

**Vocational Rehabilitation for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities as a
Mechanism for Achieving Equal Opportunity: A Human Resource
Management Perspective
–Pedagogical Psychological Centers in M'sila Province as a Model –**

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Abstract

This study meticulously explores the realm of vocational rehabilitation for the mentally disabled, adopting a perspective that intertwines human resource development with the enhancement of individual capabilities. Vocational rehabilitation is foundational in promoting the principle of equal opportunities by acknowledging and respecting individual differences, particularly when contrasted with typical developmental trajectories.

The underpinnings of this approach are robustly supported by a spectrum of legal frameworks, ranging from international to local scales, that guide institutional care within pedagogical psychological centers dedicated to mentally disabled individuals.

Keywords: Vocational Rehabilitation for the Mentally Disabled ; Equal Opportunities; Human Resource Management: Pedagogical Psychological Centers.

I- Introduction :

The text of the bAs global demographics shifts to include a rising number of individuals with various disabilities, contemporary societies are increasingly committed to enhancing support for those with special needs who possess the same inherent rights as other members of the community.

This commitment is pivotal in fostering their societal integration and necessitates a collaborative approach from all stakeholders involved in their care. Among these individuals, those with mental disabilities are recognized as valuable human resources, whose inherent potentials and skills are ripe for development and rehabilitation.

This paper delves into the societal perception and humanistic valuation of individuals with mental disabilities, highlighting the concerted efforts by professionals at specialized institutions and centers to surmount the barriers to self-reliance and enhance their skill sets in preparation for suitable vocations. The process of vocational rehabilitation is described as a

dynamic and multi-disciplinary endeavor that leverages the expertise of educators, specialists, and professionals in crafting comprehensive and integrative programs.

These programs are designed to affirm their rights, underscore their societal contributions, and shift the narrative from viewing them as societal burdens to recognizing them as capable, contributing members of the community. This transformation is central to actualizing the principle of equal opportunities, which in this context, is facilitated through a strategy that minimizes individual differences and champions the treatment of all individuals with uniformity. This approach is supported by a robust framework of international, Arab, and local legislative actions, charters, and agreements that embody and promote this principle. In light of the above discussion, the problem statement crystallizes around: "How does vocational rehabilitation for the mentally disabled in the pedagogical psychological centers for mentally disabled children in M'sila achieve the principle of equal opportunities under legal legislation?" To answer the above problem, we addressed the topic through the following elements:

This research is crucial as it addresses mental disabilities, a condition impacting approximately 2% to 3% of any given population. The integration and development of this segment through vocational rehabilitation not only enhances their individual capabilities but also contributes significantly to societal progress within the framework of their unique abilities and traits. The essence of vocational rehabilitation lies not only in its role as an enabler for the mentally disabled to access professional training and employment but also in its recognition as a fundamental right underpinned by various legal statutes. Such programs serve as critical conduits through which these individuals can engage meaningfully in society.

I.1. Study Objectives:

- To elucidate the concept of vocational rehabilitation for the mentally disabled, delineating its crucial stages and guiding principles.
- To foster societal awareness of the learning and participation capabilities of the mentally disabled within structured vocational rehabilitation programs.
- To spotlight the significant legal frameworks that uphold the rights of the mentally disabled to access vocational rehabilitation and institutional care, thereby promoting equal opportunities.
- To identify and address potential barriers that impede the successful implementation of vocational rehabilitation and to propose actionable strategies and recommendations that could enhance these programs and further solidify the principle of equal opportunities (font, size, interlines spacing).

I. 2. Study Methodology:

The research employed an analytical approach, meticulously chosen to align with the specific objectives and the nature of the study.

I. 3. Study Population and Sample:

The population for this study comprised various cohorts of interns from the pedagogical psychological centers for the mentally disabled in M'sila. These individuals had participated in vocational rehabilitation programs across diverse specialties, spanning from the inaugural cohort of the 2012/2013 season through to the seventh cohort of the 2018/2019 season.

I. 4. Study Structure:

The study is organized into three distinct sections:

- _ The first section provides a comprehensive overview of the general framework of vocational rehabilitation for the mentally disabled.
- _ The second section elaborates on the general framework of the principle of equal opportunities, exploring its application and challenges.
- _ The third section is dedicated to the specific context of vocational rehabilitation within the pedagogical psychological centers for mentally disabled children, examining both the strategies employed and the outcomes achieved.

I. 5. Study Structure:

- **Aoun et al. (2017) "*The Role of Vocational Training in the Social Rehabilitation of People with Special Needs*":**

This study embarked on an exploration into the role of vocational training in socially rehabilitating individuals with special needs, concentrating on various facets of vocational training such as offered specializations, trainers, and requirements. It sought to enhance employment opportunities for this demographic and proffered recommendations for the augmentation of the vocational training process.

The findings indicated a moderate and unsustainable connection between vocational training centers and the job market, which hindered consistent employment opportunities for graduates. Recommendations included the establishment of committees to support the professional integration of the disabled into institutions, under existing laws and regulations, and fostering mechanisms for collaboration between vocational training institutions and the job market to align mutual needs.

- **Boukraa and Abaidiya (2017) "*Contributing Factors in the Effectiveness of Vocational Rehabilitation Programs for the Disabled in Algeria*":**

Conducted via a survey at a vocational training center for the disabled, this study aimed to assess the alignment of training programs with the training and employment needs of the disabled, from the perspectives of trainers and interns. The conclusion was that the programs sufficiently met the needs and aspirations of the disabled, thus achieving the set general objectives of these rehabilitation programs.

