

# **PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AND THEIR WORKING LIFE**

A Case Study about Finnish People with Physical Disabilities

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## ABSTRACT

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People with physical disabilities and their working life is the topic discussed in this study. The previous studies acknowledge that disability has been defined differently; this includes social, cultural, and as well political aspects, the academia classifies disability into biomedical and social modes. This research work aims at looking at the challenges that are accompanying persons who have been physically challenged and their working life.

The main discussions raised in this study have been related to the lives of persons with physical disabilities in regard to the society's attitude towards them, employment after study, and as well looking at the Finnish legislations and act on employment for the disabled in relation with the United Nations conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities. The in-depth of the study has been mainly focusing on the Finnish context in particular and as well the European Union legislation in general. The study further examines the system of education in Finland, afterwards the build-up of the career of persons with physical disabilities. Another research question is: How does disability reflect on their life when it comes to employment and independent living?

The results have indicated that there is a reasonable percentage of unemployment as compared to the total population of people with disabilities. The study also confirms that still there is social exclusion of persons with physical disabilities in the society. Recommendations have proved that enforcement of the non-discrimination act still needs more attention, as well as the employment act.

The research methods used in this study have included gathering of information from the randomly selected population. This included both service-users and service providers, and the senior staff of the administration, and this included principal, deputy principal, and teachers.

Data collection included interviews, questionnaires, and the existing literature about the disabled students from one of the training center, and were conducted through contacting person.

Key concepts: Persons with physical disabilities, United Nations convention on persons with disabilities, social exclusion and inclusion, physical disability, Finland

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Disability serves as a multi-definition that is associated with people who have mental, physical and intellectual challenges. Disability has also been classified into biomedical and social modes. In reference to biomedical modes, it means disability that accredited to medical challenges and social modes refer to disability that is associated with social challenges. Literary disability can be defined as “a fixed condition of preset illnesses which cannot be changed.” (Smith, 2009) This definition may have been debatable because the advancement of technology has brought about positive development to medicine. And this has further brought about changes to the world of disability. This can be associated with disabilities that have been corrected by medical procedures. To this end, disability can also be defined as any form of impairment that negatively affects the ability of a person to function by and large. In the contemporary times the phenomena does not only refer to the above mentioned but also the study has confirmed that disability has more to do with different fields of definitions such as political and economic disability as well. People with such challenges have been given specific names referring to specific parts of the body that have been impaired. A title such as handicapped is referred to as one whose upper limbs cannot function normally. Also, people with defects have been experiencing social-psychological problems in the society in the sense that society defines them as function-less and that they cannot positively contribute to the society. Thus they live in isolation and exclusion.

The United Nations Convention on People with Disabilities has precisely given a broader definition that entails all forms of disabilities as; “those who have physical, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society with others” (United Nations 2006).

It is also worth noting that disability as a whole phenomenon is still widely debated, various agencies to include the United Nations, the European Union, civil societies, as well as human rights activist agencies with the aim of breaking the social economic and political barriers between them and the performing society. Therefore, I have deemed it important to choose this topic for further research. Physical disability as a result limits the capability of that particular individual to function as expected. This can normally become known in the mobility or immobility of the individual, which can affect the person's ability to effectively carry out his or her day to day activities.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the Finnish context, since Finland is a European member state; the study also contains references in the same context. Therefore the aim of the research is examining whether people with physical impairment have been excluded from active social and economic development in the society. The study also intends to find out the challenges faced by people with physical disabilities in their day to day social working life; after studies. More so it also intends to find out whether having provided them with supportive special needs people with physical disabilities are able to join the labor market and not excluded from social economic development. Therefore based on the above information my research question to be examined is:

What are the challenges faced by people with disabilities and their working life after school?

### 2.1 Research Limitations

Disability is a collection of impairments to include intellectual, physical, as well sensory and other types that fall in the same definition. This research is conducted with people with physical disability. Also data collection is mainly within the framework of the Finnish legislation and acts, of which if need be the EU will be the second reference; it is also worth noting that since the United Nations Conventions and resolutions on the subject matter do not defer with the European Union, it is therefore worth referring to the United Nations regulations.

The study was conducted in the city of Järvenpää, and more information was collected from one of the training centers for persons with special needs and the union organisation.

## 2.2 Significance of the study

The study will be useful to the persons with physical disability in understanding their rights, freedom and equal opportunities in the Finnish society, and how do the challenges of impairments reflect on their working life in Finland. The union organization and the training center may be more interested in knowing the challenges those persons face in their organization, and lastly to the entire population of Finland in understanding how to socialise with persons with physical disability without having the mentality that people with physical disabilities cannot actively participate in normal work having provided with special or supportive needs.

### 3. EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND

Finland being a welfare state free education begun in 1860s. The welfare system has been constituted on education, culture and knowledge. Education is considered a key factor in enhancing the competitiveness. The Finnish educational policy aims at equality, efficiency as well as equality and internationalization. The Finnish education system also provides equal opportunities of education for all citizens irrespective of cultural affiliation and sex.

