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Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs: The Case of Lebanon.

Abstract

Many remembrances in the last 50 years have emphasized how movements for social justice helped to define the history of the countries that developed it (1964 Civil Rights Act, 1954 decision for desegregation of schools...). These remembrances and others have played an important role in how school leaders turned out to be social justice advocates and activists. Dantely and Tillman (2006) have framed the concept of social justice in the field of education around several issues including race, diversity, poverty, marginalization, gender, spirituality, age, ability and sexual orientation. Most Middle Eastern governments have tried to provide appropriate remembrances to promote social justice, but were not able to implement and empower school leaders by these abilities. The case of Lebanon is not an exception. The purpose of this chapter is to establish functional administrative management reforms in favor of social justice leadership and moral responsibilities of school leaders and their communities as they advocate for the inclusion of students with special needs. This reform should be based on international standards and cultural considerations. This chapter argues that fostering social justice starts with re-establishing ethics of care, education and integration of what is social justice and how to seek it, and to question what is and what is not, what practices have to be developed, and what skills have to be acquired. The main intent of this particular intervention program is to create a positive school environment encouraging collaborative partnership with constructive ramification towards management of social justice for children in appropriate and innovative way in the community.

Introduction

International initiatives have been taken to support inclusive education. The UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994) calls on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schools by implementing practical and strategic changes. The UN Convention on the rights of the child contains several articles which taken together, provides the right to inclusive education.

These initiatives have led to a considerable growth in the literature on integration and inclusive education (Jenkinson, 1997). In general, it has headed in 3 main directions, understanding the practice of inclusion as it related to different disabilities, understanding the factors which help build inclusive schools capable of responding to diverse needs and comparing the effectiveness of separate special education and inclusive education (Jenkinson, 1997).

The lack of documented information about the field of special education in Lebanon has compelled the researchers to rely on informal observations and anecdotal reports. In describing the existing reality of special education practices in Lebanon, we can reveal that the educational private sector is the main provider of educational services for students with special needs (Ismail, 2004). Some private schools started building their own special units, typically referred to as the Learning Support Department, to teach students with special needs. Other schools use resource rooms as a main setting for providing specialized academic help for students with learning difficulties. A handful of private schools host children with special needs, placed by one of numerous non-governmental organizations.

Although the Lebanese educational system has been updated to keep up with recent trends of technology, the component that involves exceptional students remains grossly overlooked. Policy makers have kept the educational titles “regular” and “special” independent of each other (New Hierarchy for Education in Lebanon, 1995). Arab countries like Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya and the United Arab Emirates have already taken the appropriate measures to restructure their educational system to combine the two educational systems into one by adopting the UNESCO project, Education for All (Yacoub, 2000). Therefore, Lebanon, in comparison to other Arab states, is not as competitive in adopting the principles of special education. With the social awakening concerning children with special needs, the academic integration of these children into regular schools became essential both for the person with a need and as a solution to a problematic situation.

Having acknowledged the seriousness of the problem at hand, what can we do to help solve this dilemma that is complex and multidimensional? In the researchers’ view, we need to

create a holistic approach *where educational leaders, parents, students and stakeholders operate together to solve the problem*. We would like to propose an integrated framework of performance and well being that unlock parents, children and staff potentials leading to a fundamental transformation of the school environment, its society, and its culture as a whole. This integrated framework is underpinned by psychological learning theory in a process that is progressive, brings adjustment and is culturally attentive. It facilitates flexibility and variability in its application, to expand outside the walls of the school.

In setting the foundations of this framework, some basic steps have to be preformed:

a) Developing a vision that tries to answer certain questions in order to help create an ideal school/community life; the first is “What do we believe inside ourselves that special need children deserve in order to be healthy (physically, mentally and socially) in our environment?” The second, “What would be the attitudes and behaviors of those who interact with these children when they have to apply the core convictions derived from the first question?” Thirdly, “What would be the behavior and attitude of the children and their peers when all the school community lives by these core convictions? Lastly, “Did we enumerate all the achieved standards and mastery level of performance and add or delete goals based on data collection?”

b) Improving quality: Quality improvement occurs at three levels: competence, awareness and management. At the level of competence skills are planned at the personal, social, cultural as well as professional. As for awareness, emphasis is at the level of self-awareness, compassion with the other, and awareness of cultural differences and performance. While at the level of management stress is on teaching self-regulation, social skills, leadership and continuous professional development. With the continued emphasis on school/community environment development, the integration of Maslow pyramid, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and Social Ecology model can demonstrate success in helping these people change.

c) Accentuating collaboration: As for collaboration, the focus is on students’ family, peers, staff, professionals, and stake holders. In establishing the program of collaboration we need to be cognizant of what really bothers each group if we are going to develop ways of genuine

empathy and caring. We have to be aware about the issues and problems that make individuals anxious, such as lack of justice, equality, security, rights, equal opportunities, survival... The framework emphasizes on the social ecological model as a form for collaboration where interaction in relationships have to be between the special needs child and the surrounding community. The model uses horizontal multilateral rather than vertical approaches to service delivery through creative use of volunteers, paraprofessionals, peer support, and social networks, in addition to professional services. Training at the level of collaboration provides services in the domains typically classified under the heading of "social support."

The link that has to be established between the mentioned three parts will create a difference in the lives of the students and the whole community.

Vision

It would be to start with a definition of disability: it is a complex phenomenon that reflects an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. The International Classification of Functioning (ICF) defines disability as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is the interaction between individuals with a health condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g. negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social supports).

A child with disability may suffer from mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities (*IDEA, 2004, Sec. 602(3)*). So, people with disabilities have abilities that go unnoticed because society focuses excessively on their limitations and not enough on what they can do. In many ways, disability can merely be a point of view.

In addition, a disability is a 'social construction', whereas impairment is not. As such, a person can be blind (a disability), but in the dark, a sighted person becomes handicapped, and hence on equal footing with the blind person. Not every inability is a disability because a "disability is an inability to do something that most people, with typical maturation, opportunity, or instruction, can do" (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2005, p. 30). As such, a person's inability to read is not disabled if he or she was not exposed to reading instruction.