- **Mathew & Ravindranadan (2015) "*Vocational Rehabilitation of Mild Mentally Challenged Adults*":**

Utilizing an experimental approach, this research analyzed the impact of vocational rehabilitation on the competencies of mildly mentally challenged adults within the age range of 18 to 30 years. A personalized vocational curriculum was crafted, integrating vocational rehabilitation with training in diverse skills such as computer operations, embroidery, office assistance, and ID card making. The study demonstrated that vocational rehabilitation significantly bolsters the competencies of mildly mentally challenged individuals, equipping them with the skills necessary to secure and maintain suitable employment. It advocated for the provision of vocational rehabilitation programs to maximize the potential of mentally disabled individuals, fostering a dignified life across various aspects.

- **Omede & Okpe (2016) "Vocational Rehabilitation Programmes for Disabled People in Nigeria: Problems And Prospects":**

This study addressed the vocational rehabilitation programs for the disabled, with a focus on the challenges and potential enhancements. It identified numerous impediments to the effective operation of these programs, including a shortage of rehabilitation centres. It called for governmental action to establish additional rehabilitation centers and develop more comprehensive programs to help people with disabilities develop their capabilities and contribute to national development. Recommendations also emphasized the need for hiring qualified staff to manage these programs efficiently and urged the government to enact legislation ensuring automatic employment for trainees upon the completion of vocational rehabilitation programs.

II– General Framework for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Mentally Disabled:

II .1. Rehabilitation:

Vocational rehabilitation for the mentally disabled is conceptualized as an enduring process aimed at offering comprehensive programs that facilitate job acquisition aligned with their capabilities and capacities. This initiative requires the synergistic efforts of educators, professionals, and specialists, striving to achieve psychological adaptation along with social and economic integration for the disabled (Djefflat Abdelkader, 2004, p. 19).

II .1.1. Concept of Rehabilitation:

The term 'rehabilitation' is multifaceted and employed across various domains, encompassing several nuanced definitions:

Broadly, rehabilitation is defined as "the restoration of an individual with disabilities to the maximum personal independence possible, encompassing physical, mental, social, vocational, and economic elements of their life." This process is often viewed as a re-adjustment or preparation for re-engagement with life. (Habib Al-Sah, 2003, p. 57)

From a human resource management perspective, rehabilitation involves "the process of imparting essential vocational skills to an individual, typically delivered through specialized technical institutes or extensive organizational training programs, aimed at equipping them with specific competencies required in the job market" (Azza Nadi Abdel Baki, 2012, p. 98).

Modern approaches to rehabilitation extend beyond mere personal reorganization to cope with reality; they also encompass environmental modifications to facilitate a disabled person's interaction with their surroundings, striving for a balanced adjustment in their lives. This holistic view underscores that rehabilitation is not solely focused on the individual but also involves transforming the environment to remove barriers that hinder the restoration of their capabilities and qualifications.

II. 1.2. Philosophy of Rehabilitation

The philosophical underpinnings of rehabilitation for the disabled initiated in the United States around 1920, with a primary focus on utilizing their abilities and potentials in the workforce. This philosophy highlighted the transformative goal of rehabilitation, aiming to shift qualified disabled individuals from being consumers of services to becoming producers and taxpayers.

By the mid-20th century, the focus expanded from purely vocational outcomes to include broader humanistic aspects. This evolved philosophy fostered the development of various rehabilitation modalities, such as vocational, psychological, social, and medical rehabilitation. These modalities emphasize the human dimension of the disabled, supporting them in achieving a level of work performance conducive to independent living, tailored to their specific capabilities.

- Contributing to this comprehensive perspective are several factors (Adel Youssef Abu Ghunaima, 2011, p. 89):
 - The enactment of targeted laws and legislation that safeguard employment rights for disabled individuals, including the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (No. 13/122) among others.
 - The labor market's demand for diverse professional roles that can be effectively filled by individuals with disabilities, tailored according to the nature and degree of their disabilities.

II.1.3. Types of Rehabilitation:

Rehabilitation is a multifaceted field, encompassing several types tailored to address different aspects of disability (Publications of the Women's Association, 2004, p. 8) :

- Medical and Physical Rehabilitation: This type focuses on restoring a disabled individual to the highest possible functional level, whether physically or mentally, using medical expertise to minimize or, when feasible, eliminate disability.
- Social and Psychological Rehabilitation: Aims to elevate a disabled individual to the optimal psychological and social functioning, facilitating better integration and interaction within society.
- Vocational Rehabilitation: Comprises a series of services designed to guide disabled individuals toward gainful employment, enabling them to engage in beneficial and profitable professions.
- Academic Rehabilitation: Involves educating disabled individuals and equipping them with necessary academic skills that are applicable in their practical life, tailored to their specific abilities and the extent of their physical and mental disabilities.

II. 1.3. Intellectual Disability:

The terminology used to describe individuals whose performance is below the average of typical individuals often varies, leading to potential confusion. Terms commonly used include handicapped, disabled, and special needs individuals.

II. 1.3.1. Concept of Intellectual Disability:

Disability is recognized as a complex interaction between an individual and their environment, presenting multiple dimensions:

World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability as: "A state of deficiency or malfunction in physical or mental abilities due to genetic or environmental factors that hinder the individual from learning some activities performed by a healthy individual of similar age." (Ahmed Shendwili and Mohamed Ajwa, 2018, p. 4).

