Promoting Inclusive Education Through Child-to-Child Activities

Pilot project at Jerusalem Centre for Disabled Children - Palestine

Report
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June 1997

**Acknowledgements**
We would like to thank all the people who have been involved in this pilot project. Our special thanks go to the administration of the Jerusalem Centre for Disabled Children who gave us continuous encouragement to implement the project.

We are also indebted to the employees of the JCDC who participated in the training and gave us many thought provoking comments. Thanks go to: Nellie Husary, Jameelah Abul Hawwa, Soheila Mneir, and Ramez Abdul Maseeh. The teachers of the JCDC school who participated in the training, Iman, Ameeneh, Nariman, Mahera and Abeer, were the driving force behind the implementation of the activity sheet with the children. Special mention goes to Iman who with her teaching skills and personal insights became an excellent facilitator.

Special thanks go to Ula Diab for her participation in the training. Her input was instrumental in a deeper understanding of the issues for all of us.

Special thanks also go to the mothers of the children who participated in the training and of course the children of the second class of the JCDC. Because of their views on the activities the activity sheet became what it is now.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background Information - Palestine

Palestine is a country consisting of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank which are areas of land divided by Israel. It has an estimated population of 2.4 million, with almost 50% off the population younger than 15 years. This pilot project took place in East Jerusalem, located in the central area of the West Bank.

Education plays an important role in the lives of Palestinians and they are considered to have a high level of education. However, political events in the last decade have influenced the performance of Palestinian children in the present educational system. A high number of drop- outs and wide gaps in academic performance is reported from all over the country.

The newly formed Palestinian National Authority is in the process of identifying an educational structure which is appropriate for all Palestinian children. Although inclusive education emphasises on the inclusion of children with disabilities, it is based on the principle that all children benefit. The PNA is aware that because of a lack of resources special education in the form of special schools or classes can not be offered to all disabled children. Additionally the PNA acknowledges the principles of the Salamanca Statement which states that including disabled children into mainstream schools benefits all, both disabled children and non-disabled children.

## 1.2. Background Information - Jerusalem Centre for Disabled Children

This document reports on the implementation of a pilot project which took place in a mainstream school located within a rehabilitation centre for disabled children. The Jerusalem Centre for Disabled Children (JCDC) or better known as the 'Amira Basma Centre' is situated on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, Palestine. It opened its doors as a rehabilitation centre in 1965 when the area was still under control of Jordan. It offered rehabilitation for children with impairments as a result of poliomyelitis. After 1967 the area became occupied by Israel. Since then the centre has developed to become a National Referral Centre for Palestinian children from the Central and Northern part of the West Bank and Gaza. These children are referred from Community Based Rehabilitation programmes or Intermediate Level Services for evaluation and short term intensive rehabilitation. The majority of children who receive services of JCDC at present have impairments as a result of cerebral palsy.

In 1987 a mainstream primary school was opened. It started small and at first only for children with disabilities who received rehabilitation at JCDC. But gradually non disabled children from the direct neighbourhood of the JCDC were also attending the school. Over the years the number of children with disabilities became less. They either graduated or found access to schools in their own communities. At present the school consists of two kindergarten classes and a primary school up to sixth grade. There are 11 teachers and 185 students. As the building is physically accessible for most children it is a welcoming environment for children with disabilities. As a result there are 27 disabled children from the neighbourhood attending the school. As this is quite unique for a Palestinian school we wanted to learn from this experience as it may provide valuable information for other people promoting inclusive education in Palestine. The presence of rehabilitation and education professionals in the near vicinity of the school gave us the opportunity to explore their roles as resource personnel to support inclusive education.

## 1.3. Inclusive Education

In most countries throughout the world, a majority of children with disabilities either do not receive any form of education or if they receive any it is often inappropriate (Hegarty 1990, Khatleli et al 1995). During the last century, segregated special education has been promoted for children with disabilities. Special education claims that it is designed to meet the special needs of disabled children. However several people have challenged this claim (Oliver 1995). Among the people challenging special education are a great number of adults with disabilities who have gone through special education. They argue that this type of education re-enforces the negative, rejecting attitudes of the rest of society (Mason, Reiser 1994, Swain et al 1993, Oliver 1995).

A shortage of resources, the gr owing realisation that existing special education is not appropriate, and the fact that inclusive education gives benefit to all children has lead to the promotion of inclusive education. Children with disabilities were included into the mainstream school. To achieve successful and sustainable inclusion, UNESCO (1994) suggests that the existing education system has to change. There is a need for the education policy to allow for a flexible curriculum based on the philosophy that difference is positively valued and celebrated (Oliver 1995). Including children into mainstream education does not necessarily mean that teachers need to acquire extra knowledge and different skills. Oliver argues (1995) that 'teaching is teaching' regardless of the range of needs of the pupils. All children experience difficulties at some stage during their education, therefore all children can be considered to have special needs. What is needed from the teachers is a commitment to work with all children regardless of their needs. Motivation, professional support, better and more appropriate learning material and curriculum reform are considered to support the teachers to implement inclusive education (World Bank 1994). Curriculum reform should aim at making learning appropriate to the lives, capacities and needs of a wider range of children. Teachers needs to be able to adjust the curriculum and be more flexible in using different teaching strategies. Support personnel may be used but it is recommended that they should be considered a support for the learning of all children and not just for the disabled child. Parents also play an important role in supporting the teacher.

Inclusive Education asks to accept each others differences and experience has shown that it benefits all children. Academically because the teacher uses a wider range of methods and socially because children learn to be more tolerant and accept each others differences. As disabled children have traditionally been segregated, the school needs to be prepared to welcome children with differences.