Most persons have not directly encountered people with disabilities and the challenges they face. Accordingly, they may not appreciate the extent to which people with disabilities and their families are excluded, impoverished, and marginalized within a vicious poverty disability cycle. Persons with disability remain invisible and isolated because of stigma, discrimination, myths, misconceptions, and ignorance. Only by a thorough analysis of this experience and input from people with disabilities can society build a sound understanding and development of a strategy to address the needs and aspirations of disabled groups.

Based on what was mentioned, the development of a vision will be mandatory. This vision has to replace the archaic relationship existing between school administration, parents, and children by an active performance-driven development. Bainbridge (2007) describes the importance of a vision by stating that "...creating a vision... encourages thinking 'outside the box'. In order to do this you will need to undertake the process of 'visioning' in a safe and secure environment where new ideas are encouraged and possibly innovative ways of working are explored... (P3)" Following this particular definition, few questions need to be formulated in the quest to create a vision tailored towards an ideal school/community life. The first is "What do we believe inside ourselves the special needs children deserve in order to be healthy (physically, mentally and socially) in our environment?" The second, "What would be the attitudes and behaviors of those who interact with these children when they have to apply the core convictions derived from the first question?" Thirdly, "What would be the behavior and attitude of the children and their peers when all the school community lives by these core convictions? Lastly, "Did we enumerate all the achieved standards and mastery level of performance or add or delete goals based on data collection?" This vision seems utopic and unrealistic unless the last question is answered where vision is put into action.

The answer to the first question, “What do we believe inside ourselves the special needs children deserve in order to be healthy (physically, mentally and socially) in our environment?”, could be reflected through a system of shared values if applied it will facilitate the whole life of the children, their peers and care givers not in the school community only but outside it. These values are intended to guide everyone who interacts with special needs children, and assist them to become independent, healthy, and safe. The core values will be derived from the acronym **ADINES** and have to be integrated into all levels and functions of the school organization:

A = Acknowledgement: Recognition of another’s existence, validity, authority or right

D= Diversity: To recognize and appreciate diverse characteristics that make every person unique in an atmosphere that promotes individual and collective achievement.

I = Intra/Interpersonal relationship: *Intra:* To have the kind of life that a person wants as related to private effects, personal growth, and spiritual/moral.

Inter: The important relationships that exist between individuals.

N= Needs: The needs are a motivating force that compels action for its satisfaction. They range from basic survival needs satisfied by necessities, to cultural, intellectual, and social needs satisfied by necessities.

E= Equality: Equal treatment of people with disabilities through development of legislation to provide protection from discrimination, and implementation of a policy to combat discrimination and promote equality

S= Sustainability: It is intended to be a means of configuring civilization and human activity so that society and its members are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential in the present, while preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems and planning and acting for the ability to maintain these ideals indefinitely.

Thus, it is necessary to remove attitudinal barriers and strive for further integration of people with disabilities and by this it will help to remove the biggest danger in society which people's ignorance in dealing with learning disabilities. Intellectually disabled people are not mentally ill or contagious. While they may not be totally independent, they can learn to do simple household chores or attend to their self-care needs. The intellectually disabled can take part in all activities if people allow them to. Some learn vocational skills and can even become part of the work force. It is merely a question of proper job matching and job training. Intellectually disabled people have emotional needs just like other people.

For example, students with developmental disabilities display more maladaptive behaviors than their peers because of their slower rate of information processing. Socially, they may be rejected, derided, bullied or ignored. They experience difficulty in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships due to their apparent immaturity. As for students with physical and health impairments, they may have limited physical mobility, such as wheelchair users, and need the physical environment to be modified to allow access. Students with behavioral disorders need special services, namely intensive special education in special classes, special schools, and even residential facilities (Lewis & Doorlag, 2009). Inaccessibility to the physical environment, such as buildings and roads, as well as public transport and communications systems, is still the major physical barrier that prevents people with physical disabilities from actively participating in social activities (Disability Brief, 2005).

Just like legislation around the world stipulate, such as PL 94-142 (United States), the National Disability Strategy in Jordan Act or the National Disability Authority (Ireland), students with disabilities deserve a free, appropriate public education depending on their abilities and learning styles, should be allowed to be educated in the least restrictive environment, be tested fairly, be treated without discrimination at school and in public places (streets, restaurants, malls, buildings, offices, etc.), be provided with special services in public transportation and telecommunication. In addition, younger children should have the right to early assessment and intervention.

Another point that has to be looked at in establishing the vision is inclusive education. The Salamanca Statement passed by UNESCO (Ainscow, 1994) fully advocates the practice of inclusive education for students with disabilities with the caution that “while inclusive schools provide a favorable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, their success requires a concerted effort, not only by teachers and school staff, but also by peers, parents, families and volunteers” (p. 11). Thus, the pendulum for special educators worldwide has swung towards a position of inclusion, rather than segregation or exclusion, where inclusion refers to the full-time integration with appropriate accommodations and supports of students with disabilities in general education classrooms located in their neighborhood schools (Bartolo, 2003).

Educational values such as ‘freedom’, ‘equality’, ‘justice’, ‘personal autonomy’, ‘self-realization’ and ‘the growth of understanding’ that are often discussed in the context of inclusive education are notoriously vague and cannot translate into concrete quantifiable indicators of educational outcomes. They are rather qualities that can be achieved through proper interaction with students in learning situations, and “not extrinsic products of these interactions” (O’Hanlon, 2003). Inclusive education has had tremendous impact on philosophy, values and practice of entire educational systems worldwide, and is often based on ideals of social justice (Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, in *Inclusion & Diversity in Education*, 2009).

For inclusive education to attain freedom, equality, and justice, and foster autonomous learning depends largely on the nature of the conditions for learning set forth by the teacher, rather than its products. “Therefore, teaching is seen as an ethical activity, and an appropriate focus for practical investigation and reflection. All areas of education and schooling are open to scrutiny in the advancement of such values and concepts within inclusive practice through research processes like action research. However, it is argued that, within a discourse of ethics, ‘maintaining segregated special education is incompatible with the establishment of an equitable education system and hence, ultimately with an equitable society. It follows therefore that only inclusive education can deliver social justice’ (Dyson 1999).”