In the context of human rights, disabled individuals are described as: "Those who suffer from long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which may prevent

them from fully and effectively participating in society on an equal basis with others." (Judith Hollenweger, 2014, p. 7)

International Labour Organization (ILO) characterizes a disabled person as: "An individual whose prospects for securing and maintaining suitable employment are substantially reduced due to a physical or mental impairment." (Taysir Kawafha and Omar Abdel Aziz, p. 15)

According to Algerian legislation, a disabled person is defined as: "Any person, regardless of age or gender, who suffers from one or more congenital or acquired disabilities, which limit their ability to perform one or several fundamental activities in their personal and social daily life, due to impairment of their mental, motor, or sensory functions." (Article 2, 2002)

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (2002) defines intellectual disability as: "A disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of eighteen." (Article 2, 2002)

American Association on Mental Retardation (1992) defines intellectual disability as: "A deficiency in certain aspects of personal competence, evident through average performance of mental abilities, accompanied by a lack of adaptive skills in one or more of the following areas: intellectual skills, practical skills, social skills, academic performance, leisure skills, and self-care skills." (Ziad Kamel Al-Lala et al., 2013, p. 105).

II.1.3.2. Categories of Intellectual Disability Benefiting from Vocational Rehabilitation:

The objectives of rehabilitation will vary from one group to another, with overlaps between groups regarding certain variables. These groups according to Saad Mohammed Al-Shabana include:

- Mild Disability Cases: Suitable for achieving economic independence and societal integration through rehabilitation.
- Moderate Disability Cases: Assistance in acquiring skills for routine tasks that are less skill-intensive.
- Severe Disability Cases: Focused training on specific tasks, with an emphasis on adaptive behavior training.
- Profound Disability Cases: Require intensive care within specialized centers, focusing on personal care activities.

It is important to consider that some intellectual disabilities may co-occur with physical or sensory impairments (e.g., hearing, vision), which can intensify the severity of the disability. When determining eligibility for rehabilitation programs, cases with multiple disabilities might be more appropriately addressed in specialized centers rather than mainstream programs.

II.1.3.3. Important Considerations to Take into Account When Implementing Activities for the Intellectually Disabled:

There are several considerations that help in the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled that supervisors should take into account, including (Ibrahim bin Hamad Al-Mubraz, 2010, pp. 24-25) :

- Generalization: Transferring theoretical knowledge to practical application in real-life situations encountered by the individual, also known as generalizing the experience in situations faced by the disabled starting from the classroom and the school community to the broader social environment.
- Functional Skills: Educational programs should focus on functional skills related to daily and professional life tasks, beyond just textbooks and classroom exercises.
- Pre-requisite Skills for the Offered Skill: Organizing the lesson steps logically, as it is known that any educational skill cannot be learned without first mastering prerequisite skills.
- Repetition: Reviewing skills that have been mastered to reinforce and consolidate them, transferring information from short-term to long-term memory.
- Skill Segmentation and Task Analysis: Breaking down topics into parts that suit the individual's capabilities.
- Individual Differences: Recognizing the differences in a disabled individual, acknowledging inconsistencies in their performance and mental abilities relative to their chronological age, and the variability in their performance over time due to psychological influences from environmental, social, and family factors.

II.1.4. Vocational Rehabilitation for the Intellectually Disabled:

The early initiatives for rehabilitating the disabled in the United States began in the 1930s, followed by efforts and attempts around the world to ensure and establish the necessary rights for this group (Medhat Mohamed Abu Al-Nasr, 2015, p. 32).

III.4.1. Concept of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Intellectually Disabled:

The concept of vocational rehabilitation for the intellectually disabled has received considerable attention as it involves an element of the human resource possessing a set of qualifications and capabilities enabling them to perform assigned tasks. The definitions are as follows:

In the 1973 Convention on the Rehabilitation and Employment of the Disabled, vocational rehabilitation is defined as: "That phase of the ongoing and coordinated rehabilitation process that includes providing professional services such as vocational guidance and training with the aim of enabling the disabled person to secure suitable employment, retain it, and advance within it."

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines it as: "That aspect of the comprehensive rehabilitation process that deals with the vocational aspects of the individual in an attempt to develop their professional capabilities and assist them in entering the labor market, feeling productive and useful in society"(Hamid Jasim Hamadi, 2016, p. 29).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines it as: "That aspect of the ongoing and interconnected rehabilitation process, which involves providing professional services such as vocational guidance, training, and employment, making the individual capable of securing suitable and stable employment" (International Labour Organization, 1955, p. 2).

These definitions of vocational rehabilitation for the disabled, despite their different phrasings, agree on the objective: rehabilitation is an ongoing, coordinated, and integrated process aiming to provide a set of professional services from guidance and training to rehabilitation to enable the disabled in suitable and continuous work.

Based on these definitions, which link the concept to the relationship between the individual and work, vocational rehabilitation for the disabled can be defined as: One aspect of the comprehensive rehabilitation process, which includes all efforts aimed at developing their professional capabilities that qualify them to be individuals capable of working in a suitable place for their abilities like their typical peers and stabilizing therein, helping them integrate into society.

