



International
Labour
Organization



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

“
UNIVERSITY CENTERS
FOR
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT”

2018-2022

PROMOTING **STRONGER** INCLUSIVITY
FOR **STUDENTS** WITH **DISABILITIES**

FACT SHEET
2



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



The American
University in Cairo

LONGSTANDING BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVITY

In 2014, Egypt ratified its new constitution guaranteeing the economic, social and education rights for persons with disabilities. It committed the state to provide them with work opportunities, equip public facilities, and guarantee their integration with other citizens in order to achieve the principles of equality, justice and equal opportunities. The 2017 census published by CAPMAS indicated (for the first time) that persons with disabilities in Egypt constitute 10.7% of the population aged 5 and above. Only 2.7% are suffering from severe disabilities. Shortly after, law 10/2018 on the rights of people with disabilities was ratified, prompting the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHE) to issue its decree 2555/2020 stressing on stronger inclusion of Students With Disabilities (SWDs) throughout higher education institutions nationwide. In 2020, the MoHE reported that the 2020 cohort of university enrollments included the highest number of SWDs in its history.

These were all positive drivers, to reverse the longstanding neglect, and set the stage for stronger inclusion of SWDs in public universities and eventually in the workplace. But were the universities ready to provide an inclusive environment? More so, were the SWDs themselves ready to engage?

In 2017, the USAID commissioned a needs assessment study on the status of SWDs in Egyptian public universities. Some of its findings suggested that: admission procedures for SWDs are arbitrary and discriminatory, SWDs are mostly invisible in public universities noting the absence of informative data and surveys, any support provided is based on good-will with no binding policies/procedures covering assistive educational material/tools and physical accommodations in the built environment. It also noted the absence of support services to encourage and integrate SWDs in campus activities. Shortly after in 2018, the ILO partnered with the University Centers for Career Development (UCCD) project, which is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the technical expertise of The American University in Cairo (AUC).

After the project's inception, ILO's international disability experts held consultations with the MoHE, AUC and the universities (including SWDs), which indicated wide-spread interest and commitment to strengthen the participation of SWDs in both the educational system as well as in career counseling and development services. They also suggested that, due to physical barriers and social and cultural perceptions, the SWDs were mostly withdrawn from university life, reluctant to participate in capacity building events and extra-curricular activities, and show limited motivation to seek employment after graduation. In response, the ILO designed and delivered a package of tools to help the 18 new UCCDs and the general community within the 11 participating universities (including its SWDs) tackle 2 priority action areas. The first was the pressing need to build awareness among the various universities (leadership, faculty, staff and students) on how to improve physical accommodations for students with different types of disabilities and the second was how to improve communication practices and provide emotional and practical support to maximize SWDs' inclusion in career counseling and development services.

1 PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENTS

The ILO recruited 2 national physical accessibility consultants to assess the suitability of the designated locations for the new UCCDs and recommend reasonable accessibility accommodations for students with different types of disabilities (before actual refurbishments had started).

Over the course of 3 years, coinciding with the gradual launch of the UCCDs, the consultants worked closely with the Engineering Departments at the 11 participating universities to audit, assess and incorporate physical accessibility arrangements at the 18 locations, to ensure SWDs' access to the various counseling and career development services. Each of the assessment reports provided audit findings, pictorial documentation of gaps, priority accommodations required, descriptive illustrations and layouts, tentative budgets and specifications on:

- ▶ Parking, approaches, ramps, entrances, floors, elevators and hoists.
- ▶ Guidance, information and instructional signage.
- ▶ Accessibility to electrical and control units, goods and services.
- ▶ General layout, furnishing, assistive educational tools and technology.
- ▶ Bathroom layout, utilities and fittings.
- ▶ Safety, emergency and first-aid arrangements to accommodate different types of disabilities.

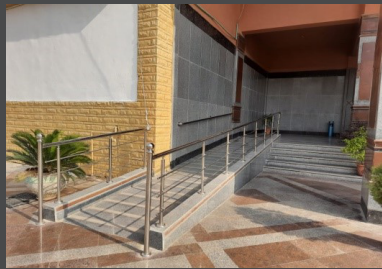
Many of the recommendations made by these assessments were incorporated during the renovation of the newly established UCCDs at several locations. Those were mostly self-funded by the universities themselves from their own financial resources.