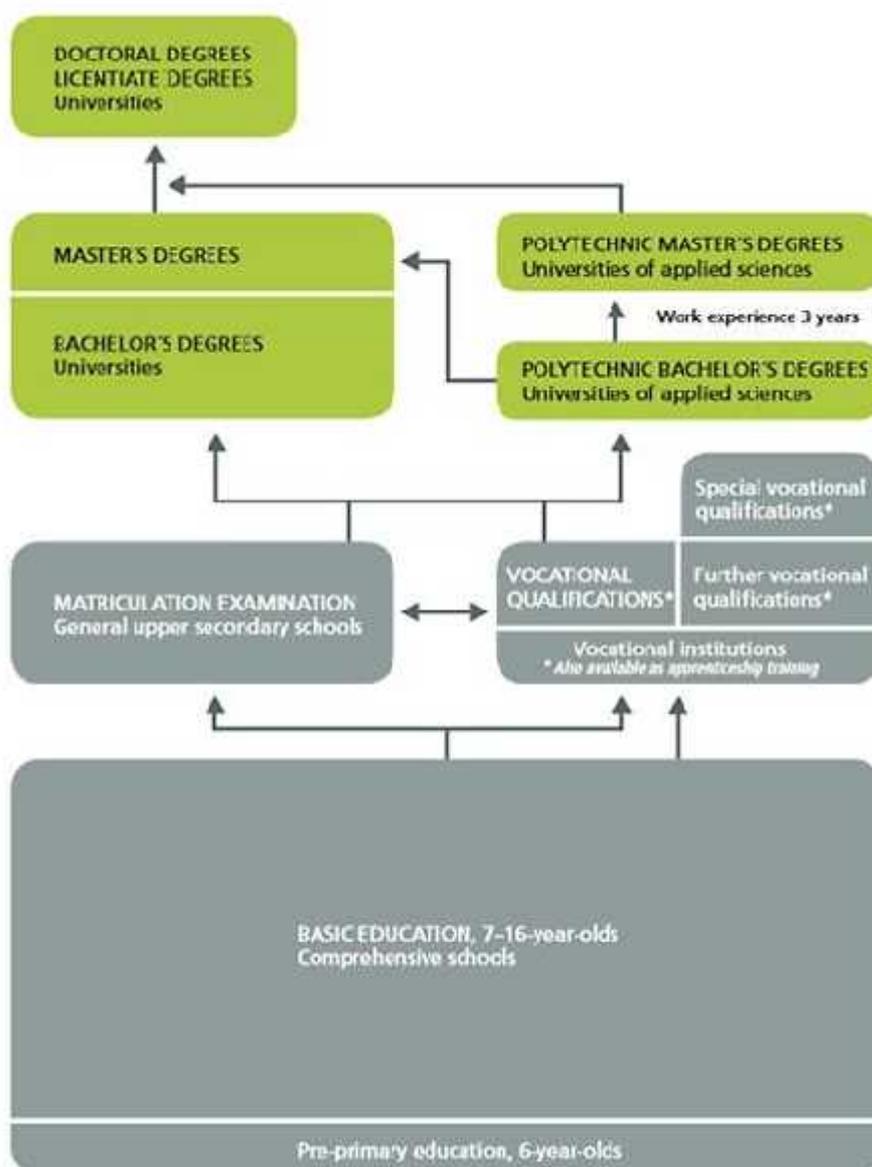
The Finnish educational system consists of the following stages:

Early childhood care (pre-primary education), this is between 0-5 years of age. Municipalities have a mandate to arrange and monitoring the quality of services in regard to early childhood education and care (ECEC), of which learning through playing is the most essential activity. According to the Finnish national board of education (FNBE) pre-primary education shall be mandatory to all children under the age of six in Finland; this statute will be effective by August 2015. Primary education (comprehensive school) is non-selective, and continues up to nine years; subjects provided in all schools do follow the national core curriculum. Basic education is from age of seven up to sixteen. Upper secondary education, which also consists of vocational and universal education, is a dual structure, after words matriculation examinations are conducted as result for the continuing students. Admission to higher institution (tertiary institutions) depends on the results obtained from examination and entrance tests. Higher education is provided by universities and polytechnics and it is a dual structure (universities of applied sciences). It is however restricted because of huge number of student candidates outweighing the places.

Finland is officially a multi-lingual state; therefore the language of command in schools is either Finnish or Swedish. In addition the Finnish higher educational

institutions offer approximately five hundred degree and non-degree programmes in English language.

Figure 1: The table below illustrates the Finnish education structure right from the tender age (pre-school) to the higher education level (university or polytechnics).



### 3.1 Special needs education within the education system in Finland

The Education in Action project (E A)

### 3.2 Pre-school education

Pre-school education constructs on the core values of the society. Such values have been specified in national legislation and international declarations, commendations and conventions, to ensure safeguarding human rights and global viability. Pre-school education plays an important role in promoting children's development into humane individuals as well as ethically liable members in society; by doing so it guides children to become responsible in their action and by guiding them towards responsible action and acquiescence with generally accepted rules and to appreciate other people. Also promoting children's favourable growth, development as well as learning opportunities at pre-school level is one of the core roles. This core role does support and monitor physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional development and avert any problems that may arise. Therefore it is so important that children whose conditions for development, growth and learning have been affected by illness, disability or reduced functional ability need special support in pre-school education. During pre-school education a child is entitled to receive adequate support for growth and learning as soon as the need for support becomes apparent. The Finnish government has outlined the National Core Curriculum for Pre-Primary Education as general support, intensified support and special support.

### 3.3 Compulsory schooling and Vocational Education

As in pre-primary education, support for studies and students' welfare has been categorized into three parts in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education namely: universal support, intensified support as well as special support. Those pupils in need of special support are entitled to apply to ordinary vocational schools under the national joint application system. They can also apply through the related flexible application process or through educational institutions with special educational tasks directly

The main of pupil counsellors in universal education and student counsellors in vocational institutions and training is to find an appropriate place for each student; this is done in accordance with the student's wishes.

### 3.4 Upper-secondary education

Although special needs education is not stated in the existing regulations of upper-secondary education (629/1998, 810/1998); the Upper-Secondary Schools Act (629/1998) however provides that students with disabilities and those in need of special support for some other reason deserve the right to support services, student welfare services as well special supports, as required in their educations.

### 3.5 Historical background of the training center for persons with disabilities

The training center is meant for the Finnish Association of People with Disabilities in Järvenpää, which is approximately thirty five kilometers north of Helsinki. The center is an association member serving under the union organization for persons with disabilities in Helsinki.

The union organisation was established in 1948 with the aim of rehabilitating war traumatized victims most of whom come from Southern Finland. It was long discovered afterward that there were social problems arising, and it has also been related to the experiences of the war. When those people who got physically wounded started developing mental, psychological problems, and as well others become physically and severely disabled as a result. This called for a need for expansion of services and a more comprehensive approach to treatment of people with disability. Since then the organisation has extended nationwide services to various fields related to disability. The organisation has since then been transforming its programs on people with disabilities. This is done to meet the present and arising need of people with disability. The training center has played important role in this process and to date has become one of the training colleges in Järvenpää.

