

Telecentre Leaders' Forum MENA - Mashreq Region

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Telecentres and Disabilities




Definitions


Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.





Statistics




On an average around 10 percent of the world population is disabled and this number is likely to increase in the near future due to various factors.

The following statistics will give us an idea:

- 18% of the world population lives with some kind of disability, including those related to aging
- 10% - more than 650 million people - live with life-altering disabilities
- Two thirds of which are in developing countries.

WHO Statistics



Brief Description

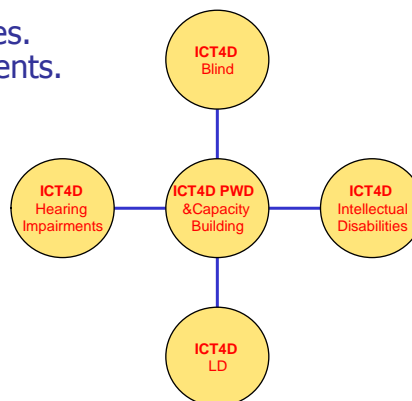
With the advent of information and communication technology (ICT), new hopes are emerging for persons with disabilities.

There can be many other ways in which ICT could be used to enhance the skill sets of disabled, raise their hopes and opportunities.

- ICT offer capacity building, empowerment and combating poverty among the disabled in their communities.
- ICT offer individuals the ability to access knowledge by adapting digital media, and to enhance their social and economic integration in communities.

Who is Included and Targeted Group

- People with Physical Disabilities.
- Blindness and Visual Impairments.
- Hearing Impairments.
- Intellectual disabilities
- Learning Disabilities.



Vision, objectives and goals:

The vision aims at achieving certain goals and focus on disabilities issues through ICT.

- Maximize the use of IT skills.
- Creating job opportunities.
- Involved in their communities.
- Eradicate extreme Poverty For PWD and their Families.
- Implementation of many telecentres in Arab region.

The present indications are that an **"Information Society for All"**.

What the Role of ICT in Capacity Building for the Disabled

- ICT help alleviation of poverty through building capacity.
- ICT can open new vistas for disabled people and make a different world through education, as well as by rehabilitation and building their capacities.
- ICT is useful for improving the quality of life by enhancing effectiveness.
- of teaching, developing life-skills, complementing learning and exploring other related issues.
- ICT enrich the learning opportunities, capabilities and potential of the disabled.
- ICT offer individuals the ability to access knowledge.

People with Physical Disabilities.

ICT is vital to access communicating with other pupils.
 ICT helps students in writing process.
 Training the trainers to update their skills.

ICT tools can offer support through:

- Communication facilities.
- Computer access devices.
- Utilizing the specialized software.
- Maximizing the disabled inputs



Hand in hand with success makers



“Noura Arsalan “ said: I have the pleasure to tell you, I have been lucky enough to obtain better chances for my future career. Your courses ICDL at Salamieh community centre helped me to get my new job. (Noura 24 years.)

Promoting Disabled ability to use ICTs

Disabled, But Not Disqualified



ICTs can open new vistas for people with disabilities



ICT for persons with intellectual impairment

Even for persons with intellectual impairment, ICT could play a vital role.

- People with problems associated with intellectual impairments like autism, Downs Syndrome, learning disability can benefit from the use of ICT.
- ICT can be used to support individual children and adult needs by providing access to online software resources. with special training can assist their integration into the curriculum and assist them in learning about different uses of ICT.
- Moreover, ICT can also be used in language development, communication and in development of other cognitive skills.



ICT for persons with intellectual impairment

The four main areas are focused on:

- Communication : E-mail, Internet, 3 System, Mobile Phones, SMS, Special chat.
- Compensation : Movies, Music, Games, Special Services.
- Competence : E-Learning Systems, Special Training.
- Cognition : Rehabilitating Programs – IT Persons training of brain injured, Alarm system, Expert panel, consultations online.

Do their smiling faces tell us something ?



Making a World of Difference



Success Stories

Telecentre for Learning Disability

Roza Al-Yazji, a twenty-two year-old girl, has been suffering from many health problems, including speech disorder and learning disabilities. She was not admitted to state schools because she couldn't continue learning with her colleagues in the classroom. At the Salamieh telecentre, she was imparted with a lot of training, designed within the telecentre, to overcome her intellectual impairment. Roza showed tremendous commitment to do the tasks assigned and gradually started to begin a new life. After nine months of training she was able to perform her tasks brilliantly. Nowadays, she regularly takes part in public service through a local public service organisation.

We do care for all people



using ICTs to access the world and implementation issues (Information for All).



ICT for Blind and Visually Impairment .

ICT can help the Blind and visually impaired

Things that are kept in mind while designing the programs and situation of the blind such as are position of the screen, clarity of the display, use of large and clear fonts, and adding speech recognition where possible.

The tools which facilitate these processes include talking word processors, big pointer utilities, screen magnifiers, screen readers, electronic Braille and closed circuit television.



Success Stories

Telecentre for visually impaired

Bassem Yazagi, a 25 years old man, has been suffering from severe blindness for some years and that was reflected on his psychology and manners. After making a visit to the Salameieh telecentre, new vistas have

opened up for him and surprisingly, his hopelessness has given way to new hopes and is now turning into amiracle. He underwent a training course on speech recognition programme and was taught the usages of ICTs and taught him to use it properly. Now, Bassem is working as a trainer for the blind and visually impaired students at Computer Training Centre in Damascus.



Those who can make a change. They won the battle over darkness

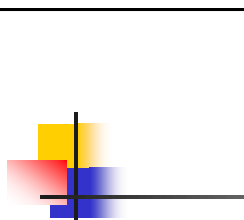


Assisting the blind to be active in the wider community



ICT for persons with hearing disability

- ICT can also be made a tool of empowering and facilitate the use of language development activities, as speech is a major difficulty for most of the people with hearing disability.
- Symbol or picture enhanced text can bring meaning to print illustrated concepts.
- Keyboard overlays make writing more accessible and access to the words.
- ICT can also organise their ideas and graphics and simulate writing as well as learning.
- Symbol generating software's such as word processors, clip art, graphics design etc.,



Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community; deaf and deaf blind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development

Speech is a major difficulty for most of the people with hearing disability.



Technology for persons with disabilities

- Developing programmed services for PWD.
- Certain special browsers can be programmed, enabled with speech recognition devices for wider access of the Internet to the disabled
- Improvement of networking facilities to allow more efficient co-operation between institutions and telecentres for all types of disabled people online network.
- Adaptation of standard software to the needs of children with intellectual impairment.



Hopes vs constraints

- There are different types of support structures available within countries but they must be focused on developing the capacities of the disabled by removing attitude barriers and understanding the benefits and possibilities of ICT at the policy level and diffused responsibility for policy implementation.

Still, the main challenges facing these projects are:

- limited finances
- Lack of specialised teacher training, limited flexibility in training options, limited availability of specialised hardware and software resources.
- Lack of formal national support structure for ICT for the disabled.



Conclusion

ICTs can be a powerful tool in supporting educational inclusion for the disabled.

ICTs means new 'digital opportunities' 'new job opportunities' and of course 'new hope'.

The information society has the potential to contribute more in the form of knowledge resources. The resources must be developed to meet the requirements of all disabled people by overcoming the traditional barriers to mobility and geographic distance.



"Let us work together, we are confident that we can, and we are very sure, make brighter future.

We have a dream that our world will be forever bright and green

especially in the eyes of those disabled".

Thank you for your attention

Nabil Eid

nabieid@gmail.com