II.1.4.2. Objectives of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Intellectually Disabled:

The comprehensive rehabilitation process aims to provide integrated services in the social, psychological, medical, and professional aspects for the disabled individual and their family. Specifically, vocational rehabilitation aims to:

- Employ the capacities and energies of the disabled individual by training them in a suitable profession.
- Equip the disabled individual with the professional skills needed for their future profession.
- Assist in creating future employment opportunities.
- Restore the disabled person's self-confidence, self-esteem, and sense of productivity.
- Develop the technical skills of the disabled in various fields.(Hamida Jiru, 2018, pp. 195-196).
- Guide and harness the unused labor and energies of disabled individuals as a resource for productive economic development in society.
- Achieve the principle of equal opportunities, social justice, and protect the rights of workers.(Ashwak Jamal Omar, 2010, p. 27).

The essence of the rehabilitation process is to provide opportunities for the disabled to participate in decisions related to their own welfare, benefiting from a deep understanding of community needs and prioritizing these needs accordingly (Arafat Mohamed Abu Jaree, 2014, p. 15).

II.1.4.3. Stages and Steps of Rehabilitation for the Intellectually Disabled:

The rehabilitation process for the intellectually disabled aligns with the overarching philosophy and principles applicable to other types of disabilities, especially in its structured stages. This tailored approach ensures the specific rehabilitative needs of this group are met effectively and methodically through the following stages:

A. Study and Preliminary Evaluation Phase:

- Receiving Cases: This stage involves welcoming new cases and preparing all necessary arrangements for the case's acceptance and completion of the rehabilitation process, as rehabilitation is a supplementary phase to the services provided during childhood and adolescence. At this stage, the case is either accepted or directed to other institutions.
- Preliminary Study: The accepted case is observed through an initial examination that involves a thorough assessment of the physical, psychological, and professional

aspects by all team members over a period determined by each case (Afifa Laajal, 2005, pp. 156-158).

- Assessment of Intellectually Disabled Individuals: The case is evaluated by coordinating the data obtained to form a clear picture, covering psychological, medical, social, educational, and professional aspects (Najat Sassi Hadeef, 2014, p. 156).

B. Preparation of the Rehabilitation Plan:

Upon completing the assessment, various reports provided by specialists are collected, which include information from studies and evaluations to establish short-term and long-term goals:

- Determine the extent to which the individual can benefit from the tailored educational program.
- Identify the specialists and services necessary for the work and intellectually disabled individual according to their specific program.

C. Implementation of Rehabilitation Services and Programs:

This involves executing and monitoring the plan until the final rehabilitation programs are delivered to the individual (Najat Sassi Hadeef, 2014, p. 162).

II.1.4.4. Fundamental Principles in Rehabilitation for the Intellectually Disabled:

The International Labour Organization adopts several fundamental principles aimed at establishing the principle of equal opportunities for all individuals without discrimination. Among these principles are (Saad Mohammed Al-Shabana, p. 36) :

- If a disabled individual can be employed in suitable work without training, vocational rehabilitation or training is unnecessary.
- The principles, foundations, and methods applied in vocational rehabilitation for the non-disabled should also apply to the disabled as much as their medical, educational, and professional situation allows.
- Disabled individuals should receive rehabilitation under the same conditions and terms as their non-disabled counterparts.
- Specialized training should be developed to rehabilitate those disabled individuals who, due to their disabilities or lack of necessary educational foundations, cannot be trained in the same centers as non-disabled individuals.
- Rehabilitation should continue until the individual acquires the necessary skills to perform work as precisely as a non-disabled person.
- Rehabilitation is futile if it does not lead to employment in the trained profession or a similar field.

III. General Framework for the Principle of Equal Opportunities in Light of Legal Legislation:

Achieving the principle of equal opportunities is complex, and opinions may differ regarding the extent to which this principle serves to enforce justice, which encompasses ensuring that activities and practices are devoid of discrimination.

One prevalent method to realize equal opportunities involves the deliberate disregard of individual differences, promoting a policy of universal equality that particularly benefits the less fortunate in society. This approach views the disabled not merely as beneficiaries but as

valuable human resources worthy of rehabilitation and development (John Jackson and Robert Mathis, 2009, pp. 140-141).

III.1. Concept of Equal Opportunities:

Equal opportunity stands as a cornerstone in the realms of special education and broader societal participation. (Mohamed Bouskra and Siham Belkermi, p. 3). Special education is defined as "all specialized educational programs devised specifically for individuals with special needs, aimed at enabling them to achieve their fullest potential and develop their skills to the maximum extent feasible."

The ultimate goal is to facilitate the highest degree of personal, educational, professional, and social integration. (Abdel Fattah El-Sherif, 2011, p. 21). This is crucial for nations committed to providing authentic support for the disabled, beginning with recognizing and nurturing their unique potential.

The term 'equal opportunities' generally signifies the absence of any form of direct or indirect discrimination. Discrimination can be categorized as (European Institutions Center Report, 2007, p. 51):

- **Direct Discrimination:** This occurs when an individual is treated less favorably than another in a comparable situation based on characteristics such as religion, belief, disability, or age.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** This refers to a situation where a policy or practice that seems neutral superficially ends up causing bias and discrimination against individuals because of their beliefs, disabilities, or age relative to others.

III.2. Legal Framework for the Principle of Equal Opportunities in Vocational Rehabilitation for the Disabled in Algeria:

Algeria, like many other nations, has demonstrated a commitment to the welfare of individuals with disabilities through a comprehensive approach encompassing legal, medical, psychological, professional, and social care. The nation has implemented a range of legislative and legal actions to cement the principle of equal opportunities within its legal system. This effort reflects a dedication to uphold the rights of the disabled, particularly in the domain of vocational rehabilitation.