Quality improvement

a) **Teachers Empowerment**

The answer to the second question of our vision “What would be the attitudes and behaviors of those who interact with the special needs children when they have to apply the core convictions derived from the first question” The answer will be through training the whole constituents of the school, to build a good quality of life for these children in and out of school there is a pressing need to build capacities and develop the skills of its constituents who have to practice and teach these skills; in other words, teachers, staff, care givers, mental health staff and stakeholders. The biggest challenge lies in the transition from an archaic system of interaction with special needs children to a system of various roles and wide variety of tasks that offers a cooperative and comprehensive program in managing the situation in inclusive schools. With continuous emphasis on school environment development, integration of Maslow pyramid, development of Cognitive Behavior Coping skills and Social Ecology model can demonstrate success and induce positive change.

In Lebanese schools, teachers have to follow a limited agenda in teaching and giving information, and they value students’ success by this set agenda. They are disregarding a human value, a personal ability to contribute to society. They devalue the students’ capacity to do and to be. But psychological evidence shows that if educators infuse teaching activities with value, dignity, and respect of the learner, the learners will be ready to do and contribute to the utmost of their ability (Rogers, 1983).

When teachers follow the limited, short-term goals of the educational programs set by the government ministers, they are narrowing the concept of education and disabling student to be value-laden human being. This situation has lead the researchers to ask what contribution might the skills of special needs helper make to increase the levels of dignity with which people in the Lebanese schools are treated.

Although they may lack the professional training of special needs helper, school- teachers have a long tradition of helping students with disability problems. They also interact daily with the students, and thus are in an excellent position to provide personal direction. In fact, effective teachers share many of the same traits as effective helpers: ability to empathize with

students, patience and flexibility, excellent interpersonal skills, openness to new ideas, and awareness of individual differences. Good teachers also habitually promote and sustain positive group interaction in their classes, and develop a helping relationship with both students and parents. In all these ways, the elementary school teachers, who work closely with young children in a single classroom, generally might have the idea that developmental guidance is an integral part of their responsibility to students. (Ismail, 2004)

As NDA summed it up, understanding social constructions of disability and impairment can help to explain why people with disabilities have been marginalized. Contact with people with disabilities under particular conditions can reduce prejudice. Also, affective ties including forming close friendships appear to be very effective in reducing prejudice. Further, disability Awareness Training is required for all but how it is carried out is important. The impact of disability awareness training should be evaluated. Media may play a larger role in determining attitudes and knowledge than otherwise and, in these circumstances, the need for an enlightened, responsible and non-discriminatory media culture becomes more important. Finally, understanding and promoting the values underpinning basic human rights or the basic human conditions required for development - equality, autonomy, dignity and solidarity/social justice - is essential if governments and individuals are to commit themselves to ensuring that each and every person can access the conditions required to live as self-determining individuals (Hannon, 2010).

The Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly has adopted a resolution aimed at improving the daily lives of people with disabilities. It calls on WHO and its Member States to work towards ensuring equal opportunities and promoting the rights and dignity of people with disabilities, especially those who are poor.

In Jordan, His Majesty's initiative and instructions have resulted in a new Jordanian strategy paying particular attention to issues central to the lives of citizens, including the rights of persons with disabilities, by developing a National Disability Strategy. In the area of accessible communication and environment, the National Strategy calls for accessibility in all

forms including social and behavioral attitudes and stereotypes, through a series of interventions and programs, to simplify and facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, by altering transportation, information and communication technologies, and all other public service facilities which will result in self-reliance and social integration for persons with disabilities.

In the target area of media and awareness raising, the document calls for effecting a change in Jordanian society, leading to a reduction in the incidence of disability, and to the restructuring of the physical and social environment, enabling persons with disabilities to achieve their rights and improve their image in society.

The National Strategy aims at ensuring equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities with the aim of leading lives with dignity, including accommodation and sustainable care services aimed at all types of disabilities, especially for those with medium and severe intellectual disabilities, and to ensure equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

In the field of sport, recreation and culture, the strategy seeks to enhance the physical, psychological, social and cultural well-being of persons with disabilities, and to build their confidence in themselves and in their abilities, as well as helping them regain motor and other skills through sports and cultural activities. These factors play a significant role in the development of physical capabilities, as well as, their impact on the development of adaptive behavior and social maturity of individuals with disabilities.

Regardless of what was issued or what was planned, quality improvement in schools occurs when people use their abilities to the maximum.

A first step that has to be done is to improve the well-being of teachers by improving their attitudes towards themselves and towards others. They need psychological support for their own self-esteem and well being, they need help in understanding and coping with the stressful situations they are experiencing as well as the demands of the position.

Second, the role of the teacher has to be changed from a dispenser of information to a facilitator, a skilled helper, communicator, and to a certain extent therapist. Here the role of training becomes important due to the difficulty in changing adult attitudes and behavior. Without training to tackle teachers' own behavior, there is the danger that the adults' words will not match their actions.

A third thing that should happen is empowering teachers, because teachers can influence students' affective, behavioral, and intellectual abilities if they are empowered. By empowerment we mean how to make the transition from a traditional system of teaching to a system of various roles and wide variety of tasks to offer a cooperative and comprehensive program in psychosocial support and justice as an equal partner with educational programs. There is evidence (Norcross & Grencavage, 1989; Sizer ,1992) that human beings perform better, will learn more effectively, when they perceive themselves as possessed of inviolable dignity and worthy of unconditional respect, when they share in decision making, and have a certain level of control. What we have to do is to help teachers develop inner justice, peace with their own self, with no inner conflict. If this is achieved then social justice will prevail, and thus we will experience harmony in human relationships, social justice, friendship, unity, cooperation and collaboration, and community development.

