

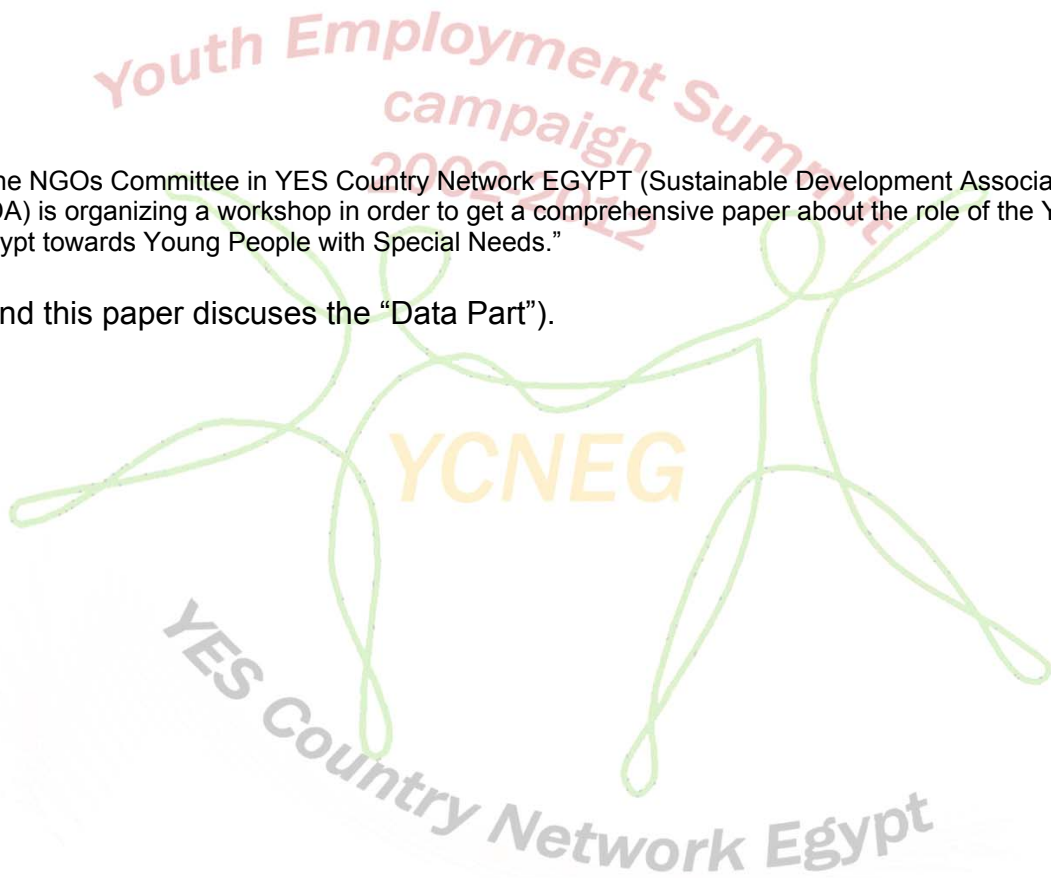
## Youth and Special Needs

**A Brief review on  
Disability  
In “ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT”**

**- Part I -**

“The NGOs Committee in YES Country Network EGYPT (Sustainable Development Association - SDA) is organizing a workshop in order to get a comprehensive paper about the role of the YES\_ Egypt towards Young People with Special Needs.”

(And this paper discusses the “Data Part”).



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## 1. Abstract

Individuals with different mental abilities are given different names through medical history starting by mentally retarded, mentally handicapped, individuals with mental disabilities and now, mentally challenged individuals. These definitions reflect the community's outlook to those individuals from neglecting to independency.

The developmentally challenged individual is a person with certain degree of disability that renders him in need for extra-help in order to develop to his capacity.\*

## 2. Introduction

Mental challenge implies significant deficits, with onset early in life, in intelligence and in adaptive behavior (e.g., communication, social interaction, school and/ or work). The deficits are recognized in the performance of social roles and age-appropriate tasks.

The infant and preschool child may fail to achieve developmental milestones of sitting, responding to familiar faces, walking, talking and sphincter control at expected ages. The schoolchild falls short of social expectations for classroom behavior and for reading, writing and arithmetic. The adult may have difficulty in the performance of work roles within and outside the home, in communication skills, or in the understanding of money, transport, and locality.

In the mind of parents of mental challenge children a lot of questions that need a proper answer. Some of these questions are what is wrong with my child? What shall I do?

Where I can go? Are the current services enough? What about the next pregnancy?

