

FACTORS THAT IMPACT QUALITY EDUCATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN VIETNAM

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SUMMARY

Purpose: This paper aims to present a comparative analysis of the current situation of the education for People with Disabilities and to explore the conditions needed for effective inclusive education for people with disabilities in Vietnam.

Method: Two models of education, one inclusive and one special were studied for the needed conditions and existing situations. Factors were taken into account including human resources and coordination. Data is collected through desk research, interviews and focus group discussions with education managers, stakeholders from provincial, district and communal levels and with people with disabilities.

Result: The National Law on Disability and the National Action Plan on Disability (NAP) showed the advancement of Vietnam in securing the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects of the society, including education. Conditions contributing to the effective inclusive education included: multi-sector coordination of services and human resources.

Key words: Education for children with disabilities, National Action Plan on Disability, The National Law on Disability, rights of persons with disabilities, Education for People with Disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

According to the results of the National Census 2009, Vietnam has 6.7 million people with disabilities (accounts for 7.8% of total population). People with disabilities were considered by the State as one of the social protection objects that need attentions and support from community. In 2010, the National Assembly of Vietnam officially enacted the National Law on Disability, effective from January 1st, 2011 – marking an advancement in gradually improving a legal framework to ensure the rights of PWD, contributing to mobilization of resources and participation of Government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), related stakeholders, people with disabilities and their families in order to build up a free barrier and right based society, leading to full inclusion of the Vietnamese with disabilities into the society. The law has one chapter regulating conditions to ensure the rights of PWD to education.

However, the legal framework is just a primary condition to ensure effective and sustainable education work to support people with disabilities. Based on the legal framework as foundation, the education support service system on disability should be comprehensively and strategically improved, developed and coordinated by different sectors in responding to the diversified needs of PWD. Although there is yet a formal research/assessment conducted at the national level on the current disability service system on education, the reports from workshops, and information collected from monitoring trips conducted by projects supporting PWD showed that there have been a lot of shortcomings and challenges in the support work to education of PWD, especially the coordination amongst the key sectors of health, education and labor/social affairs. The education support services to PWD were well delivered within the sector itself but the education services are not well coordinated with other sectors to meet the demand need of PWD.

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Being aware of these limitations, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), with technical assistance and funding from VNAH/USAID, conducted a National Baseline Survey on Disability Support Service System, focused on education for persons with disabilities. The results of the survey will provide a foundation and suggestions for the Government in improving the educational service system to support PWD.

METHOD

Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and focus groups involving stakeholders from all levels, to understand different views on effective education system for persons with disabilities in Vietnam.

STUDY POPULATION

The study population consisted of persons with disabilities, their families, local authorities at provincial, district and commune levels, the service providers/technical staff and managers on education sector, and the decision maker at the national level (ministry level). Three surveyed provinces of Hanoi, Quang Tri and Vinh Long were chosen for the need assessment of PWD and service system. Two case studies were selected – one on special education and one on inclusive education in Danang and Vinh Long respectively.

DATA COLLECTION

The survey was conducted with qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative approach was used to collect information and data, to describe the situation while the qualitative approach was used to understand more deeply about the causes and nature of the gaps between the policies and the practices as well as the conditions needed for an effective education system for PWD. The below table summarized approaches and tools used for collect information and data. More than 1200 PWD and their families were selected for interview in the three provinces,

teachers and education managers and staff from schools. DOET and communities involved in the focus group discussions.

ANALYSIS

The existing education policies to support PWD in Vietnam

Vietnam has policies to support PWD at different levels, covering all areas of health, education and social/employment and other supports. These policies helped PWD overcome difficulties in their lives. Most of policies were implemented in the localities after the enactment. As for PWD who are entitled to receive support from policies, they said the policies have positive impacts on their lives, however, more on the side of spiritual lives than material lives. Under the impact of policies and disability services, 5.4% PWD feel their lives “were totally changed”, and 25.5% feel “change significantly in spiritual life”, while 3.6% feel their lives were totally changed in material life and 28.1% feel “change significantly in material life”. However, 15% PWD did not see any changes in their life.