Teachers should be trained in the basic skills of psychosocial support, teaching diversity, communication skills, critical thinking and others. When teachers are trained on these basic skills, they will be able to help learning disabled students cope with particular challenge in some cases. But, they need to have the opportunity to internalize these concepts and skills themselves before they can develop these skills and attitudes in these students. By applying this, the teacher will be using the first key to social justice education: a helping and healing relationship. In addition, when we stress the importance of acquiring these skills, we are not devaluing teaching and academic skills, nor disregarding the value of knowledge that the teacher has, but we are trying to show that deficiency in interpersonal and intra-personal skills has a negative effect on teaching and learning. (Blase and Blase, 2001; Keiser & Shen , 2000).

Teachers also receive important benefits from teaching in an ILFE (Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments, 2006). They have more opportunities to learn new ways to teach different kinds of students. They gain new knowledge, such as the different ways children learn and can be taught. While looking for ways to overcome challenges, they can develop more positive attitudes and approaches towards people, children, and situations. Teaching becomes a joy, not a chore. Teachers also have greater opportunities to explore new ideas by communicating more often with others from within and outside their school, such as in school clusters or teacher networks, or with parents and community members. By applying these new ideas, teachers can encourage their students to be more interested, more creative, and more attentive. As a result, the children and even their parents can give teachers more positive feedback. They also can receive increased support from the community and be rewarded for the good work they are doing.

Teachers can experience greater job satisfaction and a higher sense of accomplishment when ALL children are succeeding in school to the best of their abilities. Remember, however, that “ALL children succeeding” does not necessarily mean that all children successfully pass a written examination. It means accepting diversity in the different ways children learn as well as how they show their success in learning; for instance, when they can successfully explain and apply a concept to the teacher or to the class, instead of answering questions about it on an examination.

In schools that are inclusive and learning-friendly, teachers may have more volunteers working in their classrooms, which reduce the teaching workload. Under the teacher’s guidance, these volunteers will more likely want to help when they understand how what is learned in the classroom is important for the lives of children and their families

Increased professional development opportunities are also needed to create a more dynamic and peaceful workplace. In this situation administrators and principals should encourage teachers in creating their own professional development opportunities. They have to be aware of their needs in relation to the vision and mission of the school. Another way to improve professional development is to recognize that teachers have different needs. Teachers vary in

their learning styles and their desires and needs also differ. Teachers have to be given options to decide what kind and type of professional growth, training, and career goals (Robinson, 1994).

The working conditions of teachers will improve dramatically. Instead of working in isolated settings with few resources, teachers will have time to collaborate with one another. The ideas of teachers will be highly valued, and they will be viewed as leaders who work collegially with school administrators to design the best learning environments for students. There will be a place that creates winners, not winners and losers (Kottler, 1998).

Rejecting teachers cause disabled students to perform more poorly, both socially and academically. The self-concept of a rejected student can be affected. Simply including students with disabilities in the regular classroom does not guarantee their social acceptance or their acquisitions of improved social skills. Teachers must participate in developing and implementing a systematic program designed to improve the students' social skills and to increase their social integration.

Teachers should start by changing their attitude as their attitude has a significant effect on the attitudes of the students within the class; negative feelings towards students with disabilities can be communicated by the teacher. Teachers should attempt to convey a positive attitude that encourages acceptance of the student with special needs.

Teachers should focus on students' similarities. Turnbull and Shulz (1979) state, "A difference is only a difference when it makes a difference...[C]hildren [with disabilities] has far more similarities than differences with the children without disabilities (p. 48).

Because of the strong relationship between attitude and information, teachers should be sure they have adequate knowledge about students with disabilities and the appropriateness of different educational interventions. They should assume primary ownership and accept responsibility for the education of students with disabilities, just as they do for all students on the class list. Provide families with documented evidence of their children's progress and successes. Help families become more actively involved in their children's education. Help

families determined where a student's interests lie so that appropriate long-term goals can be established. Teach and reinforce social skills that are needed for students to be successful, contributing members of the communities in which families live. Tell families when their children exhibit inappropriate behavior or academic needs in the classroom. Provide important educational and community data to help families stay current and knowledgeable about opportunities available for children. Lend a helping hand, a supportive ear, and a friendly face to all families served (Hattie, 2002).

Another important figure that plays a role in creating and developing social justice for special needs children is the principal and stake holders. If they are supportive, involved, and engaged in what is happening, all the positive powers of students, teachers' assistants, and counselors will be unleashed to their fullest. In this situation, they will be facilitators and managers at the same time. Trust and rapport must be established through open communication with students, parents and teachers. By maintaining a positive attitude, and viewing all members of the school and community as assets then culture of social justice will prevail (Bentely, 2000; Harris & Enfield, S. (2003).).

In Quebec, Education Minister Line Beauchamp unveiled guidelines for integrating students with special needs into schools. The directives aim to define the best conditions for supporting "harmonious" integration and will guide administrators at school boards and public and private schools.

Its four guidelines call for: a) Determining the best educational service for a student based on an evaluation of his or her needs and abilities; b) demonstrating, should the need arise, that integrating a student poses an "excessive constraint" or infringes on the rights of other students; c) planning the composition of a class so that it's balanced; d) and putting in place a flexible and varied "continuum of services."

Children's mental health, social, and emotional development should not be the responsibility and goal of teachers only, but every active member within the school community. All staff should be trained in the basic skills of observing and discovering the beginning of health and

mental symptoms, dealing with diversity and communication skills McGuiness, 1993b). When staff is trained on these basic skills of rights, equality, and diversity, they will be empowered to help special needs children cope with their particular situation.

To alleviate problems, enhance and develop awareness a map of how to improve performance will be based on training that tackles the health, personal, professional and social factors of the people in the school. The most feasible way seen by the researchers could be through practical and applied workshops and activities like but not limited to:

- Development of students profile
- Offer trainees simulation of situations that occur on job, and make them practice ways of how to cope with these situations.
- Offer sessions in human rights, justice, peace education and conflict transformation
- Organize events designed to improve teachers and staff motivation and analyze successful actions in dealing with health and disability problems
- Offer activities related to: relaxation training; stress booster training and cognitive structuring.