The commitment is underpinned by various international and Arab charters and agreements, presenting a unified legal perspective that spans international, Arab, and national legislation. This legal framework not only supports the rights of disabled individuals in Algeria but also aligns with global standards and expectations for equal treatment and opportunity in vocational rehabilitation settings.

III.2.1. International Perspective on the Principle of Equal Opportunities and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Disabled:

The global community has actively addressed the needs of persons with disabilities through various declarations and international charters that have imparted a global dimension to the rehabilitation of the disabled. Key among these are:

- **The United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975):** This declaration asserts the rights of the disabled to education,

training, and vocational rehabilitation. (Nadia Belamouri, 2017, p. 62) It emphasizes enabling individuals to enhance their abilities and skills to fully realize their potential, preparing them for professional roles suited to their capabilities, skills, and interests. Additionally, it spearheaded the International Action Plan concerning Disabled Persons (1982), which focuses on three primary objectives: prevention, rehabilitation, and equal opportunities (Amal Abdel Rahman Saleh, 2010, p. 3).

- **The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993):** Issued by the United Nations General Assembly, these rules are designed to ensure that disabled persons, as full citizens, enjoy the same rights and obligations as others (Taher Abdel Rahim, 2011, p. 86). Key aspects covered by these rules include fostering equal opportunities, raising awareness, improving access to medical care, and facilitating rehabilitation (Bassam Mustafa Aisha, 2012, p. 31).
- **The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006):** This convention comprehensively addresses a wide range of rights including civil, political, cultural, economic, and social aspects. While it follows the general format of human rights treaties concerning reference sources and core principles, it stands out for its detailed focus on the rights of persons with disabilities and specifies the obligations of states to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights (Ali Hamidi Al-Shakraoui, 2016, p. 26). The convention highlights the critical importance of rehabilitation for social integration, advocating for programs that enhance the capabilities and qualifications of disabled persons to achieve their full physical, mental, social, and professional potential (Abdullah Ali Abou, p. 353). Article three of the convention delineates the fundamental principles essential for the enjoyment of rights, notably:
 - Respect for inherent differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity.
 - Promotion of equal opportunities.

The Convention came into force on May 3, 2008, and was ratified by Algeria on May 12, 2009, through Executive Decree 09/188, as published in Official Gazette No. 33. Unlike other international documents such as declarations and recommendations, international conventions carry binding legal force for each state that ratifies them, imposing obligations that must be adhered to (Abdullah Ali Abou, p. 355).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) also plays a vital role in promoting the rights and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. It introduced Recommendation No. 99 in 1955 concerning the vocational rehabilitation and reintegration of the disabled, grounded in fundamental principles previously established in texts related to vocational training, equal opportunities, and equal pay for equal work (Arthur Orley, 2008, pp. 4-6). This groundwork facilitated the establishment of new international labor standards pertinent to vocational rehabilitation.

Additionally, it issued Convention No. 159 in 1983 concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons, which included several key principles (Nadia Belamouri, p. 64):

- The necessity for the state to establish a national policy for the rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons.
- This policy should cover all categories of disabled persons, considering the principle of equal opportunities between them and non-disabled workers, and among disabled persons of both genders.
- The provision of appropriate services for disabled persons in training, education, and employment.

III.2.2. Arab Perspective on the Principle of Equal Opportunities and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Disabled:

Regional Arab charters and agreements significantly contribute to the legal protection and promotion of rights for persons with special needs:

- The Arab Charter on Human Rights of 2004, which Algeria ratified on June 11, 2006, stipulates in Article 34 the "guarantee of production and freedom of work and equal opportunities, without any kind of discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, language, political opinion, national or social origin, disability, or any other status (Article 35, 2004)." Article 40 emphasizes the "obligation of the state parties to provide all appropriate educational services for persons with disabilities, taking into account the importance of integration into the educational system, and the significance of training, vocational rehabilitation, and preparation for employment"(Article 40, 2004).
- The Arab Decade for Persons with Special Needs (2003-2012), officially launched at the Arab League Summit in Tunis in 2004, emphasized its pursuit of asking member states to enhance the integration of disabled persons into education and the labor market through rehabilitation in light of scientific and technological advancements and labor market needs. This includes ensuring equal employment opportunities through the establishment and development of training and rehabilitation centers for disabled persons, encouraging and supporting qualified disabled individuals to create viable small income-generating projects, and urging the private sector to train, rehabilitate, and employ disabled persons, supporting them to maintain their jobs and advance in their careers. The Decade also aims to establish programs for exchanging expertise among Arab countries in the fields of worker training, specialized educational curricula, and the management of training and rehabilitation centers for disabled persons(Islam Al-Tamimi, 2016).

III.2.3. National Perspective on the Principle of Equal Opportunities and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Disabled:

A- Constitutional Basis:

The Algerian Constitution serves as a cornerstone of national legislation, focusing on the protection of human rights and public freedoms. It enshrines general legal guarantees that are accessible to all members of society, including persons with disabilities (Hadi Khadrawi and Hadi Bin Qwaidar, 2017, p. 26). Specifically, Article 32 of the Constitution affirms, "All people are equal before the law, and no discrimination based on birth, race, or any other circumstance shall be tolerated"(Article 32, 2016).

This clause explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Further, Article 72 states, "The state shall facilitate the enjoyment by vulnerable groups with special needs of the rights recognized for all citizens and their integration into social life." (Abdelhamid Lekhdari and Fatima Ben Jedou, 2018, p. 421). This underscores the inclusion of vocational rehabilitation rights as essential for the social integration of vulnerable groups (Article 72, 2016).