Education Support Policy for people with disabilities was regulated in the law and under law documents. The National Law on Disability 51/2010/QH12 has one chapter regulating education for people with disabilities. The Decree 49/2010/ND-CP regulating school fee exemption and reduction for students with disabilities, Decision 23/2006/QĐ-BGD&ĐT regulating inclusive education for people with disabilities, and Correspondent Nr 9890/BGDĐT-GDTH guiding the contents and approaches for education of students in difficult situation. In theory, the existing policies has mentioned and impact on all related objects, many areas, as well as education support system for PWD. The significant policies include rights of PWD to education, approaches and education establishments for PWD, preferential policies

on school fees, for those who work on education for PWD, and guidelines to the contents, approaches, methodologies and assessment of PWD's education.

The gaps between the policies and practices in education for PWD

The results from in depth interview (IDI) with local authorities and sector departments and PWD showed that there are some shortcomings to policy enforcement as follows:

- Although the policies regulate the rights of PWD to education, PWD are entitled to school fee and other education exemption and reduction, there are many PWD who come from families with difficult economic conditions can not afford to pay learning costs including text books, special learning equipments, transportation, thus they can not access the educational services. 33.1% PWD interviewed expressed their difficulties in paying the education services that need

- The implementation of policy on school fee exemption and reduction in particular and other support in general for PWD with the cost much lower than the need of PWD in reality and the process for receiving the support is too complicated.

- While most of interviewees agreed with the view that the policies and laws on education of PWD are appropriate and meeting the expectation of PWD, the conditions for enforcement and implementation of the policies and laws are limited. The localities depend on the development projects and programs in order to carry out the policies properly. This leads to the unsustainability of the programs when the support ends

Although there are policies to support education for PWD and those who come from im-poor families and be able to pay for the services, they face problems of transport accessibility, access to schools, and offices in most of places, these are also the obstacles for enforcement and implementation of disability support policies.

Conditions contributing to the effective inclusive education included: Human Resources and Capacity and the Multi-sector Coordination of Services.

Human resources yet meeting the need in terms of qualitative and quantitative

The human resource to support PWD at all levels in general was weak in terms of quantity and quality. The staff that was trained in teaching CWD accounted for a very low rate. The results of surveying 167 support staff and teachers working in the education service system in three surveyed provinces showed that the rate of teachers trained in special education accounted for very low rate of 28.7%, only 6.7% was trained in general teaching methodology and also had degree in special education

In fact, it is very difficult to attract staff working on disability issues because the cost norm for preferential policies is very low but staff has to work hard in difficult situation. The capacity of staff doing disability work is very limited. One of the indicators that the survey focused on was the level of confidence of staff working on education for PWD and the result showed that only 48% of education staff find confident in working with PWD

Percentage of provinces having education services for PWD is gradually increasing and stable over the past three years. For example, in three years from 2009 - 2011, the rate of provinces with services of "disability screening/disability detection" was 48.28%, and 55.17% by year. With 80% of provinces reported that there have been inclusive education services.

The education support service to each type of disability, from pre-school level to junior high school education existed and reported by many provinces. Of those services, the services for pre-school education were provided most, and secondary education services were provided least. The types of disabilities that were provided most services

included mobility disability, speaking and hearing impairment, intellectual disability. As for the new type of disability that were difficultly recognized such as autism, learning difficulty, diversified types of disabilities were not reported by the provinces in terms of number of them received services.

Of those education services, special education was reported as the most stable approach, with the highest level of frequency in providing services to PWD, while inclusive education was reported as the least services provided. The places for providing education services were mainly in the schools while the support services provided to families and the centers were very limited.

Multi-sectoral coordination in providing services to PWD

The Education sector usually coordinated with social sector in providing services to PWD. Through survey on 75 special education schools/centers for education of CWD, the results showed that 14% schools worked and coordinated with social sectors in order to ensure CWD be entitled to receive support/subsidy, 11% schools transferred children of older ages to vocational training centers. The coordination between health and education sectors in early detection and early intervention was not as expected. The survey results of 75 education establishments showed that there were 3 key activities of coordination between health and education were (1) diagnosis and assessment of people with disabilities (39.1%); (2) early intervention in education (30.9%); and (3) practice of special skills (27.7%).

