

June 21-22 2017

Community Based Rehabilitation Workshop for People with Disabilities and their Family:

Institute of Education and Behavioral Science, Department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

In the Framework of the APPEAR Programme of the Austrian Development Cooperation.

Summarized Report

A two days training was given to capacitate the livelihood of citizens with various disabilities and their relatives. The training was prepared in the hope to play the expected role and achieve the planned visions of the university as well as the transformation plan of the nation. The participants were invited from different parts of the Gedeo zone (Ethiopia) targeting people with disabilities (PWD) and their relatives who closely can share their experience in their community. The training covered five important areas that can fill the gaps observed, concerning disability, in most contexts. Namely:

- A. Human Rights and Disabilities,
- B. Social Inclusion Between PWD and their parents,
- C. Reflection on Life experience by PWD in relation to their profession,
- D. Vocational Skill training and
- E. Inclusive Education for PWD

Waking up in the calm moist morning of Dilla all participants of the training took their seats in the bus and drove for about 30 k m southward to Yirgachefe. After 1 hour drive, we all reached our destination peacefully and we were welcomed by the well-furnished Lision Hotel as per our schedule. After having our breakfast the training was blessed by the core figure of the training, Mr. Ababu Teshome. Mr. Ababu welcomed the participants and introduced the 5 pillars of the training and the significance of the symposium.



He noted that the training was held under the initiatives of the four universities: Dilla University, Gonder University, Addis Abeba University, and the University of Vienna for the coming three years (2017-2020). As part of the national policy implementation these institutions launched a collaborative move

- ❖ to enhance the awareness of disability and cross cutting issues in the community,
- ❖ to minimize the challenges facing people with disabilities
- ❖ to improvise the current backward views about disability
- ❖ finally to see the national dreams true

Bearing these objectives in mind the training proceeded after the participants made acquaintance of each other. Hence, the first topic was presented by Mrs. Dehinet Fetene, from the Law department.

1. Human rights and Disability (Mrs. Dehinet Fetene)

Mrs Dihinet came up with impressive facts which were believed to equip all the participants with the fundamental concepts about human rights and their link with disability. Then she elaborated the following points in well-organized procedure and appetizing language:

- a. What is human right?
- b. Limits of human rights
- c. Characteristics of human rights
- d. Human rights and government responsibility and
- e. Laws on human rights



Mrs Dehinet Fetene (presenter)



Ato Endashaw Getnet (Receiving trainees)

Mrs. Dihinet, commenced by inviting the participants to define the essence of, 'Human Rights'. Almost all of the participants had similar ideas about this concept. Human right is the right given to all human beings in common, regardless of their social and natural differences.

Secondly, the scope of human rights followed by the unique features of the issue was presented. Human rights can be inspected in different stratum. These are the first generation, second generation, and third generation rights. The first generation rights are the civil and

political aspects of human rights issues. To elaborate more, the violation of these rights is highly attached to the criminal code and at times of violation these can be treated in court.

Moreover, the characteristic features of human rights were dealt with. The interdisciplinary nature of human rights, the universal features of the area, inclusiveness of the discipline, and its relation to law were elaborated in depth. Nowadays, the UN (United Nation) attempts to secure all human rights all over the world without any discrimination. Regardless of the political systems human beings have the right to live, the right to grow, the right to have family, the right to get job and the like. This serves to all people including people with disabilities equally.

In addition to the above concepts, human rights encompass the right to get access, the right to grow the right to create, the right to change, the right to learn, the right to elect or to be elected and other related human wants. The third was the rights related to residence, and environmental changes. All people have the right to live in a clean environment, have access to information, entertainment and other rights that characterize improved living.

Fourth, Dihinet enlightened the role of governments in securing human rights. As expressed earlier all governments have an accord to respect, secure and protect human rights. For instance, our country, Ethiopia, has accepted almost all the conventions and proclamations referring to human rights. As a result, it is trying to bring these theoretical values to the ground by designing a variety of executive organs. Any government is supposed to act upon the principles set and rescue citizens from unlawful violation of these natural rights.

Secondly, a government is supposed to fulfill the human needs and wants equally, fairly. Despite the differences, most countries are working on the basis of these international conventions. A government protects human rights for a range of reimbursements. Above all, when human rights are despoiled conflict is inevitable.

First and foremost a government is supposed to put the conventions in meaningful documents and apply across the governmental chains. For example the international human rights' declaration, the African human rights and other supplementary documents were set on the basis of the stated executive mechanisms. Following the documentation process practical function is expected.