B- Legislative Basis:

In alignment with constitutional directives, the legislative framework in Algeria has evolved to support the practical implementation of rehabilitation processes. This development ensures that the rights of disabled persons are upheld under the overarching principles of human rights and equal opportunities. The legislation actively facilitates the participation of disabled individuals in rehabilitation programs, embedding these processes within the legal fabric of the nation.

C-Law on the Protection and Promotion of Persons with Disabilities No. 02-92:

Recognizing the rights of persons with special needs, Algerian legislation has introduced several legal texts, with Law (02-09) being pivotal. This law establishes foundational principles for implementing the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities, ensuring their access to prevention, health, education, vocational training, and employment services.

Article 3 of this law emphasizes the guarantee of compulsory education and vocational training for disabled children and adolescents. To facilitate the care process for the disabled in the fields of education, vocational training, and employment, Article 19 of this law establishes a provincial committee for special education and vocational guidance (Law 02-09, 2002).

This committee's responsibilities include ensuring the acceptance of disabled persons into educational and vocational training institutions and specialized institutions, and directing them according to expressed needs and the nature of the disability. The principles of social integration, which are core to the rehabilitation process, are articulated in Chapter Four of this law.

D-Some Legislative and Regulatory Provisions:

- **Regarding Advisory Bodies:** A National Council for Persons with Disabilities was established, charged with studying and expressing opinions on all matters related to the protection, promotion, and social and professional integration of disabled persons, as per Executive Decree No. 06-145 dated April 26, 2006 (Official Gazette 28/2006) (Protection and Promotion of Disabled Persons, 2013, p. 7).
- **Regarding Institutional Care:** Disabled children benefit from specialized education and training in institutions under the sector responsible for national solidarity, according to Executive Decree No. 80-59. Provisions of this decree were updated by Executive Decree No. 12-05 dated January 4, 2012 (Official Gazette 05/2012). (Protection and Promotion of Disabled Persons, 2013, p. 5)

IV. Vocational Rehabilitation in Psychopedagogical Centers for Intellectually Disabled Children:

Specialized institutions play a vital role in the care of disabled individuals of various types, pursuant to legal mandates that ensure such care. This is highlighted by Executive Decree No.

12-05, which includes the model statute for specialized educational institutions for disabled children, affirming their right to institutional care comparable to that of other individuals.

These institutions provide foundational work and ongoing monitoring of both mandatory and optional educational programs within departments and sections designed for this group, including psychopedagogical centers tailored specifically for intellectually disabled children.

IV.1. Nature of the Institution:

IV.1.1. Definition of the Institution:

The Psychopedagogical Center for Intellectually Disabled Children is designed specifically for the tasks and activities it conducts. This center performs educational, psychological, and social diagnostics for intellectually disabled children and provides a range of activities tailored to the capabilities and predispositions of each child. The scope of care at the center encompasses psychological, social, educational, vocational rehabilitation, and medical care. These activities aim to:

- Minimize the disturbances that hinder the development of the child's mental abilities as much as possible.
- Foster professional integration for the children.
- Educate and train the children to be self-reliant in meeting their basic needs, thereby achieving self-independence.

IV.1.2. Legal Status:

- The Psychopedagogical Center in Bou Saâda was established under Decree No. 07/264 dated September 9, 2007.
- The Psychopedagogical Center (1) in M'Sila was established under Decree No. 99/89 dated October 10, 1999.

IV.1.3. Catered Group:

The psychopedagogical centers cater to intellectually disabled children from age 3 until the end of their educational pathway. The children are classified in the pedagogical departments based on the degree of disability (mild, moderate, and severe) and their achievements after spending at least three months and at most six months in observation sections (Zuhair Kahal et al., 2013, p. 4).

IV.1.4. Legal Framework for Vocational Rehabilitation within Psychopedagogical Centers:

The process of vocational rehabilitation within these centers operates under a partnership agreement between the Ministry of National Solidarity and Family and the Ministry of Vocational Training and Apprenticeship, as outlined in Ministerial Circular No. 07/96 dated June 26, 1996. This agreement specifies the organization of training for special categories.

IV.1.5. Vocational Rehabilitation Mechanism:

- This program benefits intellectually disabled children and individuals aged 15 and above who demonstrate the requisite capabilities, following a comprehensive evaluation that addresses psychological, social, medical, educational, and professional aspects by the psychopedagogical team at the center.
- After identifying the cases that meet the legal criteria for the vocational rehabilitation program, the pedagogical team responsible for overseeing the vocational rehabilitation

process within the workshop is established. This team includes a qualified instructor in technical and pedagogical guidance for each specialization, specializing in intellectual disabilities.

- The vocational rehabilitation process begins when the necessary tools and facilities are available, as is the case at the Psychopedagogical Center in Bou Saâda, or at vocational training and apprenticeship centers, as with individuals from the Psychopedagogical Center (1) in M'Sila. The presence of a qualified instructor in technical and pedagogical guidance is crucial.
- The vocational rehabilitation period typically lasts six months, with the possibility of extending for another three months.
- Those who succeed in the final examination are awarded a qualification certificate by the vocational training and apprenticeship center in the specialty included in the agreed-upon vocational rehabilitation program.

Based on the vocational rehabilitation mechanism followed within the psychopedagogical centers, several observations can be made regarding:

A- Evaluation and Admission Process:

The comprehensive evaluation stage is a critical and fundamental phase where the potentials and capabilities of individuals are assessed from all aspects. The evaluation encompasses all applicants for the vocational rehabilitation program, including those who have been under care in the centers until the age of 15 as well as those who did not join the centers but reached the age of 15 or above and directly joined the vocational rehabilitation process.