More importantly, the participation of the engineering departments during the assessments enhanced their understanding of reasonable measures to accommodate the SWDs following international best practices and guidelines from the 'National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation', which they now apply in other construction and or renovation activities throughout their campuses.

ZAGAZIG UCCD



BEFORE



AFTER

2 QUALIFYING DISABILITY AND EQUALITY TRAINING (DET) FACILITATORS

ILO's experts from the International Training Center in Turin, Skill and Employability Section in Cairo and Geneva worked closely with leading national disability consultants and practitioners to adapt, Arabize and customize ILO's global "Disability and Equality Training (DET)" toolkit in alignment with the context of Egypt's public universities and national regulations. The DET, introduced globally since 2008, is a dynamic, focused, highly participatory group-work approach to change attitudes and practices within educational institutions for the greater inclusion of SWDs in its mainstream services and activities.

Rolling out the training, necessitated the qualification of an initial core group of national DET facilitators who would acquire the skill to deliver the highly interactive sessions from 'ILO-certified' international trainers to subsequently deliver the training sessions nationwide to the target beneficiaries at the various universities (and also qualify more DET facilitators moving forward).

The 2 'Training of Facilitators' rounds were implemented by 'International DET Facilitators' from the 'Indonesian Better Work Foundation - Yayasan'. Both rounds allowed 24 competitively selected staff from the UCCDs (over the course of 5 days) to build their awareness and skills on: various disability topics, DET facilitation techniques, and communication to advocate and increase awareness on disability inclusion among faculty, staff and students.

On the completion of each round, each of the trained facilitators rehearsed the delivery of the programme to the instructors to ensure that they are capable of building awareness on:

- ▶ The different types of disabilities, impairments and barriers SWDs face on campus and in the workplace.
- ▶ The right terminologies and language to use with SWDs.
- ▶ International and national legislation and laws regarding the rights of people with disabilities.
- ▶ UCCDs' role in enhancing the inclusion of SWDs in their services.

In August 2022, the ILO organized a certification ceremony, under the auspices of H.E the Minister of Higher Education, to celebrate and acknowledge the outstanding performance of the DET facilitators, 10 of which were certified by the ILO as 'National DET Facilitators'.



3 PLANNING AND TAKING 'INCLUSIVE ACTIONS'

For the most part, the counselors and their universities were new to the inclusivity concepts and tools introduced by the ILO. While they had taken positive steps to provide reasonable physical access at their centers and their awareness on various means to enhance inclusion was improved, they were not yet comfortable to take on the responsibility to directly engage with and support SWDs.

Between 2019-2022, the ILO worked with national disability consultants to support and coach 120 counselors in preparing and implementing their individual action plans, focused on stronger inclusion of the SWDs throughout all the their services. Each of the action plans detailed specific objectives, activities, and results that each center aimed to achieve with specific milestones and progress indicators. Those plans guided the 18 UCCDs' activities on 4 parallel directions.

UCCDs' actions started with compiling a database of SWDs enrolled in their universities and their contacts to facilitate direct communication channels. The staff were also advised on how to design their communication campaigns, targeting SWDs, to enhance both guidance and universal access.

"Networking with disability community of practice in the various governorates"



"Building awareness among faculty, staff and students on reasonable actions to secure stronger inclusion of and accommodations for SWDs"



"Supporting students with different types of disabilities to participate in skill development sessions and employment fairs"



The counselors were then coached to map and engage with existing disability service providers in their governorates (government, private and civil society) and were also linked with various disability service providers active nationwide. Some of those included: Seti Caritas Egypt - CEOSS - Helm Inclusive Solutions - Egyptian Foundation for Deaf Rights - Al Hassan Foundation for Motor Disability, Baseera Foundation for Visual Impairment, AUC's Well-Being Center (among others) all of whom were strongly willing to backstop the counselors and more importantly the SWDs themselves (emotional, rehabilitative and professional).

In addition, the ILO encouraged and supported the UCCDs to network with and exchange their DET lessons learned and resources with the USAID funded 'Disability Service Centers' at Egyptian Public Universities that were gradually being established by Amideast, at 20 public universities nationwide.

Starting from 2021, the trained DET facilitators began organizing, announcing and delivering DET awareness building sessions across the various universities in the 10 governorates. Each of these 2-days sessions were attended by faculty, students, and staff. The SWDs also attended to learn options available to help them improve their career prospects and shared their stories and perceptions with the other participants. Eventually, the participants in those sessions expanded to include employers, families and local NGOs, all of whom were keen to learn how they could contribute to better inclusivity for SWDs and support their transition into the workplace.