Finally our main question: *If you have a mentality challenged child/youth at home, would you like the community to neglect him/her or would you like to be proud of his/her achievements like the others?*

## 3. Issues on Disability

### 3-1. Definition of Disability in Egypt\*

In Egypt, "a disabled person" means a person who need rehabilitation service to meet the basic needs in society because impairment such as movement-related function, sensory function and mental function brings physical, social, economical and psychological disability.

### 3-2. Current Situation

#### A. Data on Disability

According to the Central Authority for Public Mobilization and Statistics, there are approximately two million persons with disabilities in Egypt, which represents about 3.5% (2002) of the total population. Unfortunately, no comprehensive data on disabilities is currently available.

But according to some studies (at 2000), as mentioned in them: - The total number of the disabled in Egypt is between 3.85-4.7 million people, 73.3% of them are mentally disabled. In Alexandria we have 98.150 mentally challenged i.e. about 22.5% of the population.

It is a real scarify to waste 2.5% of the population and about 4% of the total number of children, whom are by some services, can be a productive power, capable on their families, care givers, local society, and country resources.

## **B. The present Services provided**

The general frame of the handicapped/ mentally challenged/ disabled services in Egypt consists of two governmental, NGO, and, private sector.

- **The Role of the Governmental Services provided**

The government of Egypt places a high priority on disability, with governmental and non-governmental organizations working together to solve disability issues. However, current services cover only about 10% of the total number of persons with disabilities.

**The Ministry of Health and Population:** No specific section or department is responsible for the planning and managing the disability-related services. This Ministry is responsible for the following services and items:

1. Eliminating the causes of disabilities
2. Early detection and treatment through necessary check ups, operations and medical rehabilitation
3. Participation in the planning and preparation of medical rehabilitation programs
4. Vaccinations and periodic check-ups
5. Therapeutic and rehabilitative services

**The Ministry of Education:** provides special education services for children with disabilities. It introduced education services for the visually, hearing and mentally impaired through 165 specialized schools and 204 schools, with at least one or more special classrooms for children with disabilities As the ministerial resolution No. 154 decided that children with disabilities should join special education schools and classrooms. Children with disabilities include children with visual disabilities, visual weaknesses, hearing disabilities, mental disabilities, and those whose health conditions require hospital care. The Ministry is responsible for special education schools and classrooms, and the promotion of special education.

- According to the studies (*published 2000*) the total services for all the handicapped persons covers about 20.892 persons (*which is about 0.5% of the total handicapped –at that time-*) as regards the distribution, it seems to be unfair for the mentally challenged as the percentage of them is about 73.55 of the total services.
- Considering the teachers and classes, we can recognize a major gap between the available services and the actual needs. We can summarize that the gap between the available classes (*estimated in 1995*) and the estimated needs in 2001 is about 97.9% and that of the teachers in about 96.2% (*taking in consideration that 67% of the available teachers are not trained or qualified to teach this special group*).and as if all these limitation of the services are not enough, the ministry of education puts a lot of restriction in accepting the children in these schools and classes for example, the child should be older the 8 years (*while all the recent researches and studies states that early start gives the best results*), should be transferred from one of the mainstream schools, and the should have a mild mental challenged.
- Unfair geographical distribution of services provided, as most of the services are in Cairo while many governments have no services at all. The country side and rural areas (*which have about 64% of the mentally challenged*) have only one center serving the disabled in Saft Khalid village in El-Bahera.
- Most of the current steps in dealing with disabled depend on instutlization rather than integration in the society, which is more helpful. for the mentally challenged and also less expensive.
- Most of the current programs depend on curative aspects rather than, the most important and less expensive, preventive aspects.
- Shortage of the research works in all aspects including: causes, trials and evaluations of the different rehabilitation programs. These researches (*if present*) will provide complete data to choose the most effective methods in rehabilitation.

- Shortage of the professional manpower such as specialized doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, teachers.....etc. this shortage in the manpower is a major barrier against the spread of the rehabilitation programs in Egypt.
- Lack of personal motivations, as people still have an emotional barrier against dealing with mentally challenges, not to mention helping them and give them equal rights in life.

**The Ministry of Social Affairs:** This Ministry prepares policies to care for persons with disabilities, and issues licenses to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which provide rehabilitation services, physical therapy, intellectual education, and other social services for persons with disabilities.

**The SETI Center:** Established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and CARITAS-Egypt as a Special Education Training pilot project, Offered short intensive training courses on a modular basis to beginners, special educators working in this field, psychologists, social workers, physicians and those trainers working in government organizations and NGOs.

.....*To be continued*.....

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