### 3.6 Aims and objectives of the organization

The training center is a member association of Finnish People with Disability nation-wide; it therefore shares the following aims:

Ensuring that the disabled people enjoy the same benefits of the country, the organization intends to make it important that people with disabilities of all levels have access to better education, work, and perform in the society; improvement of the quality of life of its membership, functioning as a link for people with permanent physical disability, fostering opportunities for people with disability as well as stimulating the fulfilment of rights for people with physical disabilities. The organization also aims at sustaining and developing the functional capabilities of people with physical disabilities as well as running as equal and empowered citizens

### 3.7 Programs offered at the center

The training center seeks to give life and the meaning to live for people with disability. This can be associated with the disregard that people with disability are prone to from the wider society. In some contexts members of the public do not seem to understand that a worthy is a right to every individual, regardless of one's ability to contribute to the society. And this is what the center set forth to guarantee. The center seeks to ensure that people with disability also to have a chance to live a worthy life. Mainly the center is currently providing programs such as vocational education and training to pupils with special education needs. The center also offers training and rehabilitative instruction and guidance to severely disabled pupils. In-addition, the organisation offers development and service center of the vocational special needs education and training to people with disability. This seeks to guarantee that people with disability are

able to acquire skills that can make them productive and living a worthy life. Under the rehabilitative instruction and guidance (RIGP) program there are two main sections to which this program is maintained. namely: Ava 14 which after one year prepares for the upper secondary vocational Studies; and the Tyva which after three years students are prepared for the working and independent life. Tyva is mainly for the physically disabled students of which it has been also divided into multi groups up to the severely disabled students.

### 3.8 The Ava14 and Tyva Sections

Ava 14 section has been divided into three groups, namely ava-musa which mainly takes practical music lessons; ava-b designated for those students with Asperger problems, and as well ava-c mainly for logistics. English language and mathematics are core lessons taught in these groups on a non-curriculum oriented basis. Building self-confidence within themselves is part of the school curriculum so as to help students cop up with independent life after training from the center. After graduation from the upper secondary vocational studies to the tyva, graduates are now getting prepared for work and independent living. The maximum period for the vocational training is three years respectively. During training sessions, visiting students to their respective homes have been always organized as part of reflective follow up by tutors. This is in such a way to make sure that students have achieved their learning objectives and as to whether they are ready for work and independent living. It is also worth to note that learning social skills and self-confidence is part the curriculum.

figure 2

figure 3

figure 4



Figures 2-4 clock wise: Ava training and rehabilitation instruction and guidance for vocational upper secondary education 1; students are now being prepared for social and health care 40cr, technology and transport 40cr, Information and communication Technology as well music and sports oriented classes.

### 3.9 Fields of upper secondary vocational educational and training

The upper secondary receives the following qualifications in vocational training: vocational qualification in household and cleaning services, vocational qualification in crafts and design, artisan vocational qualification in vehicle technology, vocational qualification in watch making and micromechanics, vocational qualification in business administration, vocational qualification in logistics warehouse operative, vocational qualification in property maintenance services and, and vocational qualification in metal work and machinery

Figure 5.

Figure 6.

figure 7



Figures 5-7 clock wise: Culture serves as one of the fields of study at Validia. Gold Smith; in Crafts and Design students specialize in Handicrafts and Production, 120 cr.

### 3.10 Facilitation of the organization

The center provides enough study facilities to students as well as to service providers (trainers). During study period free accommodation is provided to students with physical disabilities. The center maintains 120 rooms of which 48 are actually student occupied single rooms with private shower and toilets. Under aged student live separately. Dormitories are closed during school intervals and holidays therefore students leave the school and go back to their respective home towns. A well-equipped library and a computer lab are also part of Student Support Services. They support studies and learning to offer reading materials, guidance and information services as well as course information search.

### 3.11 Administrative structure and staff

The management committee is run by the chair, managing director and the financial director. Currently the college staff is made up of two hundred seventy co-workers, eighty teachers, of whom forty three are special teachers, occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, worker trainers, employment counsellors, and Special education experts.

#### 4. DISABILITY FROM MULTI PERSPECTIVES

As stated earlier that disability is a broad definition that entails social cultural economic perspectives, it has been historically and traditionally oriented to bio-medical as well as diagnostic models. The transformation of the phenomena proves that disability has never been cultural free. The traditional aspect of understanding what it means to be disabled has to date changed since the United Nations Convention on People with Disabilities. According to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, human beings are entitled to equal rights and fundamental freedom irrespective of gender. Member states as well as governments and parties have been urged to provide guarantees to those rights given the fact that they are natural rights by virtue of humanity. In respect of the above, the following instruments have been clearly enshrined and endorsed unanimously by one of the biggest turn-ups since the establishment of the United Nations Organization in 1945. Among these include: civil as well as political rights, The right to life, the right to liberty and security of a person, the right to be free from degrading treatment and from discrimination, the right to economic and social cultural opportunities; this includes education and the right to work; human beings including the disabled should actively par-take communal services as to meaningfully enjoy such rights without boundaries. It is also worth noting that over the past decades, disability as a concept has been transforming into deferent perceptions as a result of the United Nations Conventions on declaration of human rights. Not until a special convention on people with disabilities brought about thorough transformation.

#### 4.1 Theoretical concepts

The main focus of the study is to find out how people with physical disabilities live by the day and how does disability reflect on their social as well as working life. It is also important that this research combines both looking into the general situation of people with physical disability through existing literature and by gathering information through interviews and questionnaire with the aim of getting an insight on the research topic. Through my own experiences with people with physical disability, this research topic shall be conducted from the critical analysis point of view; through this exercise and also information respectively. Making it a point for them to share their own experiences with me; thus ethical considerations will be highly observed. This theoretical part of the study gathering of the literature will be of helpful to process the data

## 5 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives an insight to different works done by different researchers about persons with disabilities. It mainly focuses on challenges faced by the people with physical disabilities in their day to day social working life. To find out whether people with physical disabilities are provided with supportive special needs for them to persevere in day to day social working life and to examine whether disability deters them to participate in policy making.

### 5.1 Challenges faced with people with physical disabilities in their working life

According to Yvonne Zimba (2015) people with disabilities have the same health needs as non-disabled people – for immunization, cancer screening etc. They also may experience a narrower margin of health, both because of poverty and social exclusion, and also because they may be vulnerable to secondary conditions, such as pressure sores or urinary tract infections. Evidence suggests that people with disabilities face barriers in accessing the health and rehabilitation services they need in many settings.