Mrs. Dihinet summed all these up to how human right is linked to disability and people with disability. All the principles underlying in human rights are liable to secure the rights of human beings at large. Therefore, this convention will not have any difference for people with disabilities. Even it adds more consent to fulfill the accessibility of services and facilities which people without disability do not request. Hence, the conventions enforce reconsiderations of the needs of people with disabilities. And governments are expected to work on accordingly. Through these executive measures, governments will be able to secure the civil and political rights as well as the right to access further benefits of people with disability. All these are not extra advantages that people with disabilities achieve rather these are complementary requirements for the comprehensiveness of fairness among human beings.

Following the tea break of the morning session the presenter invited the participants to raise different questions related to human rights issues and disability in relation to our contexts. But she headed by asking brainstorming questions; namely, she broke the silence by asking, **whether death sentence on 'criminal' people violets human rights or not**. She also asked,

whether private elementary schools have legal mandatory responsibilities to entertain children with disabilities or not.



Mrs Dihinet & Ato Ababu



Participants partly

On their part some of the participants asked such questions as:

1. How can the schools in urban and rural areas be brought to serve people with disabilities?
2. What is expected of people with disabilities to minimize the challenges facing them in their community?

The answers were primarily given by the discussants themselves. Accordingly, in some countries death sentence is applied to secure the majorities right. Those who are killed legally are believed to be dangerous for the lives of others and death sentence is the option some countries prefer. Secondly, any school is expected to entertain children with disabilities though they are set for profit. The laws and proclamations of our country have the power to enforce the provisions for children with disability in any school. When such rights are violated any one including people with disabilities is expected to defend. The presenter shared her experience in one KG in Addis Ababa that refused to receive a school child with disability.

In addition, the participants discussed the needs of creating awareness everywhere, especially in schools. However, there are many things which can take time and tirelessness. Through time and development the changes will come. In the end the participants underscored the role of people with disabilities and their families to bring about significant change in the nation. The effort should start from proper definitions of disability and from constructions of positive self-esteem.

Generally, Mrs. Dihinet achieved her objectives by equipping the most important elements in human rights to people with disabilities and their relatives. She addressed the meaning of human rights, the scopes of human rights, the characteristics of human rights, the role of governments to secure human rights and the relationship between human rights and global laws. In relation to these she underlined the need of boosting the role of people with disabilities in defending their rights.

II. Parents Attitudes towards inclusive education. (Dr. Solomon Sebro)



In the afternoon, Dr. Solomon Sebro brought substantive inputs regarding cross cutting issues in relation to inclusive education and parents' attitudes towards this concept. He then presented;

- 1. The definition of inclusive education**
- 2. Global concepts about inclusive education**
- 3. The advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education**
- 4. The challenges in promoting inclusive education and related concepts**

1. What is inclusive education?

As to the presenter inclusive education is part of social inclusion, but particularly related to the field of teaching learning. Inclusive education refers to the practice of considering all citizens in schools regardless of their different behaviors and needs. This education style creates opportunity for all citizens by minimizing the non-conformities.

Dr. Solomon brought global concepts on inclusive education. Nowadays there are a number of findings and publications to reach the people with disability. Most of the publications as well as the research findings address the indispensable role of the family members in either hurting or supporting people with disabilities. In order to help people with disabilities, the second important stake holders are schools. Schools are responsible to fulfill what the students with disability require.

2. Global concepts of inclusive education?

Our country Ethiopia also had accepted the conventions of the UN despite some problems. The access to education is growing from time to time. Using this opportunity the old culture can be changed gradually. Our national laws about human rights strengthen the need to solve problems of people with disabilities.

Here Dr. Solomon underscored the need of attitudinal change in education, parents, and people with disabilities themselves. This can be checked by soliciting some questions about how to serve people with disabilities, how to let them access services and secure their rights.

3. The advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education

Separating individuals with disability may seem helpful to offer appropriate facilities in specific compounds. Because of this, in some parts having special schools for the individuals with disabilities used to be practiced.

However, this was found more harmful. Recently, research findings implied that the challenge comes later when the individuals with disability try to cope up with the ups and downs in life. Therefore, early exposure provides them with different advantages in creating cooperative atmospheres among all people.

Following the lecture the participants were made to discuss on the following important points until tea break. These were:

1. What are the importance of inclusive education for teachers, parents and the individuals with disability?
2. What challenges does inclusive education have?

The participants on their part explained different views and we synthesized into themes of these sort. Inclusive education is helpful for parents, teachers and the children themselves. It is helpful primarily for the student himself/herself because it can give them exposure to share life with any person in the community. This in turn can enhance the confidence access, opportunity and other things. Here the parents and teachers can have direct and an indirect advantage.