This approach underscores the right of intellectually disabled individuals to apply for rehabilitation programs, embodying the principle of equal opportunities.

B- Supervisory Team for Vocational Rehabilitation:

Understanding the characteristics of intellectually disabled individuals and their educational strategies forms the cornerstone of setting up the vocational rehabilitation program. This preparation involves creating individualized plans suitable for the varying conditions according to the degree of disability and associated disorders (Ahmed Jaber Ahmed and Baha' Al-Din Jalal, 2010, p. 50).

The process involves both individual and social dimensions because the program setup is an integrated and dynamic operation. Initially, the lack of familiarity of the instructor affiliated with vocational training centers with these characteristics and strategies complicates the communication process and correct information delivery.

The training received by these instructors is typically directed at non-disabled individuals, not those with intellectual disabilities.

C- Initiation of Vocational Rehabilitation:

The initiation of vocational rehabilitation for intellectually disabled individuals within vocational training centers, on equal footing with non-disabled individuals, represents one of the forms of integration enshrined by both local and international legislation. The term 'integration' in special education refers to the inclusion of socially and educationally relevant activities and rehabilitation for intellectually disabled individuals capable of learning, alongside their non-disabled peers (Suheir Mohammed Shash, 2016, p. 42).

This integration enhances social and professional interaction opportunities, which is one of the most effective means to achieve societal integration in life generally, fulfilling the ultimate goal of the rehabilitation process.

D- Duration of Vocational Rehabilitation (3-6 Months):

The duration of vocational rehabilitation is adjusted based on the type of specialization, the feasibility of completing the rehabilitation program within this timeframe, and the learning and training capabilities of individuals (both non-disabled and disabled). Learning is the central axis in the vocational rehabilitation process. The difference between non-disabled individuals and intellectually disabled individuals within this axis lies in the latter's inability to learn independently (Akram Mohammed Subhi Mahmoud, 1st ed.).

Reflecting on some learning-related characteristics of intellectually disabled individuals (cognitive educational traits), we find that attention, learning transfer, and memory are among the most severe issues.

Vocational rehabilitation for intellectually disabled individuals requires focusing on several aspects: behavioral, educational, professional, and relational, potentially necessitating a longer duration compared to their non-disabled peers, as determined by vocational training centers to be either three or six months depending on the specialization type.

1. Number of Trainees, Qualified, and Integrated Individuals:

A. Psychopedagogical Center for Intellectually Disabled Children in Bou Saâda:

Table (1): Number of Trainees, Qualified, and Integrated Individuals at the Psychopedagogical Center in Bou Saâda.

Batch Number	Period	Specialty	Number of Trainees		Type of Disability	Number of Qualified Certificates		Number of Integrated Individuals (Dais)	
First	-2012 2013	Pottery: Pottery option	10		Intellectual Disability	10			
		Sewing		10	+ Down Syndrome T21		7		
Second	-2013 2014	Craftsmanship: Decoration option	11		Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21	10		3	
		Painting on Fabric and Silk		10			10		2
Third	-2014 2015	Craftsmanship: Turning option	5	11	Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21	5	11		

Fourth	-2015 2016	Craftsmanship: Turning option	10		Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21	7		4	
Fifth	-2016 2017	Craftsmanship: Decoration option	10		Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21	9			
		Assembly and Sewing of Clothes		8		8			
Sixth	-2017 2018	Craftsmanship: Decoration option	11		Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21	11			
		Assembly and Sewing of Clothes		12		9			
Seventh	-2018 2019	Craftsmanship: Mold option	12	2	Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21	12		2	
		Sewing		8	Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21		8		5
Total			69	61	Total	64	53	9	7
			130			117		16	

Source: Developed by researchers based on data provided by the center.

Table 1 reveals that the initiation of vocational rehabilitation at the Psychopedagogical Center in Bou Saâda took place over seven cohorts, starting with the first cohort in the 2012-2013 period and extending to the seventh cohort in the 2018-2019 period. The specializations included options such as pottery, decoration, turning, and molding, along with specializations in fabric painting and clothing assembly and sewing.

The total number of trainees across all cohorts, both male and female, was 130. Out of these, 69 males and 61 females suffered from mental retardation or Down Syndrome (T21). The number of qualified individuals in each specialization over the cohorts was 117, with 64 males and 53 females. The number of those integrated into employment under the DAIS scheme from the qualified individuals was 16, comprising 9 males and 7 females, who are currently employed within the psychopedagogical centers.

B- Psychopedagogical Center for Intellectually Disabled Children (1) in M'Sila:

Table (2): Number of Trainees, Qualified, and Integrated Individuals at the Psychopedagogical Center (1) in M'Sila.

Batch Number	Period	Specialty within Vocational Training Center	Number of Trainees	Type of Disability	Number of Qualified in Each Specialty	Number of Integrated (Dais)
First	2016-2017	Horticulture	11 Males	Intellectual Disability	11 Males	8
Second	2017-2018	Horticulture	17 Males	Intellectual Disability + Down Syndrome T21	17 Males	-
Third	2018-2019	Horticulture	6 Males	Intellectual Disability	6 Males	5
Total		Overall	34	Overall	34	13

Source: Developed by researchers based on data provided by the center.

