
COTTOLENGO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION RESEARCH CENTER

*UNIT OF COTTOLENGO EDUCATIONAL AND CHARITABLE SOCIETY (CECS) – NORTH
PARAVUR*

Estd. 1993. Reg. No.: 663/96

Cottolengo Social Service Center

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Annual Report 2019-2020

Introduction

The Cottolengo Vocational Rehabilitation Research Center is an on-going initiative that works for the betterment of the people of various disabilities: intellectual disability, hearing impaired, physically disabled and multiple disability etc. Especially in the district of Malappuram, the problem of disability is very common owing to some sociological and generative problems. The awareness of the problems and welfare of the differently abled persons is really scarce. The problem doesn't end with such persons alone, rather it affects the life of the persons around. The mothers of these persons are first ones who are forced to take burden of the disabled ones of the family, affecting their psychological health too. This situation reflects some important aspects: the families and the society need the awareness of the disability and care for their welfare.

As a response to this situation, Cottolengo Vocational Rehabilitation Research Center chose to orient its resources towards the differently abled persons between 18 to 45. The reason behind such a decision was

due to the very less attention given to such persons after their school days. Therefore CVRRC (Cottolengo Vocational Rehabilitation Research Center) started a center aiming to develop their abilities and talents so as to prepare them for works, through which they can earn their livelihood and stop being a burden to their families. The second important goal CVRRC is the social integration of these person: it teaches them to read and write, to move around in public means by themselves, in order to be independent. The CVRRC also broadens his services towards the parents and families of these persons through other associations.

I. Project Execution

The project execution began in the month of May 2019, with a data collection of differently abled students who had passed tenth and plus two standards in Nilambur and Wandoor block. In order to understand the situation of the students and their families, lot of visits have been done, so as to assess the possibility to bring students to the center. One of the main problems was the transportation. The center began with the inauguration of the academical classes on 10 June 2019, with 21 students with intellectual, physical and hearing disabilities.

1. Stitching and Embroidery

One of our proposal for vocational promotion for the differently-abled persons is stitching and embroidery opened to boys and girls based on their interest. This project aims to teach in different levels. Stitching all types of clothing is ultimate goal. Apart from that we also teach to stitch simple domestic things like handmade mates etc. Since the government has banned usage of plastic bags, this project aims to make alternative means like bags made of clothes and using newspaper.

2. Basic computer courses

Basic computer courses are provided for the students keeping in mind their capacity and interest. A particular attention is also given for the typewriting.

3. Agritourism and Social farming

The vocational training also believes in the relation with the nature for the betterment of a person. Therefore, encourages it through agritourism and social farming. A certain hour of a week is allotted to take care of the green house which aims to provide vegetable needed for the need of the institution. Other than the greenhouse the students also engage themselves in watering the plants and the garden and animal husbandry.

4. Music therapy

Music is an important mean to express the emotion, to relax and can help a person grow with equilibrium. Everyday an hour of the classes is dedicated to music, which aims not only to entertain but also to recognize and to grow the talents of the persons to sing and play simple musical instruments.

5. Sports and Yoga

Sports and yoga are integral parts of our courses. In fact, classes start with exercises and ends with games. Differently able students are given the possibility to play some games such as ring ball, flying disc, carom board and shuttle cock.

6. Other vocational training courses

- At present computer training, stitching and embroidery, basic academics and agriculture. We too provide sports activities, physical education, music therapy and yoga.

In the month of August a devastating flood fell upon the town of Nilambur and around. CVRRC couldn't be indifferent before such natural calamities which kept at risk the people and the families of our students.

II. Project Beneficiary distribution

Flood Relief: Cottolengo Vocational Rehabilitation center functioned as a collection center for flood relief. With the help of volunteers, 1000 kits have been distributed for flood affected families and 7 medical camps were conducted in collaboration with NIMS and Help for helpless. More than 1000 persons from different villages benefitted from the medical camps. Constant visits were conducted distributing kits for 60 bedridden differently abled students and catered 300 school kits.

After facing the consequences of the flood CVRRC continued its journey with 21 students, assessing their vocational aptitude and conducting above mentioned courses.

III. Our outreach findings

- a) Persons with disability: The district of Malappuram has the highest number of persons with disability in all Kerala. The mental retardation is the main disability beside physical disability. These persons are unfortunately cared little compared with other students. Usually, the mother of the family is forced to face the major needs of such persons. The family is often afraid of their future and hesitate to integrate such persons in the society.
- b) The family: CVRRC cares and profoundly believes that the welfare of the differently abled pass through their family. Often

it's the family that is burdened by the presence of such persons in need. They need moral support and solidarity.

c) **Transportation:** Transportation is one of the main problem to be faced for any initiative in favour of such persons. normally, the houses in Kerala especially in Malappuram are built maintaining certain distant. Geographically the district of Malappuram is made of hills and rivers. Consequently, the road are un even. The public means does not reach all the villages. Yet we have visited more than hundred families of the bedridden.

d) **Social awareness on disability:** Social awareness is one of the main issue of this part of Kerala. Even though such persons are not rejected by the society, they are not accepted fully. Lot of work and forces are need to be spent in order to show that these persons are integrate part of the society. To answer this requirement, we have frequently conducted parents meetings and cultural events for the disabled.