4. The challenges in promoting inclusive education and related concepts

Unlike the people without disability people with disabilities have a lot of challenges. These might be related to themselves, their family, their society, the administration and political systems and others. Above all the most harmful is the deep rooted negative attitude of all people. According to Dr. Solomon everything that begins from attitude and other problems are successors of this evil construct. Therefore, if we want to change the existing situation we all need to work on people's mind. This is because, as any human being people with disabilities have the right to act manly. Dr. Solomon underlined the role of family members in changing themselves first. Families are the close relatives who even reflect different harmful emotions regarding their disabled sisters and brothers.

IV. Learning Life Skill



Ato Wesenu Bekele



Trainees (Group Discussion)

On the next day of the conference, Ato Wesenu Bekele, from the Special Needs Education department of the college brought very impressive topics which helped people with disabilities as well as other participants change their attitude. He synthesized tasty concepts on

- a. What life skill is.***
- b. How people can be fit among their community.***
- c. How people with disabilities can cope up with different challenges.***
- d. Types of life skills and other related issues were discussed.***

Ato Wesenu energized all the participants with interesting views of life and the philosophies which can help one be fit in life. He elaborated the major concepts of life skill to be coined into such aspects as,

1. Learning personal skills,
2. Interpersonal skills,
3. Cognitive skills and other related skills which can contribute to one's survival.

Unlike other animals man is a gifted creature that can devise mechanism to most challenges in this world. But in reality this gift varies from person to person. Some people are skilled in treating different obstacles than others. And the main aim of the discussion of that conference was to fill the gaps of the people with disability.

A. Learning Personal Skill:

Personal skill is the skill that an individual develops from his/her experience and from learning. This skill is what a person has to develop. It encompasses the communicative skill, problem solving skill, creative skill and other skills which help us perform something with better quality and efficiency. To develop better personal skills one is supposed to define himself/herself. Besides, accepting all what one has and developing positive self-esteem is important. God didn't create and will not create exactly ones copy in this world; we all have to accept what we are.

Thus, people with disabilities should accept the nature they have and feel confidence in their potential. In reality one real power is in his/her brain and people with disabilities are healthy from this angle. Therefore, the major challenge that people with disabilities need to win is the negative attitudes. As a community Ato Wesenu advised to fight the negative views and attitudes about disability which were experienced in human history. That is the first step we need to struggle. This includes,

a. The ability to adapt: According to the presenter, our understanding of this world depends based on our assumption and expectation not based on perfect reality.

B. Interpersonal Skill:

Interpersonal skill, as the expression indicates is the skill that we apply when we interact with others. In the day to day life people communicate with each other and work together. But different persons have different levels of skills. This is true when we compare the educated and illiterate, the able and disable men and women and so on.

In order to survive, effectively and lead a better life possessing better interpersonal skills is mandatory. If one fails to properly interact with people or work with people his/her life will be full of ups and downs. These can be revealed in terms of different kinds of performances. Therefore developing better interpersonal skills adds value to the betterment of the life of people with disabilities too. Bridging positive relationship with other persons is advised to people with disabilities.

C. Cognitive skills:

Cognitive skills are the different skills which are highly linked to knowledge and philosophy about knowledge. Different persons have different potentials and life experience. These knowledge and experiences are revealed into meaningful cognitions. Therefore, ones skill of constructing knowledge and using knowledge is what we meant by cognitive skill.

Following the presentation the participants were made to discuss on;

a. Do we know ourselves or others more?

b. What is the value of knowing others?

After the tea break the participants came up with different sights regarding the above questions. Actually, every participant gave what he/she felt was right. But Ato Wesenu noted that there are many things that we fail to sense about ourselves. Most of the time we attach the positive and good things with ourselves but we link the negative and bad things with others. So, being genuine is great human skill we ought to develop. On the part of the participants different questions were asked. Issues like

1. *How can we live a better life?*
2. *What is the relationship between time management and life skill?*
3. *What should people do at times of challenge?*
4. *How do people define this world?*

Were presented for discussion.



Ato Wesenu (supervising group tasks)



Then each group reflected the points they have summed up. Above all to be empathetic is necessary. Taking the idea, “Don’t do what you don’t want to be done on to you” as principle in our interpersonal relationship is an essential life skill. So, give and take is better than take and give.