## 1.4. Child-to-Child Approach

To prepare the school environment to be more welcoming to all children, the Child-to-Child approach was used in this pilot project. The Child-to-Child approach has traditionally focused on issues of health. However health is looked at from a view which is wider than merely the absence of disease. It stresses the importance of happy relationships and that is where issues of disability comes in (Hawes, Scotchmer 1993).

The approach also addresses issues of learning (Hanbury 1995) and links what is learned now with what we do now. It links with what we learn in the classroom with what we do out of class and at home. The approach promotes experimental learning and the use of a wide range of teaching strategies. It sees children as equal partners who are able to make a difference in their communities.

The present Child-to-Child activity sheet covering disability recommends the use of simulation activities, whereby children are blind folded etc. and activities to learn to discover disabilities. However, simulation activities have been criticised by disabled people for promoting a feeling of pity (French 1992). Simulation activities tends to put an emphasis on the individual model of disability whereby the 'problem' is situated in the individual. This pilot project tries out a newly developed activity sheet focussing on issues of exclusion/inclusion and how all children can be included through a change in the environment. Emphasis on disability is avoided.

# 2. The Pilot Project

## 2.1. Introduction

The aim of the pilot project was to learn from the experiences from disabled children, non disabled children, parents an d teachers who have been involved in putting inclusive education in practice. The teachers, parents and children from the second grade of the school at JCDC were involved as they have 7 (out of 23) children with disabilities in the classroom. We were especially interested in:

Testing the appropriateness of a newly developed Child-to-Child activity sheet. The support system needed to make inclusion successful, real and sustainable. Developing a training manual for teachers, parents and professionals to promote inclusive education.

Activity sheets are used as part of the Child-to-Child approach which is an approach to active learning establishing closer links with what is learned in the school with the community. The activity sheet is used as a resource for the first of the six steps of the Child-to-Child approach, raising awareness. Activities were developed addressing issues of exclusion and inclusion. Different methods were incorporated in the activities to emphasise the need for a wide range of teaching methodology for inclusion. Methods include role-play, games, drawings, stories and observations.

To make inclusion possible teacher support is important. During the pilot project we were looking at support in the form of parents, children, rehabilitation workers, colleagues and Disabled People's Union. Representatives of them participated in the pilot project.

As Inclusive Education is a new concept with a philosophical base developed in the West, we felt it necessary to develop a series of workshops to discuss issues related to disability and exclusion. Issues covered include the social and individual model of disability, images of disabled people, attitudes formation and change and principles of Inclusive Education. The participants did also experience all the classroom activities from the Child-to-Child activity sheet.

The activities were then implemented with the children in the classroom. Both the children and teachers evaluated the activities and gave recommendations for improvements. The teachers and children were also involved in a pre- and post-test, consisting of classroom observations and drawings.

## 2.2. Preparation

Before introducing the pilot project, awareness was raised among the teachers and rehabilitation professionals concerning inclusive education in the form of a workshop. When interest and support was secured from the administration, the teachers and the rehabilitation professionals, a parents meeting was organised. All parents of class 2 were invited for a meeting to discuss the pilot project and to invite them to participate in the training. All parents turned up (mothers and fathers) and it resulted in a lively discussion. All participants were then invited for a orientation and planning meeting. The logistics for the implementation of the project were discussed and a final list of participants was made. Three of the mothers of class 2 were interested to participate, all mothers of able bodied children. The Union of Disabled People was not able to participate. However, one of the teachers of special education, who is disabled, was able to represent the union. Other people participating were, a social worker, an occupational therapist, a recreational therapist, 4 teachers and the head mistress. Additionally the educational support person of another rehabilitation centre also participated in the training. Among the participants were four people with disabilities. The training was performed by an experienced trainer of the JCDC with support from a consultant who was involved in the development of the pilot project.

## 2.3. Implementation

### 2.3.1. Training

The training was divided into 7 workshop sessions. The first six sessions took place over a period of 5 weeks, mainly in the afternoons. Then time was taken to implement the activities which involved the trainer and the teachers. Throughout the implementation extensive documentation took place, both written and audiovisual. After implementation of all the activities the training was continued. The following is a detailed report of the implementation of the training (See [Appendix 1](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/resources/docs/promotpx.php) for outline of training).

**Expectations:**
The first activity of the training was to identify the participants expectations and to match them to the objectives of the training. The participants were divided in small groups and identified the following expectations:

Group I:

* To learn activities to re-enforce the relationship between disabled and non-disabled children.
* To be able to recognise the psychological impact of activities on the children and how to solve their problems.
* To emphasise the importance of integration related to the recreational aspects.
* To improve parent participation.
* To be able to transfer our experiences of integration to others.
* To gain more information on integration and to spread it to the rest of the community.
* To enrich the participants (teachers) on how to deal with all children as all children have special needs.
* To learn techniques for being able to teach all children.
* To develop the hobbies of children as there are no centres to where children can do this.

Group II:

* To have a variety of teaching methods to accommodate the abilities of all children.
* To find out how to promote the inclusion of all children.
* Improve the relationships between disabled and non-disabled children.
* To make a disabled child more independent in school.
* To give teachers techniques to solve psychological problems that can affect the achievement of children and the relationship between them.
* Give parents techniques to deal with the child at home in coordination with the school.

Group III:

* Gain a better understanding of the concept of disability.
* To raise awareness for equal opportunities.
* To reduce the negative attitudes towards disabled people through better relationships.
* To eliminate the word disability.
* To find an appropriate way to identify the problems disabled people may face when integrated into mainstream schools.
* To support the concept of the right to education for all, including disabled children.
* To understand the psychological background of disabled people to reduce their problems.
* To find new ways/techniques to integrate disabled children with non-disabled children.