In addition to training and workshops certain activities and incentives have to be promoted such as:

- Updated information for teachers and parents as related to the nature of the job and their children's development.
- Offer social activities for teachers and children's family in the school vicinity to understand the nature of work handled.
- Opening a unit of stress management and physical training. The focus of the unit's activities will be on both individual and organizational levels, not forgetting the promotion of the awareness for children's right and justice workshops.
- Promotion criteria and salary improvement plays a role in creating a positive atmosphere.

b. Administrators Leadership

Within a task, there are many activities, which only the leader can perform. However, there are often, opportunities for leaders to delegate parts of the task to colleagues. Delegation should not be undertaken in order to off-load boring, tedious, unrewarding tasks, but to empower and enhance job satisfaction and reward (Bennet, 1994; Praisner, 2003).

Kottler and McEwan (1998) suggest that when a principal chooses to accept the leader role, he/she has to develop as a skilled helper. This skill will involve mastering a number of counseling and consulting skills. The acquisition of these skills will allow the principal to gain access to the mind of the people whom he/she is interacting with, earn their trust, and understand what they are experiencing. In return, the people will listen to him/her because he/she has credible helping skills and an authentic interest in their benefit.

As a leader in his or her school, the principal has to be aware of the needs of students, and ensure that teachers create an encouraging atmosphere for education. Hazler (1998) emphasizes the importance of the climate of respect and caring that engenders effective teaching and learning. Hazler contends that if the principal is supportive, involved, and engaged in what is happening, all the positive powers of students, teachers' assistants, and counselors will be unleashed to their fullest. In this situation, the principal will be a facilitator and a manager at the same time.

The climate of the school and the leadership of the principal in the school play significant roles in creating a positive environment that can affect the students' behavior and subsequent learning. The principal is one of the most important people in the school; the leadership provided by the principal determines whether a maximum opportunity for developmental task mastery by the students in the school is promoted.

Administration support is *vital* to the intervention and its sustainability. They can give a hand in identifying specific dilemmas that represent the current culture of the school. Administrators and supervisors should undergo training that has to do with awareness, accepting diversity, human right etc. If teachers and staffs see their administrators and supervisors attending the training, they will acknowledge that this is important and their own participation is necessary.

The provision of intervention program would be most successful when applying Maslow's Pyramid of hierarchy of needs for the faculty and staff. The most important basic needs are:

- Reliable assistance from persons and settings.
- Services that facilitate self-advancement, self-improvement and autonomy.
- Personal development and respect from others.
- A sense of being appreciated and cared for, and a desire for relationships that provide emotional sustenance and empathy
- Privacy and autonomy.

In sum, the ideal path moving from one stage to the next until maintenance is achieved. When these basic needs are satisfied then the next step is moving to the complex level of improving quality.

How can we create a just, accepting society, and fair treatment for special needs children? This is where the third level of improving quality comes; management. An implementation of a comprehensive prevention program, which is characterized by a number of cognitive, behavioral and social activities that form the basis for understanding the best practices, will be needed.

At the level of cognitive activities the teacher should be able to:

- Assess the nature and type of skill deficits in every child.
- Increase the child's ability to cope with high-risk situations including both interpersonal difficulties and intrapersonal discomfort.
- Be able to use active behavioral or cognitive coping methods to deal with problems.
- Through simulation, teachers will develop the skill of self-efficacy and be persuaded by the possibility of change.
- Teach coping behavior through instruction, modeling, directed practice and feedback.
- Involvement and engagement of the significant other of the child (parents, peers...) in attending training sessions
- Elicit from the significant other and the child some important positive aspects and explore how they can work together to overcome the problem.

Behavioral and Social Activities:

Physical Activity constitutes an important factor in promoting resilience and mental health in the children. In fact, physically active people tend to have better mental health than their inactive counterparts. The physically active usually score better in regards to positive self-concept, and self-esteem. Physical activity has also been used to treat mental health problems such as depression (American Heart Association, 2009).

Practical ways of enhancing resilience include but are not limited to:

- Access to sports and other activities that suit the situation of every child;
- Opportunities to participate in arts
- Practice in social skills
- Opportunities to practice enjoyable and fulfilling use of time, for example involvement in the theatre, arts, music, drama or exercise
- Opportunities for socially useful activity, for example through peer support or community involvement.
- Opportunities to benefit from education and obtain qualifications.

Collaboration

Thirdly, “What would be the behavior and attitude of the children and their peers when all the school community lives by these core convictions? This question can be attained by collaboration between teachers, mental health professionals, students’ family and stakeholders. Collaboration can be grouped into shared core values and respect, proper training, and continued cooperation. Each level depends on and potentiates the other.

Maslow’s theory of self-actualization maintains that there is a hierarchy of needs, ascending from the basic biological needs to the more complex psychological motivations that become important only after the basic needs have been satisfied, namely physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, and self-actualization needs.

The needs at one level must be at least partially satisfied before those at the next level become important determiners of action. When food and safety are difficult to obtain, the satisfaction of those needs will dominate a person's actions and higher motives are of little.

Most individuals with special needs continue to struggle to fulfill the first four needs as many are poverty-stricken in developing countries. Those who are luckier and live in more prosperous and supportive societies cannot claim to have achieved esteem needs. In other words, to achieve, be competent, and gain approval and recognition (Atkinson & Hilgard, 2003; Walker, 2003).

Parental Collaboration

Most parents in Lebanese families do care what happens to their children. Many parents want someone else, usually the school, to guide them in helping their child. It is here the school's task to consistently emphasize parental responsibility at the same time offering help to these children and their families. Parents need help in developing parenting skills that will encourage the kind of conditions that promote learning and the development of a positive self-concept in their children.

Some schools do not believe that working with the families of the children in the schools is a viable option for them. It is the view of the authors that teachers should spend a significant amount of his/her time working with the meaningful adults in the child's life, the peers and the parents, in addition to spending time with the child in classroom guidance activities, small group work, and individually.

