff of We Care CBR project.. It was actively coordinated by Mr. Sagayaraj the programme coordinator We Care CBR project. The main objective of the programme was to understand and learn about CBR components focusing on how to carry out rehabilitation interventions for people with disability in urban

communities. This 6 days training included a day for practical assignments in the field. Total of 9 staff members have successfully completed the week long intensive exercise on CBR approach in urban areas. The group was oriented with basic concepts related to CBR, leprosy, and disability.

The training was concluded with an exercise on analysing the merits and difficulties of executing CBR programme in urban areas. With little experience of less than 2 years, the team has analysed some of the areas as advantages and difficulties. These could be useful for CBR initiators in urban situations.

Merits

1. Availability of resources and facilities from GOVT and private sectors
2. More possibilities for media advocacy
3. Many entitlements for PWDs from Govt Sector
4. Employment schemes in govt sector and options for self-employment
5. Availability of infrastructure facilities for conducting activities
6. Availability of more education and health services
7. Easier for conducting mass campaigns and events

De merits

1. Low motivation with the parents towards mainstream education and lack of awareness in PWDs on health issues particularly in slums.
2. GOVT schemes and programmes are not actively implemented in outskirts of the city and slums.
3. Economically well-to-do families try to hide disability, does not give full information, rejection, inferiority complex and non-cooperation.
4. Repetition of data collection, communities are confused and people are engaged with many activities.
5. Migration of people or change of location.
6. Irregular participation by the members in self-help group activities.
7. Physical accessibility is a serious concern in slums, semi-urban areas.

One cannot reform the world unless one enriches one's heart

- Raoul Follereau

AIFO-INDIA BIENNIAL MEETING – An Overview

This year, AIFO Biennial Meeting was held in our ORBIT Project, Humnabad, Bidar (Karnataka) from 16th to 19th November.

The main objective of the meeting was to:

1. To Re-affirm AIFO's vision and current financial position
2. Discuss strategic plans for the years 2007 - 2009
3. Analyse IEC activities
4. Presentation of project findings



During the meeting AIFO team facilitated different session's main areas which included AIFO's vision, financial position, groups in Italy, IEC activities and strategic plans for the future. The participants were divided into 3 groups to present their project findings. Each group was represented by a secretary

who finally presented the consolidated project findings of respective groups using participatory methodologies during the plenary sessions. Poster presentations, PowerPoint and transparencies were used to facilitate small group and plenary sessions.

Dr. Colizzi, AIFO's new president, introduced the participants to AIFO Basis, fund raising strategies and functioning of board members. He also envisaged the vision of AIFO on the Philosophy of Raoul Follereau.

Dr. Giovanni, Projects Director and Dr. Manimozhi, medical coordinator took sessions on IEC activities and its impact. They also discussed on appraisal and evaluation.

A social evening was organised by the ORBIT team to entertain the participants on 18th Nov evening

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