Agreeing on the objectives is vital prior to starting training. However this exercise also showed to be important for the following reasons: Although all participants had received an outline of the activities and background information on the training, expectations were still sometimes removed from the objectives that were identified. A lot of the expectations relate to obtaining techniques which may be addressed at a later stage through further training. The present training focused on awareness raising in order to be able to implement the Child-to-Child activity sheet. Through the expectations it is also possible to identify some of the present attitudes. The expectations showed clearly that the participants have accepted the idea of including children with disabilities into mainstream schools.

**Individual/Social Model of Disability:**
The next part of the training consisted of clarification of the models of disability and the recent emphasis on explaining disability from a social model. Inclusive Education is also based on the social model. A reading on the differences of the models was used from Coleridge (1992), then it was re-enforced through different exercises. At the start of the second session a re-cap of the models took place emphasising how language is linked to how people view disability. Several exercises were needed to gain a reasonable understanding of the issues involved. Throughout the training it showed how difficult it is to look at disability from the social model. Among the professionals who have been part of a charitable institution, some of them who are disabled themselves, the charity model is very strongly present.

The models were further emphasised and linked directly to their work through a video: Just ordinary people. This is a video from Jordan (Arabic with English sub titles) showing three Jordanian disabled people who are considered to have succeeded to live a satisfying life. It showed very positive images of disabled people in the Middle East. However all the steps taken to do this were related to the individual model. It showed to people that activities may be successful for that person but will not have changed much for others because nothing has changed in the society as such, other than their presence.

**Portrayal and models:**
The two models were emphasised through the use of how disabled people are portrayed in pictures. Posters for fund raising, pictures from the literature etc. were used. The participants were asked what kind of feelings these pictures generated and what kind of effect this could have on disabled people. Most pictures were generating pity, feeling sorry for, and an impression that disabled people are useless and in need of constant care from us.

**Language, Models and Attitudes:**
The session on attitudes consisted of a brainstorm session on the words used for disability at present. The following words were identified:

Mo-ahtaz . . Mohtaj . . A'ama . . Atrash . . A'araj . . Muskeen . . Nus beni adam . . Akhras . . Gher tabiya' . . Mushloul . . Mukersah . . Mubtala . . Insan thuo ihtiasjaat khasa . . Moaqad . . Ajez . . Naqes . . Ahbal/tabara . . Mutakhalaf . . Moa'ek . . Muntafe'a . . H'ala khasa . . Mareed/ayen . . Musaab

Most, if not all, of these words are negative. Many of them are linked to the medical/individual model and show the influence of this model on language. Other words are related to the disabled person not being 'whole', being half or 'broken'.

**Attitudes:**
The participants were asked to read through a reading (Coleridge 1992) discussing attitudes and to give feedback of the three questions related to the reading. They had discussed these in small groups. The questions are as follows:

1. How can rejection result in negative attitudes?
2. What is the role of disabled persons in the formation of attitudes?
3. How can the vicious circle as outlined in the reading be broken?

After th is, discussions took place on factors which can influence attitudes and what promotes positive attitudes. Information concerning disability has proven to influence the formation of attitudes. Information based on an individual model does not promote positive attitudes. Information based on the social model does. Films in this respect are quite powerful, especially if it is followed by discussion. Contact with disabled people is also important in shaping attitudes. However, contact based on an unequal level as between disabled people and professionals results in negative attitudes. Contact has to be on an equal level, as friends for example, to be able to have a positive effect. Professionals often only have contact with disabled people through work and is on an unequal level. They also tend to have only information on disability based on the individual model as a result of their studies. One can therefore suggest that especially professionals should question their own attitudes towards disability.

**Evaluation:**
After each session a short evaluation took place. After the first part the participants were asked to identify something they liked and something they did not like. They expressed the following:

Something which they liked included the methodology used, the structure of the workshops, the sequence and flexibility, the information, the possibility of expressing yourself freely, of accepting different ideas, the participatory approach, the realistic examples and the involvement of all participants. Things which they did not like were the timing (Ramadan), the long day on Friday and the absence of participants. The following sessions were all short sessions in the afternoons of three hours. All day Fridays were not repeated.

**Exclusion - Personal Experiences:**
The exercise on exclusion asked from the participants to identify personal experiences. Before starting the exercise the participants were given five minutes to think. Then one of the participants took the ball and threw it to a participant of which he/she could remember the name, this person (if the name was right) said in a few words a personal experience of being excluded. The ball was then thrown to the next until all participants had their turn. One of the participants was not able to recall an experience. This showed to be an important exercise. It resulted in strong personal feelings related to sometimes very unpleasant memories. It was important to give all participants a chance to contribute. The facilitator needs to be prepared to deal with different emotions that may result from this activity, and to be able to express these emotions a high level of trust between the participants is important.

Then the participants were asked to divide in small groups and discuss the following questions:

What could be possible causes for exclusion?
What kind of feelings can exclusion give?
What kind of behaviour could result from exclusion?

The following feedback came from the participants:

Why:

- unknown - new environment - away from own community - only female/male - language - culture - how you look - age - others expectations - attitudes of others - protection.

Feelings:

- missing someone - hatred - blame - stress - not belonging - anger - fighting/perseverance/'I'll show them' - confusion - boredom - shyness - lonely - fear - ashamed - uncertainty - vulnerable - wanting to hide.

Results:

- self development/knowing yourself - wai ting/passive behaviour - retreat - self pity - questioning - perseverance/taking initiative - silence - ignoring that there is a problem - denial - walking away in anger - anger - fights.

It was discussed that the feelings and behaviour resulting from exclusion could occur to all. However if the situation of exclusion is over a long period of time or happening many times in the life of a person the resulting behaviour can become internalised.