A variety of approaches to parent education have appeared over the years. Some of the most successful ones include the Adlerian psychology approach, developed by Rudolph Dreikurs, (1959) in which a group of parents meet to discuss and analyze the behavior of children, lending support to the parents as they attempt to be more effective. This was one of the earliest approaches to parent education, proving itself successful to the extent that parents felt supported and helped as they sought to increase their parenting skills.

Parent education appears to be the key to helping parents learn how to deal effectively with their children. Hansen, Himes, and Meier noted that "parents who know someone will respond positively to their inquiries and assist them in their questions will more than likely return to

the school with a favorable attitude and will be able to consider a collaborative role with the school in the future “ (1990,p.88).

Through an ILFE, parents learn more about how their children are being educated. They become personally involved in and feel a greater sense of importance in helping their children to learn. As teachers ask them for their opinions about children, parents feel valued and consider themselves as equal partners in providing quality learning opportunities for children. Parents can also learn how to deal better with their children at home by using techniques that the teachers use in school. They also learn to interact with others in the community, as well as to understand and help solve each other’s problems. Most importantly, they know that their children—and ALL children—are receiving a quality education.

An ILFE can offer many benefits to the community, too. The community develops a sense of pride as more children go to school and learn. They discover that more “community leaders of the future” are being prepared to participate actively in society. The community sees that potential social problems, such as petty crimes or adolescents’ problems may be reduced. Community members become more involved in the school, creating better relations between the school and the community.

Lebanese schools have to do certain steps to establish partnership with parents and the community. As Epstein (1992) remarked, parents still feel lucky when teachers inform and involve them in activities with their children. Thus, the researchers have some suggestions, if implemented in schools it will lead to involvement that is more parental.

These suggestions include:

- Finding out about the needs of parents and communities, this can be reached by asking parents during conferences, or by making interviews and surveys to learn about the activities that parents are interested in, and the nature of assistance that the parents want or that they can offer to the school.
- The other step that has to be done is, if you cannot bring parents to you try to go to them. This will allow the educators to get to know the families, their values expectations, and customs. Here, teachers can perform such job.

- A third point is to use positive communication strategies with parents to extinguish the negative attitude that was established through the experiences. Contacting parents and thanking them for their cooperation in parental conferences, and encouraging them to share in other meetings, this will establish a positive rapport with parents.
- Change the one used to be atmosphere of the school. The environment of the school has to be a receptive, comfortable, and encouraging one. Administrators as well as teachers and key players have to appreciate the interest and involvement of parents in the school. They have to create ways for parents to know how to help in order to create an excellent atmosphere for the children.

Implementing these, strategies will take time and might be frustrating when response from parents in the beginning of the implementation of the program might not be up to the intended goals. In this situation, creative ways and insistence on cooperation in a positive and gradual way will lead to a change. The more parents become interested in the school's activities, the more effectively they will be helping the school, the more they will ask from schools, and the more positive effect will be reflected on the behavior of their children (ElZein, 2009). This might be troublesome in the beginning, but this is what is needed for social justice.

Peers' collaboration

Students with special needs may encounter difficulty in social interactions with general education because of their behavior, fail to conform to the expectations of school and society, not look or act the same as other students, can be easily identified; their appearance or their actions are visibly different, are delayed in social development, often encounter failure, lack the necessary language skills for effective communication.

Successful inclusion depends on three factors: attitude, resources, and curricula (Favazza, Phillipsen & Kumar, 2000). Hence placement alone does not guarantee acceptance, social integration and social justice. What is needed is multiple opportunities for children without disabilities to interact with special needs children, especially when they are supported and

encouraged to do so. In their research, when participants (kindergartners) played directly with peers with disabilities, they reported increased levels of acceptance, began to incorporate children with disabilities in their drawings, stop by the classes of children with disabilities, and greet one another in the hallways, cafeteria, and playground.

Peers should provide support and assistance (assisting students with physical or visual impairments in their travels around school or providing a student with severe disabilities the opportunity to learn and practice age-appropriate skills while participating in games or verbal interactions with others (Reay, 2006).

Peers can become peer tutor to help them with instruction and the model provided by the general education tutor. Tutoring is effective with students who are withdrawn; have acting-out behaviors and those with academic needs.

Through an ILFE, children become more self-confident and develop greater self-esteem. They take pride in themselves and their achievements. They learn how to learn independently both inside and outside of school. For example, they can learn how to ask good questions. They learn to understand and apply what they learn in school to their everyday lives, such as in their play and in their home. They also learn to interact actively and happily with their classmates and teachers. They learn to enjoy being with others who are different from themselves, including how to be sensitive to and adapt to these differences. All children learn together and value their relationships, no matter what their backgrounds or abilities. Children also become more creative, and this improves how well they learn. They learn to value their native language, to appreciate their cultural traditions, and to consider themselves as also being different from others, which is normal and something to respect and to celebrate. Through an ILFE, children improve their communication skills and are better prepared for life. Children gain—or can regain—self-respect for themselves as they learn to respect others.

In addition to parent, peers and family involvement, collaboration must occur internally (within the school) and externally (outside the vicinity of the school). Within the school, it is the responsibility of the leaders to build collaboration. If collaboration and collegiality are

missing within schools, we cannot build collaboration with business, political bodies, universities, or organizations (Vincent, 2003).

In establishing collaboration we need to be cognizant of what really bothers each group if we are going to develop ways of genuine empathy and caring. We have to be aware about the issues and problems that make individuals anxious, such as lack of justice, equality, security, rights, equal opportunities, survival... The framework emphasizes on the social ecological model as a form for collaboration where interaction in relationships have to be between the children and the surrounding community. The model uses horizontal multilateral rather than vertical approaches to service delivery through creative use of volunteers, paraprofessionals, peer support, and social networks, in addition to professional services. Training at the level of collaboration provides services in the domains typically classified under the heading of "social support," including:

(a) Creating awareness as related to special needs problems.

