



INCLUSIVE SCHOOL MODEL

GUIDE FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Youth Association of the Blind (YAB)
and GVC Italy

This publication is produced with the financial support of the Italian Development Cooperation. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of GVC and YAB and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Italian Development Cooperation.



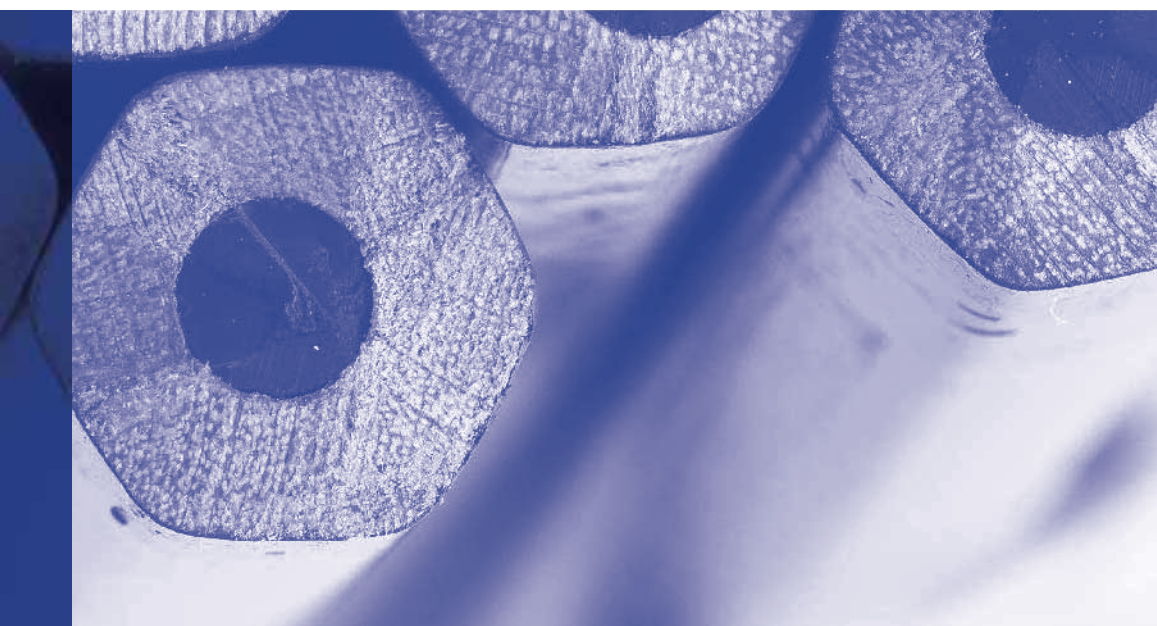


TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	6
PREFACE	8
SECTION 1 - Inclusive School Model	12
intro	14
chapter 1: Informative Definition of Inclusive School	16
chapter 2: Indicators of Inclusive School	26
chapter 3: Strategies	32
conclusion	38
SECTION 2 - Operational model for school inclusion	40
SECTION 3 - YAB Experience in School and Educational Inclusion	54

INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities in the world are a little less than one billion (about 15% of the global population) and 82% of them live in cooperation countries, as identified by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC).

In the world, 90% of persons with disabilities have no access to services, over 85% are unemployed and less than 4% of minors with disabilities have access to formal education. These persons are nearly always excluded from the advantages of development. Disability is therefore both the cause and the effect of poverty, since persons with disabilities are subject to discrimination and have no access to equal opportunities. This situation limits their participation in society and entails continuous violations of their human rights. The negative attitudes of society towards persons with disabilities produce a very strong social stigma, which is reflected in all the spheres of economic, cultural, political and social life.

Italy started to significantly address the need of promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities since the early seventies, adopting an inclusive policy, recognizing the right of children with disabilities to be educated in regular classes, developing one of the most advanced model of inclusion. Moreover since Italy's signature of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2007 and ratification in 2009, the Central Technical Unit of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), adopted a view to mainstreaming disability in the Italian development agenda.

The Italian experience in practicing and improving the inclusion model, served as an inspiration to be shared with other countries: since the eighties GVC has been cooperating with several partners in Palestine, Cuba, Romania, Vietnam and finally Lebanon with the aim of piloting and adapting the model to the specificity of the different cultures and contexts.

In 2007 GVC started an exchange of experiences and practices with Lebanese civil society organizations as well as institutions, reflecting on hypothesis of inclusion model that led to the elaboration of the "Inclusive Public School Model". The project managed and implemented in partnership with Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) from 2012 to 2015 has been extremely important as it gave the possibility to contribute to building a society where people with disabilities have equal dignity and opportunities.

The project promoted the exchange and dialogue between national and local institutions, representatives of disabled people, school workers, parents and the community in order to foster a participatory process aimed at defining a "Lebanese way to social inclusion".

The guide for inclusive school model is one of the results of the project and has been developed with the contribution of all the education stakeholders in order to have a tool that can guide and support future inclusive educational experiences that could help the Lebanese Ministry of Education to adopt an inclusive school system.

Dina Taddia
GVC President

PREFACE

This publication is part of a joint project between the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) and GVC Italy, titled the Inclusive Public School Model and implemented in Lebanon between 2012 and 2015. The publication aims to support the efforts of stakeholders and staff working to develop inclusive schools towards ensuring learning opportunities for all children, including children with additional needs. The publication comes at a time when educational and school inclusion are still controversial issues in the Arab region and other countries around the world. While the countries that ratified or signed the International Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) agreed to develop their general educational systems to become inclusive, and while they acknowledged that this guaranteed the right to education for persons with disabilities, actual implementation still falls short. The time has come for serious implementation and this calls for careful planning founded on a clear vision. The publication consists of three distinct yet complementary sections that offer, on the one hand,

a tool for planning inclusive schools and, on the other, practical experience for application. Indeed, the experience collected in this publication combines theory, vision and praxis in a coherent, and at the same time independent, whole, across three sections. The first section – Inclusive School Model – is a manual on developing inclusive schools. The second section consists of a report on the Inclusive Public School Model which was implemented in under three years to transform 6 public schools into inclusive schools. The third section features highlights of YAB's experience in school and educational inclusion. Among the experience's key lessons is that inclusive schools are necessary for all students and for advancing quality education. Moreover, it is possible, as demonstrated by YAB's experience, to create inclusive schools in all local communities: schools have been developed in the private and public sectors, in cities and in remote rural areas. Ensuring the continued development of public schools, however, is impossible without the Ministry of Education's adoption of a clear policy on educational

inclusion and its commitment to measures that support public schools.

We hope that this publication contributes to the promotion of a strategic approach to school inclusion and to the development of implementation plans, and look forward to the next endeavor that will help improve the general educational system to be inclusive. It is worth noting that the publication centers on inclusion at the level of the school as a stand-alone institution. As for inclusion at the level of the educational system, a different strategy applies.

We are grateful to all those who contributed to the production of this publication, including everyone who shared their testimonial, not to mention the interviews and production team: Ruwaida Nasr Salman, Ayat Jeha, and Iman Sadeq.

We extend our appreciation to GVC Italy and to project manager Maria Grazia Presacco.

Amer MAKAREM,

YAB Manager,
project local coordinator

YOUTH ASSOCIATION OF THE BLIND

The Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) is a national nongovernmental and non-profitable organization that has no religious or political affiliation. We, blind, low vision and sighted members with gender balance, value participatory approach in our joint efforts. We refuse all forms of isolation and discrimination against persons with visual impairment. Our overall goal is to attain an inclusive society to persons with visual impairment. Our strategies are advocacy work, presenting program models and involving DPOS and stakeholders in accomplishing YAB goals that ensure persons with visual impairment access to human rights and services for being in a society for all.

The Association was established in Beirut in October 1988 and registered at the Lebanese Government in May 1990 under the number AD/57.

YAB STRATEGIC GOALS

- Legitimate and implement the rights and policies that ensure inclusive society to persons with visual impairment
- Attain an inclusive education system at all levels to persons with visual impairment
- Attain inclusive social environment to persons with visual impairment within the family and the local community
- Ensure to persons with visual impairment access to information from any source
- Attain an inclusive labor market to persons with visual impairment
- Ensure the participation of persons with visual impairment in cultural life
- Ensure that persons with visual impairment have access to recreational and sporting activities

Youth Association of the Blind

Head office:

Beirut, Karakul El Druze Area, Tadmor Street,
Zahera Building, First Floor.

P.O.Box: 5487/113 Beirut - Lebanon

Tel/Fax: (+961) 1 364 259 / 368 221

Email: info@yablb.org

Website: www.yablb.org

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/yablebanon>

GVC- CIVIL VOLUNTEER GROUP

GVC- Civil Volunteer Group, is a nongovernmental, secular and independent organization, founded in Bologna in 1971. We are active in international development aid projects with complex action strategies: from humanitarian aid to populations suffering from conflicts and natural disasters to reconstruction, hygiene, and food security; from rural development to education, to the protection of women's and children's rights.

In over forty years of activity, GVC has operated in all parts of the world, carrying out thousands of projects. We collaborate with public institutions, cultural associations, cooperatives, and Italian and European NGOs, organizing seminars, conferences, exhibits and festivals, laboratories in school and training courses for teachers. We produce educational materials and carry out communication activities on sensitive issues such as differences, human rights, women's issues, sustainable trade, and biodiversity.

GVC works in 26 Countries: Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Philippines, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia, Morocco, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mozambique, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Perú, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, Cuba.

VISION

We would like to help bring about a better world, fairer and more equal than that we see today. We try to contribute to this through the respect and promotion of the rights of the communities in which we work, within a vision of dignity, exchange, and reciprocity.

MISSION

We believe in the ability of every person to become aware, we believe in every individual's capability to see the world in a new way and realize that respect for people and the environment, in a closely-linked global North and South, is nothing other than respect for oneself.

We work with individuals, social actors, governments, and local administrations, to help take care of the present and the future, building a culture of self-sufficiency and cooperation that reinforces the independence and freedom of communities.



SECTION 1



Inclusive School Model
Guide for Inclusive School System

INTRODUCTION

This guide for inclusive school model comes as part of the "Inclusive Public School Model" project managed and implemented by the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) and Civil Volunteer Group (GVC) during the years 2012-2015. The purpose behind developing this guide and presenting it to education and school stakeholders is to help public and private schools draw a roadmap to become inclusive schools. It helps, specifically, in planning for inclusive schools, including elaboration of expected results, selection of strategies, identification of effective activities, interventions and measures and construction of indicators to measure the extent to which the results are achieved. Prior to this purpose, it is to introduce them to the "inclusive school" concept. Therefore, this guide includes three chapters:

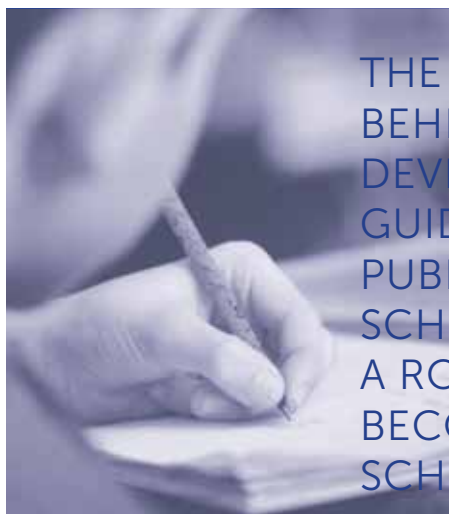
- I)** Working areas that define the inclusive school and what each area may include;
- II)** Indicators of the inclusive school;
- III)** Type of actions and interventions that might be adopted and carried out to achieve the expected results as included in the indicators set out in chapter II.

The misconceptions of the inclusive education and the inclusive school were the main incentive behind preparing this guide. The main reason of the misconceptions could be the lack of a methodical instructive Arabic reference that includes working areas or approaches for inclu-

sive school. Hopefully this guide will help dissipate the common misconceptions of inclusive school such as, among others, the inclusive school is a school that merely provides physical/place accessibility, or shadow teacher to a student with "special needs", or books in Braille format to blind students or it is inclusive if and only if a student with disability exists in the school, or etc. Hopefully, this guide will put an end to the misconception of labeling any inclusive school as a school that includes students with disabilities. The picture must be much clearer with this guide based on the assertion that working for inclusive school fosters the quality of education for all students and strengthens the role of the school with all students and in local community.

The methodology used to prepare this guide consists of the following steps:

- Documenting the experience of the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) including the common experience with GVC during 2012-2015 through implementing the project "Inclusive Public School Model". The documentation was made by the project staff based on the six areas of the "inclusive school model" which has been developed by YAB since 2007 and adopted by the project to carry out its activities. The document was submitted in the first meeting of the task group formed for the purpose of developing a guide for inclusive school model:
- Forming a task group composed of representatives of diverse governmental and



THE PURPOSE BEHIND DEVELOPING THIS GUIDE IS TO HELP PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS DRAW A ROADMAP TO BECOME INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS.

non-governmental, academic and professional experienced bodies;

- Ensuring theoretical and practical experience in preparing this guide;
- Relying on practical experiences and previous academic works;
- Holding more than 16 working sessions by the task group to put forward ideas and suggestions, agree on them, review the text prepared and approve every single word in it.

Under this methodology, a task group was formed of the following members along with the party they represent:

Mrs. Hanaa SALEM, for the Lebanese Down Syndrome Association,

Mrs. Nadine ISMAIL, for the Learning Center for the Deaf,

Dr. Asma Moujaes AZAR, for the "Institut Libanais des Educateurs" (The Lebanese Institute for the Training of Educators) at St. Joseph University,

Mrs. Rita GHARIB, for the Ministry of Education,

Mrs. Elize BITAR, for the Center for Educational Research and Development,

Mrs. Norma WEHBE, for the Inclusive Public School Model project, Youth Association of the Blind,

Mrs. Imane SADEK, for the Inclusive Public School Model project, Youth Association of the Blind,

Mr. Amer MAKAREM, for the Youth Association of the Blind and the Inclusive Public School Model project.

In my capacity as the coordinator of this task group, I would like to thank the group members for their contributions, efforts and time they voluntarily dedicated to this work, with special thanks to Dr. Asma Moujaes AZAR for her prominent contribution to this guide. I also appreciate the support of GVC organization in this regard.

Amer MAKAREM

Local Coordinator of Inclusive Public School Model project, Manager of the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB)

CHAPTER ONE

Informative Definition of Inclusive School

The inclusive school is a school that works on the following six areas to reach the general outcome mentioned in each area:



Educational Principles and School Policies

The inclusive school is a school that its stakeholders (administrators, teachers, professionals, parents, local community representatives) adopt and comply with educational principles and school policies that are inclusive.