Table 2 elucidates the progression of vocational rehabilitation at the Vocational Training and Apprenticeship Center for participants of Psychopedagogical Center (1) in M'sila. This program unfolded across three cohorts, starting with the first in the 2016-2017 period and culminating with the third in the 2018-2019 period.

Specialization was primarily in horticulture. The cohorts consisted of 34 male trainees, all of whom had mental disabilities, either mental retardation or Down Syndrome (T21). Throughout these cohorts, the total number of individuals who qualified in this specialization was consistently 34. Furthermore, 13 of these qualified individuals were successfully integrated into employment under the DAIS scheme.

IV.1.6. A comparative analysis of Tables 1 and 2 reveals several insights:

- _ The vocational rehabilitation process was inclusive of both genders aged 15 and above, encompassing those who had received ongoing care within the center up to this age and others who had directly enrolled in the vocational rehabilitation program. Trainees ranged in age from 15 to 28 years, thus encompassing a broad spectrum of age groups.
- _ The types of disabilities involved in vocational rehabilitation—mental retardation and Down Syndrome T21—fall into the category of those amenable to learning, with disability severities ranging from mild to moderate.
- _ The specializations listed, including pottery, horticulture, and sewing, are well-suited to the abilities of individuals with mental disabilities. These fields do not demand high-level skills relative to other vocational training specializations and pose no significant risk to the health and safety of the participants.
- _ Across both centers, a total of 29 individuals benefited from professional integration through the DAIS scheme. This scheme, dependent on positions allocated by the

Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity for each center, serves as a form of social protection for this demographic. However, it should be noted that these employment contracts do not offer permanent positions, being limited to a maximum duration of six years.

- _ At the Psychopedagogical Center in Bou Saâda, the total number of qualified trainees was 73. Of these, 43 trainees pursued a single specialization, 16 were qualified in two specializations, and 13 managed to qualify in three different specializations, culminating in a total of 117 vocational qualification certificates.
- _ Only 15 externally qualified trainees directly joined the vocational rehabilitation program, a markedly low figure compared to the potential number of mentally disabled children with the capabilities and qualifications who have not been integrated into either the psychopedagogical centers or vocational rehabilitation programs. This disparity may be attributed to:
 - ✓ A lack of commitment from the guardians of mentally disabled individuals to integrate them into psychopedagogical centers or enroll them in targeted vocational rehabilitation programs.
 - ✓ Insufficient media coverage that fails to adequately highlight the accomplishments of mentally disabled individuals and their capability to perform work comparable to their non-disabled peers, which consequently affects their enrollment in vocational rehabilitation programs.
 - ✓ Prevailing societal biases and negative attitudes, particularly among employers, about the work abilities of mentally disabled individuals.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations:

- _ Legal legislation has played a crucial role in promoting awareness of the legal, social, economic, and professional rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities, ensuring their access to vocational rehabilitation. Psychopedagogical centers fulfill their mission by providing holistic care—psychological, educational, social, and vocational—tailored to the individual's needs and the nature of their disability. These centers also simulate real work environments through vocational rehabilitation programs that aim to equip intellectually disabled individuals with the skills and confidence to integrate into society as productive contributors.
- _ Supervisors at these centers strive to harness the potential of intellectually disabled individuals by training them in suitable crafts and professions, enabling their transformation from passive dependents to active societal participants. These vocational rehabilitation programs also offer equal services and opportunities akin to those in mainstream vocational training centers, reinforcing gender equality and the broader principle of inclusion. This not only fosters acceptance of intellectually disabled individuals as part of human diversity but also strengthens the idea of equality in access to employment.
- _ However, despite the efforts and available institutional support, some challenges remain. Not all eligible individuals benefit from vocational rehabilitation due to shortages in specialized staff at training centers. Furthermore, while qualification

certificates are granted, nearly half of the rehabilitated individuals (under the D.A.I.S scheme) do not find employment within the fields for which they were trained. Additionally, the vocational specialties offered are often limited to crafts, which may not align with current labor market demands, and many employers fail to comply with the legal quota for hiring disabled individuals.

- _ The contemporary approach to rehabilitation emphasizes not only the individual's abilities but also the impact of environmental barriers. Recognizing that limitations are often imposed by society and not solely by the disability itself, modern rehabilitation seeks to empower individuals to fully exercise their rights, grow their capabilities, and actively contribute to their communities.

In light of these conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

✓ **At the level of the supervisory directorate and psychopedagogical centers:**

- _ Organize regular workshops and seminars for the families and guardians of intellectually disabled individuals to raise awareness about the importance of vocational rehabilitation and its role in empowering their children toward employment and integration.
- _ Collaborate with local associations and media outlets to promote awareness about disability issues and the achievements of intellectually disabled individuals, fostering a more inclusive and respectful public perception.

✓ **At the level of the supervisory ministry:**

- _ Implement regional or national training programs for vocational supervisors, focusing on the needs and strategies specific to intellectually disabled individuals.
- _ Provide training for specialized teachers in vocational rehabilitation programs tailored to the intellectual capacities of the target group, reducing dependency on general vocational training instructors.
- _ Adjust the structure and requirements of vocational rehabilitation programs, such as internship durations, to better suit the needs and pace of intellectually disabled individuals and to uphold the principle of equal opportunities.
- _ Establish clear mechanisms for integrating qualified individuals with intellectual disabilities into public or private sector employment, preferably in institutions located near their homes, and ensure continued pedagogical support.
- _ Promote small individual or collective enterprise projects through institutional backing and financial support, enabling intellectually disabled individuals to apply their training in real economic settings, both within and outside specialized centers.

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