### 5.2 Health needs and people with physical disabilities

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 15 per cent of the world's population, or estimated 1 billion people, live with different disabilities. They are the world's largest minority. This figure is increasing through population growth, medical advances and the ageing process, says the World Health Organization.

In countries with life expectancies over 70 years, individuals spend on average about 8 years, or 11.5 per cent of their life span, living with disabilities, reports

Disabled World. Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

### 5.3 People's attitude towards people with physical disabilities world wide

During the 16th century, however, Christians such as Luther and John Calvin indicated that the mentally disabled and other persons with disabilities were possessed by evil spirits. Thus, these men and other religious leaders of the time often subjected people with disabilities to mental and or physical pain as a means of exorcising the spirits (Thomas 1957). Franzen Bjorn (1990) observed that in some communities in Kenya and Zimbabwe, "a child with a disability is a symbol of a curse befalling the whole family. Such a child is a "shame" to the whole family, hence their rejection by the family or the community. Children who are met by those beliefs and attitudes can hardly develop to their full potential: "They get less attention, less stimulation, less education, less medical care, less upbringing and sometimes less nourishment than other children." Franzen Bjorn (1990, 21-26.)

From a cultural point of view, therefore, there are many specific circumstances that have influenced the living conditions of persons with disabilities, not to mention people's attitudes towards them. History shows that ignorance, neglect, superstition and fear are social factors that have exacerbated isolation of persons with disabilities.

Throughout Africa, persons with disabilities are seen as hopeless and helpless (Desta 1995). The African culture and beliefs have not made matters easier. Abosi and Ozoji (1985) found in their study that Nigerians in particular and of course, Africans in general, attribute causes of disabilities to witchcraft, juju, sex-linked factors, God /supernatural forces.

The desire to avoid whatever is associated with evil has affected people's attitudes towards people with disabilities simply because disability is associated with evil. Most of these negative attitudes are mere misconceptions that stem from lack of proper understanding of disabilities and how they affect functioning. "These misconceptions stem directly from the traditional systems of thought, which reflect magical-religious philosophies that can be safely called superstition" (Abosi, 2002).

The study therefore is aimed at finding out whether communities in Finland have such cultural perceptions towards people with disabilities.

Data on attitudes indicate that: The National Council on Disability (VANE) reports that, although a basic positive attitude has been found in recent attitude research, disabled people are considered as objects and not subjects. The recession of the 1990s worsened attitudes. The 2007 Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in Europe, showed that 58% of people knew someone who was disabled) and 84% acknowledged that being disabled tended to be disadvantage in society (both slightly higher than the EU average). However, disability discrimination was not viewed as particularly widespread (only 43% thought this compared to an EU average of 53%); Only 19% thought that disability discrimination was more widespread than five years ago. 78% thought that more disabled people should be in the workplace (higher than the EU average of 74%) and 86% thought specific measures on equal opportunities were needed in this field.

It is upon this background that the researcher wants to find out if the above mentioned challenges about people with disabilities still exist in Finland.

#### 5.4 Poverty/ low income among people with physical disabilities

Yvonne Zimba (2015) observes that according to the latest national study, poverty and low income of disabled people are permanent issues in Finland although historical data is not readily available. 22% of disabled people aged 25-64 have lower income than non-disabled people. Disabled people have an employment rate of around 25-30% and a third of them have a disability pension 2006.

#### 5.5 Physical and social obstacles among people with physical disabilities

According to the United Nations (UN) about 650 million people in the world live with disabilities, and frequently encounter a myriad of physical and social obstacles. They often lack the opportunities of the mainstream population and are usually among the most marginalized in the society. Women face barriers to full equality and advancement because of such factors as race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability. Persistence of certain cultural, legal and institutional barriers makes women and girls with disabilities the victims of two-fold discrimination: as women and as persons with disabilities.

#### 5.6 Discrimination and segregation of people with physical disabilities

Women with disabilities may be particularly at risk due to stigmas associated with both disability and gender inequality. Deaf blindness isn't as a well-known disability as deafness or blindness because of a small number of deafblind persons. In Finland only about 850 people use services of the Finnish Deafblind Association, which is not much. The number depends on when these people have become deafblind. Most of the deafblind are elderly people and use the

health services via hospitals. The Finnish Deafblind Association (FDBA) is a 40 year old and small organization with only about 350 members. Not many people have heard about it. Certainly the information about deaf blindness is very important and without knowledge people don't know how to face a deafblind.

Although Finland is one of modern day welfare countries, previously women in Finland have been facing several challenges. Discrimination and segregation could be seen in different situations, e.g. in leading positions, household tasks, work income and internal family relationships.

All people face different challenges and situations in our lives; childhood, sexuality and gender identity, parenthood, studying and working environment and leisure time. Humans are social animals and need other people also for sharing experiences, especially on a new or tough life situation. Networking and collaboration are ways for sharing experiences and knowledge with others. According to a statistics every Finn is on average a member of three different organizations in his life. People with disabilities also have such experiences, which are unknown to non-disabled people. They miss other people with same experiences. Persons with disabilities often depend on their family or another people (e.g. personal assistants, interpreters, guiders) in order to survive in everyday life. This is the reason why people with disabilities have bigger need for networking. Serious problems may occur if disabled person's parents or close people don't accept their disability or refuse to support them.

### 5.7 Unemployment among people with physical disabilities

In developing countries, 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas in industrialized countries the figure is between 50% and 70%. 'Disabled still face hurdles in job market', (The Washington Times, 5 December 2005)

In most developed countries the official unemployment rate for persons with disabilities of working age is at least twice that for those who have no disability. Business Disability Forum, <http://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/>

Debra A. Perry (2002). There are 370 million persons with disabilities, 238 million of them of working age around Asia and the Pacific. Their unemployment rate is usually double that of the general population and often as high as 80% or more.

In the European Union, (EUROPS, 'The ability to work', 1998) reports that; There are approximately 40 million persons with disabilities, and of these 43% to 54% were of working age in 1998. Persons with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be unemployed than others.

Latin America and the Caribbean, World Bank, 'Disability and inclusive development: Latin America and the Caribbean', 2004 states that about 80-90% of persons with disabilities are unemployed or outside the work force. Most of those who have jobs receive little or no monetary remuneration.