Culture of Inclusion

The inclusive school is a school whose curricula include inclusive culture education.



Partnership with Parents and Local Community

The inclusive school is a school that fosters partnership with parents and local community and its bodies.



Curriculum and Instruction

The inclusive school is a school that takes measures to make curriculum and instruction appropriate with the capacities and educational needs of all students including those with additional educational requisites.



Non-academic Aspects

The inclusive school is a school whose curricula include adapted programs and adequate services targeting non-academic aspects of all students including those with additional educational requisites.



Human Resources and School Administration

The inclusive school is a school that continuously reinforces its human resources and develops its administrative systems so as to assume its functions and roles as inclusive school.



This guide uses the term "students with additional educational requisites"

What does it mean?

Students with additional educational requisites are students whose education demands additional requirements to those usually provided for the education of most students.

Those students require additional requisites due to different reasons they may have, including: disability; growth; learning or behavioral disorders; severe weakness in one of intelligence areas; learning disabilities; emotional disorders; different social or cultural background; differences in physical or social aspects; etc.

Needs: All children, whatever differences they have, have the same needs such as the need to learn or the need to play, etc.

Requisites: are the requirements to meet the needs. The requisites to meet the need to learn would be a school with all its contents such as books, copybooks, pencils, teachers, etc. And, the requisites to meet the need to play would be toys and games, tools, persons to play with, etc.

Additional requisites: are additional requirements to the requisites that are usually provided to meet the needs of children.

These additional requisites could be in educational, social, health, psychic or in other domains. And, could be achieved through enhancing the criteria of the requisites, taking additional measures on the requisites, adapting materials, activities or objectives, providing modified or alternative materials, tools or equipment, fostering the school cultural environment or/and other measures.

Therefore, the "additional requisites" is a term that describes the students' requirements, and not the students themselves or their characteristics; it doesn't classify the students.

$$3 \times 9 =$$



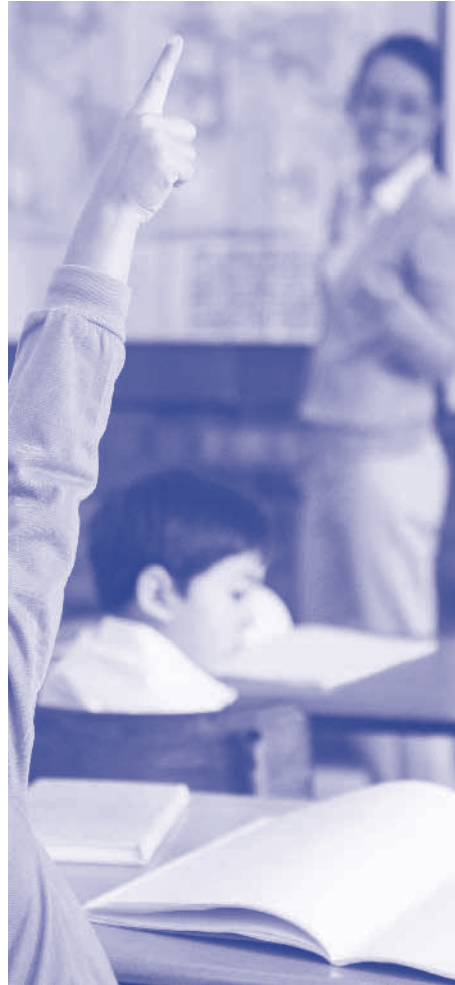
THE "ADDITIONAL REQUISITES"
IS A TERM THAT DESCRIBES THE
STUDENTS' REQUIREMENTS, AND
NOT THE STUDENTS THEMSELVES
OR THEIR CHARACTERISTICS; IT
DOESN'T CLASSIFY THE STUDENTS.

$$4 \times 3 = 12$$



Content of the Informative Definition of Inclusive School

What makes inclusive school? The school that works on the following six areas is inclusive school. The below is the content of each area, while it is essential to maintain that educational work is open to any addition whether in interpretation or in development. Therefore, each area consists of basic points to build on.



Educational Principles and School Policies

The inclusive school is a school that its stakeholders (administrators, teachers, professionals, parents, local community representatives) adopt and comply with educational principles and school policies that are inclusive.

A. The main educational principles that school stakeholders, in particular teachers, believe in are:

- Learning is the aim of schools.
- Students, including those with additional requisites, have inherent tendency to learn.
- All students, including those with additional requisites, are able to learn.
- Role of pedagogy and education at school is to help every student, whatever differences he/she has, to realize his/her highest potential capacity.
- Education is a shared responsibility among students, parents, school staff and local community.
- One of the school's main goals is to develop all aspects of student's personality.
- All students, even those with additional requisites, are welcomed in the school.
- Uniqueness and diversity among students, staff and school groups are sources of richness and glory.
- Providing educational requisites to students by the school is founded on justice and fairness bases in addition to equity.
- Content of the curriculum and instruction must be adapted according to the capacity and developmental stage of every student.
- Student's individual planning, teaching

and evaluation are based on student's needs and capacities as well as his/her performance.

- The school has a key role in fostering local community culture.

B. The main school policies are:

- Ensuring diversity within the school as it is in the local community.
- Ensuring all children of local community, including those with additional requisites, are admitted and educated.
- Implementing full inclusion in regular classrooms and within school environment for students with additional educational requisites.
- Using multi-methodical assessment on continuous basis to identify needs and appropriate interventions of every student.
- Respecting the full inclusion when implementing any individual program or intervention to students with additional requisites.
- Securing fairness in meeting the students' educational needs.
- Complementarity of school interests between academic and non-academic aspects.
- Implementing continuous professional development for school staff.
- Promoting openness to evolution, conveying advancement and adopting changes based on recent researches.
- Planning and evaluating continuously school development.
- Allocating annual budget to become inclusive school.



Culture of Inclusion

The inclusive school is a school whose curricula include inclusive culture education.

Culture of inclusion mainly includes:

- Culture of the principles of human rights of persons with disabilities, including respect of the difference, non-discrimination, equal opportunities, equal rights, full participation and inclusion.
- Culture of human rights, child rights, women rights, rights of persons with disabilities, etc.
- Culture of right to learn and learning is innate to every human.
- Culture of democracy.
- Culture of pride in diversity as it is a source of richness for groups, school community and local community.
- Culture of social solidarity.
- Culture of responsibility of community in developing the capacities of its members and meeting their basic needs however disparate they are.
- Culture of responsibility of school in educating all students even if they are with additional requisites.



Partnership with Parents and Local Community

The inclusive school is a school that fosters partnership with parents and local community and its bodies.

The main partnership areas and themes are:

- Strategic and annual planning for the school.
- The student educational process including the process of individualized educational plan to students who need it.
- The development of school capacities and resources including specialized resources.
- Support the education of the students and their academic and non-academic experiences within local community institutions.
- Fostering culture of inclusion of parents and local community.
- Develop communication and partnership frameworks and mechanisms.

Non-academic Aspects

The inclusive school is a school whose curricula include adapted programs and adequate services targeting non-academic aspects of all students including those with additional educational requisites. The main non-academic aspects and areas are:

- Safe school environment, free from violence, abuse and bullying.

- General safety in school buildings and facilities in terms of physical structure and personal use.
- Personal independent skills, social skills and self-esteem.
- Psychological, social and health support.
- Creativity and development of talents.
- Entertainment and physical education.

Curriculum and Instruction

The inclusive school is a school that takes measures to make curriculum and instruction appropriate with the capacities and educational needs of all students including those with additional educational requisites. This area mainly includes:

- Teaching strategies and contents of instruction.
- Objectives, contents and activities of teaching and learning in any lesson or subject course.
- Learning strategies "Learn how to Learn".

- Schoolbooks, teaching and learning materials and alternative educational equipment and tools.
- Alternative and augmentative communication methods, means and modes, and alternative types and formats of reading and writing.
- Individual and collective assessment and evaluation and the tools in use.
- Individualized intervention programs and individualized educational plans.
- School facilities and its accessibility.

Human Resources and School Administration

The inclusive school is a school that continuously reinforces its human resources and develops its administrative systems so as to assume its functions and roles as inclusive school.

This area mainly includes:

- Available human resources and their qualifications and tasks, including the groups of teachers, professionals, technicians, specialists, administrators and parents.
- Continuous professional development for human resources and available support services for teachers (guidance, counseling, advising, backing, cooperative teaching, references, etc.).

- Communication and cooperation frameworks and mechanisms to exchanging experience, solving problems and taking decisions within each human resource group and between one group and other groups.
- Mechanisms of planning, monitoring and evaluation for school development.
- School internal by-laws.
- Administrative system and administrators' tasks (leadership, coordination, communication, supervision, assessment, administrative operations).
- Monitoring and assessment mechanisms of the participation, inclusion and learning of students with additional educational requisites.

CHAPTER TWO

Indicators of Inclusive School

Indicator is a unit of information which is timely measured. In addition, indicator includes one or more specific conditions under which the unit of information is measured. These unit and conditions provide simple basics to be relied on to prove and evaluate an achievement, a change or a performance.

Indicator is a measurement unit that measures the results (changes) on short, medium or long term. These changes may happen in the life of individuals, families, social group or local community or in a system, as a result of activities being carried out. Also, these changes could be in attitudes, knowledge, skills, behaviors, beliefs, principles, policies or partnerships of individuals, groups, communities or institutions.

So, the results/changes are the outcomes of implemented activities. Indicators are the first step to understand the quality and effectiveness of the activities to be planned or the implemented activities, and consequently improve the management.

Applied Example

Let us take one indicator from the second area below to examine its use in measuring the achievements or the changes.

Indicator: "The verbal and nonverbal expressions used by stakeholders and students indicate their culture of inclusion provided the same expressions are used in all formal and informal settings, in organized and non-organized occasions and in all aspects of school daily life"

This indicator comprises the following elements:

- Unit of information: the verbal and non-verbal expressions used by stakeholders and students indicate their culture of inclusion.
- One or more conditions: the same expressions are used in all formal and informal settings, in organized and non-organized occasions and in all aspects of school daily life.

These two elements together make up a measurement unit (indicator) for measuring any change occurred as an outcome of implemented planned activities or interventions. The change in question could be: the verbal and non-verbal expressions used by teachers in classes indicate culture of inclusion. Such change is gauged by the measurement unit "the above mentioned indicator".

On the other hand, the indicator helps determine the results we want to reach or achieve. If we take the same above mentioned applied example — the verbal and non-verbal expressions used by stakeholders and students indicate culture of inclusion, provided the same expressions are used in all formal and informal settings, in organized and non-organized occasions and in all aspects of school daily life — we can elaborate the result that must be reached, i.e.: School stakeholders and students use verbal and non-verbal expressions that are indicative of culture of inclusion.

Once the results are identified, high quality, effective activities and interventions can be planned. Therefore, the indicators are the first step that enables us to identify, from the indicators, the results we want to achieve and, from the results, we can plan for activities.

This guide provides in this chapter the main indicators of inclusive school model according to working areas. These indicators help the school and the people in charge plan for inclusive school, elaborate the results that must be achieved and select effective activities and interventions that lead to such results. At the same time, these indicators provide a measurement to gauge or assess the achieved results.



Educational Principles and School Policies

- The school developed its strategic plan (vision, mission, goals, educational principles, etc.), through a participatory way with representatives of stakeholders, for inclusive school development.
- School stakeholders show a common understanding of their inclusive education principles and of school vision, mission, and goals.
- The school developed its educational

and school policies for inclusive school.

- The school adopts binding measures to apply its policies so as these measures are written in its documents.
- The policy of full inclusion of students with additional educational requisites is applied at school and in regular classrooms without being inconsistent when individualized support and intervention programs are applied.



Culture of Inclusion

Practices of stakeholders and students indicate their respect of the right of each student to education, particularly the practices which are not set forth in school regulations or/and obligations.

- The verbal and non-verbal expressions used by stakeholders and students indicate their culture of inclusion provided the same expressions are used in all formal and informal settings, in organized and non-organized occasions and in all aspects of school daily life.
- Inclusive culture education is included in teaching and training activities in a planned way that target students or stakeholders.
- Activities planned or implemented by students indicate their culture of inclusion.
- Activities organized by the school or

co-executed by the latter inside or outside the school are indicative of culture of inclusion and participation.

- Teaching and learning materials in use indicate stakeholders' culture of inclusion.
- Students participate in decision-making related to them provided such participation is organized.
- The selection processes of students for any assigned task or role of their work operate in a democratic and transparent ways that guarantee equal opportunities and participation for students, including those with additional requisites.
- The social solidarity initiatives taken by students, school or members or bodies of local community target students with additional requisites.



Partnership with Parents and Local Community

- Mechanisms of involving parents and communicating with them are in function particularly in preparing, developing and executing plans whether for their children or for all the school students, including those who require individualized educational plan.
- Mechanisms of involving parents and communicating with them are in function to foster inclusive school development.
- Mechanisms of involving local community and communicating with it are in function to foster inclusive school development.
- Local community bodies take initiatives on their own or jointly with the school to foster inclusion at school and in local community.
- The school benefits from the resources of the local community and its institutions to support students' education and develop their academic and non-academic capacities.



Non-academic Aspects

- Students with additional educational requisites show inner comfort and self-confidence through their participation in school life.
- The code of conduct is in operation and continuously developed in a participatory way with teachers, parents and students.
- Code of ethics is signed by school staff.
- Students with additional requisites advocate for their rights and needs in the school.
- Individualized educational plan (IEP) includes goals and strategies for non-academic aspects of students with additional requisites.
- Students with additional requisites receive health, psychological and social services that appropriately meet their needs in terms of timing, quantity and quality and in terms of obtaining mechanism.
- Curriculum includes organized classes or programs to nurture artistic, literary, cultural and sport abilities according to student individual tendency.
- School provides opportunities to display students' creativity and talents in ways that foster esteem among students.
- Students with additional requisites participate in the non-academic organized classes, programs and activities in particularly those which support teaching and learning that make education more meaningful in life experience.
- Students with additional requisites use school facilities and buildings independently and safely.