**Exclusion and Disabled people:**
Several disabled people were asked to share their experiences of exclusion with the participants. This was an important exercise; it is very important to have disabled people involved in the training. It is surprising how many people, including professionals who daily work with disabled people, feel uncomfortable in the presence of disabled people outside their working sphere. It gave the participants a chance to ask questions, express their concerns etc.. The input of disabled people/parents is very important to link their personal experiences with experiences of disabled people. It is much more effective when it comes from disabled people themselves. The success of the training depends very much on the participation of disabled people.

**Inclusion and Education:**
The session on inclusion and education was introduced through the following exercise:

The participants were divided into three groups. Each was given a task. One group was asked to think of why it is important to be part of the local school concerning going to and from school, what activates do you do and which activities require contact with others. The next group was asked the same but concerning being part of a class. The third group was asked the same for being part of the local school.

The feedback was as follows:

**Group 1.**
Going to and from school:

Private car/public transportation/walking - learning to use it, using money - recognising roads/neighbourhoods - being seen by others in the neighbourhood - recognising the people of the neighbourhood - being with others; reviewing home work/tests - pointing things out to each other - discuss gossip/politics etc. - buy things at the local shop - discuss things which happened during the day at school/in class - gossip about teachers - when picked up by parents discuss with them - going to other places (clubs) after school.

**Group 2.**
Being part of the classroom of your local school:

Being able to find children in neighbourhood to discuss home work/tests etc. - friends from class will be from same neighbourhood (for play outside school) - Teachers will be from same town/village, able to talk about them with others - sharing other activities together as school plays, trips, assemblies, singing the national anthem etc..

**Group 3.**
Being part of the same local school:

Being able to discuss school issues with others from different ages (brothers, sisters, cousins, sometimes even parents etc.)- discussing teachers - discussion how certain teachers give exams - exchange of papers/tests etc. - being part of school activities as summer camps etc. - taking part in contests etc. - being part of issues at the start of the year as uniforms, books etc.. - sharing days off, special days with children from the same school/neighbourhood.

This activity was difficult for several people. The issues iden tified above were mainly as a result of the input of the trainer. The activity was important to emphasise the wide range of issues involved when you are not going to the local school.

**Inclusive Education**:
The presentation concerning Inclusive Education included information from the Salamanca Statement and a statement of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. The participants were asked to read this information and to summarise the presentation resulting in the following:

Inclusive Education:

* Develops a cooperative spirit.
* Will form pressure on schools to develop better teaching methodologies.
* Will reduce segregation and isolation of children and families.
* Will give a chance to implement the right to all to education.
* Will promote accepting differences/tolerance.
* Educational methods will improve.
* Will promote support to parents and their children.
* Will diminish feelings of prejudice.
* Will help to improve the community as a whole, as all people are used to their full potential.
* Is cost effective.
* Will help to prepare students for real life which is the aim of education.

This activity showed how the participants managed to take the step from looking at inclusive education as an issue with emphasis on the person with disabilities and the benefits for them to an issue of benefit for all.

**Inclusive Education - Obstacles:**
The exercise concerning obstacles faced when trying to promote IE was done in the form of a role-play. The participants were divided into three groups each with a task. One group had to play the parents of a disabled child trying to enrol her/him at the local school. The other group had to play the reluctant head teacher thinking of all kinds of reasons why it was not possible. The third group had to play 'the idea person'. They had to give ideas how to overcome the obstacles. Each group nominated one person to play the role after discussing all the possibilities. The others were asked to observe the play and to write down all the possible obstacles and possible solutions for it.

The participation of disabled people/parents proved to be very important in this activity because of their personal experiences and their creative solutions. The plenary session following the role-play resulted in the following issues and possible solutions:

**Obstacles:**
Environmental: roads/ stairs/ steps/ bathroom/ doors/ room to manoeuvre/ classrooms/ tables/ chairs/ blackboard/ playground/ transportation/ cost + time/ high number of children in class.

**Solutions which were found:**
Adaptations/ building laws/ moving classes/ community participation - voluntary day/ ramps/ use available resources: fathers/ building materials/ safe equipment to be used by all for play ground/ change toilet with used materials/ adapt with chair/ widen door/ providing human resources for the school as a whole but functions also as a sharing of responsibilities/ creativity in teaching/ training to include all children/ reduce number of children in the classroom or introduce more group work/ change classroom setup which encourages inclusion.

**Obstacles:**
Attitudes: attitudes of teachers/ parents/ other children/ false reason of the need for specialised professionals/ afraid to fail/ no previous exper ience/ disabled child needs special care/ is slow/ is often in hospital/ is often absent/ disabled child is a greater responsibility/ safety etc./.

**Solutions which were found:**
Use other parents to convince/ positive role models/'let's try it'/ group activities with parents/ workshops/ parents committee/ activities with children/training for teachers/ continuous communication between parents and school/ environment should be safe for all/

Quite a lot of time was spend on this activity. Participants were encouraged not to give up, to think of possible solutions. It gave a very positive feeling 'finding solutions'. It also made it very real and practical for the teachers and the help they needed from the professionals, they all had a responsibility to think of their suggestions for solutions. Role-play is a useful method to bring up issues of concern. However it is important that the participants do not get stuck in a hopeless situation. It is therefore very important to have the third party, 'the idea person' there. Most participants, although initially a bit apprehensive, are willing to participate in a role-play. It often creates a feeling of togetherness/having to cope with similar problems. Of utmost importance is to use this feeling after the role-play and to discuss solutions etc.

This activity showed a very open group not afraid of self criticism. The good relationships between the participants and the absence of feeling threatened was the basis of the success of this exercise.

**Child-to-Child Activity Sheet:**
Two of the activities of the sheet were already done earlier on as part of the training. The other activities were in the last training session before implementing the activities.