The study therefore intends to find out whether people with physical disabilities in Finland have such difficulties as stated by different researchers as seen above.

#### 5.8 People with disabilities and provision of supportive special needs

Finnish law states that a disabled person must not be discriminated against. A disabled person has the right to live a normal life, for example, to study, work and start a family. (Non-discrimination act; Ministry of Justice, Finland Updated 9.1.2015.accessed on 20/11/2015

Municipalities are required to organise special services for disabled persons who need them. These special services include, for example, transport service (kuljetuspalvelu), aids (apuvälineet) and personal assistants (henkilökohtainen avustaja). The purpose of the services is to help the disabled person to participate in the society's activities and remove the hindrances and obstacles caused by the disability. If you have a residence permit and municipality of residence (kotikunta) in Finland, you are entitled to the services that your municipality offers.

When you apply for services for the disabled, you should contact the Social Welfare Office (sosiaalitoimisto) of your municipality. Municipalities have a social worker who is responsible for the services for disabled persons. You can ask this person for guidance and advice in applying for services. The Social Welfare Office will make you a service plan (palvelusuunnitelma). Its purpose is to find out what services you need. To apply for the services, you will usually need a doctor's certificate. You can get this, for example, at a health center.

## 5.9 Human rights and people with disabilities

Associations for disabled persons in Finland were founded in the end of 19th century with the aim of providing social needs to the people with physical disabilities. According to a report from Project research » Finland » Human rights of people with disabilities in Finland, the first association for visually impaired in Finland was founded in 1887 and the Association of the Deaf was founded in 1905.

Today the disabled person's own associations have a vital role in surveillance of the human rights of the disabled. The associations have their own lawyers and advocates, who help their members with legal problems.

Finland's Slot Machine Association (founded 1938) RAY's task is to raise funds through gaming operations to support the work of voluntary health and welfare organizations. Each year RAY's funding enables the organisations to take care of tens of thousands of people from all walks of life.

Finland's Disability Policy Programme 2010-2015 highlights the need to bring Finnish legislation in line with changes required by the United Nations Convention, which Finland has signed. They enable Finland to proceed with ratifying the convention, and in early December, the government submitted to Parliament a proposal on the ratification of the United Nations Convention, as well as proposals for the necessary legislative reforms.

A main determinant of change is the development of how disabilities are conceptualized.

"In current legal thinking, disability groups should not be differentiated based on the nature of their disability or illness. The necessary assistance must be provided regardless of whether the limitation on functional capacity is physical, mental, cognitive or social. (Huhta 2013).

(Since 2009, the act on disability services has been preeminent in relation to the act on intellectual disabilities. This is why services for people with intellectual disabilities should be organised according to the act on disability services, when they are adequate, appropriate and in the interests of the recipients.

In practice, the actualisation of intellectual disabilities leads to the comprehensive application of the act on intellectual disabilities, in part due to the differentiated nature of the service structure. Problems are also caused by the fact that the laws provide for the same sorts of services but the demarcation of their client groups or the criteria for client fees contain unjustifiable differences from an equality perspective.

"Although the act on intellectual disabilities has ensured comprehensive services, on the other hand it has excluded people with intellectual disabilities from general services and other disability services. The disability service system is also criticised for its old fashioned conception of disability, which circumscribes the self-determination, equality and freedom of choice of those who are included within it," says Huhta.

One of the aims of the legislative reform is to prevent the danger of people falling between cracks in the service system. "At present, for example, people suffering from various forms of autism or neurological disorder may find themselves left without services. Their need for assistance is not being properly recognised."

#### 5.10 Retaining subjective rights

The new legislation will strengthen the direction according to which people with disabilities will primarily use general social and health services. If these services are not sufficient to and in the interests of clients with disabilities; they will be entitled to special services.

"There have to be services when they are required, in other words when a person cannot manage in every-day life without assistance. Different needs naturally require different forms of assistance. For some it is support in doing certain things, for others it is about communicating or understanding," Huhta observes.

Under the current law, people with severe disabilities have a subjective right to certain services that their municipality must arrange regardless of funding allocations. The criteria of severe disability are determined per service. The new law, on the other hand, presupposes the necessity of service requirements for all groups of people with disabilities. Huhta points out that the new legislative design does not alter the baseline of the law.

"If the need for assistance is assessed as essential and recurrent, the service will be granted. The point is therefore to maintain the subjective right of equal, inclusive and essential care to ensure services such as personal assistance and comprehensive housing and mobility services. The necessary conditions and services included in the sphere of subjective rights or other services will be determined separately according to each specific service."

Huhta stresses that identifying constraints on functional capacity and assessing special service needs as a basis for deciding on disability services are hardly new.

After The Second World War, there was a large number of disabled war veterans in Finland as well as elsewhere in Europe. They enjoyed great respect in the society, which in turn helped the cause of other disabled persons. The Disabled War Veterans' Association of Finland was established in 1940 and it is still working and has a strong influence in a society. The first Care of Invalids Act is from 1946.

In the 1960's a general growth of welfare in society improved also conditions of disabled persons.

The Social Insurance Act (1956) and the Social Insurance Institution provided medical care, training and employment rehabilitation in order to prevent permanent disability or to restore working capacity. The aim of the rehabilitation provided under the Social Insurance Act is to maintain and improve the working capacity of the ensured or to prevent permanent disability.

The Social Welfare Act (1982) is a general act and it covers the social welfare needs of all citizens, including disabled. Most of the services for disabled can be provided under this Act. According to this act municipalities are responsible for organizing the following social services: social work; child guidance and family

counselling; home help services; housing services; institutional care; family care; and activities support the access to employment and specific work for people with disabilities.

The Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act from 1987 provide services for disabled when a disabled person does not receive sufficient and suitable services or benefits under any other Act. The purpose of the law is to improve the conditions of a disabled person so that he may live and act as a member of the society equal with others, and to improve the potential of disabled persons for independent action and for influencing the planning and implementation of the services provided by the society. In September 2009 the Act was reformed and, for example those with serious disabilities now have extensive rights to define the services that they need, and a subjective right to personal assistance.