Ato Wesenu summarized that there are different types of life skills we ought to learn in life. These are as stated earlier personal skills, interpersonal skills and cognitive skills. These skills are developed from time to time through education and training. As consequence poor life skill leads to poor living. Therefore, people with disabilities are supposed to learn the different life skills and to achieve that they are expected to change their attitude and train themselves to have a positive self-esteem. This means properly defining, analyzing, and interpreting our self-concept is an essential life skill.

IV. People with disabilities and their Family



Dr. Tesfaye Basha



The Trainees (partly)

In the afternoon session Dr. Tesfaye Basha tried to reflect the relationship of people with disabilities and their family. Creating positive relationships and constructive concepts of disability has significant advantage to bridge the skill and knowledge gaps observed in our

societies. In most cultures of Ethiopia there are a number of negative views about disabilities. For instance, in many parts of the country people attach disability with evil fates of the family.

Dr. Tesfaye referred to different literature which was addressed by different organizations under the umbrella of the UN. For example, in ***The Copenhagen declaration-2000*** the UN has designed a development program which encompasses the inclusive service to all human beings. Such declarations refer to all of us including disability. This declaration by implication, refers to equality to social justice, social security, development for all, social participation and related aspects in the declaration.

Q1. What is inclusion and exclusion?

Inclusion is the consideration of different things as right and exclusion will have meaning when the following are fulfilled. Treating unequally, defaming, harassment, refrain from service, excluding in residence, excluding from education, excluding from education, in proper life, excluding from politics, derogation, suppressing their voice, unemployment, denying access to education or medication or transportation or others.

Q2. Who is/are excluded?

In a given community different social groups are excluded from different services. Especially, people with disabilities, minority groups and despised are often excluded. Such acts, however, are bad and can hurt such groups.

Q3. What are the results of social exclusion?

When there are different kinds of exclusion from social services. Exclusion results in joblessness, aggression, homelessness, dependency, inferiority, hopelessness, crisis and inability to serve the family.

Q4. How is social inclusion reflected?

Social inclusion is expressed in different ways. These are, being accepted, allowing community participation or social participation, creating better places to reside and securing any benefit to the majority.

Q5. What are the challenges of securing social inclusion?

Problems emanating from distorted attitude, technology, shortage, non-conformities, language barriers, non-comfortable programs, shortages of services.

Distorted Societal Attitudes are the most serious problem as compared to other challenges. Next to the wrong attitude the ineffectiveness of the law practice takes the second position. Despite the international declarations and conventions most countries fail to secure accountability. For instance the buildings in different offices, the transportation services, the health areas and other services have mandatory responsibilities to consider individuals with disabilities. However most of these services are not accessible and easy for such groups. Had

our law been strong enough all the violations we observe wouldn't continue. As a result of such pressing factors and related challenges people with disabilities have 4 times the probability of being poor.

To sum up Dr. Tesfaye intensified the role of the family in understanding people with disabilities. This can help them play their role and minimize the challenges that their family members with disabilities are facing. No challenge can hurt people with disabilities, as worse as awful outlook. This was similar to the previous presenters.

Following the last presentation the participants forwarded constructive comments on the relevance and value of that training and added the loop holes which can affect the transformation effort. Some of them commented on the importance of such trainings if it can be given continuously and broadened to reach the wider community. Some relatives expressed their regret for their wrong perceptions and their damaging effects on their relatives living with disabilities.

Ato Ababu, finalized the training by sharing responsibilities to all the participants. He advised, "Participants from now onwards ought to take their share and work to change the existing situation." In addition he recommended how the administrative line can support such a progress and create fair play ground for all citizens. This has to be not for granted but it is a human right and we are part of the conventions.



Dr. Tesfaye & Ato Ababu (left to right)

Participants of the training

Generally, the training was essential and successful. It had met its prime objectives as to the participants' feedback and our observation of the whole process. The training had targeted on the following important issues. These were,

1. Defining or conceptualizing disability and raising awareness to convey better self-esteem.
2. Explaining the conventions and agreements regarding disability and equipping the individuals with the relevant information to stand for their rights in better confidence.
3. Bringing heightened know how of disability and working towards attitudinal changes in the communities.

4. Raising awareness of different stake holders to play their role especially schools.

5 Creating better understanding of families of the people with disability, and initiating them to stand on their side at times of challenges.

As a result the participants had got a lot of valuable points and promised to play their role. Everybody who attended the presentation was satisfied by the training. Hopefully if such trainings would proceed change will come in the near future. That is why we can dare to conclude that the training was successful and fruitful.

Disability becomes inability if and only if we forget the most precious territory and focus on the lost periphery...!