The role-play activities were implemented as a role-play whereby one of the participating teachers would play 'the teacher' and the others would play 'the class'. This proved to be very valuable as the activities were a very new way of working with the children for some of the teachers. It was especially difficult for some teachers to encourage the children to contribute to the discussions, rather than a question and answer session in which there is only one right answer. It generated a lively discussion on the importance of participation of children in a discussion.

The activity concerning the circle of friends was enjoyable for most participants. It was nice for most people to think of all the people who are important to them and to realise that there are quite a lot of them.

It is very important that the participants themselves experience the activities first before they implement them with the students. Their own personal experience will enrich the implementation.

### 2.3.2. Pre-Test

1. Classroom Observation:

The teachers were asked to do an observation exercise in the classroom in which they documented the interactions between the teacher and students and between the students. As there was a lot going on, two teachers would sit in the class, each of them taking a half of the class. The teachers were asked to draw lines between the children and teacher when ever interaction took place. The teacher gave keys to the different forms of interaction taking place.

**Comments:**
The most important result was that the teachers realised that interaction did not take place in an equal way and that this was not related to disability. Quite a few children were excluded, however not necessarily because they have a disability. It became also clear that a few children had more interaction with each o ther than with the teacher. As a result the teachers decided to change the set up of the classroom in order to improve the inclusion of all children as much as possible. The children were seated in a horseshoe form with children with a tendency to exclusion in a central place. Some children were seated next to each other to promote peer support, other children were seated closer to the front to decrease distraction.

2. Drawing:

The teachers asked the children 'to make a drawing of their class'. Nothing else was asked, in order not to influence the children. The drawings showed the following:

* Absence of children/people in most pictures.
* When people present, small in size.
* Emphasis on desks/windows, squares/order.
* Almost all used rulers/little 'free drawing'.
* Colours were used but sparsely/light colours mainly.
* Centrality in most pictures of the blackboard - often big in size, blackboard not made black, often full of colours.
* Wide range of drawing abilities between children, some were not able to draw anything resembling anything.
* Disabled children were not recognisable in the drawings.
* Aids used by disabled children were not present in the drawings.
* Teacher sometimes present, when present not portrayed differently, i.e. same size, use of colours etc..
* Door was often drawn, often very big.
* Teacher's desk often portrayed big.

**Comments:**
It was wondered if the Arabic word for class means only the material aspect of it and that this was the reason for the absence of children/people. Importance was given to desks and the blackboard, this may indicate that the children think that learning takes place because of this, not because of human presence. The children were not used to freely draw, this may show an absence of creativity, fantasy, etc.. colours used show tranquillity/happiness in the class, light colours. Teacher is not such an important person, but when portrayed obviously she was not seen as a person to be afraid of etc..

### 2.3.3. Activity Sheet

All activities were done with the children of class II. An evaluation involving the children took place at the end of each activity. Two questions were asked:

How did they feel about the activity?

The children were asked to indicate if the activity was fun or not by standing in front of a smiling or sad looking face.

What did we learn from this activity?

The children were asked this question orally by the teacher and they gave feedback orally as well.

**Activity 1 + 2:**
Activity 1 (game) and activity 2 were done as one activity. First the game was done by using a game in which everybody could participate. An active child was chosen by the teacher to be excluded from the game. First reactions of all the children was immediate questioning why the one child was not allowed to participate, the teacher ignored these questions. The teacher has to be aware that the isolated child may become upset because of the isolation. When the game started and a disabled child was chosen to do a part of the game the other children showed prejudism by commenting that he/she could not do it and they should be asked to do it. The teacher was able to judge that the child with disabilities was able to do it which had an interesting extra impact on the othe rs. After the game the teacher explained why the one child was excluded and started the discussion with the children. The excluded child was asked: How did you feel? He answered that he felt he had done something wrong for which he was punished. Why would you like to be included? He answered that he likes to play with others, that he wants to be part of the group. The other children were asked questions as well. Answers from them included personal aspects; he is my friend, it is fun to have him with us, I like him, he is clever in games. Others were more general; we do not want him to be all alone, it does not feel the same when someone is not allowed to play with us.

**Comments:**
The choice of the child who will be isolated is sensitive. Choosing a child lacking self confidence might influence the child negatively, by increasing their feeling of insecurity.

The time of the isolation should be long enough to have an impact but not too long to cause too much worry for the child in isolation. As the group seem to forget quickly that a child was isolated, the teacher may every now and then, although indirectly, remind the others of the isolated child.

After these questions the teacher incorporated activity 2 and asked the children for personal experiences of exclusion. Several of the children were able to re-call incidents, mainly related to be excluded from playing with others. They recalled that it generated feelings of sadness, loneliness, unhappiness, boredom and anger.

**Evaluation:**
When the activity was evaluated by the children the children all liked the activity although some would have liked to be chosen to be the excluded person. Several of the children mentioned that they learned that it is important to include everybody because it is not nice at all to be all alone.

The teachers commented that all children were actively participating in the activity, that it achieved its aim that the children were aware of the negative feelings connected with exclusion.

**Comments:**
The activity showed that everybody can be included by choosing an activity for all. Obviously the children were very used to having not the full participation of all and took it for granted that disabled children were not able to do the game. The teacher therefore realised that it is important to make an effort to think of activities which can be done by everybody. By not doing this you unconsciously exclude children and make it 'normal'. To ask questions at the end of the game to the whole group and to ask a number of children for answers can be boring. The children got bored after listening to a couple of answers which were often similar. It may be useful to explore the possibility of small groups answering these questions instead of to the whole group. The class has a wide range of abilities and the fast ones get easily bored. The slower ones had difficulties understanding what was asked from them. However teachers are not used to small group work in the class. It is recommended to make it part of the activity in order to encourage the teacher to try it.