Government Report on Disability Policy 2006 is based on the Government Programme of Prime Minister. The Finnish disability policy is based on three main principles: equality, inclusion and necessary services and supportive measures. The policy focuses on human rights and non-discrimination, access to employment, reasonable income, education, independent living as part of the general housing policy, reform of disability legislation, information technology and collection of information.

### 5.11 Discussion

The existing literature proves that to date people with disabilities are still encountering challenges in various aspects of life. Though the global societies including Finland have throughout decades working to improve human standards of which persons with disabilities is part of the struggle.

It is more important to mention out working life of persons with disabilities since it is my study area. Person with disabilities have been facing difficulties of unemployment, social challenges at places of work and other related issues.

## 6 DATA COLLECTION

The mode of data collection was confined to qualitative method, and it has included interviews. Since the nature of the study is sensitive, all the interviews have been conducted, open-ended questions, and have been conducted depending on the available friendly environment. Amidst the interview my target-group is mostly the middle age of either sex. Interviews combined both service-users and as well service providers, this is because either of the parties may share common experiences of the same grounds as a community working toward the same cause. In addition, questionnaires as part of interviews have been distributed in consideration of confidentiality. Working partners during the process was one the training centers for persons with disabilities in Järvenpää and the union organization Headquarters – Helsinki. Interviews and questionnaires were conducted in English language as there were open-ended questions.

## 7 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The chapter presents the methods and procedures used in the study to generate and analyze data. It discusses the research design, the constituents of the sample, the research instruments used and how the data was used and analyzed.

The research design chosen was a descriptive survey design. This was to enable the researcher to choose a sample of counselors and service-users. This was done to reduce on the costs, time and to make a thorough study of the sampled institution. Consequently, qualitative data was collected.

The total number of staff at the college is 270 including counselors, occupational therapists, work trainers, special education experts, school assistants and personal assistants. In order to keep the study within reasonable and manageable proportions, the researcher used an overall sample of 52 respondents randomly from the training center. A principle and deputy principal were purposively selected since they are ones responsible for all matters concerning the administration of center and their role of being the immediate supervisors of the curriculum coverage. They are also responsible for all the professional and academic records of teachers, counselors and service users. 20 teachers were randomly selected with the help of deputy principal at the training center.

Equitable random selection of 25 service-users from different levels was done. This was preferred in order to obtain relatively unbiased information from across section of students at different levels in the school. Out of the 25 service users only 10 have responded to the questionnaires

## 7.1 Research methods

The following methods were used in the study questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis. About questionnaires the researcher used open ended questionnaires as appeared in appendix 1. This method was preferred because it is more efficient since it requires less time, it is less expensive and permit collection of data from a large sample. About interviews direct contact interviews with principal and deputy principal were conducted using both formal and informal questions. This instrument was considered appropriate because by establishing rapport with the principals, the researcher was able to obtain in depth data that would not have been effectively done with questionnaires. Results obtained from interviews were supplementary to the response from the questionnaires and documents from the training center.

Data was also collected from people with physical disabilities performance from institution records which were received from the principal's office. This provided information on students' secondary academic performance, were also used to obtain information not available through other means and ascertain the authenticity of the same information.

Validity of the questionnaire was determined through discussions and consultation was done with colleagues. The researcher gave the constructed items to the supervisor to rate the relevance of each item. The questionnaire was pilot tested to enable the researcher get those that were vague and ambiguous and those that were relevant.

To ensure that the data collection method and process and tools remain the same over time despite uncontrollable testing conditions a pilot test was done amongst different times. The purpose of the pretest was to test if the instruments could facilitate the researcher in obtaining consistent information. After

two weeks the questionnaires were administered to the same pilot subjects to obtain test retest stability reliability coefficient.

Data collected was coded along identified themes and topics representing categories in to which various pieces of data was classified. Description was done on the basis of tabulated frequencies and percentages. Interpretation involved attaching significance to categories offering explanations from which conclusions were derived. Where applicable, quotations and related literature were used in the discussion of study findings. In depth information derived from interviews and documents were used to explain some inconsistencies that may crop in during the study.

## 7.2 Research ethics

Ethical principles and ethical codes of conduct are very important and useful, like any set of rules, (David, Ph.D. 2011) and they are considered among the key issues when it comes to rules governing research. It is therefore important that during the process of collecting information and data from my cooperate partners, I have maintained the required principles. Interpretation and assessing of the information in the context of the organization was of more importance. The information gathered was also confined to confidentiality. Among the personalities from which the information was collected are: the principal, study counselors, career counselors, teachers and students. Contact interviews were meant for the senior staff and questionnaires were meant for students; though the response of students was not up to the required number.

## 8 FINDINGS

This chapter accordingly presents interpreted and analysed data collected from the questionnaires. Data has been tabulated and summarised as indicated below:

### 8.1 Challenges among persons with physical disabilities

Principal's views on challenges faced with people with physical disabilities in their day to day social working life; after having formal education through professional studies.

According to the principal, staff has a big regard/concern, they have come here with the feelings that they want to offer good services to the students. But the challenge is that many of them have gone beyond professional approach with aim that they want to help students to prosper in life and have some kind of sympathy with them. Another challenge which is more important is to help the staff keep the moral support in order to provide better services to our students.

According to the interviews, there is a challenge of teachers lacking faith and moral support in providing better services to the persons with physical disabilities. The principal further revealed that there is still kind of thinking that when one is disabled he/she is not mentally right. According to the principal, there is also an inferiority complex that persons with physical disabilities cannot engage in physical activities thus combining all faults in just one difficult.

Table 1 Peoples' attitude towards persons with disabilities

Teacher's response on challenges among persons with physical disabilities	Agree	Disagree	Total N=20
Statement	n	n	n
People's non-welcoming attitude towards the disabled	12	8	20
Poverty/ low income among the disabled persons	15	5	20
There is unemployment among disabled persons	20	0	20
There is discrimination and segregation of the disabled	10	10	20

N= Total number of respondents expected negative

n = total number of respondents

Table 1 reveals that most of the teachers (n=12) agreed that people have non-welcoming attitude towards persons with physical disabilities as compared to only 8(40%) who disagree. The same table reveals that 15(75%) teachers agree that there is poverty/low income among persons with physical disabilities as compared to only 5(25%) who disagree. The table further indicates that the 20(100%) teachers agree that there is unemployment among persons with physical disabilities. It is indicated in the table above that 10(50) teachers agreed that there is still discrimination and segregation of persons with physical disabilities whereas 10(50%) disagree.