(b) Developing skills that have to do with support such as:

- Readiness to offer help upon observing personal risk or health problems
- Recognize some of the signs of injustice and discrimination, health and mental health illness.
- Emphasize on personal responsibility for working towards change
- Use appropriate flexibility in managing children's disabilities
- Facilitate self-efficacy and encourage optimism.
- show compassion without overruling the acquired skills
- offer clear advice to change

(c) Instrumental support (referrals, help centers, etc.).

(d) Networking between school and community to facilitate good resettlement and rehabilitation.

For families to be healthier they should be cohesive, that is, family members are free to act independently of other family members. Such families can offer a child with a disability the necessary support. It should not be overly cohesive as it becomes overprotective.

It should also be adaptable, that is the degree to which families are able to change their modes of interaction when they encounter unusual or stressful situations. A family should be neither unstable nor rigid as it would become less effective in dealing with disability.

Another substantial collaborative work is the development of a board or committee that handles complaints and problems between the school community as a whole the children and their parents. This committee is responsible for handling problems and improving the school system, since an outside observer can handle any problem objectively.

In general the suggested horizontal cross-training can plant the seeds for the development of awareness, knowledge and appreciation especially if all contributing members are receptive to the conveyed messages. The triangular relationship established between parents, teachers, staff and stake holders could be ultimate strategies to ensure social justice in school. A good knowledge of the network and a comprehensive health and social needs assessment plan allows for a correct orientation of children in school and in their community.

Through all forms of cooperation between parents, teachers, and peers, children become more self-confident and develop greater self-esteem. They take pride in themselves and their achievements. They learn how to learn independently both inside and outside of school. For example, they can learn how to ask good questions. They learn to understand and apply what they learn in school to their everyday lives, such as in their play and in their home. They also learn to interact actively and happily with their classmates and teachers. They learn to enjoy being with others who are different from themselves, including how to be sensitive to and adapt to these differences. All children learn together and value their relationships, no matter what their backgrounds or abilities. Children also become more creative, and this improves

how well they learn. They learn to value their native language, to appreciate their cultural traditions, and to consider themselves as also being different from others, which is normal and something to respect and to celebrate. Through an ILFE, children improve their communication skills and are better prepared for life. Children gain—or can regain—self-respect for themselves as they learn to respect others.

Through collaboration the community develops a sense of pride as more children go to school and learn. They discover that more “community leaders of the future” are being prepared to participate actively in society. The community sees that potential social problems, such as petty crimes or adolescent problems may be reduced. Community members become more involved in the school, creating better relations between the school and the community (Hudson &Fradd, 1990; Casanova, 1990).

When inclusion is implemented properly, which means involve and give training to the teachers, give the kids support in the integrated environment, involve general education and special education parents from the beginning, and make adjustments as the program is implemented- the whole school becomes a better place.

Sustainability

Fourth question asked in developing the framework for social justice was the evaluation of the achieved standards and mastery level of performance “Did we enumerate all the achieved standards and mastery level of performance and add or delete goals based on data collection?” The researchers consider four steps to be followed in order to answer this question; implementation of governance, accountability and order, abiding by legislations around the world that stipulate information about dealing with disabled children and their rights, enhancing partnership with educational organizations and the children’s community and exchanging practices. The success in delivering all the services needed demands dedicated and well-trained teachers, but they in their turn need support and recognition from the administrators. The more this positive environment is maintained the clearer the emotional resilience among children is observed.

Research shows that many mistakes were major with the rush to implement massive inclusion programs in the United States. Some of these mistakes include inadequate preparation of mainstreaming participants (regular education teachers, special education teachers, parents, etc.), misunderstanding of the principle of Least Restrictive Environment which presupposed a continuum of services as full inclusion, inappropriate selection of students for full-time mainstreaming, insufficient support to inclusion students, general education teachers, and inadequate communication among team members (Lewis & Doorlag, 2003).

Moreover, research on inclusion showed mixed results that have to do to the effectiveness of inclusion programs. There were several examples of successful programs that showed more gains in self-contained classrooms than the resource room for mildly handicapped students, whereas placement in the regular classroom with a combination of carefully designed individualized instruction and resource support was more effective for students with mild learning disabilities (Smith & Tyler, 2010; Lewis & Doorlag, 2003).

Generally, inclusion yielded positive outcomes for students with severe disabilities in terms of social relationships and friendships, acquisition of communication skills as part of their participation in cooperative learning activities, and generally tended to receive more academic instruction, one-to-one instruction, and more teacher attention than their peers in self-contained classroom.

Research concluded that the instructional factors that promote achievement of students with disabilities include:

- Small class size
- Consistency between curricular goals and instructional activities
- Mastery learning and a formal management system,
- Increased time for cognitive activities, and
- Increased instructional time

(Lewis & Doorlag, p. 435).

A quantitative study in Kuwait (Al-shammari & Yawkey, 2007) concluded that teachers were supportive of autistic students and their education because of their learning potentials compared to students with other disabilities, and attributed this finding to parental involvement in programs related to their children's needs. Recommendations of this study included additional training for special education teachers which may influence attitudes towards teaching and accepting students with special needs. Another recommendation was the awareness of and need for parent involvement of families with their special needs children.

Furthermore, there is research evidence that the family attitude contributes to the prognosis. Family stresses associated with limited financial resources, lack of appropriate services, and insufficient support systems are examples of family system risk factors that can contribute to poor prognosis. Environmental risk factors such as lack of services and negative attitudes can also have an adverse influence on the prognosis of the child with disability (Gupta, Kar & Thapa, 2006).

In India, disability is still viewed in terms of a "tragedy" with a "better dead than disabled" approach, the idea being that it is not possible for disabled people to be happy or enjoy a good quality of life. Dalal and Pande(1999) and (Gupta & Singhal(2004) investigated cultural beliefs and attitudes of a rural Indian community towards physical disability. The results revealed fatalistic attitudes and external dependence in families with disabled children.

Though it cannot be disputed that parents of disabled children face a great deal of stress, it is now important to move away from describing these stressors and their adverse effects. Instead, research should now focus on exploring the ways that such families cope with varying degrees of success.