**Activity 3:**
Activity 3 consists of a series of role plays.

**Role-play 1:**
Two students asked a third student who is new to join them in their play activity. The students were told the plot before hand and then performed the role-play. The teachers choose students who they thought would be good at acting. After the role-play the class was asked the following:

* What happened in the role-play?
* How did it f eel to be asked to join? It made me very happy, it is boring to be alone. At this stage one of the children expressed the idea that it would be good to do an activity together when you first start school.
* How did you feel on your first day at school? Bored, lonely, unhappy.
* What did you like the others to do with you at that time? Talk, play, introduce, know names.
* How would you have felt if they would not have asked you to join? Upset, lonely, unhappy, feeling alone because I do not know anybody.
* What would you do if this happened? Go and play alone, find someone I know etc.. Most children would do something else, will not demand to be included or find ways to be included.
* Who can suggest a way to get to know new students? Several students play how they would approach a new child, including exchange of names, playing a game together, sitting together, introducing her/him to others, exchange items as rubbers/pencils etc.

**Evaluation:**
All children liked the role-play. They learned that whenever there is a new child in the school they should make an effort to include the child. It is important to act out again the possible ways of welcoming a new child.

**Role-play 2:**
Several children were asked to participate in this role-play whereby the teacher asks a question to the class. One of the children gives a wrong answer and the others start laughing.

One of the children played the teacher and asked the following question: Name a couple of names of birds. The child answered; donkey.... This caused a lot of laughter. After the role-play the child and the class as a whole was asked how it felt to be laughed at.

Embarrassed, unhappy because of the wrong answer.

How would you feel if someone laughed at you?

Unhappy, angry.

Why did you laugh?

Wrong answer, stupid answer, he said donkey.

If you were in is place, how would you feel?

Stupid, embarrassed because of wrong answer.

Did this ever happen to you?

Once my friend did it to me, I was very angry. Several children gave examples.

If someone does something wrong, what should we do?

Do not laugh, forgive the people who laugh, do not make fun of each other, help the person to give the right answer.

**Evaluation:**
All children expressed that they felt it was fun. They felt they participated and thought it a good activity because they learned that it is not nice to laugh at others.

**Comments:**
For this activity we may consider the type of question and answer. It may be that the answer (donkey) became the focus point of the laughing, instead of the laughing to be the focus (donkey is a common way of expressing stupidity in Arabic). The answer may have given the children somehow 'the right' to laugh because the answer was so stupid.

It was interesting that several of the children said to forgive the people who laughed and not the person who gave the wrong answer. This may show that they were able to consider themselves in the position of the children who laughed but that it did not really occur to them that they could be the person laughed at. This may again be linked with the answer, donkey. It was so stupid that it was unthinkable for them to say that.

**Role-play 3:**
In this role-play two children are together while a third child wants to join them. The two turn their back on her and try everything to ignore her. Afterwards the children in the role-play and the class as a whole were asked the following:

How did you feel when they ignored you?

Angry.

Why do you think they did this?

No reason, they do not want to play with me, they do not like me, maybe the game is not for more people, not everybody can always join.

What could you do?

Adapt the game, you should ask her to join, or at least allow her to watch.

Did this ever happen to any of you?

Yes, I will not allow people join who does not allow me to join, punishment.

Do you think they should be punished?

No, we should allow each other to be together.

**Evaluation:**
All children liked the role-play and learned that they should find ways of not ignoring other, even if this is sometimes difficult because you do not like this person very much, or this person had not been nice to you previously.

**Role-play 4:**
In this role-play a child who was absent the previous day(s) is welcomed by two of her classmates. The following questions were asked:

How did it feel when they asked you where you had been?

I was embarrassed.

How would others feel?

I would feel happy.

What if one of your classmates is absent, what would you do?

I would visit him/her because I would feel unhappy/alone.

What would you say/do?

Bring a present, visit, be nice.

What are the differences between the two role plays?

(role-play 3 and 4 were performed after each other).

General differences were given concerning the good and the bad.

**Evaluation:**
All children were happy with the exercise and learned that they should respect each other.

The teachers noticed again that it is difficult to keep everybody's attention during the discussion. The questions can only be answered by a couple of children, then others become bored. They gave the idea to ask small groups of children to prepare for a role-play and to perform it in front of the others. The questions can then focus on the comparison between the role-plays. However this may result in children concentrating on their own role-play only.

**Comments:**
It may be advisable to allow the children time to prepare for the role-play in order to make it longer and to allow them to be more creative. To avoid the discussion afterwards to be boring for some the class could be divided in smaller groups each given the questions so that they can first discuss it in the small group. One of the children easily getting bored can be given a leader role.

**Extra Test:**
The teachers asked the children at this stage to draw a picture of the things they had learned from the activities so far.

**Activity 4:**
For this activity the children were asked to identify friends in a set of circles. The circles were drawn by the teacher beforehand. The teacher also prepared five sets of circles as examples. The students were asked to put names or just marks of the people closest to them in the inner circle, of the people important to them but not as close in the second circle, and in the third circle people they deal with but are not that important to them. After the children finished their circles, the teacher opened a discussion. However, instead of focussing on the circles of the children, the examples were used. The teacher felt that focussing on the children's circles may result in a too personal analysis.

The teacher asked the following questions:

What kind of people are we able to find in each circle?
Which person is the happiest if we look at the examples?
How does a person with these circles feel?
If nobody is in the last circle, what does this mean?
If nobody is in the first circle, what does this mean?

Then the children were asked to put the examples of the circles in order of happiness. The children were able to distinguish between the examples which is in need of quite a bit of abstract thinking. One child put the example with no people in the inner circle as most important. This showed her personal problems with her family by opting for the example where the first circle is empty as the most desirable.