Table 2: Teachers' statements on the challenges among persons with physical disabilities, counselors too gave their views..

<b>Teachers response (N=20)</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Statement	n	n
People's attitude towards the disabled is?	16	4
poverty/ low income among the disabled	18	2
There is unemployment among disabled persons	16	4
There is discrimination and segregation of the disabled persons	8	12

N= Total number of respondents expected

n = total number of respondents to a particular item

Table 2 above indicates that 8(80%) counselors do agreed that people still have negative attitude towards persons with physical disabilities as compared to only 2(20%) who disagreed. Table 2 further reveals that there is low income\poverty among persons with disabilities as agreed by 7(70%) counselors compared to 3(30%) who disagreed. It is further indicated in the table that 9(90%) counselors agreed that there is still unemployment among persons with physical disabilities as compared to only 1(10%) who disagreed. Lastly the table indicates that 4(40%) counselors who are the minority do agreed that there is segregation and discrimination of persons with physical disabilities as compared to 6(60%) who disagreed. People with physical disabilities are able to join the labor market and not excluded from social economic development response bellow.

Employment, unemployment and inactivity shared among people with disabilities.

Table 3 below shows teachers' responses about persons with disabilities in labour force.

<b>Teachers response (N=20)</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Statement		
Most of the disabled have been integrated in the labour market	4	16
Many of the disabled are inactive	18	2
Most of the disabled persons are unemployed	16	4
Many of the disabled persons are employed	8	12

N= Total number of respondents expected

n= total number to a particular item

The table above indicates that only 2(20%) teachers agreed that persons with physical disabilities are integrated in labour market as compared to 8(80%) who disagreed. The same table indicates that 9(90%) of the teachers agreed that many of the persons with physical disabilities are inactive as compared to only 1(10%) teacher who disagreed. About whether employed or not employed 8(80%) of the teachers agreed that most of the persons with physical disabilities are unemployed as compared to only 2(20%) who disagreed. The table further indicates that 4(40%) teachers agreed that persons with physical disabilities are employed as compared to 6(60%) who disagreed.

Teachers' response about the causes of high unemployment or inactivity among persons with disabilities,

Table 4: showing teachers' response about causes of unemployment/ inactivity among people with disabilities.

Teachers response (N=20)	Agree	Disagree
Statement	n	n
Prejudice of employers	16	4
The lack of education and training	6	14
Severity of their disability	12	8
Lack of adaptation of the work place	4	16
Lack of psychological support and guidance	14	6
the existence of a "benefit trap" preventing disabled persons to access to part or full time jobs	12	8

N= Total number of respondents expected

n= total number to a particular item.

Table 4 shows that 8(80%) teachers agree that prejudice of employers is one of the causes of unemployment among person with disabilities as compared to 2(20%) who disagree. Same table indicates that only 3(30%) teachers agree that the lack of education and training causes unemployment compared to 7(70%) who disagree

The table further reveals that 6(60%) teachers agreed to the severity of their disability as a serious cause to unemployment as compared to 4(40%) who disagreed. It is further indicated in the table that only 2(20%) teachers agreed that lack of adaptation to the work place causes inactivity among persons with physical disabilities as compared to 8(80%) who disagreed. More so 7(70%) teachers agreed that the lack of psychological support and guidance renders persons

with physical disabilities unemployed as compared to 3(30%) who disagree. Lastly 6(60%) teachers agree that the existence of a benefit trap causes unemployment among persons with disabilities as compared to 4(40%) who disagree. Counselors' responses on whether persons with physical disabilities are employed in various institutions after college.

Table 5 indicating counselors' responses on whether persons with physical disabilities are employed in various institutions.

<b>Counselors' response N=20</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>disagree</b>
<b>Statement</b>	n	n
Graduates are employed with state	2	18
Graduates employed with municipalities	3	17
Employment in the private sector	4	16

N= Total number of respondents expected

n= total number to a particular item.

Table 5 indicates that only 2(10%) counselors agreed that many of their graduates are employed with state compared to 18(90%) who disagreed. 17(85%) Counselors further disagreed that many persons with physical disabilities are employed in municipalities as compared to 3(15%) who agreed.

Finally about employment in private sector, still a big number of counselors 16(80%) disagreed as compared to only 4(20%) who agreed that persons with physical disabilities are employed.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter the results are discussed according to the research question that was posed to guide the study. Besides this, conclusions and recommendations are drawn from these findings. The importance of findings to the various stake holders is outlined.

### 9.1 Challenges faced with people with physical disabilities in their life; after school

People's attitude towards persons with disabilities is still a social challenge among the persons with disabilities. According to tables 1 and 2 the study reveals 60% and 80% of the teachers and counselors respectively considered this. The study further reveals that unemployment and low income/poverty are the most serious challenges faced by the persons with disabilities in Finland. 100% of teachers and 80% of counselors all agreed with that. This is in comparison with Debra A. Perry (2002) there are 370 million persons with disabilities, 238 million of them of working age around Asia and the Pacific are unemployed.

Poverty/ low income among the persons with disabilities is also outlined as a major challenge and so much associated with unemployment as it is proved by both teachers and counselors 75% and 90% respectively. Yvonne Zimba (2015) observes that according to the latest national study, poverty and low incomes of disabled people are permanent issues in Finland, that 22% of disabled people aged 25-64 have lower incomes than non-disabled people.

Lastly the results reveal that persons with disabilities are not so much discriminated and segregated as indicated by both teachers and counselors in tables 1 and 2 with 40% and 50% respectively. This is contrary to the principal who revealed that there is still kind of thinking that when one is disabled he/she is not

mentally right. This shows segregation of the persons with disabilities. It is further contrary to a report in Finland which reported that, although Finland is one of modern-day welfare countries; also women with disabilities in Finland are facing several challenges of which work and low income and internal family relationships.

These findings therefore indicate that unemployment, low income and people's negative attitudes have a bearing on the social lives of the persons with disabilities in Finland.