Curriculum and Instruction

- Teachers apply diverse teaching strategies and differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of students.
- Teachers apply diverse teaching styles for students with additional requisites in all courses and subject areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers plan for any adaptation in teaching strategies, instruction, teaching and learning activities as well as any learning objective for students with additional requisites.
- Teachers teach learning strategies, from within the curriculum, by using appropriate teaching strategies for students with additional educational requisites.
- Student assessment is based on continuous assessment by using a variety of adaptive assessment formats where the purpose is improving learning.
- Schoolbooks and alternative and adaptive learning means are used by the students according to their individual needs.
- Students who require an individualized educational plan are targeted according to an individualized plan which is prepared through a participatory way and reviewed and developed periodically.
- The individualized intervention programs and services are provided to students who require IEP to support their teaching and learning processes at school.
- Students with additional requisites make progress on academic and non-academic levels where this progress can be measured.
- Students with additional requisites use and benefit from school facilities to improve their learning.



Human Resources and School Administration

- Lists of job description and qualifications of school staff that are developed on the bases of inclusive education and inclusive school are applied by the staff and the administrators.
- The school reinforces its human resources by volunteers from among parents and local community members.
- The school provides professional development opportunities within and outside the school for its entire staff.
- Teachers benefit from different support services according to education requirements.
- School administrators and staff comply with school internal by-laws which is based on underlying principles of culture of inclusion and inclusive school.
- School administrators regularly schedule time for concerned staff for bilateral and collective meetings within workday in order to exchange experience, make early plans, solve problems and study individual cases in a participatory manner.
- School administrators apply the planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for inclusive school development.
- Stakeholders benefit from the reports on planning, monitoring and evaluation activities for inclusive school development.
- Administrators undertake leadership roles by involving the stakeholders, coordinating the operations, facilitating communication and applying the mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation to achieve the goals and foster the inclusive school development.
- Stakeholders use data, reports and recommendations of planning, monitoring and evaluation processes of the inclusion of each student with additional requisites to improve student inclusion in school life and education.

CHAPTER THREE

Strategies

Strategies are types of works or activities that determine how the pre-defined goals or results can be achieved. The strategies reflect the vision and the directions to reach the goals or the results. If Chapter I helps to establish vision and directions toward inclusive school development, and Chapter II helps to conclude the results from the indicators that we need to achieve, the strategies in this chapter help to design activities and measures to be planned and implemented in each of the six areas of the inclusive school model to reach those results. It is worth making clear that the strategies are not specific activities, but types of such activities.

✓ Educational Principles and School Policies

- Presenting a simple idea about inclusion and inclusive school among school stakeholders through organized communication sessions in which the benefits of inclusion on the school and the students are highlighted and the concerns and inquiries of stakeholders are addressed, so as to adopt the idea.
- Organizing events where the school stakeholders have opportunities to learn from stakeholders of inclusive schools.
- Assessing the current status of the school by using the six areas definition of "Inclusive School Model" as bases of the assessment. The assessment methodology may include conducting focus groups of teachers, parents and students along with collecting data methods such as interviews and questionnaires.
- Organizing workshops for the school stakeholders to present and discuss the "Inclusive School Model" and the results of the school current status assessment so as to make them recognize the importance of inclusive school development and to identify candidates who will effectively participate in the project, i.e. Inclusive school development.
- Forming a team in charge of planning for inclusive school, identifying its mandates that ensure involvement of different actors within the school community and establishing common goals. The team has to develop a framework (committee or working group) for the Project so as to involve the stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, professionals, representatives of local community).
- Identifying the issues raised from the current status assessment that the committee will work on. Accordingly, the committee develops annual action plan which includes the issues, activities, expected results, implementation timeline, responsibilities and roles.
- Launching the annual action plan in a public event attended by all parties who will acknowledge it as a school plan and not as committee plan.
- Organizing workshops or training sessions to increase the knowledge of teachers on related matters including mechanisms of acquiring knowledge and skills by students, purposes of education and values of inclusive education.
- Identifying the current and new school policies required for inclusive school, provided that these policies are included into school documents or in a separate school policy document.
- Developing admittance mechanism for new students with additional educational requisites that includes individual assessment process to determine the student academic and non-academic level. In case of admitting deaf students it is important to have more than one deaf student in the same class.
- Developing a strategic plan which includes and contributes to: common vision of stakeholders on inclusive school, common strategic goals for the next three years, common educational beliefs or principles of school teachers and staff, strategies to achieve the goals, human resources and budget required to implement the plan, time intervals to assess the results.



Culture of Inclusion

- Organizing workshops for teachers, professionals, administrators, parents and local community on human rights, child rights and rights of persons with disabilities, and on the principles of these rights as mentioned in the international conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Organizing awareness activities to school students on the distinguishing differences of individuals in terms of shape, physiology, intelligence areas, disability, cultural diversity, social differences, family conditions, etc., provided that such activities are organized periodically, and not seasonally.
- Organizing training sessions for teachers of civic education subject on teaching lessons which may include culture of rights and inclusion.
- Promoting culture of inclusion and rights through school activities.
- Including principles of culture of inclusion into the school documents such as the code of conduct, school internal by-laws, etc.
- Organizing the processes of selecting class representatives in a way to promote culture of democracy among the students.



Partnership with Parents and Local Community

- Developing criteria for selecting a sample of parents to participate in school current status assessment, planning processes, inclusive school development committee, organization of school or community activities, and accordingly invite them to take part.
- Organizing periodical meetings between the team members working with the student (special educator, teachers, specialists, etc.) and the parents of each student with additional requisites in order to involve parents in the educational process, the follow up process, solving problems and taking decisions related to their children.
- Involving parents of students with additional requisites in preparing the individualized educational plan of their child and get their approval for its implementation.
- Providing mentoring or training to parents of students with additional educational requisites to undertake their role in bringing up and tutoring their children at home.
- Conducting survey on the existing local community bodies and its programs and services, and to introduce the school project on inclusion.
- Organizing activities within local community to foster culture of inclusion and to display school efforts to provide education to students with additional educational requisites.
- Engaging local community bodies in supporting the education of students and enhancing their experiences.
- Engaging specialized bodies in society to provide specialized support services to students with additional educational requisites at school.

Non-academic Aspects

- Preparing or developing a code of conduct for students through participatory way with them and make it well known to students and teachers to comply with.
- Preparing code of ethics for teachers in a participatory way to be signed by them.
- Allocating budget to provide specialized services to students with additional educational requisites such as functional vision assessment of students with low vision, assessment of learning difficulties of the students, speech and psychomotor therapy, physiotherapy, etc. by contracting specialists to work with students with additional educational requisites whether in the school or in their clinics.
- Identifying individuals or institutions in the local community that can provide or contribute to specialized services to students with additional educational requisites.
- Identifying the social skills and behaviors and the daily life skills of students with additional requisites that need interventions to develop them and including such interventions in the individualized educational plan. It is important to emphasize on interventions to support, develop and enrich the social aspect of students with hearing difficulties, cerebral palsy, autism or intellectual disability for it is the most damaged growth aspect.
- Providing deaf students with communication opportunities with a cultural group of deaf. It is preferable to have one or more deaf adults among the team at the school.
- Allocating budget to artistic, sport, creative and entertaining programs and activities, and identifying individuals or institutions in local community that can contribute to and support such programs and activities.
- Appointing time for training blind students on orientation and mobility, and if necessary, on sense development.
- Identifying physical and technical barriers to ensure accessibility to students with additional requisites for school facilities, programs and sources of information and knowledge and eliminating them by applying accessibility criteria.



Curriculum and Instruction

- Providing specialized educational services that support the learning process of students with additional requisites (special education/orthopedagogy services, speech therapy, psycho-motor therapy, physiotherapy, etc.)
- Determining the learning strategies to be taught, in which subject courses and the required adaptation to teach them to any student with additional requisites.
- Identifying the technical aids which support the participation of every student with additional requisites in learning and school life.
- Developing individualized educational plan (IEP) for every student who need it. The IEP shall include goals, strategies for each goal, activities and measures, needed means and resources, support services needed for student and teachers, etc. provided that IEP stakeholders participate in developing, signing, reviewing and assessing it on a periodical basis.
- Approving individualized intervention program for every student who need it according to his/her IEP provided that it identifies location and schedule of the individual work whether inside the class or the resource room or outside the school.
- Ensuring that any continuous assessment of deaf student includes, in addition to academic aspects, assessment of linguistic, communicative, conversation, abstract concepts, solving problems and in particularly the social aspects.
- Conducting memorandum of understanding with governmental or non-governmental institutions to supply school-books in Braille, in large print, in audio format and in electronic format to be available in due time and with necessary quality according to the needs of every student with visual impairment. The school has to study first its financial capacity to supply these materials including graphics, documents and maps in embossed lines and characters for the blind students.
- Enhancing the resource room at school to support teaching and learning of students with additional requisites, provided that it contains Braille typewriter, Braille papers, geometric drawing tools and talking computers for blind students.
- Organizing teaching schedule for students with visual impairment to learn reading and writing Braille and drawing geometry in embossed lines.
- Providing opportunities to support develop and enrich the communication with the deaf students not only by the speech therapist but with every person who has a main role in communicating with the students. It is to be noted that the main method of communication may vary from one deaf student to another (sign language, verbal method, audio/sound method, total communication method).
- Teaching the basics of the sign language to all students and staff at school since it helps deaf students to communicate with others.



Human Resources and School Administration

- Developing the job description of teachers and professionals working at the school according to the inclusive school role and development.
- Organizing annual training program for the teachers to develop knowledge, skills, practices and applications to make education related to life experience and to diversifying teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms.
- Establishing and applying a teacher support mechanism to improve performance mainly for teachers who have students with additional requisites in their classes. The support of teachers includes: support of different parties such as the principal, other teachers, the special educator/orthopedagogy, the specialists, etc. Such support may be in several forms: guidance, accompaniment, deliberation and supervision, cooperative teaching, etc. The support mechanism ensures time for teachers during workday to obtain such support.
- Authorizing the tasks and responsibilities of the special educator/orthopedagogy and introducing him/her to stakeholders so as to facilitate his/her job and to avoid any conflict with class teacher or other professionals.
- Establishing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the work of professionals (including the special educator/orthopedagogy), teachers and specialists who engage in inclusion of students with additional requisites provided that the monitoring mechanism ensures review of their reports on every student with additional requisites in order to improve the performance and determine the needs for professional and personal development.
- Identifying professional development opportunities for the special educator/orthopedagogy as holding experience exchange sessions with educators from other inclusive schools and sessions with the reference who supervises their work.
- Appointing a qualified well-experienced school coordinator for inclusion to coordinate the processes, activities and services of the professionals and specialists.
- Contracting specialists to refer students to students for assessment, therapy or rehabilitation provided a referral mechanism.
- Organizing periodical meetings with parents of every student with additional requisites so as to include, depending on their subject, the special educator, the teachers or the social worker, and between these three parties and the parents if necessary.
- Identifying professional development opportunities for school directors focused on educational planning, leadership, monitoring, follow-up, etc.
- Developing the mechanism to assess the inclusion of students with additional requisites at school and identifying the assessment responsible reference provided the use of assessment tool and data collection tools through which the collected data are supported and compared by the individualized educational plan and the reports of the special educator, the professionals and the specialists.

- Designing a continuous assessment process for the inclusive school development according to the strategic plan and the annual plan to measure the progress accomplished in each of the six areas of the inclusive school by using the indicators stated in chapter II of this guide provided the results of the assessment are used in the re-planning process.
- Designing rewarding mode for learners

and staff to appreciate efforts even if these efforts are minimal.

- Submitting periodical reports to the educational region/district (of the public schools) or the central education administration (of the private schools) and holding periodical meetings with them in order to get their support, resolve the problems and comply with educational regulations and laws in force.
-

CONCLUSION

by Dr. Asma AZAR

The school inclusion can only be achieved after making changes on many levels: the place, the persons, and relationships, the education, the teaching and the school administration.

Therefore, the necessary changes must include the values, positions and behaviors of the different actors in addition to the educational practices, the roles, the exchanged relations and the policies that regulate the entire school institution. However, such changes must not be superficial or arbitrary since they are intended to apply quality educational services.

In this context, it is important to refer to the main mission of the school in order to make the education goals in agreement with the teaching objectives. Certainly, this mission does not only aim at helping the students acquire the school program skills,

but also at "promoting the development of the child personality and talents, preparing him (her) for an active life as adult and establishing the human rights with the child as well as the respect of his (her) own cultural and national values and those of the others" (Tisdal, 2007). On the long term, this task also stresses the importance of forming a citizen who is able to effectively contribute in his (her) community.

Therefore, for a real school inclusion to be achieved, the actors within the school community, particularly the teachers and the administrators, "must make concerted, sustainable efforts to adopt the idea that the students cannot achieve better results if the adults do not change their behaviors" (Ainscow, Miles, 2008).

It is worth noting that so far, there have been no specific procedures to promote

the policies and practices related to the school inclusion; rather, there is an array of steps tackled by specialists in the school inclusion from all over the world. These steps are about a circular process that reinforces the flexibility and dynamism of the work that cannot be fixed or linear. The flexibility is important because every experience is unique since it falls within the material and human aspects of each school and environment.

The work team at the school in question must manage such steps by planning and implementing the school inclusion. Among the steps that need to be implemented:

- To study the situation of the school environment and to identify the needs.
- To determine a common philosophy and task.
- To involve the entire school community through communication.
- To select the work team members and to undertake the cooperative planning activities.
- To determine the needs of the professional development or the training.
- To offer and apply the supportive services to the teachers and to the learners.
- To draw up and implement individualized intervention plans.
- To accommodate the individualized intervention plans according to the assessment results.
- To create a reward system for the learners and the staff and to appreciate the efforts and the achievements made no matter how trivial they are.



SECTION 2



Operational model for school inclusion

PROMOTION OF A PILOT OPERATIONAL MODEL FOR SCHOOL INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LEBANON



Period of implementation:
2015-04-09 / 2011 12-09

The project counts with the financial support of Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs – General Direction for Development Cooperation and has been implemented jointly by GVC – Civil Volunteer Group and YAB – Youth Association of the Blind. Since the designing, Lebanese Ministry of Education and High Education – MEHE has played a key role in it as well through a cooperation agreement with the Centre of Educational Research and Development (CERD), providing a dynamic mentoring, facilitation and additional resources.

On one hand, the intervention provides six schools with the opportunity to improve cultural educational and operational skills

of teachers, social workers, special educators and directors and, on the other, to stimulate civil society and the communities in which schools are located. The main focus has been to shift from a mere insertion to a hundred and eighty degrees inclusion of children with disabilities.

So then, the project has the overall objective of contributing to the implementation of the Lebanese law 220/2000, on the promotion of the rights of the disabled, and making it more functional and effective, capillary and at the operational level. In order to reach this goal both in the short and medium term, the aim is the promotion of access to education of children with disabilities in public schools, through experimentation of an operational model of school inclusion and elaboration of guidelines together with the relevant institutions.