**Evaluation:**
All children liked the game although the teachers found it a difficult activity. It maybe that the circles are too abstract, also, because of the absence of colours it may be boring. It may be an idea to use practical places as home, neighbourhood and town instead of circles. Or to use stickers/more colour in order to make it more interesting/colourful. The activity did show additionally that it may be a good way for children to express the problems they are facing at home, in the neighbourhood, in school etc..

**Activity 5:**
For this activity the children were asked to go around the school in small groups to look at the accessibility and safety. Each group included at least one disabled child.

They found the following:

Steps which could be changed to a ramp.
Fire equipment low, easily to hit your head.
Grids for drainage, too wide, walkers/feet get stuck - during the summer they could be covered.
Heavy doors, difficult to open.
Ground not even.
Cars at the entrance drive too fast.
Electricity switch for toilet too high.
Rubbish around the school/not enough rubbish bins.

This list was given to the administration as recommendations for improvements of the school.

**Evaluation:**
This activity was very useful for the children. They felt important because they were given an important task which was offered to the administration. This will give them a feeling of ownership of their school and will most likely result in taking more care of the environment. Concerning Child-to-Child, this is an example how increased awareness (step 1) leads to information gathering in the environment (step 2) leads to planning for change (step 3) leading to promoting change by offering the list to the administration (step 4).

**Activity 6:**
For this activity the teacher used the blackboard. She drew pictures on it while leading the discussion by asking questions while the children provided the answers: We want to go on a trip:

What can we see in the picture?

Children, a bus, the teacher, bags with food.

Why do we go on trips?

For fun.
To see new places.
To learn new things.

Should everybody go on school trips?

Of course!

Why?

Because it is for everybody and everybody likes to go on trips because it is fun.

Where can we go so that everybody will be happy?

Somewhere with space, no stones, water, shade, tables.

Could we go to Jericho?

Too difficult, steep, small toilets, steps.

Can children using walkers go here?

No, it will be difficult. Maybe they can use wheelchairs so we can push them.

If we go there what could we do to help each other?

We will hold, push, pull each other.
We will find a place where we can all get to.
What kind of things can we take along?
Food and drinks.
Games and swimming gear.
Something to sit on.

**Evaluation:**
This activity was seen as useful but may be better to use as an evaluation after a trip or before going on a trip to anticipate the difficulties.

**Extra Activity:**
For this activity the children were given the reading; 'Leila Al Hamra'. They were asked to read the story at home. The following day they were asked what they liked about the story:

Leila was strong while everybody thought she is weak! She kicked out the wolf.
She was also strong because she forgave the wolf.
She can play while everybody thought she could not, they just have to change the game a little.
Leila did something for the whole village.
Because Leila is wearing a brace people think she can not do anything.

The children were also asked: What if we all want to play a game together, how can we make sure everybody will be able to join?

We can sit and throw instead of run. We can play more gentle.

What about football, why do the girls do not like it?

Because the boys are rough.
How can we make it for all of us?
Play more gentle and have a good referee. A girl should be the referee.
I can join by being the goal keeper because I can not run well.

This activity proved to be an important activity as it pulled together what the children had learned from the other activities. It showed that they had achieved a high level of understanding of the issues involved. The story provided a useful medium to start the discussion.

### 2.3.4. Post Test

1. Drawings:

The teachers were asked to implement the post test after implementation of the activities. The c hildren were asked to draw their classroom again. It is important to ask with exactly the same wording for this activity to avoid influencing the children in any possible way. The post-test drawings showed this time many more people in the pictures. The number of people was much higher, their presence was more prominent; they were larger in size and more central in the picture. The people in the pictures were also personalised by writing their names next to them. The first series of drawings did not show any names. The first series showed people but it was mainly the teacher who was portrayed (on their own). The second series showed the students. This may show that their classmates did start to play a more important role in the classroom. Before they saw their class as a place with items in it. After they were more aware of their classmates. When looking at the names mentioned in the pictures it became clear that students mentioned were both disabled and non-disabled classmates. This may show that disabled children are part of the classroom.

2. Classroom Observation:

The teachers did again an observation of both the Arabic lesson and the mathematics lesson as before. The children were sitting this time in a different format as the sitting arrangements were changed as a result of the analysis of the first observation.

3. Extra Test:

Additionally the teachers asked the children to make a drawing concerning the activities they had been doing in order to see the level of understanding of the children concerning the activities. These drawings were all very colourful and showed the presence of all people. They were holding hands, playing or in the classroom, but all looked happy. Quite a lot of the children put into the drawing the evaluation done at the end of each activity (pictures of a smiling and non smiling face). This may show the importance children gave to the fact that they were consulted and taken seriously about teaching. The pictures showed that the activities did get the message across of the importance of all children and of being happy together.

### 2.3.5. Follow up Training

After implementation of the activity sheet by the teachers with support from others, the people who participated in the training were asked to come together for follow up training. This consisted of the following:

**Feedback from Classroom Activities:**
The teachers were asked to present their findings/experiences of the post tests and the implementation of the activity sheet. They showed a high level of enthusiasm for the whole project and put a lot of work in the documentation and presentation. They gave valuable recommendations on the activities which created interesting discussions. They also gave a range of anecdotal feedback of the behavioural change of the children in the class and outside the class. There was clear evidence of the children implementing the messages of the activities into practice during incidents in the classroom, in the school and in the playground. There were several incidents showing improvement of their tolerance for each other, sticking up for each other, defending children who were left out, sometimes bullied.

They also mentioned that they themselves learned a lot from the whole experience. They were more aware of the children who were excluded. They were aware of the influence of the sitting arrangement on exclusion, of the teacher's preference for certain students and of the importance to use different methodologies to involve excluded children. They were not sure of what kind of methodologies to use but it gives a very important opening for further training. The important thing is that they discovered this need themselves .

