



DIVISION FOR RESEARCH ON DISABILITIES

Program to Include Young People with Disabilities in Centers for Young Adults

Mariela Yabo ■ Dori Rivkin

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Related Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute Publications

Keren-Avraham, Y., Rivkin, D. (2016). *Evaluation of the "Secure Future" Employment Program for Young Adults with Learning Difficulties*. S-165-16

Barlev, L.; Keren-Abraham, Y., Haber, Y., Admon-Rick, G. (2017). *People with Disabilities in Israel 2017*. Joint publication with the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Justice

Kahan-Strawczynski, P., Amiel, S., Konstantinov, V. (2016). *Status of Young Adults in Israel in Key Areas of Life*. RR-736-16

Eyal, Y., Barlev, L., Rivkin, D. (2016). *Path to Independence Mentoring Program for Young Adults with Disabilities: Evaluation Study*. RR-725-16

Naon, D., Hadar, Y., Kahan-Strawczynski, P., Vazan-Sikron, L., Konstantinov, V. (2014). *Young Adults with Disabilities in Israel: Integration into Employment – Resources, Barriers and Needs*. RR-650-14

Naon, D., Kahan-Strawczynski, P., Vazan-Sikron, L., Konstantinov, V. (2013). *Integration of Young Adults into Employment: Resources, Barriers and Needs – Main Findings*. RR-645-13

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Abstract

Background

The Centers for Young Adults (hereafter, Centers) were designed to provide a system-wide, institutional response to the needs of the 18-35 age group at junctures affecting their lives in various areas. Young people with disabilities cope with similar needs albeit at a much greater intensity due to social, conceptual and systemic barriers.

Program to Include Young People with Disabilities in the Young Adult Centers

The inclusion program began in 2012, funded jointly by Israel Unlimited and the local authorities where they operate. It was aimed at young people with any type of disability in the 18-35 age group. Its goals were to provide an adjusted, available response to the needs of young adults with disabilities in the core activity areas of the Centers, to include them in all Center activities, and to change the attitude towards people with disabilities.

Evaluation Study

Initiated by Israel Unlimited, the study addresses the implementation of the inclusion program for young people with disabilities in the first three Centers where it operated: Acre, Sderot and Netanya. The study also examined the issues emerging in implementation and the program contribution, as perceived by the staff and the young people attending the Centers. The goal of the study was to assist in making decisions regarding the continued development of the program. It employed the qualitative method based on semi-structured interviews with Center staff, young people with disabilities and young people without disabilities attending the Center, and key figures involved in the program's development. A total of 30 semi-structured interviews were held from August 2017 to January 2018.

Main Findings

The study found that initially, the program definition was not sufficiently clear so that, in fact, each of the three Centers in the study implemented it differently, with different emphases: (1) long-term personal support by the Accessibility Coordinator; (2) service adjustments to needs, providing an egalitarian service with the emphasis on the rights of young adults with disabilities and the desirable adjustments; (3) universalism, providing universal services to all young adults while making existing services accessible to young people with disabilities. These differences of implementation were reflected in various components, such as the role of the Accessibility Coordinator, collaborative ventures in the community, or targeted activities in the Center for young people with disabilities.

The different implementations in each Center allowed for greater compatibility between the Center's characteristics and the program components. However, the differences created gaps in the way that the program goals were implemented. Thus, for example, one Center placed greater emphasis on universal integration and another, on personal support.

The main program contribution, evidently, was that it managed to raise the awareness of Center staff of the needs of young adults with disabilities and the provision of accessible services to them. The young adults without disabilities responded positively to the presence at the Centers of the young adults with disabilities, while the latter noted that they felt comfortable at the Centers and received supportive service adjusted to their needs.