Furthermore, it is also in accordance with the strategic plan launched in February 2012 by MEHE and prepared by the Centre of Educational Research and Development (CERD) in collaboration with institutions and associations, as it worked in several of the pillars included in the document:

- Legislation, administrative and pilot phase;
- School buildings and engineering technical changes (architectural constructions);
- Training of human resources: teachers and experts;
- Curriculum, methods and teaching equipment adapted to the needs of the disabled;
- Promotion of a culture of inclusion in schools and in the community.

WHAT WE WANTED TO ACHIEVE

Developing and testing cultural, educational, operational and functional skills for inclusion in six public primary schools.

HOW WE DID IT

The first step was to select the six schools to be included in the project. Selection was held in collaboration with CERD. The identification process started in collaboration with Ministry of Social Affairs – MoSA, starting from the identification of the areas in Lebanon with higher percentages of children with disabilities, with special focus on three of them: visual, physical and learning ones. Subsequently, key indicators for schools selection have been defined. Among them:

- ✓ School located in communities where there are children with disabilities.
- ✓ Mixed school.
- ✓ School that includes preschool and basic education primary and secondary.
- ✓ The consent of the Director to include students with disabilities in the classroom.
- ✓ The consensus of teachers to participate in the initiative of school inclusion.
- ✓ The consensus of these figures to participate actively in the project.





- ✓ Consent to have a room for the special educator.
- ✓ School with a good reputation and good level of teaching.
- ✓ The willingness to share experience and transfer knowledge and results of the project to other public schools.

Finally, the following schools have been selected, in 3 different areas of Lebanon:

1. The school in Minya, Nabi Khezeiber.
2. The school in Dennie, Hakleet fi Baghun.
3. The school in Beirut, Sheikh Jaber al Ahmed el Sabbah.
4. The school in Chouf Khafarnabrakh, Murabbe Rauf Ibn Ghanem
5. The school in Nabattie, Zebdeen.
6. The school in Khiam, Ali Hussein Abdallah.

The list was endorsed by both President of the CERD and Director General of MEHE.

The second step was to train all the staff and key actors involved in the project.

Capacity building was the focus of the project for all parties surrounding the child in the classroom: special educators, teachers, social workers, school directors and employees of MEHE.

Trainings have been differentiated according to different roles and professional profiles.

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

It addressed six trainers with a specific expertise on disability and special education, appointed by MEHE and NGOs working in the field of disability. After a first training phase, four of them were selected to continue the training in order to become a pool for the future sustainability of the application of the model by the Ministry. Training was held by both Italian and Lebanese trainers.

The main topics of the training were:

- Policies and legislation on disability in Lebanon and abroad;
- Definition of disability, clinical diagnosis, functional and different types of disabilities;
- Strategy and methodology of educational intervention with people with disabilities;
- Solution techniques educational problems in the intervention;
- The virtues and skills of the teacher and educator in the relationship with the disabled;
- Networking and interdisciplinary work between the various actors involved in the inclusion school;
- Tools for the organization of the class on the basis of the inclusion of the disabled;
- Tools and methodologies for the development of personalized educational plan (PEP) of the disabled;
- Relationship between the disabled, family and professionals.

The four selected trainers have made cascade trainings to teachers, special educators and social workers.



TRAINING OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

After selecting special educators on the basis of a job description specifically made by the project pool, they started being trained, and so social workers. Original project proposal foresaw trainings only for the first year of implementation, but practice made it clear that it should have been a continuous process of both training and guidance.

The main topics of the trainings were:

- Concepts and terminology on disability and inclusion education;
- Definition of cases of visual impairment;
- Introduction of activities and responsibilities of special educators in public schools;
- Introduction of Braille reading and writing;
- Development of sensory abilities;
- Introduction of inclusive classes;
- Clarification of the concepts of education and skills to students with visual impairment;
- Adaptation of reading lessons in Arabic, English, mathematics and science;
- Development of the PEP for students with visual impairment;
- Teaching of language skills (Arabic and English);
- Teaching maths skills;
- Teaching study skills;
- Teaching of communication skills;
- Development of the PEP for students with learning difficulties and reporting.

Social workers also participated in ongoing support sessions to improve their knowledge in the context of inclusion. Some topics discussed were:

- The concept of inclusion and inclusive school;
- The definition of blindness and visual impairment;
- Support in the formulation and administration of the questionnaire to choose schools;
- Support in the formulation and administration of the questionnaire to diagnose cases of disability;
- The how to interact with parents of children with disabilities;
- Organize focus groups and write technical reports about it;
- How to improve writing monthly reports to be submitted to the coordination committee of the project;
- An assessment of skills and social skills of children with disabilities on the basis of guidelines prepared;
- Tools of analysis and research for the social impact assessment of the processes of inclusion and integration of disability, social, family and community.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Courses concentrated in the first year but once again it became evident that resumption should be needed in following years for both strengthening abilities and overcoming turn over in staff. Couching in classrooms was also included.

The content of the training was:

- Concepts related to inclusion and the inclusive school;
- Types of disabilities and behavior management in the classroom;
- Individual education plans and checklist;
- Adapting education for students with vision problems;
- Definition of reading and writing in Braille;
- Development of the 5 senses in children with visual disabilities;
- Adaptation to mathematics and science for students with visual disabilities;
- Role of special educator and drafting of monthly reports;
- Defining a different difficulty learning;
- Strategies for teaching reading vocabulary and grammar;
- Strategies for the teaching of writing.

TRAINING OF DIRECTORS

The six directors of the schools involved. The course was held in Beirut and lasted 5 days (5 hours per day) for a total of 25 hours. The recruited trainer had experience not only in terms of disability, but also in communication, special education and management of educational facilities. The main topics included organizational and methodological tools for the management of processes for change towards the school inclusion of children with disabili-

INTERNAL TRAINING

The other strategy adopted by the project in order to increase the capacity of staff was to provide ongoing support. Among the main ways to support the project staff we can mention:

- support to social workers to prepare their work plan, including analysis of the strengths and weaknesses and provision of technical tools to improve the skills related to field work, such as the best way to gather information, organize interviews and meetings and prepare the materials for field data collection;
- special educators are supported by the coordinator of special educators with regular meetings and monitoring visits;
- internal workshops for special educators and social workers, respectively, with the aim at improving their understanding of the objectives and work more effectively by creating synergies between the actors involved in the project and among them and external actors.

ties, the inclusive school, leadership in an inclusive school, supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, the project also included a visit in Italy for key figures involved in the project, in order to know directly implementation of inclusion in another country, where policies in this sector are quite advanced. It was the opportunity to meet with public officials responsible for inclusion at Italian

Ministry of Education and General Direction for Development Cooperation of Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as well as to visit schools of different level where inclusion is implemented. This visit set the basis for a possible future collaboration among Institutions involved in policies on inclusion in both countries, particularly about their implementation at a capillary level.

Only after a first period of capacity building, the identification and selection of the children was undertaken: this was made in collaboration with Municipalities, MEHE and MoSA. Social workers from the project were in charge to follow up the procedure. The goal was to include 10 children in each school. In order to achieve it, support by MEHE has been very important, providing an extra special educator for each school. The inclusion of ten children in each school with a different type of disability shouldn't been sustainable with only one special educator, as it has been foreseen at the beginning, because of the huge workload.

Awareness-raising activities at community level have been implemented in order to encourage the enrollment of children in institutions that thanks to the project appear to be better equipped at managerial, educational and instrumental level.

Each child was included on the basis of a Personal Educational Plan - PEP defined at the beginning of the school year and constantly monitored to allow the child with a disability to adapt and integrate to the class. The special educators prepare each PEP with the support of the project team and then transmit it to the social workers

who integrate the document with aspects related to social inclusion of the student in his community.

All the details about this procedure are part of the inclusive school model proposed in the present publication.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that besides the provision of theoretical and practical educational skills, the project also included material and structural improvement of schools.

Due to budget limitations, only one school could be rehabilitated and adapted to be accessible for persons with disabilities. It is the school Zebdeen, where the project could provide the reconstruction of bathrooms, ramps and adaptation of electrical system to make the lift (funded by the school) work.

As for the other schools, the Steering Committee decided to give priority to the Resource Rooms. These are rooms equipped with tools and materials that facilitate learning and teaching for children with disabilities. These rooms are used when the special educator has to work with the child alone (work out of the classroom). The decision to open the Resource Rooms also considered that the majority of project beneficiaries are children with visual impairment and learning disabilities, thus support learning materials were more needed than architectural adaptation.

At any rate, Resource Rooms are a tool available for all the children attending school.

WHAT WE WANTED TO ACHIEVE

The access to learning materials for children who are blind and visually impaired, through the production and dissemination of textbooks in Braille.

HOW WE DID IT

Having retrieved the list of textbooks foreseen by Lebanese educational curriculum from first to ninth grade, Braille technicians have adapted to the Braille system. A total amount of 150 books in Braille and enlarged writing for visually impaired students were distributed in the schools. In addition, each school has been given a computer equipped with SUPERNOVA-software, so that even students with visual impairments can use the computer. The schools involved in the project have set up a resource room for computers and educational training materials purchased by the project, which is available to all students, with or without disabilities. Were also distributed typewriters Perkins for children with visual impairment.



WHAT WE WANTED TO ACHIEVE

The testing of the model through strengthening partnership and relations between civil society and institutions.

HOW WE DID IT

In order to benefit from the learning experience of the project and spread it with other stakeholders, the project worked to document the experience and propose tools on how to work in the inclusive school.

The guidelines were developed with a participatory strategy, starting from data collection by project's staff in the schools and communities about practices, activities, results, difficulty of implementation, etc.

It was therefore organized a two-day workshop to discuss and analyze the practices applied within the project as well as providing an opportunity for the exchange of experiences. The outcome of the workshop was a document containing the most important pillars in order for a school to become inclusive and, within each component, the results achieved, procedures and activities that are designed to achieve these results.

This document was presented to the Working Group formed by experts and relevant stakeholders: a representative of MEHE, a representative of the CERD, the Director of the Department of Education at St. Joseph University, a manager of the Association of the Deaf, the head of the Association for Education of children with intellectual disabilities, the coordinator of special educators, a social worker from the project, YAB manager and GVC project manager. All participants were chosen because they represent the most active institutions and NGOs in the field of disability in Lebanon and are members of Inclusion Network. They all have experience in different types of disabilities, which enriched the discussion bringing different perspectives based on field experience.

From their joint work we have today the present guide.

WHAT WE WANTED TO ACHIEVE

The community as a whole has been sensitized on disability issues and in particular on school inclusion through the active participation of those involved.

HOW WE DID IT

The main efforts for this result have been focusing local communities, their institutions and civil society. Sensitization started from the schools involved, from their school committees on inclusion, established and supported by the project, that are composed by the school director, two teachers who participated in the training, a representative of the parents, the special educator and a social worker. Besides the tasks related to educational path for children with disabilities, the boards have been also in charge to promote inclusion on a wider level, inside and outside the school. Identifying and planning awareness activities have been done in a participatory way, involving parents and students with and without disabilities in focus groups, to collect their point of view.

Then, each year a number of activities have been undertaken both inside the school and in the communities: local institutions and local associations have been participating, besides a huge number of students and parents. Activities have been usually linked to cultural ones and supported by

materials: posters, brochures, thematic movies, expositions, etc.

This is a key factor for inclusion: social life for children with disabilities does not end at the end of school attendance. On the other hand, school environment can work as a flywheel for social inclusion and create an expansion movement towards the other sectors of society.

At the same time the project focused on a second level, involving the Inclusion Network in an effort to bring awareness to a wider extent. Considering the huge activity of the IN on updating and seizing policies on inclusion, the wide range of member organizations and its work at national level, its contribution represented a valuable factor for the project. It has been involved since the beginning, when the public event for the presentation of the project was organized. Members of the Inclusion Network have been also participating in the definition of the manuals and its Facebook page has been activated as a tool for awareness.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is important to highlight that it would not have been possible to achieve the results and impact of the project without the full commitment and dedication of all the staff and persons who got involved in it. For this, most grateful thanks must be given to the General Director of Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Director of the Center for Educational Research and Development, the Specialists of Center for Educational Research and Development, the Presidents of Regional Educational Directorates, the Directors of the six schools, the Special Educators, the Coordinator of Special Educators, the teachers, the social workers and all the members of Inclusion Network.



SECTION 3



YAB Experience in School and Educational Inclusion
2015-1992, Youth Association of the Blind "YAB"





The overall goal for which the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) was established was, and continues to be, attain to inclusive society for persons with visual impairment. One of YAB's strategic goals, since it was founded in 1988, has been to attain to an inclusive educational system for blind and low-vision persons across all academic stages.

This section of the handbook offers a few highlights of YAB's experience in school and educational inclusion, given the lack of comprehensive documentation of the association's track record. The section features a roundup of milestones, with acknowledgments, testimonials and pictures, in addition to a summary of YAB's work and the outcomes it aims for. Those interested and willing to search further will find other documents, publications and information about our work.

First is a short account of the evolution of YAB's experience in school and educational inclusion, between 1992 and 2015. It is worth noting, however, that these intervals are cumulative and overlapping, rather than distinct.

1992-1999

This period was marked by the integration of children with visual impairments in regular schools within their local communities in Beirut, Nabatiyeh, Iqlim el-Kharroub and Tripoli.

Acknowledgment is due to Mr. Nemat Kanaan, former Director-General of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), for her support of this direction taken by YAB, during this period, through a joint contract.

Acknowledgment is equally due Mr. Omar Traboulsi and Mrs. Lina Bu Habib for supporting this direction in YAB through Oxfam GB.

YAB also provided paid consultations and services to UNRWA, over the course of seven years, for the roll-out and development of a school inclusion program for the visually impaired in selected UNRWA schools in Lebanon. The services included the training of teachers, special educators and social workers.

Acknowledgment is due to Mrs. Taghrid Awad for her support and professionalism in implementing this inclusive direction.

2000-2003

During this period, YAB contributed to the development and implementation of programs and projects with organizations and associations operating in Lebanon and abroad, notably:

- Participating in the management of a one-year project to develop educational inclusion in Lebanon, organized by the UNESCO Regional Office, and involvement in research on school inclusion experiences in regular schools in Lebanon — with gratitude to Dr. Ramzi Salamé;
- Involvement in planning and implementing the three-year school inclusion program in the Syrian governorate of Homs, as part of a contract with the UK-based Karim Rida Sa'od Foundation, throughout which YAB handled all trainings — with gratitude to Mrs. Mareake Bosman;
- Developing the school inclusion focus for blind students in Yemen over a 10-41y training for Al-Aman Association for Blind Women Care and for public school teachers — with gratitude to the late Fatima Al-Aquil;
- Organizing a regional conference in Beirut, in partnership with the Asian Blind Union (ABU) and the UNESCO Regional Office, on inclusive education and the school inclusion of students with visual impairment — with gratitude to Dr. Hijazi Idris for his support of this direction at regional level;
- Early work with a group of organizational and individual stakeholders to found the Inclusion Network — with gratitude to Dr. Maha Damaj for the part she played in these efforts.