Support:

Support for sustainable inclusion of disabled children at JCDC:

The participants were asked to identify the support they need in order to make inclusion successful and sustainable. They were asked to group the support under three headings:

Support from administration:

* Implementation of suggestions for improved accessibility.
* Budget for educational resources.
* Facilitate involvement of parents.
* More concern for the physical environment of the school: class size, toilets, playground, place for recreational activities etc..
* Continuing education programme for the school.

Support from professionals at JCDC:

* Social work support to improve links with the parents.
* Joint activities both professional and social.
* Technical support: ideas for activities, adaptations, seating etc..
* School health programme (nursing).
* Physical Education for all.

Support from parents/community:

* Awareness raising.
* Community activities related to themes: i.e. National Health Day.
* Involvement in identifying needs, problems of their children.
* Exchange of information between school and community.

## 2.4. Evaluation

The participants were given a questionnaire at the end of the training. The questionnaire covered issues of attitude change, methodology and follow-up. The results show that most participants acknowledged their change of thinking concerning inclusive education. They are more positive towards it and are willing to support it in the future. Most of them also view disability differently with more emphasis on the environmental barriers faced.

All participants appreciated the participatory way of conducting the training, they all highly enjoyed the training. When asked for reasons towards the success of the training the participants gave the following reasons:

High level of trust between the participants attributed to the fact that most participants were female, the one male participant only attended part of the training.

Teachers open to change, not feeling threatened by criticism.

High number of participants with disabilities with awareness of social aspects of disability and who are role models of successful integration.

A number of participants stressed that for IE to become a reality support is needed from a wide range of people. Issues of follow-up covered areas of increased cooperation and coordination between professionals and the school. A number of people were also interested in further implementing the Child-to-Child approach, training in the approach was asked for.

# 3. Discussion and Conclusion

The pilot project can be considered successful in that it achieved its objectives:

Activity sheet:

* The activities of the sheet were evaluated by the children, the teachers and disabled people as appropriate for Palestinian society, with some minor adaptations.
* The activities are considered to promote the principles of inclusive education concerning accepting differences and increasing tolerance.
* The activities are consi dered to promote the principles of inclusive education concerning teaching methodologies. It made the teachers question their teaching practices.
* The activities fit into the Child-to-Child approach as it raised enough awareness to trigger off action.

Training manual:

* The training as identified was successful in preparing the teachers to implement the activities with the children independently.
* It is recommended to include the pre- and post- test into the training, especially the classroom observations, as this was an important trigger for change.
* It was acknowledged by all participants that training is needed to be able to implement the activities with the children successfully.

**Support system:**
The support system identified by the teachers included the professionals. They are important for the technical support, environmental adaptations etc.. The administration was also important to receive support from as they are the decision makers. Flexibility on their part and interest in promoting inclusive education is an important aspect of the success of inclusion.

Parents support was not discussed in great detail as the school has limited involvement of parents up till now. The parents are very informed about what is happening in the school but are not involved as such. This needs further investigation and follow-up in the future. Another aspect which needs further investigation is the support from a group of parents of children with disabilities. The present Palestinian Union of Disabled Persons does not have representation of parents yet.

We additionally recommend that the activities be implemented in different schools, in different settings and with different age groups. It is also recommended to use the activity sheet in coordination with a full Child-to-Child project, going through all the six steps.

# Appendix 1 Possible Training Outline

**Workshop Day 1**

**Objectives:**
At the end of this day the participants:

* Will have some knowledge of each other.
* Will agree on objectives and outline of the pilot project.
* Will be able to discuss the social model of disability.

**Outline:**
Introduction and ice breaking/Drawing of class 2.
Expectations and agreement on the objectives and outline.
Models of disability.

**Workshop Day 2:**

**Objectives:**
At the end of this day the participants:

* Will have understanding of the feeling of being excluded and included.
* Will be able to identify ways to promote inclusion.

Activity 1 from activity sheet.
Feeling excluded: experience of disabled people/children, parents (presentations).
Feeling included: experiences of disabled people/parents/teachers.
Characteristics of inclusion

**Workshop Day 3**

**Objectives:**
At the end of this day the participants:

* Will be able to identify the main aspects of the educational policy of the Palestinian National Authority.
* Will be able to discuss inclusive education.
* Will be able to discuss the formation of attitudes.
* Disability

**Outline:**
Educational policy.
Inclusive education
Examples of IE/Video etc..
Attitudes - Reading.

**Workshop Day 4**

**Objectives:**
At the end of this day the participants:

* Will be able to identify the pre- and post-test for the pilot project.
* Will agree on the objectives and the contents of the classroom activities.
* Will be able to identify methods to evaluate children's attitudes towards promoting inclusion.
* Will have ready a plan for the implementation of the pre-test.

**Outline:**
Attitudes, formation - positive/negative.
Methodology to evaluate children's attitudes/pre-test.
Introduction to activities, agreement on object ives and contents/implement one of the activities.

**Workshop Day 5**

**Objectives:**
At the end of this day the participants:

* Will have done the classroom activities promoting inclusion.
* Will be able to discuss the reading materials available addressing attitudes towards disability.
* Will analyse the results of the pre-test.
* Will provide feedback of the workshop days.

**Outline:**
Activities as described in the package - discussion and feedback.
Reading material.
Analysis of pre-test and video.
Planning for classroom activities.
Evaluation and wrap up.

**Workshop Day 6**

**Objectives:**
At the end of this day the participants:

* Will have discussed the implementation of the activities with the children.
* Will have discussed the outcomes of the post-test.
* Will have agreed on recommended adaptations.
* Will have identified aspects of support for implementation of successful inclusion of all children.

**Outline:**
Feedback from teachers on implementation of activities.
Discussion and agreement on changes/adaptations.
Identification of support received, needed etc..
The way forward.
Evaluation of the training and pilot project.

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