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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by International Catholic Child Bureau, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Good practices on inclusive education: Preparing children with severe physical and mental disabilities to inclusive education in the Russian Federation

The *International Catholic Child Bureau* (BICE) and its partner organizations in the Russian Federation have developed good practices in relation with the inclusive education of children with severe physical and mental disabilities in a difficult context.

Context

On 25 September 2012, the Russian Federation ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This milestone towards the realization of the rights of people with disabilities, including children has been followed by the adoption of the Federal Law No. 273-FZ of 29 December 2012 on education that entered into force on 1st September 2013. This is a normative and substantial step toward children's access to education, including those with disabilities. This law radically changes the vision and paradigm of the Russian society regarding children with disabilities. Indeed, prior to this law, these children were considered to be "uneducable". Since then, children with disabilities can either benefit from inclusive education, education in a special school, home-based education or boarding school type of education. In addition, further measures were taken to enhance the normative framework related to inclusive education. Notwithstanding, inclusive education is still facing a number of challenges, including the lack of specialized well-trained professionals as well as appropriate and adapted infrastructures and didactic tools.

Purpose of the good practices

Ensure a suitable preparation of children with disabilities to integrate the mainstream school system in better conditions.

Beneficiaries' profile

Children between 4 up to 18 years old and adults up to 40 years old benefit from good practices. Children suffer from severe physical and mental impairments. In most cases, they are in wheelchairs, and nearly in motionless positions. The majority undergo a significant mental retardation.

Human Resources involved in developing the good practices

A multidisciplinary team composed of physiotherapists, pedagogues, social workers, lawyers and educators who received medical training. Volunteers are also part of the staff.

Approach

Firstly, children with disabilities are supervised and integrated into a special school in which infrastructures and appropriate educational tools allow them to start school in good conditions. During this preparatory phase, there are only children with severe or less severe disabilities and not children without disabilities. Then, when it comes to recreational and leisure activities, these children play with children without disabilities to allow inclusion, interaction and integration. It is a gradual approach. To avoid exposing a child with disabilities to violence, but also to any form of discrimination and to school dropout in the mainstream education system, where teachers are not always trained to deal with temper tantrum or behavioural disorders and where infrastructures are not always adequate, the approach opts for a prior preparation of the child in order to be able, afterwards, to better

integrate him into the mainstream education system. It is also a matter of effectiveness and efficiency of inclusive education.

Activities

Many stakeholders benefit from the approach and the tools, including children themselves:

Children: professionals and volunteers create a strong relationship of trust and maintain an intense interaction based on care, affection and attention towards children. They proceed by integration and sensorial awakening, basic stimulation, psychomotor exercises and physiotherapy. Specific methods allow them to teach children how to feel their body. They also proceed by inclusive communication, pedagogy and educational entertainment. These proven methods lead to trustworthy, steady and convincing results.

Parents benefit from counseling, support and training in order to:

- Restore their confidence about their child's potential and ability to develop and make progress, as for a long time, they have been instructed over and over again that their child is not able to walk, read, write, count or even play or socialize with other children. It requires sustained support and listening sessions for families with a child with a disability;
- Help them to put an end to social isolation by hosting children with disabilities for a period of 1 or 2 months in a small house in order for parents to be able to relax, look after their other children and enjoy social life. Hosting parents in day-care centres allows them to engage in other activities knowing that their child is being looked after carefully;
- Train them on the way they look at their child, the way they approach and communicate with him, including in case of temper tantrum by avoiding violence;
- Provide an appropriate and adapted response to difficult situations during school learning process.

Special schools enjoy disability-based teaching and learning. Teachers and care assistants from primary or secondary special schools requesting specialized trainings are provided with specific and adapted tools and methods.

Teachers are instructed and trained for the:

- Preparation of individual plans for each child taking into account the level and the nature of the disability;
- Adaptation of the counseling methods, taking into account the child's environment, for example at the cafeteria.

Boarding schools that continue to receive about 19.000 children with disabilities throughout the country for the:

- Monitoring activities within boarding schools by civil society organizations;
- Possibility to allow children to go out in the neighbourhood to receive education there (or at least a part of their education).

Advocacy endeavours relate to:

- Effective enforcement of the 29 December 2012 Federal Law No. 273-FZ on education in the Russian Federation;
- Harmonization of the national law with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, especially its article 24;
- Implementation of a multidisciplinary response which goes beyond the medical aspect in order to address the educational, psychological, psychomotor and the psychotherapeutic dimensions as well;

- Allocation of significant resources to meet the challenges, including the training of professionals involved in inclusive education, the equipment of schools with adapted infrastructures, tools, approaches and methods for children with disabilities, as well as the integration of children with disabilities into the mainstream education system;
- Access to boarding schools for civil society organizations for monitoring steps.

We, therefore, recommend to the annual-full day discussion and the foreseen relevant resolution of the 40th session of the Human Rights Council to:

- **Empower children with disabilities to participate, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in the development and enforcement of inclusive education tools, services, methods and infrastructures;**
 - **Ensure that the education of children with severe physical and mental disabilities is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, in environments which maximize academic, social and personal development, including the provision of assistive compensatory aids, specific learning materials in accessible formats, communication aids and assistive and information technology;**
 - **Create a conducive environment for the development and functioning of civil society operations, and adopt community-based responses that allow and strengthen cooperation among States bodies, local governments, municipal entities, civil society organizations and families dealing with children with disabilities, to ensuring a public control and monitoring over relevant services and policies, including inclusive education;**
 - **Acknowledge that institutionalization of children with disabilities as a response to disability-related challenges in many parts of the world may undermine and hinder children's development and effective access to inclusive education;**
 - **Anticipate and ensure that children with disabilities, in accordance with their evolving capacities, follow curricula that allow for their future autonomy.**
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