2004-2007

This period saw a quality advance in YAB's experience and work in the area of educational and school inclusion and a shift to work at national level.

Such progress was the result of the World Bank-funded National Inclusion Project (NIP) which was managed by YAB, in partnership with and under the supervision of the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR). The project's most salient achievements include:

- Working with 10 private schools to build their capacities to become inclusive;
- Conducting the largest media campaign for disseminating the culture of inclusion;
- Training teachers, special educators and social workers;
- Developing strategic guidelines for inclusive education through a national conference;
- Launching the Educational and Social Inclusion Network;
- Publishing guidebooks and studies, among which:

- Study on the current state of educational, social and occupational inclusion in Lebanon, 2004, in Arabic and English;
- Book on adapting the academic curriculum, in Arabic and English;
- Book on inclusive schools, in Arabic and English;
- Book on early intervention, in Arabic and French;
- Study on the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education (MEHE) towards creating a MEHE authority dedicated to educational inclusion and the identification of tasks required from the MEHE to handle educational inclusion;
- Statistical study on the conditions of persons with disabilities, with recommendations for improvement.

Acknowledgment is due to Dr. Rima Hatoum and Dr. Samantha Wehbe for their contribution to the development of the project proposal.

Acknowledgment is also due to Mr. Ramzi Noaman for his support of our endeavor at the CDR and the World Bank. His support has had an impact on YAB's work beyond the project's lifecycle.

2007-2012

This stage of YAB's experience was characterized by working with public schools to become inclusive and to integrate students with visual impairments in a number of these schools. Work also continued with several private schools. YAB capitalized on its previous experience in working with public schools. Schools were selected in Beirut, Miniyeh, Dinniyeh, Chouf and Nabatiyeh.

Acknowledgment is due to Mr. Jean Hayek, former Director of Guidance and Counseling at the MEHE, for his support, cooperation and recognition of YAB's experience in this area.

YAB integrated the Inclusive School approach and the Quality School approach in working with schools. In 2007, YAB developed an inclusive school model which can be replicated at any school wishing to become inclusive.

YAB shared its experience in the framework of a project managed and implemented by the Université Saint-Joseph (USJ), in association with the MoSa and MEHE. YAB was chosen to coordinate a working group on school management and legal issues. But the project was ended in its early stages. Acknowledgment is due to Mrs. Hala Raad for her support and cooperation with YAB.

2012-2015

YAB partnered with the MEHE and the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) in working on school inclusion in public schools, through the Inclusive Public Schools Model project, implemented by GVC. Acknowledgment is due to Mr. Fadi Yarak, MEHE Director-General, for approving and supporting the project since the planning stage. YAB's experience during this period is illustrated in the report on the joint project with GVC, contained in this handbook. Acknowledgment is similarly due to GVC for their support of our efforts towards educational inclusion and for their partnership in planning and implementing the project.

The cooperation of Mrs. Martha Tabet, CERD, was also instrumental to the project's implementation.





NADA FAHED

Blind, holder of a Master in Social Sciences from the Lebanese University

INTERVIEWED IN MARCH 2015:

When I recall the Youth Association of the Blind, I think back on a beautiful time during which I learned and acquired so much. YAB is a part of my life. For 12 years, it was my sole preoccupation – my whole life. I joined YAB because they have a clear and overarching goal that I intrinsically share and believe in. When I learned that YAB's mission was to promote social inclusion, and the educational inclusion it involves, I was thrilled. Inclusion affects me. It stems from my experience and personal struggle. It made me a staunch advocate of YAB: their unambiguous, candid objective serves, first and foremost, the blind.

I was an early founder of the inclusion program in the Nabatiyeh area. I was the first to work on the program through implementation. We set out from our personal experiences and accomplished great work. We worked day and night until we developed inclusion as it stands today.

The center was inaugurated on October 9th 1992, following a survey of the number and conditions of blind persons in Nabatiyeh. YAB was the first association dedicated to the blind in the area. Inclusion was a concept, still incompletely formed. On March 20th, 1993, we conducted an activity that essentially launched the inclusion project.

Over the course of two years, we held several training and habilitation courses at the center, including: teaching Braille in Arabic, French and English; typewriting; numeracy; home management and everyday life skills; recreational outings; dialogue sessions for blind persons to express themselves; and tutoring for low-vision students.

The first blind person with whom we kick-started the inclusion project, in the academic year 1993-1994, was Rima, from the town of Dweir. She was placed in grade 4 of basic education, at a public school, after following a two-year remedial program at YAB, Nabatiyeh.

The practical application of inclusion began that year. Rima pursued her studies, through the project, until she completed secondary school. She progressed through the Dweir Public Elementary School, to Rammal Rammal Public Secondary School, and finally the Jibsheet Public Secondary School.

FOUNDER OF YAB'S NABATIYEH CENTER IN 1992, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER AND MEMBER OF THE YAB ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD BETWEEN 1992 AND 2001

During that period, Dana, another blind student, was integrated in the Bilal Fahs High School, in grade 7 of basic education. She learned to type in Braille and to use the typewriter. We collaborated with the school for nine years.

The program catered to the needs of the blind: books printed in Braille, books in large print for low-vision persons, Braille typewriters and regular typewriters, and a special educator at the school. YAB had a significant contribution and role in boosting the morale of blind children and their parents, which positively affected their mental wellbeing, through its serious, professional, perseverant and successful management of the inclusion project.

The center was the link between the various stakeholders (blind persons – parents – schools).

During the academic year 1996-1997, YAB tested an inclusive KG 1 class at the Nabatiyeh center. The "class model" included a number of sighted kindergarteners and one blind student, Ghinwa. The results of this experiment were replicated at the school where Ghinwa was integrated in KG 2.

YAB worked with many schools in the Nabatiyeh area. Some years saw multiple simultaneous collaborations. The schools that we have worked with are: Dweir Public Elementary School (1993, 1994,

1995); Rammal Rammal Public Secondary School (1996-2002); Jibsheet Public Secondary School (2002, 2003); Bilal Fahs High School (1993-2000); Deir al-Zahrani Public School (1994); and Lycée Mondial, where all eight (2 blind and 6 low vision) students were integrated in a single school in 2000, in kindergarten, elementary and intermediary classes.

It is all etched in my mind, down to the smallest detail: every action, every activity, every student, every situation we encountered and challenge we faced... I pray that God sends every blind child people like YAB to help and nurture him/her.

To YAB, I say: I have never met an association working for such a specific goal and purpose as you do. YAB is serious about its mission and possesses enough experience, competence and plans to pursue this mission. I am indebted to the association and its president, to the program and everyone who has helped me. I am proud of YAB's achievements in the area of inclusion.



HODA HARB BALOOT

Once I overcame the “shock” of my son being born blind, it became imperative for us, as parents, to find him a lifestyle, accommodating of his visual impairment, that would ensure his right to a dignified life and to be a child like any other. It was anything but easy, in a country like Lebanon.

At first, I was absolutely against the idea of separating my son from his family to live out the intricacies of his life as a boarding student in a special institution for the blind. I wanted him to adapt to living with his condition in his community and for the community to accept his condition and his needs. I believed that I, as a mother, could meet his needs and facilitate his life at home, with his family, because that is his natural right. I admit that it was an either-or situation for me: either I agree to his educational and social integration, or he stays home to learn and study with my help. That was until I read an article, which I can still partly recall in detail, about a blind American child whose mother decided to sell everything she had to move with him to another state that allowed the inclusion

DESPITE THE PHYSICAL
DISTANCE SEPARATING US,
THE EXPERIENCE HIT CLOSE
TO HOME IN VALIDATING MY
DECISION AND CHOICE.

of blind students in schools for the sighted. Despite the physical distance separating us, the experience hit close to home in validating my decision and choice. But my aspirations were repeatedly shattered by harsh reality: where and how can I achieve my goal? I needed someone to help me realize my dream for my son Nasser. It was sheer coincidence that I found out about YAB through a television program. I was at my wits' end when I contacted them and met, for the first time in March 1996, with Mr. Amer Makarem, the president of the association. During our three-hour meeting, I told him of my plight, my pain, and that YAB was exactly what I was looking for to support my fledgling pursuit.

YAB sought to integrate blind children, from age three, in regular schools while providing a special educator to accompany them as needed, transcribing books and tests into Braille, and coordinating with the school to meet the child's academic needs. Nasser was given preparatory lessons, in the summer of 1996, to introduce him to Braille. I learned along-



side him, in order to continue working with him at home. When the academic year 1996-1997 started, Nasser attended KG 1 with his sighted classmates in a regular private school in Beirut. The experiment proved difficult for me at first. During the summer, I had been heavily criticized by the local community, out of fear of the consequences. I was even the target of an "attack" by an institution for the blind which accused me of committing a crime against my blind son! But these only strengthened my resolve and conviction that I had made the right choice in wanting Nasser's social inclusion.

Whether at school or with YAB, I followed his lessons thoroughly. Having learned Braille, I knew my efforts had paid off and I helped type and record a few stories for Nasser. Now that these needs were seen to by the special educators at YAB, I was free to perform my other responsibilities towards my son.

Nasser was an excellent student. Like me, he rose to any challenge. He was a talented musician, learning to play the guitar, the piano and other instruments. He loved the computer to which he devoted time every day. His self-esteem allowed him to accept his difference and that of others. He made

a place for himself in school and at home.

After graduating school in 2010, our new challenge was university. With his critical and analytical skills he had the makings of a journalist. And so the journey began to the Beirut Arab University. It was necessary that I visited the university alone at first, to meet the dean and coordinator, to inquire about safety measures on campus, and to explain to them my son's condition as a prospective student. Their responsiveness was encouraging. The obstacle posed by photography courses was resolved. Nasser then visited with a special educator from YAB to take stock of the buildings and departments in detail. The amazement of his fellow students at the time was only rivaled by their enthusiasm to befriend and assist him. He also excelled in his field of study, graduating in the year 2014 with distinction.

When I look back on Nasser's life, I recall the moment when I learned that he was blind and how the news affected us as parents. Yes, we decided to face the challenge, no matter the difficulties, and I decided to defend my choice. But I was never alone. I am blessed to have encountered YAB – an association that has fully assumed the responsibility of its mission.

DIRECTORS' EXPERIENCE



CHAFIK HAIDAR

Former School Principal at National Orthodox College – Mar Elias, Tripoli

EXCERPTS FROM HIS MESSAGE

IN 2010: Our conviction stems from our firm belief in the right of blind persons to learn in a regular school environment that is normal and formal.

In the summer of 2000, the president of the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) introduced me to the inclusion project run, promoted and successfully implemented by the association.

The visit was heaven-sent: a believer can but accept God's blessings and hope they fructify into talent that serves humanity.

I gave my consent without hesitation after Mr. Amer explained the cooperation mechanism. God blessed me with a team abounding with love; without them, no inclusion project could have succeeded.

Love works miracles and overcomes obstacles – you can accomplish anything with love. School inclusion of any type not only requires planning but calls, first of all, for a loving willingness. And when there is a will there is a way. A student may be integrated in a facility but this will not yield the desired results unless he/she is fostered by people driven by love.

The presence of several blind students in the school, in various classes, alongside peers with special needs – whether motor, auditory or mental – strengthened the bonds of love between teachers and students. The value of such bonds is immeasurable from the educational perspective. Education, after all, is first and foremost a labor of love.



**"LOVE WORKS MIRACLES
AND OVERCOMES
OBSTACLES ,YOU CAN
ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING
WITH LOVE."**

It was immensely beneficial to have them with us. We are grateful to God for the blessing. We learn from having among us persons different in one way or another: we learned to cooperate, each according to their abilities, and to adapt to each person's needs. We recognized the rights of others. And such recognition is an antidote to a society that only accepts others who are in its own image, as if staring into a mirror. Well, it's time to break the mirror. We only see our own reflection in it. It's a chronic disease, and we look forward to the day when we will be cured of it.

HANADI JARDALY KOTOB

Head of Houssam Eddine Hariri High School (HHHS)/an auxiliary of the Makassed Charitable Islamic Association of Saïda

EXPERIENCE OF THE SCHOOL

It was not an easy start: the inclusion of a low-vision and two blind female students was a significant challenge to our school which, at the time, had only been in operation for a few years and enrolled over one thousand male and female students. But the school firmly believed in the principle of 'education for all' and in the right of all children, regardless of their different abilities and diverse needs, to education. HHHS has sought to include children with special needs since 2000. In 2004, through the initiative and with the encouragement of the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB), we set out on our journey by including the first blind female student. Our initial hesitation stemmed from our lack of experience, our concern that we would fall short in providing her with the required educational support, and our wish to spare her any discrimination by the school community. Our concerns were soon dispelled, however, as the collaboration methodology established by YAB with the school had a major impact on the facilitation and follow-up of the inclusion process, not to mention on its brilliant success. The three students later graduated from HHHS, passing their official exams with flying colors. In fact, one student was ranked first in the South governorate and fifth in Lebanon, in the Sociology and Economics section, for the 2012 session. The three students' results allowed for smooth admission into university. Our collaboration with YAB spanned nine years during which the association assisted the school by assigning a special educator to accompany the girls throughout their years of schooling. The educator coordinated, on the one hand, with school teachers to transcribe lessons and written tests into



Braille and, on the other, with YAB for training and the provision of textbooks, technical equipment and teaching aids.

The most impressive feature of our inclusion experience was the positive response of the school community. It was a learning experience for us all – students and teachers alike – and an inspiration. It contributed to reinforcing collaborative work skills among students, as well as their respect of human difference.

As for the teachers, they handled the matter with distinctive professionalism and remarkable enthusiasm, by offering assistance and support and by adapting lessons as needed. They collaborated together to deliver their best. Our greatest disappointment during the experience was the lack of educational, technical and moral support at the national official level – by which I mean the Lebanese Ministry of Education and its auxiliary bodies, the extent of whose support was limited to the provision of a dedicated test center for students with special needs. The absence of a public educational policy for inclusion in Lebanon exposes such students to the risk of dropping out, therefore depriving them of decent employment.