CONCLUSION

Education support services for PWD in Vietnam are provided by the service provider networks of the health, education and LISA sectors. The current network is rather developed in terms of quantity while the quality is limited, based on the judgement of the staffs of service providers and PWDs' level of satisfaction. Human resource capacity

is limited: services provided are not comprehensive and do not meet the diverse needs of PWDs: inter-agency coordination is still poor and there is big gap in quality of services provided by different levels. Services are better developed at central and provincial levels than those provided at local and community levels.

Some support models for PWDs have proved to be successful in providing diverse interventions/services for PWD such as health, social/employment and education support services. The results of the study, however, indicate that a complete, comprehensive and sustainable support model with inter-agency coordination in all steps of service provision from disability detection to referral, service provision, information sharing, monitoring and evaluation of PWDs has yet to exist.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Education sector needs to develop a strategy for strengthening and developing education support system of the sector from now until (at least) 2020. These strategies should focus on provision of comprehensive, diverse services to meet the support needs of PWD, development of services and improvement of service quality at the community, with particular focus on early detection and intervention of disability; development of human resources at local and community levels. In addition, each sector needs to establish an agency in charge of conducting research and application of high technology to support PWD, especially in rehabilitation and education support for PWD.

Three ministers of Education, Health and Social/Employment need to work closely with each other and cooperate with NGOs to continue to develop and pilot new disability support service models based on the lessons learnt from the existing models, with focus on multi-disciplinary cooperation among different sector and among different levels within one sector.

The Government and related stakeholders need to develop a monitoring and evaluation system to monitor the implementation of disability support policies in general and in education for particular. PWD, organizations of and for PWD need to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of disability support policies and programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was funded by United State Agency for International Development (USAID) and Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) – and facilitated by and in partnership with Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The authors wish to thank all stakeholders and persons with disabilities who willingly spent time to share thoughts, ideas and suggestions for writing the paper.

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TÓM TẮT NHỮNG NHÂN TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG ĐẾN CHẤT LƯỢNG GIÁO DỤC NGƯỜI KHUYẾT TẬT TẠI VIỆT NAM

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Mục đích: Bài viết này nhằm mục đích trình bày một phân tích so sánh tình hình hiện nay của giáo dục đối với người khuyết tật và để khám phá những điều kiện cần thiết cho giáo dục hoà nhập hiệu quả cho người khuyết tật tại Việt Nam.

Phương pháp: Hai mô hình giáo dục, một toàn diện và một người đặc biệt đã được nghiên cứu với các điều kiện cần thiết và hoàn cảnh hiện tại. Yếu tố được xem xét bao gồm, nguồn nhân lực và phối hợp. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua nghiên cứu bán, các cuộc phỏng vấn và thảo luận nhóm với các nhà quản lý giáo dục, các bên liên quan từ cấp tỉnh, huyện và cấp xã, với người khuyết tật.

Kết quả: Luật quốc gia về người khuyết tật và Kế hoạch hành động quốc gia về người khuyết tật (NAP) cho thấy sự tiến bộ của Việt Nam trong việc đảm bảo quyền của người khuyết tật trong tất cả các khía cạnh của xã hội, bao gồm cả giáo dục. Điều kiện góp phần giáo dục toàn diện có hiệu quả bao gồm: phối hợp đa ngành của các dịch vụ và nguồn nhân lực.

Từ khóa: Giáo dục trẻ khuyết tật, Kế hoạch Nhà nước về hành động vì người khuyết tật, Luật về người khuyết tật, Quyền của người khuyết tật, Giáo dục người khuyết tật

Ngay nhận bài: 12/9/2013, Ngày phản biên: 17/10/2013, Ngày duyệt đăng: 25/12/2013

Phản biện khoa học: TS Vũ Đức Thái – Trường Đại học Công nghệ TT & Truyền thông - DHTN