## 9.2 People with physical disabilities able to join the labor market and not excluded from social economic development

The study revealed that most of persons with disabilities are not integrated in labour market indicated with 80% of respondents in table 3. This therefore creates serious problems of persons with disabilities being inactive and unemployed with 90% and 80% as revealed in the same table 3. The researcher went ahead to investigate what causes persons with disabilities to remain inactive and unemployed and came out with reasons from the respondents that prejudice of employers 80% and lack of psychological support and guidance 70% are the major causes of unemployment and persons with disabilities being inactive. These were followed by severity of their disability 60% and the existence of a "benefit trap" preventing disabled people to access to part or full time jobs 60%.

The study further indicates lack of education and lack of adaptation of the work place are not a menace to their social life as table 3 indicates that (70%) and 80% respectively disagreed.

The researcher further went ahead to investigate whether persons with disabilities are employed anywhere; the results revealed that persons with disabilities are less or not at all employed in various institutions. This is indicated in table 5 where respondents 90% disagreed; many of their graduates are employed with state, 85% disagreed that most of persons with disabilities graduates are employed with municipalities and 80% disagreed that persons with disabilities are employed in the private sector.

### 9.3 Conclusions

According to the results of the study, unemployment, people's negative attitude towards persons with disabilities and poverty/ low income have a bearing on the life of persons with disabilities in Finland. This was evidenced by the fact that persons with disabilities are either inactive or unemployed. It can be further concluded that the fact that persons with disabilities are less employed in various institutions reveals that they are not able to join the labor market and are excluded from economic development which has a bearing to the working life of the persons with disabilities.

### 9.4 Recommendations

Since the study has established that persons with disabilities are faced with challenges of unemployment, being inactive and poverty/low income, the government should encourage labor organisations through the employment act to include a reasonable percentage of their workers to be persons with disabilities. Legislation should be put in place for any private sector to least employ 50% persons with disabilities of its workers. There should be introduction of guiding and counseling curriculum at lower levels of education to enable all students learn how to deal with any situation that may affect their working life. Also The Finnish Disability Forum which is considered one of the advocacy agencies

should more influence and encourage the national policy on the equality and the rights of persons with disabilities.

#### 9.5 Areas for further studies

In depth research on unemployment among the persons with disabilities is required for improved social working lives of the persons with disabilities.

Studies to the government exclusion of persons with disabilities in labour market are required in order to improve on the jobs availability of the persona with disabilities.

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## APPENDIX 1

### ABBREVIATIONS

E A: Education in Action

EU: European Union

FNBE: Finnish National Board of Education

ECEC: Early Childhood Education and Care

FPD: Finnish People with Disabilities

RIGP: Rehabilitative Instruction and Guidance Programme

UNCPD: United Nations Convention on Persona with Disabilities

UNCHR: United Nations Convention on Human Rights

UNDHR: United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

## APPEDIX 2

### INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE FOR THE COUNSELORS/TRAINERS

#### TRAINING CENTER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIESW

Q1. As one of the service providers here at the training center, I would like you to share your experiences with me for the period you have been serving in this office or department in the following aspects:

- a. Professional experience with service users
- b. Personal experiences with service users

Q2. Handling of service users (students with physical disabilities) is more than just a professional approach, how have you been dealing with them

Q3 During my 10 weeks training at the center, I have observed that at times some students do behave strangely; In this case what measures do you consider for such situations

.

Q4 What challenges affecting your profession as an individual that you ever experienced and what suggestions should you consider to overcome those challenges

Q5. The Finnish legislation on people with physical disabilities ensures social recognition, non-degraded treatment for people with physical disability, including other basic social rights, how do you see such rights appreciated with in the Finnish community at large and at the center in particular

Q6. People with physical disabilities mostly referred to as people with special needs, people with physical impairments...; on contrary they see themselves as degraded they rather prefer referring to them as differently able; whether this is true or not how does this reflect on their attitude in the environment of the training center as a training center

Q7 Since the establishment of the center and the union organisation, legislation on the health care system has been shifting policies (on people with physical disabilities); how did that affect this institution in terms of finance and policy positively or negatively

Q8 Here at the training center students have been classified according to their state of disability and other situations, this includes those with severe disability; how does the institution entertain volunteers or personal assistants who would like to do voluntary work if any

Q9. After three years of training here at the center with financial aid from the government and other sources, students become semi-professionals in different fields of their own choices, therefore able to join the labor market; what measures taken to make sure they join Finnish labour market

Q10. . I would also like to know if after training at the center there is any union or organization or any united body that still advocates people with physical disability in particular as labour union besides FPD

Q11. The training center refers to The Association of Finnish People with Physical Disability; I would like to know if the institution refers to people living in Finland or the natives of Finland; and if so what does it require for the non-natives of Finland to get enrolled at the center

## APPENDIX 3

## QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE FOR THE STUDENTS/SERVICE USERS

Your views on problems of students/service users

Tick what is appropriate to you

1. What form of challenge (disability) are you?

a) Physical      b) Intellectual      c) Mental      d) Blindness      e) Deaf      f) Others

Specify

2. Do you feel treated equally at school?

Yes

No

3. Do you always get assistance in case of any problem in your life

Yes

No

4. What course/vocational training are you pursuing at Validia

a) Carpentry      b) Engineering      c) Music      d) Crafts design      e) Mental works  
 machinery      f) Others      Specify

**Please indicate by show of tick.**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Students receive adequate counselling in all areas during of study		
Service providers don't discriminate		
My parents are pensioners		

**Show by use of a tick 5 factors affecting students/service users**

- i. Poor Health needs
- ii. People's attitude towards people with special needs
- iii. Poverty and low income
- iv. Physician social obstacles
- v. Discrimination and segregation
- vi. Violence
- vii. Unemployment

**SECTION B (Views on supportive special needs).**  
**Indicate by show of a tick ( ✓ )**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
We have better health facilities		
We have better facilities in all areas related to our challenges/needs		
Our rights are fully protected		
We always participate in community activities		
We don't have people to attend to us in case of problems		
We have co-curricular activities.		

**In the table below rate your trainers by either agree or disagree.**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Teachers guide and counsel students		
Trainers are willing to help weak students		
Trainers encourage students to aim higher.		
Encourage students to participate in co-curricular activities.		
Give us enough materials to use at school.		