Based on our experience with YAB, we can but commend the association's work in the area of school inclusion and education for students with special needs. I wish them success and prosperity.

DOHA NASSER EDDINE

Former School Principal at Ras Beirut Public School

EXCERPTS FROM HER MESSAGE IN 2010:

In 2007, we began working with the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) towards becoming an inclusive school. Successive preparatory meetings were held with teachers, parents, and students, in addition to workshops and awareness-raising sessions about persons with special needs and the specificity of their conditions.

We ended up creating a follow-up committee consisting of a number of teachers, parent representatives and student representatives. The committee was responsible and committed in its work. YAB supported us in every step of the way by providing special trainers for the workshops and a special educator to accompany students.

Our collaboration with YAB was fruitful and very responsibly managed. I applaud YAB for their serious engagement, and extend my gratitude to YAB President Amer Makarem.

The experience was a personal milestone: I discovered how much a person has to give, even if she was deprived of sight. Despite the difficulties, the educational project with our blind student was illuminated by bright achievements, mainly: the acceptance demonstrated by all students and their responding to her special condition smoothly, with active positivity and natural innocence stemming from their youth, in addition to Rana's love for her peers and her adapting to school life with evident self-confidence.



We have built a favorable environment for integrating students with special needs and are fully confident that we will be met, as always, with utmost support and assistance from officials, civil society and active associations.

"I APPRECIATE THE TRUST INVESTED BY PARENTS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PROMISE, TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES AND RESOURCES, TO BE WORTHY OF THEIR TRUST."

KAWTHAR EL-HUSSEIN

Head Supervisor of En Nabi Kzaiber
Public School – Minyeh

EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN 2015:

Inclusion was proposed to the school in the summer of 2007. What prompted us to accept the proposal was the high repute of the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB), not to mention their serious and clear approach and the existence of a well-thought-out plan which lent credibility to the project.

Many things changed with the implementation of the project.

It helped develop students' character, allowed them to further express themselves, increased their respect of difference, and boosted their initiative and sense of community. The well-being of students, including those with special needs, was demonstrably improved. What I love most about how students relate to each other is that, to them, it makes no difference: a child with disabilities can do everything they can. So they are comfortable around each other and play together. This is impressive.



Teachers became convinced and accepting of school inclusion and its importance. As a result of trainings and daily routine interaction with the special educator on the one hand, and with students with special needs on the other, they were able to develop teaching material adapted to the students' varying levels.

The project had a positive reflection on the school in the local community. From the parents' perspective, if the school is equipped to teach students with disabilities or learning difficulties – which other schools are not – then the school is of a high academic caliber and is qualified to educate their children.

WAFAT HMEIDAN

School Principal In Haklit Public School –
Bakhoun, Dinniyeh

EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN 2015:

The Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) began the inclusion program with the school in 2009 with the integration of blind students.

Some of the chief advantages of the school inclusion program are:

- Building positive relationships between students and their peers with special needs as a key part of the school community;
- The resource room, created by YAB, which has become a beneficial asset for all students who share the use of available equipment;
- Positive feedback from parents and the community demonstrated by the parents' participation in activities on school inclusion and the willingness of municipalities to offer assistance in terms of construction services and periodic maintenance;
- It is my expectation that our blind students will have a prosperous future and play an active role in society.



" IT IS MY EXPECTATION
THAT OUR BLIND
STUDENTS WILL HAVE A
PROSPEROUS FUTURE
AND PLAY AN ACTIVE
ROLE IN SOCIETY."

KHALIL ZAHRI

School Principal in Zebdeen Public School – Nabatiyeh



"EVERY CHILD HAS
THE RIGHT TO
STUDY IN PUBLIC
SCHOOL"

EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN 2015:

In 2010, when inclusion was proposed for the first time by the president of the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB), Mr. Amer Makarem, I felt it my moral and civic duty and my educational responsibility to accept. And so I did, without hesitation, in anticipation of the meetings between the YAB administration and the school faculty and staff to learn about the mechanism for the inclusion of blind students in the school.

Every child has the right to study in public school. It is our duty to interact with them through a humanist educational approach, on a par with any other student in Lebanon. Public school is for all segments of society. It is the duty of every school to provide adequate conditions to ensure integration. Therefore, we will never hesitate to enroll any student with special needs; ours is a humanist educational engagement to students, as persons and citizens. Zebdeen Public School is the only inclusive public school in the area.

As for the faculty, their embracing enthusiasm for the inclusion project springs from an ethical, religious and educational feeling. The experience proved that classes including students with special needs are infused with a dynamic, humanist and moral atmosphere making them productive and focused classes with strong bonds between students. My wish is for society to be a reflection of the school community in accepting persons with special needs in schools, universities and the workplace...

The special educator is trained by and works with YAB who constantly monitor her performance. She has an immense responsibility in teaching Braille to students, adapting lessons and building certain skills... The sustainability of inclusion in schools depends on the presence of a trained and qualified special educator.

RAOUF ABI GHANEM

School Principal in Public School – Kfarnabrakh, Shouf Khaled el-Ali

EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN 2015:

The Inclusive Public School Model project was developed to create change in public education and to expose society to the possibility of transforming public schools to inclusive model schools. The project was conceived by the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) who translated their vision into an educational policy characterized by rigorous action and a carefully considered plan – their planning has been unequalled. We have infinite admiration for their foresight and hard work. We experienced no gaps in the project: YAB has covered all requirements, from human resources to logistics, since the project kicked off in 2012. This persuaded 90% of the faculty who are thrilled to be involved in such exceptional work. Moreover, the programmed activities and trainings concretize the idea of inclusion and make it more accessible to teachers, students, parents and the community, thus creating a positive impression of the school.

The school will continue to coordinate with the project, to the end; as long as the project goes on, we will go on with it. It can also be continued if the special educator is given tenure, since her contribution accounts for 60% of the project.

Recommendations:

- Working on instating tenure for special educators to continue the project through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the administration or donor humanitarian organizations;
- The Ministry of Education should adopt inclusion as a policy and establish an authority to monitor and supervise inclusive schools.



**"THE MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION SHOULD
ADOPT INCLUSION AS A
POLICY AND ESTABLISH AN
AUTHORITY TO MONITOR
AND SUPERVISE INCLUSIVE
SCHOOLS."**

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE



MRS. SALLY EL-GHADBAN

Mathematics Teacher in Raouf Abi
Ghanem Public School,
Kfarnabrakh – Chouf



**" WHEN YOU DISCOVER
THE IMPACT OF YOUR
WORK ON THE STUDENTS'
PERFORMANCE, YOU ARE
THRILLED AND WORK
HARDER THAN BEFORE."**

My initial surprise at learning that the school was inclusive turned into enthusiasm to rise to the challenge and make the project a success. Disability should not prevent any person from advancing in society. We must therefore work and help students arrive. There should also be several inclusive schools since children with disabilities have as much of a right to education as other children, especially given their stellar results.

This engagement had a positive effect on me as a person: it fueled my love

of life and gratitude like never before. Students teach you resoluteness and perseverance. At the professional level, you are prompted to seek nontraditional methods to ensure that information reaches the students. When you discover the impact of your work on the students' performance, you are thrilled and work harder than before.

I have today acquired more awareness and understanding of the issue. I have experience in interacting with students with disabilities. By identifying a student's weaknesses, and based on their responsiveness, I can determine their needs and strive to meet them, which can sometimes be accomplished in collaboration with the special educator and the other students.

I am heartened by our students' success. If they continue to work hard they will reach distinguished positions. We are proud to play our part in helping them succeed.

MS. SANA' ALAM EDDINE



Arabic Teacher in En Nabi Kzaiber
Public School – Minyeh

**"BLIND STUDENTS
IN FORMAL CLASSES
ENCOURAGE OTHER
STUDENTS TO PROGRESS
AND ADVANCE AT THE
ACADEMIC LEVEL."**

I have learned from our students with disabilities. It was a new experience for me. They taught me that nothing is impossible and that each person has capacities that distinguish them from others. I refuse the condescension of pity; students with disabilities are our equals by virtue of their humanity.

I learned Braille in order to engage with blind students in class, although it was not required of me. It is my firm belief that attending to all students in class is my duty.

Blind students in formal classes encourage other students to progress and advance at the academic level, not to mention the mental and personal levels, thus preparing them to interact with persons with disabilities in the wider community.

I treat all students equally: reward and retribution apply without discrimination. Moreover, students with disabilities participate with me in all outdoor activities. It is worth noting here that students readily help each other during such activities.

I am convinced that the presence of a special educator is indispensable because their role complements the role of the teacher.

MRS. NOHA MERHEB

Arabic Teacher in Haklit Public School,
Bakhoun



" THOSE STUDENTS DREW ME IN INSTEAD OF THE OTHER WAY AROUND. "

At first, I felt that the project was an impossibility. I thought that blind or otherwise disabled students could not manage in regular classes and that their presence would be cumbersome. Now, four years on, I am more comfortable engaging with my blind student than with others. Those students drew me in instead of the other way around. I was surprised by their capacities and thoughts. They guided me on how to interact with them. We were the ones adapting to them and their presence has become natural in our school.

Not only am I convinced, I am certain that students with additional needs are part of the class and capable of learning, even outpacing their peers at times and motivating them through competition. In my work, I do not compare students;

my judgment is based on each student's abilities. It is up to the teachers: either they ignore those students or act by the light of their moral and professional conscience.

I have attended, through the project, trainings that have been crucial in developing my skills as a teacher of an inclusive class. The project has improved students' conduct in general and their perception of disability. You can see them today rushing to help out and collaborate. Students with disabilities have been able to build many friendships.

MS. MAJIDA BERJAWI



Sociology Teacher and Coordinator,
in Zebdeen Public School, Nabatiyeh

Our first reaction was to wonder about how to deal with students with special needs. Then, proceeding from a humanist approach and given that persons with special needs are people who are equally entitled to an education, we conceived the idea of an inclusive school with a well-rounded and cooperative team, able to ensure inclusion, especially that positive thinking was imperative for the experiment's success.

The experiment helped develop our profession, broaden our experience and improve our problem-solving skills. The local community's acceptance of inclusion is evidence of an informed culture, of intellectual openness and a conviction that school inclusion is the way to full social inclusion.

The support provided by the Youth Association of the Blind (YAB) and the school administration guarantee the inclusion project's success. We especially applaud the part played by the special educator whom we depend on, as a specialist, for adapting activities and supplying us with the necessary information and skills.

**"THE EXPERIMENT
HELPED DEVELOP OUR
PROFESSION, BROADEN
OUR EXPERIENCE AND
IMPROVE OUR PROBLEM-
SOLVING SKILLS."**



STUDENTS



JANA IS A SMART AND SERIOUS GIRL WHO IS EAGER TO LEARN. SHE GETS ALONG WELL WITH OTHERS. SHE ONLY NEEDS TO BE GIVEN DIRECTIONS ONCE. SHE LOVES MUSIC AND IS EXCITED ABOUT NEW EXPERIENCES.

JANA, STUDENT

Jana is a ten-year-old student in the fifth grade of basic education. She has partial blindness and no learning difficulties.

ACCORDING TO MS. JOUMANA GHANEM, YAB STAFF MEMBER AS SPECIAL EDUCATOR AT THE RAOUF ABI GHANEM PUBLIC SCHOOL, KFARNABRAKH – CHOUF:

I started working with Jana since she was five years and four months old, when she was placed in KG 2 at a public school through YAB's school inclusion program. I started working on developing her personal, social and pre-Braille skills, in addition to supporting her inclusion and learning in the classroom. She could recognize the Braille alphabet within two months of starting school.

She was followed through a summer course that included dance, visualization exercises and yoga to work on motor coordination and sensory development. Her linguistic repertoire was also devel-

oped through dramatic play and song. She received Braille lessons that allowed her to read words before proceeding to first grade. In first grade, Jana was the only student who could read an entire text in Arabic and English since the first week of school. The teachers were very cooperative; some learned Braille to help type and transcribe tests or cards, in addition to implementing participatory teaching, with the educator, addressed at all learners.

Jana's excellent performance was the principal factor that changed the teachers' perception of inclusion. According to one teacher, "The speed at which Jana picks up information exceeds that of her peers, which motivates me to come up with other ways to convey concepts to her."

In grade 4, Jana participated in an eighth grade civics lesson on the rights of people with disabilities, by explaining to the students the nature of her disability and alternative learning methods. She was also involved in a public awareness-raising event in the local community, and a

very positively received yoga course on strengthening sensory-motor control and developing visualization and verbalization skills. Jana joins all school trips and celebrations. She took part in the 'Right to a Dignified Life' conference with a traditional Lebanese dabké dance performance. Jana is quick-witted, enthusiastic and enterprising. She learned to use computer screen reader software and could type in two languages after four training sessions. As for navigating a new environment, Jana needs to be trained only once, and then orientation points are used as reminders. She is an example to her peers in neatness and tidiness, ensuring that her classroom and the playground are kept clean.



Imagine my surprise, going down to the playground one day, at finding posters hung up all over to promote cleanliness. The messages were written in Braille and in sighted print; the activity had been organized by the students.

I undertook a full intervention with Jana in the classroom at first, but started to limit intervention gradually. Today, Jana is in grade 5 of basic education and intervention is reduced to a few mathematics and geography lessons. It also depends on the teachers and their ability to adapt their methods, for example when giving an explanation at the blackboard or describing a figure. Intervention is needed in PE and art classes sometimes to allow Jana to master new skills.

In conclusion, Jana is a smart and serious girl who is eager to learn. She gets along well with others. She only needs to be given directions once. She loves music and is excited about new experiences.



MONZER, STUDENT

Monzer is a 12-year-old student in the seventh grade of basic education. He is completely blind.

ACCORDING TO MS. NOUR BADR EDDINE, YAB STAFF MEMBER AS SPECIAL EDUCATOR AT THE ZEBDEEN PUBLIC SCHOOL, NABATIYEH:

Monzer was placed in grade seven of basic education at the Zebdeen Public School through the YAB school inclusion program in 2014, after returning from Africa where he used to live.

Monzer's main difficulty was Arabic, since he had not studied an Arabic curriculum in Africa and France. He therefore was not familiar with the Braille alphabet in Arabic. I started teaching him Braille while improving his Arabic through a special program developed by YAB.

Monzer was following the full Lebanese curriculum at the school while I worked

with him on the special Arabic program in the resource room.

Monzer made fast progress in learning Braille and Arabic: within three months of starting to work with him, he had mastered reading and writing in Braille in Arabic. He was able to sit for the same tests as his classmates in all subjects.