Not forgetting the reported results that families with a child with disabilities can and in fact do have positive perceptions which lead to better quality of life for the family, and scope for maximizing the child's potential. Though precipitated by a specific event, formation of positive perceptions is usually a process, which can occur simultaneously on a longtime after the event. This leads to three main implications. Firstly, given this framework, the situation calls out for more extensive exploration. Second, it is imperative to look at the tools being

used, and whether they provide space and opportunity to give positive responses. If we do not ask positive questions, we would rarely get a positive answer. Finally, helping families develop a positive outlook might be the serving points of intervention by the clinicians themselves. Although, the research in this area is limited as yet, there is a possibility of developing practical interventions to help families to adapt. Most often their intervention is done at the level of the child and addressing the disability per se. Therapists might want to concentrate on this aspect and facilitate families' coping processes by encouraging and supporting positive outlook on self and life. This can be executed through the course of family therapy, marital therapy, or individual counseling. A very effective way would be moderating self-help or support groups for parents with children with disabilities. Parents with positive perceptions can help the other parents in the early stages of adjustment develop positive but realistic expectations.

To support the sustainability of the social justice intervention the Lebanese government needs to abide by the national and regional civil rights of the people with disabilities, legislation, and litigation and court decisions. Cooperation with community agencies is vital to secure continuity of treatment and to facilitate the mainstreaming of children into the school community. One important thing has to be added related to making changes in the children's way of life and situation. Changing the way of dealing with the learning disabled children requires some basic assumptions like taking a gradual approach, avoiding too ambitious a time span; recognizing reason for the changes that are made; reconsidering workload.

Another factor that leads to sustainability of intervention program is to do continuous evaluation of the program in terms of:

- Respect of children's rights
- Application of the process of confidentiality
- Quality of care and consultation
- Reports of meetings between parents, professionals and teachers
- Quality of the physical and social climate of the disabled child

Certainly, education and skills are key to opportunity, employability and security. Yet, it takes more than personal attributes and resources to drive educational and life opportunities. Other

factors such as where, how and who the person with disability lives with can be of equal importance to one's personal resources. This is referred to by Putnam as 'social capital' (1993), and is identified as the key to success in communities. This consists of the means to access 'networks, norms and trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1993), thereby making a healthy society where dignified life is possible (O'Hanlon, 2003).

Similarly, Dyson who distinguished between justification (rights and ethics, and efficacy) and implementation (political and pragmatic) of inclusive of special education, has coined the term efficacy discourse, and argues that students may socially benefit all students through well implemented models. To do so, political actions is called for through addressing inequity among communities, and abolishing ideas and assumptions that continue to feed segregated special systems (Artiles et al, 2006).

He argued that social justice can be viewed as individualistic or communitarian. In the former, it focuses on access and distribution of resources, hence it is libertarian and merit based; in the latter, it emphasizes social cohesion, care and responsibility.

Therefore, public policies should give priority to the following concerns:

- universal pre-school education;
- basic skills for all children through literacy and numeracy targets in the National Curriculum;
- high achievement for all young people through a unified qualifications system for 14- to 19-year-olds;
- training investment by employers;
- the expansion of university education;
- the development of lifelong learning opportunities.

We believe that universal/inclusive design provides an environment that enables people with disabilities to move about freely and safely and to use its facilities and services without undue convenience and danger. The creation of universal access is a matter of design and standards rather than cost (Disability Brief, 2005).

In addition to what was mentioned, what can improve the Lebanese intervention program is the exchange of best practices from other countries under the condition of adopting experiences to suit cultural differences. This can be actualized through organized meetings, exchange of successful practices, develop management instruments and training materials and supply books, guides, and brochures.

Skills, knowledge, strategies and cooperative community are the key elements for sustaining integrity, multiplicity and social justice in educational organizations. Whether the individual is a teacher, administrator, parent or student there is a need for empowerment, guidance and counseling, support and practice. This chapter was intended to offer a framework to help facilitate the important work of promoting equity and social justice for the benefit of the Lebanese community in general and the learning disabled children in special.

The Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly has adopted a resolution aimed at improving the daily lives of people with disabilities. It calls on WHO and its Member States to work towards ensuring equal opportunities and promoting the rights and dignity of people with disabilities, especially those who are poor. Countries are requested to strengthen national policies and programs on disability, including community-based rehabilitation services. WHO is requested to support these efforts, and to collect more reliable data on all relevant aspects of disability, including the cost-effectiveness of interventions.

Conclusion:

Lebanese children are the most valuable asset. They need from us to provide support for their educational and emotional needs, taking into consideration the stresses and demands of school. As suggested, the first step to the development of a program is to build awareness of the situation, understand the degree of the problem and identify the needs. To address these problems a multifaceted framework has to be developed that deals with re-establishing safety and basic health needs, offer education and integration. These elements would provide the basis for all partners to move forward put future plans by providing technical assistance for

legal review, assessment, advocacy, fund raising, capacity building, investment projects and monitoring and evaluation

As teachers whose expertise is to understand the dynamics, challenges, and resources within the school environment, and the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functioning of children, the teacher plays a central role in supporting the educational and mental health needs of students. Legislators know this, educators know this, and the community recognizes and appreciates this. As key players, to them go to make the difference in whether or not revitalization efforts will be sustained or will fade away. Schools cannot act in a new way unless leadership prevails. In addition, restructuring will not happen unless there is external support from politicians and community. The most influential key players are teachers, who serve as primary motivators in helping students to grow to achieve. Parents must become active players in changing student attitudes. Students must assume responsibility for their own growth, learning, and achievement. Legislators interested in presenting social justice in schools should encourage the formation of a legislative study committee to determine the best ways to support social justice in Lebanon. In addition, professionals and educators who support such programs must become organized and active on the country level. The researchers suggest a three- to –five-year start-up period as a sensible time- frame to use when considering implementing social justice. This provides time for the universities to prepare qualified teachers, and for administrators, educators, and parents to develop strong effective programs.

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