IV. Recommendations for the future

The assessment of this project has helped us to reach the following proposals for a fruitful continuation of the same. Such an endeavor can lead towards a Cottolengo presence of social relevance in the area:

a) **Vocational training:** personalised vocational training is the object of our mission which still remains a goal. The various courses we have does not always in tune with the aptitude of the students we have. Therefore, after a period of preparative courses for social integration, more courses of their interest and talent would be more appropriate.

b) The family: the differently abled persons remain a point of anxiety of every family. Therefore more solidarity and moral support is needed in a special way to the mothers, so that these persons may be integrate family members, whose growth and care may be shared among the family members.

c) The bedridden

Among the differently abled persons, there are also the bedridden owing to diseases and age. These type of persons are the most difficult one to help. Because they need constant and individual visits, including palliative care.

d) Social integration

The people of Malappuram district have a long way to go in the process to accept the differently abled people as an integrate part of the society and to give them the due rights and privileges in all the realm of the society.

e) Transportation

Personal and accessible public transportation is still remains the goal to be achieved. lacking such means these persons would left behind, thus becoming dependent on others.

f) Physiotherapy unit would be very useful for our students and people from outside. We too are seeking help to start a physiotherapy unit in our center.

- g) With JSS (a central government agency for the skill training) of central government, we intend to start different types of vocational training for the students.
- h) We aim to collaborate with composite regional center for persons with disabilities in order to promote our center as model center for disabilities.

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Cottolengo Vocational Rehabilitation Research Centre was closed due to the outbreak of pandemic Covid 19.

Online Vocational Training

We started our online training on 20th April and there was an enthusiastic response from the students. In the month of November we started online skill training for differently abled persons in collaboration with JSS, Nilambur.

Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy

October 10th 2020 we started Cottolengo Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy. As a team, CCCP deals with various problems ranging from academic difficulties in children up to family counselling and treatment of psychological disorders. We provide psychosocial support for people who are experiencing greater isolation and fragile human situation due to Covid 19. As a professionally committed team, we try to make mental health a reality for all. While suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 20 years old and we try act as suicide prevention cell. We give online counselling for those who are in need.

La lavo detergents

On December 3rd, we started La lavo detergent unit in order to give job to differently abled persons after lock down period. Differently abled persons produce hand wash, dish wash, car wash, floor wash and other detergents. A new retail shop is opened at Canoly plot Nilmambur in order to sell the products produced by differently abled persons and it was officially inaugurated by Mr. Martin Noyal, DFO of Nilambur.

JSS training on agriculture

JSS, Nilambur in the month of march catered training on agriculture for 20 differently abled students in our institution.

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CVRRC restarted its online classes for its students in the month of May. On 1st June as per the instruction of Kerala Education Department, we conducted the inaugural ceremony of the academic year and our students participated state level inauguration of academic year via online. World environmental day was celebrated by planting trees which were provided by Forest department of Nilambur. During this pandemic situation we have distributed food kits to our students and public in collaboration with Volunteer Association of Cottolengo. Our Mobile challenge for differently abled persons received a good response from generous hearts. In collaboration with VAC, we provided pampers for bedridden differently abled persons in Mampad Panchayath. We provide help desk for differently abled persons in our Block.

Training in retail and placement

In collaboration with Trrain, we conducted one month online class for 30 differently abled persons in Kerala in month of June and they were trained in interview and in retail. 20 of our students had

interview in Tata, Reliance, Mayoori, Popees and 10 got job placement. Our second batch started in the month of august and there are 30 students from all over Kerala. They were trained in resume building and interview skills by HR mangers of Hexawares.

Conclusion

So far, CVRRC has achieved many of its prefixed goals for a better beginning of the Center. It also successfully faced the unexpected flood and distributed food, clothing and medical care for more than thousands of people. According to the outside testimony, it has assumed its significant Cottolengo presence in Nilambur.

Apart from the abovementioned courses, CVRRC also aimed at the welfare of the parents of our students, gathering them as officially recognized associations (special kudumbasree). It also took step for social integration of our students by conducting disability sports day, Christmas celebration and participating in Differently abled cultural fest and Disability day.

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DIRECTOR