Monzer is a very sociable and confident boy. He has built strong ties, in and outside of class, with his peers who are always ready to help him. He is an ambitious student who always strives for success.

He has a special relationship with his teachers. He is a responsive student, extremely well-integrated in class. He is competitive but also helpful.

His parents are the principal reason for his success. They are constantly and fully supportive of him. They encourage and help him. He has the will and determination to success and advance.



"SERENE IS CONFIDENT. SHE HAS MASTERED READING AND WRITING IN BRAILLE, SHE IS AN INTELLIGENT AND TALENTED STUDENT FOR WHOM WE EXPECT A PROMISING FUTURE."

SERENE, STUDENT

Serene is an 11-year-old student. She has been completely blind since birth.

ACCORDING TO MS. IMANE SADEK, YAB SOCIAL WORKER IN NORTH LEBANON:

Serene was five when she was placed in KG 1 at En Nabi Kzaiber Public School, Minyeh, in 2009-2010, through YAB's school inclusion program. It was the first time she had attended school.

When she entered school, we began working with her on several levels. She had not had opportunities and her age-appropriate basic capacities and skills had not been developed. What skills she had were very poor: communication skills, everyday life skills like eating, drinking, using the bathroom, sitting on a chair or opening her bag... She was not mobile and could not walk autonomously but needed to be carried from place to place. Of course, these

all resulted in poor social skills: shyness, anxiety, attention deficiency, withdrawal, etc.

Despite it all, she began attending formal, regular school and we started working with her on all levels, including the academic level.

The special educator, who is a YAB staff member and works with the school, followed Serene on a daily basis, throughout her successive years of study, to support and assist her, step by step.

We started by addressing her biggest challenge: mobility. After conducting the proper medical testing, it was revealed that there was no health reason preventing her from walking. So training began on walking, flexibility in movement, orientation and direction to learn how to navigate the school, between classrooms, the supervisor's office, the playground and the toilets... as well as sitting in the proper position. This was accompanied by sensory-motor therapy until she was able to overcome these

difficulties. Serene has become autonomous in terms of mobility and some everyday routine matters at school. She is also able to independently navigate environments outside school: her mother or sister used to help her from the house to the car, but Serene can do this on her own now with minimal help from the driver.

At the academic level, Serene used to have trouble with counting, combined with difficulty in sequencing skills such as knowing the days of the week. She had a poor understanding of such concepts as back/front, up/down, etc. But the teachers were understanding and the special educator and sensory-motor therapy sessions played a huge part in overcoming these challenges.

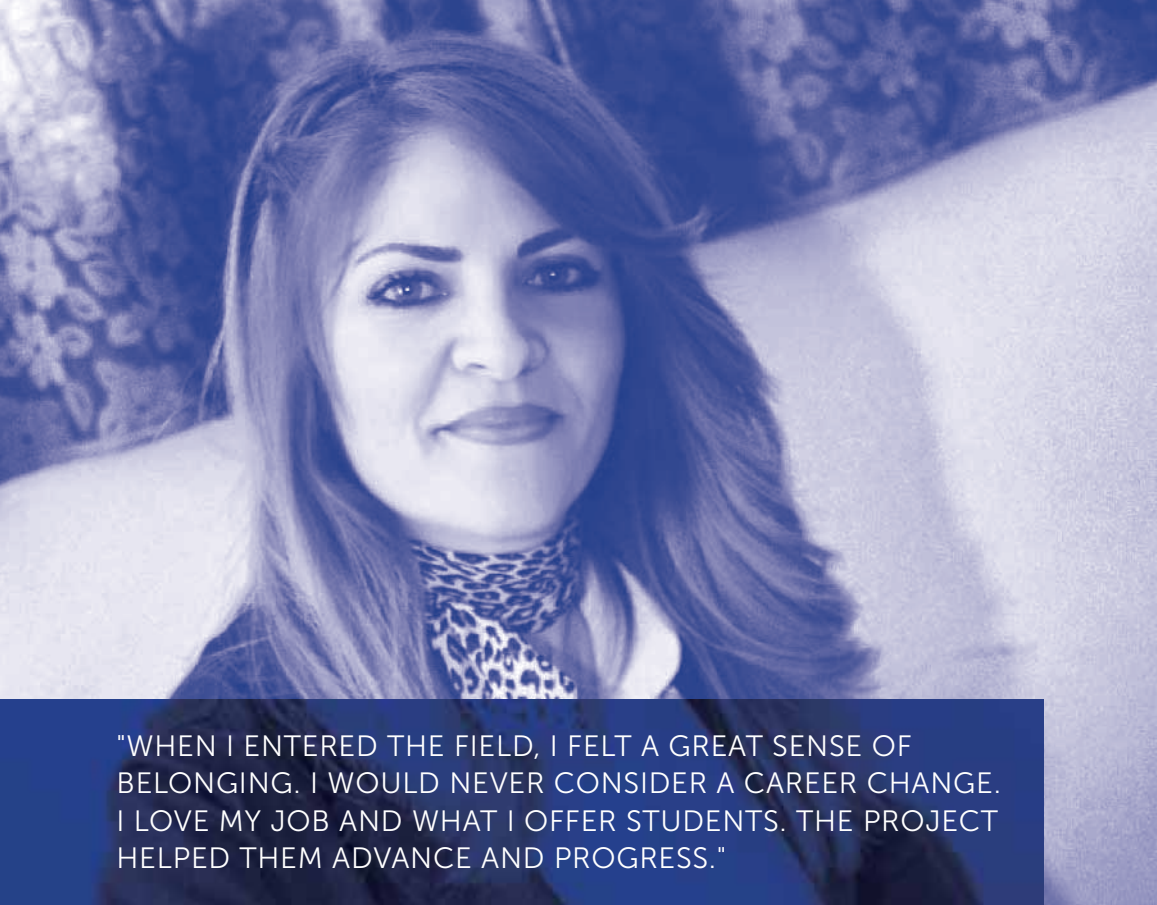
Since Serene was an avid listener to stories, storytelling was used as a way to develop her mathematical concepts and ability to recognize shapes. Her sense of touch was also improved in order to be able to identify shapes and thus begin to acquire Braille. To address this difficulty, YAB turned to an occupational therapist with whom Serene attended therapy sessions and made an immense improvement. Serene began to read in Braille in grade 3 of basic education.

From a social perspective, Serene was a quiet, silent student who did not participate in class activities or games. She sat alone and did not speak unless spoken to and only after considerable hesitation. She did not initiate conversations with her friends or play with them, as if she were unconcerned about what was going on around her. She did not explore new situations. Today, thanks to the interventions and trainings, Serene is a distinguished student in class where she participates and raises her hand constantly to engage in all, even

new, activities. She asks questions about unfamiliar things and tries to explore her surroundings. She has friends with whom she plays during recess after having sat silently on the sidelines in the past.

Serene is now in grade four, she is confident, she has mastered reading and writing in Braille, she can navigate the school autonomously, and she is markedly involved in classroom activities. She is one of the star students in school events: she has demonstrated an impressive talent for singing that awed the administration and faculty. She has performed in two concerts at the school and during a national conference with YAB. She is an intelligent and talented student for whom we expect a promising future.





"WHEN I ENTERED THE FIELD, I FELT A GREAT SENSE OF BELONGING. I WOULD NEVER CONSIDER A CAREER CHANGE. I LOVE MY JOB AND WHAT I OFFER STUDENTS. THE PROJECT HELPED THEM ADVANCE AND PROGRESS."

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

**MRS. JULIENNE NASRALLAH,
FULL-TIME TEACHER
SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AT
EN NABI KZAIBER PUBLIC
SCHOOL, MINYEH:**

I am currently working with 6 students with learning difficulties, chosen by YAB from the school student body, to provide them with direct and extensive support.

My intervention with them consists of educational support, alongside psychological support, since psychological issues are frequently the reason behind students' learning difficulties. In educational support,

I adopt a diverse range of activities and exercises and use the educational games in the resource room at school. As a result of such intervention, students manage better in class and their academic level is improved, although to varying degrees.

Most of my interventions with students are in the resource room that was created by YAB at the school. This well-equipped room is crucial, mainly because of the purposeful educational games and teaching aids it contains. Moreover, I can tell how comfortable my students are in the room since they are often marginalized in class and cannot keep up with the explanation because they need a different approach

that responds to their way of thinking and understanding – a task that is rarely undertaken by the class teacher. Therefore, in the resource room, my students enjoy my undivided attention and can assimilate the information they missed in class in various ways that are customized to their needs. This brings out remarkable enthusiasm, interest in learning and impressive results on their part.

I have attended several training courses with YAB that taught me a lot in terms of teaching and engaging with students with learning difficulties. As a former class teacher, my sole purpose, like all other teachers, was to explain the lesson. Today, my perspective has completely changed. I now consider students' needs and conditions, cater to their individual differences, and focus on these aspects more. I wish that all teachers could participate in such trainings, as they are critical and improve one's performance level.

I call for increasing the number of special educators in schools, given the high number of students with learning difficulties.

When I entered the field, I felt a great sense of belonging. I would never consider a

career change. I love my job and what I offer students. The project helped them advance and progress. I can see concrete results with the students who can now read out letters after being unable to do so despite being in grade 1 – a class in which letters are the foundation for learning.

I thank YAB for choosing me, of all the school teachers, to be a special educator for students with learning difficulties. Words cannot express my tremendous gratitude to YAB, whom I wholeheartedly appreciate and respect, especially YAB president Mr. Amer Makarem, for their noble educational endeavor. I hope YAB is granted greater support in order to pursue the inclusion project on a wider and more comprehensive scale.

YAB SCHOOL INCLUSION EXPERIENCE

DEVELOPED BY: THE MANAGEMENT OF THE INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL MODEL PROJECT, GVC AND YAB

DATE: JANUARY 2014

This file on YAB's field experience with private and public schools to become inclusive was developed through the collection of information from current project staff (Inclusive Public School Model project of GVC and YAB). Information of previous experience was collected based on specific points distributed over 6 areas constituting the content defining the inclusive school model – which is a guiding model developed by YAB in 2007.

The file documents YAB's experience rather than the work and activities conducted by YAB, the services it delivered, the number of student beneficiaries or the schools they attended. This would require separate documentation of each school's experience. What makes the documentation of details and dates impossible is the fact that different activities and services were implemented throughout the years of working with the same school.

Therefore, this file was created as a launching pad for developing inclusive school model guide.

The file reports previous experience over 6 areas. Each area consists of:

1. THE AREA NAME

2. GUIDING DEFINITION OF THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOL IN THIS AREA

3. OUTCOMES TARGETED IN EACH AREA

4. THE WORK CARRIED OUT TO ACHIEVE EACH OF THE OUTCOMES.



Educational Principles and School Policies

An inclusive school is a school where stakeholders (administration, faculty, staff, parents, local community representatives) adopt and abide by principles and policies that make it an inclusive school.

OUTCOME A:

School administration agrees to the idea of inclusion.

- Two sessions are held with the school principal to introduce a simplified version of inclusion and the inclusive school. The principal's character (pedagogical background, humanist sensibility, and sense of responsibility) plays a part in openness to the idea. The principal's previous exposure to the idea or personal experience is also influential in accepting inclusion in their school. In these initial sessions, the working mechanism with the school is explained, as well as the services and support supplied by YAB (the project) to the school – which mainly consists in providing a trained YAB staff member to work full-time at the school as a special educator. The success of the experiment in other private and public schools is mentioned. The presence of students with additional needs in the school area – i.e. the principal's own community – and the fact that these students await admission to a school to enjoy their right to education, bring home to the principal the criticality of their responsibility.

OUTCOME B:

Administration decided to become an inclusive school.

- A smooth working method has been adopted with schools, founded on a par-

ticipatory approach and natural progression, without rushing matters for the sake of sensationalist propaganda or doctored accomplishments.

- Ongoing communication is ensured with the school administration and teachers, whether directly or through the social worker or special educator.

- The findings of the assessment of the current status at the school are presented in a constructive manner to sensitize the administration and teachers to the importance of improving the school. Providing recommendations by specialists who visit the school and trainers who work with the school teachers helps motivate the administration given that the assessment method on the one hand, and the feedback of specialists and trainers on the other, are credible and reliable.

- Dialogue is held with the administration on the experience or observations of the administration or teachers about the influence of students with disabilities on the other students.

- The distinguished success of a student, at the same or another inclusive school, is highlighted, especially if the student has successfully obtained an official diploma.

- Events are organized to bring together the principals of inclusive schools to share the experience of their schools or to celebrate their contributions (training course for principals, project launch ceremony, or ceremony to honor school principals). This has had an influence on the decision being made and the continuity of the work.

OUTCOME C:

School has inclusive policies.

- The inclusive school was introduced in each school through a workshop, session or meeting. The introduction consists of a focus on policies, principles and examples of policies that the school should adopt and abide by to be inclusive. This motivated the acceptance of the idea of change in some school policies.
- The provision of support services and a special educator to the school prompted some school principals to give their consent and enroll new students with disabilities, sometimes in advance of YAB's approval, claiming the availability of services at the school for such students and the fact that the school adopts the policy of tolerance and education for all.
- The project imposed the invitation and involvement of parents in the assessment of the school's current status, and in school activities and committees. This resulted, after the school realized the advantages of parent participation, in the school's adoption of a policy for involving parents in some areas and in making an extra effort to invite and encourage them to participate.
- Issues that the school needs to address or resolve were identified as a result of the assessment of the school's current situation. Among the embarrassing issues to the school there was the matter of punishments – or reward and retribution. This led some schools to formulate a code of conduct or to update an obsolete code that had not been applied. It also prompt-

ed schools to adopt a policy of awareness, dialogue and agreement between stakeholders (administration, teachers, and students) about what is punishable and the type of punishment.

OUTCOME D:

School plans to become inclusive.

- Planning was adopted whereby an assessment of the current status was conducted in each school from an inclusivity perspective, based on the model which establishes the focuses that each school must work on to become inclusive. Focus group discussions with teachers, parents, and students were undertaken and information was collected through interviews and questionnaires in some schools.
- Issues to be worked on were identified as a result of the assessment of the current status.
- A school committee for inclusion was formed by stakeholders (administration, teachers, parents and project staff).
- The school committee devised an annual plan based on the identified issues for each school, with the help of a project staff member.

OUTCOME E:

Teachers agree to include students with additional needs in the school and in their classrooms.

- A session was held with a sample of teachers, after the principal consented to the idea of inclusion in the school, to obtain their approval of the idea. The project concept is clarified with the school,

including the benefits of the project to the school and students with additional needs. The school principal plays a part in convincing teachers. The major factor in making teachers comfortable and accepting of the idea is the provision of a full-time special educator in the school.

