FORMING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN ISRAEL

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The inclusion pedagogy, where children with disabilities are supported within regular classes is understood as a framework to providing rich learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available for everyone, enabling all learners to participate in classroom life, has become a favorable practice in recent years (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) [2]. According to the inclusion educational philosophy, it is believed that providing adaptations and supports for children with disabilities within a regular educational setting in their community is the major practical basis for inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular school system, thus enabling their holistic development and enhancing their opportunities to achieve normative educational goals (Barton,1993) [1].

Inclusion is based on the concept of social justice; wherein all students are entitled to equal access to all educational opportunities, irrespective of disability or any form of disadvantage [4]. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) highlights the need to provide education for all children in an inclusive school [6]. Inclusion principles have been acknowledged in the United Nation Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability (United Nations, 2006) and others documents. As a result, the implementation of inclusive schools has been a goal in many countries.

In order to ensure Successful Inclusion the following points to be considered in integrating children with special educational needs into inclusive schools:

- *Curriculum flexibility / adapted curriculum* (to facilitate the free circulation of materials and equipment related to the needs of people with disabilities; to provide all children, including with special needs, with the same education, providing additional assistance and support

to children requiring it; to use affordable technology when necessary to enhance success in communication, mobility and learning; to provide a continuum of support, ranging from minimal help in regular classrooms to additional learning support programmes, within the school and extending, where necessary, to the provision of assistance from specialist teachers and external support staff, with the focus on pupils' own experience).

• *School management* (more flexible management procedures, to re-deploy instructional resources, to diversify learning options, to mobilize child-to-child help, to offer support to pupils, experiencing difficulties and to develop close relations with parents and the community).

• *Didactical personnel* (all teachers should be trained to exercise their knowledge and skills in adapting curricula and methodology to specific work with both – children and students with disability and peers; the skills should respond to special educational needs; to collaborate with others specialists and co-operate with parent; dialog with community etc.).

• *Parents involvement* (The both groups should be trained: parents of students with disabilities and parents of nondisabled students. Parents of disable students should be trained / informed about specificity of special education needs of students; to support the disable students' activities; to collaborate with teachers and community. Parents of nondisabled students should be informed about educational and social benefits of educational inclusion of students with disabilities on equal base with nondisabled students).

• *Community involvement* (different components that happens within the school community: culture, policies, and practices should take into consideration the needs of disable persons, especially students; creation of inclusive community culture).

• *Information and research* (special needs education should be integrated into the research and development programmes of research institutions, also into curriculum development centres, with focus on innovative teaching-learning strategies) etc.

The situation regarding special needs education or inclusive education varies enormously from one country to another.

Consequently, in Israel and particularly in the Arab sector education policy makers have affirmed a commitment to reducing the numbers of pupils educated in segregated special schools and to moving more of these pupils into the mainstream of education.

Israel began to implement supportive systems in a variety of frameworks, including the school system where supportive legislation had already been accepted a decade earlier with the seventh amendment (Article Four) of the Special Education Law. Despite of the positive achievements regarding legal framework, it implementation remains as challenge. However, in a nationwide survey among 363 Israeli PE teachers regarding their perception of burnout (Fejgin, Talmor,& Erlich, 2005), the authors found that more than half of the teachers reported that children with sensory or motor impairments were not at all or only partially included in the school's PE classes [3].

In the frame of our study were explored the attitudes and self-efficacy (SE) of physical education (PE) teachers in the Arabic-speaking educational sector in Israel toward including children with disability in their classes [5]. The results indicated more similarities than differences compared to other samples of American, European, or Hebrew speaking Israeli PE teachers or students. Specifically, the impact of previous course work in Adapted Physical Education (APE) training was indicated as useful.

The results indicated that females had more favorable attitudes and self-efficacy than males, age had a small significant impact, training, and experience in inclusion of children with disability had a significant impact. Also, it was found that the self-efficacy toward including children with visual impairment was lower than toward intellectual disability and physical disability.

Students with disabilities have specific problems that are connected to their particular disability which must be courageously faced by society overall and particularly at school. These issues must be taken into account by society in general and especially by school, but not as a courtesy to children but as their natural right to equity, based on the international principles.

Based on our findings it can be recommended that the training processes be strengthened, and include continuous education

workshops on inclusion with an emphasis on visual impairment. Furthermore, it is recommended that the degree of teacher attitudes and perceived self-efficacy toward inclusion across disabilities should be studied in the Hebrew-speaking sector in Israel, as well as in other countries, in order to strengthen the teachers' competencies to support full participation of children with disabilities in Physical Education.

References:

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