Positive success stories and practical guidance communicated during those DET sessions helped improve understanding, changed perceptions and removed resistance within the university and among the immediate community.

All employability skills development sessions and job matching events implemented by the counselors were organized, promoted and evaluated to secure and facilitate the participation of SWDs. The UCCDs used their Facebook pages to advertise these sessions as well as their SWD specific services and job matching opportunities. They were also used to disseminate knowledge and practical guidance on various means to enhance inclusivity and share success stories.

The one-on-one career counseling sessions with the SWDs provided encouragement and advise on existing disability service providers, job opportunities and employers with reasonable accommodations in their respective governorates.

GUIDANCE MANUALS

The ILO worked with national disability experts to produce 7 manuals spanning various inclusion and accessibility topics to guide the counselors on 'How To' support SWDs. The manuals were refined over the course of the project to consolidate the lessons learned from the field work across the governorates.



1. How to make career counseling and development services inclusive for students with different types of disabilities, with simple practical tools.

2. How to appropriately engage, communicate and encourage students with hearing, intellectual, visual and motor disabilities (procedures, rules, responsibilities and approaches).

3. How to provide mobility and guidance to students with visual disabilities and secure their access to services and facilities.

4. How to use assistive digital and information technologies and tools to enhance the inclusivity of SWDs in education, training and career development activities.

5. How to assess physical accessibility and incorporate reasonable accommodations for various types of disabilities.

6. How to incorporate disability issues in Labour Market Information (LMI) studies, surveys and analyses as well as develop relationships with external stakeholders.

7. How to survey, engage and collaborate with existing disability service providers (nationally and in the governorate), with simple practical tools and initial inventory.

The manuals were professionally produced and widely disseminated (during hands-on training attended by 66 counselors) to support current and future UCCDs, throughout the various planning and implementation stages of their services.

BETWEEN 2019-2022

800



faculty, staff, students, NGOs and employers attended 44 DET sessions

430



enrolled SWDs were directly engaged

261



SWDs counseled and being supported by the centers

45



SWDs graduated and secured decent work at inclusive enterprises, with accommodations

TRACING YARA'S JOURNEY



2016

Yara Nabil joins the Faculty of Commerce at Zagazig University. While diligent and studious, she was also mostly withdrawn from campus life, extra-curricular activities and kept to her studies.

Yara knew first hand that group activities at the university and its facilities were not tailored to accommodate her disability. She also feared how her colleagues would respond to her presence in any activities and too proud to ask for help.

2019



Yara notices a Facebook post from the UCCD at the Faculty of Commerce, announcing Employability Skills Training session. At first, she was hesitant to participate but got curious to try, noting that the session was open to all students and arrangements are secured to accommodate disabilities.

The positive experience from this first trial excited Yara to then join English language training sessions, which was shortly followed by volunteering to participate in the UCCD's 2019 Enterprise Skills Survey. The encouragement from the UCCD and the reception of her work by the university leadership had been liberating.

2020



Now becoming a regular participant in most of UCCD's services, she attends a DET session delivered jointly by the ILO, DET facilitators and disability service providers. The session left a lasting impression after hearing what her colleagues, also with various disabilities, had to say.

The impression prompted Yara to form an 'Ambassadors Club' to build awareness on disability issues and inspire her peers to explore their talents and the options available to improve their prospects.

The Club made its first visit to Salah Mourad School for Girls in Zagazig, where Yara and her colleagues (empowered with their newly acquired skills) lectured 20 teachers on inclusivity, equality and various ways to help their students cope with their disabilities.

Due to its value and contribution, the Directorate of Education in Zagazig invited Yara to repeat the lecture in other schools. Overall, in 2020 the lectures she delivered were attended by 200 teachers from all over the governorate.

Meanwhile, Yara had graduated in 2020 top of her class.

2021



Yara applied to and was appointed in a teaching assistant position at the Faculty of Commerce in Zagazig, where she also registered to pursue her Masters degree.

To this date Yara is an active member in the UCCD, helping out in its DET sessions and participating in its various services and activities, while still building awareness in Zagazig through the Ambassadors Club she founded.

She is also planning to pursue her Doctorate of Philosophy in Commerce degree.