- A small-scale workshop (and sometimes a session that is 2-4 hours long) is held with all or some school teachers, often with the teachers of the classes where the students with disabilities will be included. This is critical in order to put teachers at ease, answer their questions and prepare them to welcome the student in their class.

OUTCOME F:

Parents of students without disabilities support the inclusion of students with disabilities in their children's school and classes.

- Awareness-raising activities were carried out at the school for parents on educational inclusion.
- Parents were invited to attend extra-curricular activities (celebrations, artistic activities, plays) in which students with additional needs participated.
- Meetings were organized at the school between parents of children without disabilities and parents of children with disabilities.
- Students report to their parents a clear image and information about the accomplishments of their peers with additional needs, the methods they use to learn (Braille books, Braille typewriter), the role of the educator and teacher, and how they participate together in the classroom.



Inclusive Culture Education

Inclusive school is a school whose curricula include Inclusive Culture Education.

OUTCOME A:

Administration and teachers are aware of the rights to education and inclusion of students with additional needs.

- The project uses a language of rights in all activities, used documents, and trainings.
- Project staff (special educator and social workers) is trained on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Teachers are trained on culture of inclusion during training days dedicated to teachers.
- The services provided by the project for the teaching and inclusion of students with disabilities confirms to all that the practices are in line with the culture and language of rights.

Indicators of the existence of a culture of rights among administration and teachers include:

- Teachers demanding books adapted to students with additional needs whenever there is a delay in supply;
- Teachers demanding that the administration provides some special teaching aids and creating adapted teaching aids themselves;
- The administration in some schools pays from the school's budget for the provision of special material for students with additional needs; and
- The administration in some public schools overrides internal regulations or constraints to meet the needs of students with additional needs.

OUTCOME B:

School students respect difference.

- Awareness-raising activities were organized for students at the school on the nature of each disability and on respecting difference; other NGOs sometimes participate in implementing these activities.
- Students in classes hosting a student with a disability are introduced to the nature of the disability and the special aids used by the student, at the beginning of each academic year.
- The arrangements provided by the project to students with disabilities confirm to the rest of the students the former's capacity to learn, and sometimes compete with them.
- Meaningful recreational activities are organized to promote participation in games and play.
- Students with disabilities are educated and supported to overcome their disability, where they are involved in introducing their disability and the aids they use to study.



Involving Parents and Local Community

An inclusive school is a school that works on strengthening partnership with parents, the local community, and community organizations.

OUTCOME A:

The school involves parents in the school's development.

- Parents were involved in the assessment of the school's current status.
- A representative of the parents was included in the school's inclusion committee.
- Parents participated in formulating the school development plan created by the school committee.
- Parents participated in implementing some activities in the school.

OUTCOME B:

The parents of students with additional needs participate in the teaching process and their children's learning.

- Periodic meetings were held between the educator and the parents on following up with their children and activating their role in the educational process.
- The individual educational plan was presented to parents and they were asked to approve the plan and the role or tasks set out for them in the plan.
- The special educator encouraged parents and taught them Braille and adequate methods to help their children with their studies.

- Home visits and periodic meetings were held with parents by the social workers to coordinate between parents and stakeholders and address difficulties.

OUTCOME C:

Local community organizations support the school.

- The project conducted a survey of the organizations existing within the school's local community, their programs, and services, and introduced them to the project in the inclusive school within the local community of these organizations.
- Joint activities were organized with the school to introduce the local community to the school's efforts to ensure the education of students with disabilities in order to garner the community's support.
- The school and the members of the school's inclusion committee were encouraged to communicate with the municipality and with individuals and organizations capable of supporting the school. YAB made architectural modifications in a school, while an organization helped install an elevator at another.

OUTCOME D:

The school plays a role in the local community.

- The project joined the school in organizing an awareness-raising activity in the local community on school inclusion.



Educational and Social Environment

An inclusive school is a school whose curricula include programs and services targeting non-academic aspects so as they are adapted and adequate to all students.

OUTCOME A:

School community is safe and free from violence and authoritarianism.

- The practice of violence was identified, as a result of the assessment, as one of the issues that should be addressed through the school plan created by the school's inclusion committee.
- A code of conduct was established for two schools and distributed to students and teachers to comply with. In one of the two schools, the students were involved in developing the code of conduct.

OUTCOME B:

Specialized medical, therapy and diagnostic services are available to students with additional needs.

- YAB provides specialized services to students with additional needs, e.g. determining visual condition by an ophthalmologist; referring students with learning difficulties for assessment by specialists at the school and at their clinics; speech, sensory-motor, and physical therapy at specialist clinics; and psychological consultations.

OUTCOME C:

Social skills of students with additional needs are developed and their behaviors adjusted.

- The capacities, social skills and daily living skills of some students were assessed and issues to be addressed were factored into the individual educational plan.
- Work was undertaken to develop the social skills and adjust the behaviors of students with additional needs in school and at home.

OUTCOME D:

Creative, recreational, athletic, and artistic aspects were attended to.

- Some schools devoted greater attention to these aspects after they were entered into the school's action plan.
- Students with additional needs were involved in art and sports classes and activities. Support was provided to the teachers of these subjects in order to involve the students.
- YAB organized an extracurricular program in some schools for a limited period, and partners with schools to organize various activities at the school.
- YAB holds artistic, recreational and educational summer activities for a limited number of students with disabilities, sometimes alongside abled students.



Curriculum and Instruction

An inclusive school is a school that has undertaken measures to make curriculum and instruction compatible with the capacities and needs of all students, including those with additional needs.

OUTCOME A:

Teaching objectives or activities are adapted in lessons to meet the needs and capacities of students with additional needs.

- Teachers were trained in what is meant by adapting lessons and how objectives or activities are adapted according to needs. Applied examples were mostly limited to students with visual impairment.
- Teachers and educators collaborated on the need for any adaptation and the nature of such adaptation.
- Concerned teachers were introduced to and signed the student's individual educational plan to give them a preliminary idea about the required adaptations for this student.
- The special educator is sometimes present in the classroom to help adapt teaching activities.

OUTCOME B:

Books and teaching/learning materials are available in adapted versions.

- YAB supplies schoolbooks in Braille or large print, and some in audio format.
- Some schools undertake the magnification of print in some subjects or scan books and save them on CDs for students with low vision.
- Adapted worksheets are provided in

school by the special educator and sometimes by a teacher.

- A few teachers provide adapted teaching aids when preparing lessons, especially science lessons, as a result of training and collaboration between the teacher and educator.
- Most geometric shapes in math classes and geography maps are provided in tactile form. This is done at the school by the special educator.

OUTCOME C:

Adapted materials and equipment are available to students with disabilities.

- YAB provided Braille typewriters for blind students at the school, as well as Braille paper, educational games, tools for drawing geometric shapes, speech recognition software, and an electronic Braille embosser for one public and two private schools.
- A resource room was created in six public schools.

OUTCOME D:

School exams are conducted in a compatible manner.

- School exams are adapted when necessary, in collaboration with the special educator and the teacher of the subject. The educator types the test in an adapted version for the students.
- The exam location is determined and provided either in class under the teacher's supervision or in the resource room under the educator's supervision. If the student cannot read or write, the educator acts as reader and writer; the test is often taken

outside the classroom in such cases.

- The educator transcribes the test answers from Braille to regular font (sighted/printed) for the teacher to correct.

OUTCOME E:

Individual assessment is available to students with additional needs.

- An individual assessment is conducted when a new student is admitted to the school to determine the academic level. The administration, educator and teachers collaborate to perform the assessment.
- A person with visual impairment is individually assessed before being referred to the school. A social worker and sometimes a special educator identify their academic level and assess their functional vision to determine the possible teaching options.
- A student with learning difficulties is assessed by being referred to specialists and the assessment fees are covered by YAB, occasionally with the participation of the parents.
- YAB conducts an individual evaluation in school on the extent of the student's inclusion in the learning process and school life. The evaluation is conducted by the YAB educators' coordinator.

OUTCOME F:

Special academic and non-academic skills of students with additional needs are developed.

- Students with visual impairment are trained to read and write in Braille based on the teaching methodology established by

YAB. They are trained in drawing geometric shapes using special tools provided by YAB in each school.

- Blind students are trained in orientation and mobility to enable them to independently navigate the school by relying on their other senses.

OUTCOME G:

Individual intervention is available for students with additional needs.

YAB adopts a policy of full inclusion in formal classes, where the class teacher is the teacher of students with additional needs. The special educator does not, at any time, act as a shadow or an assistant teacher. The educator is not devoted to a single specific student, but is a special educator present at the school to support the teaching, learning and inclusion of students with additional needs. Based on this policy, individual intervention is performed in the classroom, the resource room, or outside the school, provided that it is always in line with the student's best interests and with the policy of full integration in the classroom and in school.

YAB provides or supports individual intervention as follows:

1) IN THE CLASSROOM:

Individual intervention in the classroom is performed by the class teacher sometimes, but most often by the special educator. Individual intervention in the classroom by the educator with a student with visual impairment is justified for: describing graphics, data and charts; guiding

the student to the content of documents prepared in Braille; copying texts and exercises off the board; or supporting them in learning to read in Braille if they are still not proficient. Intervention also occurs in art and PE classes.

2) IN THE RESOURCE ROOM:

Individual intervention in the resource room is performed by the special educator, whereby the student is taken out of the classroom. Individual intervention in the resource room (outside of the classroom) by the educator with a student with visual impairment is justified for: conducting an individual evaluation, teaching Braille, acquiring concepts not addressed in the classroom, using special equipment, etc.

3) OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL:

Individual intervention is undertaken at home, and in locations chosen as appropriate for the nature of the intervention, by the special educator or social worker. Such intervention with a student with visual impairment is justified for: developing social, personal, life or artistic skills; improving competence in academic subjects; teaching or improving reading and writing in Braille; using computer screen reader; etc.

OUTCOME H:

School facilities are accessible and user-friendly for students with additional needs.

- Architectural modifications were made in three public schools and one private school to facilitate the mobility of students with physical disability.
- Railings were added to the stairs and posters in Braille were put up as guiding points across school facilities (e.g. class names, floors, playground directors, etc.) in a public school to make it easier to navigate by blind students.



Human Resources

An inclusive school is one that constantly develops its human resources and their capacities to be able to perform the tasks and role of the inclusive school.

OUTCOME A:

Teachers are capable of teaching in inclusive classes.

Teachers' capacities are built in the following ways through YAB's work with schools:

1) GENERAL TRAINING

Training days were organized for teachers to develop their skills and culture on teaching in inclusive classes. Over 150 public school teachers have been trained, 90 of whom were trained last year through the project with GVC, and more than 120 private school teachers. Trainings are given over the course of 3-5 days. Trainers also conducted an observation day inside the classroom at 6 public schools to support the teachers' training days.

2) SPECIAL TRAINING

Training sessions were held with teachers whose classes will receive students with visual impairments. Over 200 private school teachers and more than 160 public school teachers were trained, 60 of whom through the project with GVC last year.

3) PROVIDING CONSULTATIONS

The special educator provides, as part of her work, consultations to the teachers of classes hosting students with special needs.

OUTCOME B:

Professionals and specialists are available to support the teaching, learning and inclusion of students with additional needs.

- One special educator is provided per school if there are students with additional needs.
- YAB builds the capacities of special educators through training days. An educator who has been 5 years on the job would have acquired more than 20 days of training for special educators. Capacities are also built with support and consultation through ongoing follow-up and periodic sessions. Educators also attend training courses organized by other organizations.
- One social worker is provided on a part-time basis in each area in which the project operates. Each social worker works with two schools in the area.
- The capacities of social workers are built through especially designed training days, in addition to planning and training sessions prior to the implementation of each activity if it is new to them.
- A coordinator is provided to work with educators full-time in order to follow up on their work, support them, and evaluate the inclusion process of each student.
- The coordinator has previous experience working with the YAB program. As former special educator, she then pursued advanced studies in the field of education.
- One teacher was identified in each of 5 public schools and trained to work with students with visual impairments or learning difficulties.

- YAB is working with the Ministry of Education (MEHE) and the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) to endorse tenure for these teachers as reference teachers.

- When necessary, students are referred to specialists, and fees are paid by visit, in order to assess, treat or rehabilitate the student. This is performed in a limited way, based on resources.

OUTCOME C:

Communication and collaboration between stakeholders is available for experience sharing, problem solving, and decision making.

- The educator incentivizes teachers to cooperate and acquire experience. She also coordinates among teachers on problem solving or decision making.

- Informal meetings between the educator and class teachers.

- Acquiring and sharing experiences among the educators during formal sessions at YAB.

- Informal communication and collaboration between the educator and the school administration on problem solving and decision making.

- Formal meetings between the special educator and parents, between the social worker and parents, and among the three parties.

- Communication between the social worker and the educators' coordinator.

- Informal communication between the YAB management and school administrations.

- Formal meetings between the social worker and school administration.

- A formal school committee consisting of the various stakeholders (administration, teachers, parents, special educator, and social worker) to make decisions and solve problems.

- A regional committee was created, comprising: the head of the educational region at the MEHE, MEHE representative, CERD representative, head of the teachers academies in the area, principals of the two public schools in the area, project's local coordinator, special educators' coordinator, and the social worker in the project area.

- The regional committee holds periodic meetings to ensure communication, the sharing of experience, problem solving, and decision making.

OUTCOME D:

Administrators play their part in the inclusive school.

- One 5-days training course was conducted for school principals on educational leadership and monitoring (follow-up).

- Consultation was provided to school principals by YAB and YAB staff.

OUTCOME E:

Monitoring, follow-up and evaluation are organized.

- The YAB administration monitors and follows up on the work through:

- The educator's monthly and annual reports about each student she supervises;

- Direct communication between the educator and the educators' coordinator;

- Follow-up of the implementation of the individual educational plan;

- Periodic meetings for educators at YAB;

- Monthly reports of social workers on the implementation of their interventions and planned activities;
- Educators monitor the work of the teachers of classes with students with additional needs;
- Field visits by the educators' coordinator to schools;
- Reports by specialists on a student's evaluation or treatment.

OUTCOME F:

The school inclusion process is evaluated.

- The inclusion of students in school is evaluated at all levels through field visits to each school during which information is collected and the integration of each student is evaluated using a special evaluation tool for students. The collected information is compared against the individual educational plan and monthly reports.



ALWAYS
TOGETHER
FOR A BETTER
FUTURE



دائماً معاً
لمجتمع
دامج