

Promotion of Inclusive and Protective environment for children with special needs (CWSNs) through community based rehabilitation - (CBR) Intervention in Puducherry Union Territory, India

Activity: Training of local authorities

A one day training was designed specifically for local authority and block level officials particularly the officials from education department, social welfare department and local level Panchath Presidents providing an overview of the special educational needs and disability and their role towards creating an inclusive society as per the UNCRPD. Because, the Local authorities are responsible for the provision of an extensive range of public services in our area. In addition, local authorities promote the interests of our local community, including the social, economic, educational, environmental, recreational, cultural, community or general development of our area. More than 77 persons participated in the training.



The project had conducted about 10 events in different places in the target areas in the months of September, October 2018. Mainly the Panchayath presidents, block level officials from government departments were sensitized on the need for inclusive development of the village with the CWSN and PWDs. 100 people had participated and benefited of the program. The role of the local authorities in promoting the lives of CWSN and PWDS were explained to them for their effective contribution for the development and rehabilitation of the target beneficiaries.



The resource persons handled the sessions. The participants were briefed about the project objectives and the purpose of the program. The resource persons briefed mainly the roles of the local authorities as below mentioned

The main role of the (local authority and block level officials) is to:

- Ensure sufficient school places are available by building or extending schools
- Assess and provide home to school transport
- Provide support services for schools
- Assist the government in implementing initiatives and legislation relating to schools, children and families and inclusive education and the working concept.
- Coordinate with concerned Government to allocate sufficient finance to schools.



Resource persons said generally the LA & block level officials use to manage all schools in their area. The LA used to hold the budget for its schools and they had to ask for everything they needed. The LA used to appoint the staff, set the curriculum and inspect the schools. Those days have long gone and legislation has reduced the role of the LA and strengthened that of schools and the central government department. This is currently called the Department for Education.

She further said, the regular schools are now largely self-governing. All manage their own budgets; many employ their own staff, own the land and buildings and only come into contact with the LA when they choose to make use of our services. The LA has strict guidelines it has to follow in its relationship with schools. In general, the LA has a closer relationship with community and voluntary controlled schools, because it still employs the staff and sets the admissions criteria. Parents are often not aware of these changes and think the LA still has the right to intervene in school matters and is refusing to do something about their complaint. This is not the case. All complaints about a school must go through the school's complaints procedure; this is now the law.

The resource person **Mr. Abraham** briefed about the training contents and delivered as follows;

- **The concept of Inclusive education:**

The participants were briefed about inclusive education is based on the principle that schools should provide for all children regardless of any perceived difference, disability or other social, cultural and linguistic difference. It was further explained that the diverse needs of these learners and the quest to make schools more learning-friendly requires regular and special education teachers to consult and collaborate with one another as well as with family and community in order to develop effective strategies, teaching and learning within inclusive setups. With the right training, strategies and support nearly all children with disabilities can be included successfully in mainstream education.

In short, it was said that **Inclusion in education involves:**

He said viewing every life and every death as of equal worth. Supporting everyone to feel that they belong. Increasing participation for children and adults in learning and teaching activities. Reducing exclusion, discrimination, barriers to learning and participation. Restructuring cultures, policies and practices to respond to diversity in ways that value everyone equally. Viewing differences between children and between adults as resources for learning. Acknowledging the right of children to an education of high quality in their locality. Improving schools for staff and parents/careers as well as children.



Emphasizing the development of school communities and values, as well as achievements. Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and surrounding communities. Recognizing that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society, he added.
