

Country Report of Taiwan, ROC

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I. Background of the Taiwan

1. Population: approximately 22,554,000 till June 2003
2. GNP/P: US\$ 12,900 per year till Dec.2002.
3. Life Expectancy: 73 years for males and 79 years for the females in 2002
4. Infant Mortality Rate: 0.65% till Dec.2002
5. Literacy Rate: 96.03% for citizen age over 15 till Dec. 2002. Between ages 15 to 65, the literacy rate is over 93%. Over age 65, rate decreases to 77% in which the male rate still over 90% whereas the female rate only 60%.
6. Employment Rate: 95% till May 2003.
7. Incident of Poverty: 0.9% till Apr.2002. Total number is 60368 families.
8. Education System: Figure 1 shows the current educational system in Taiwan, ROC.

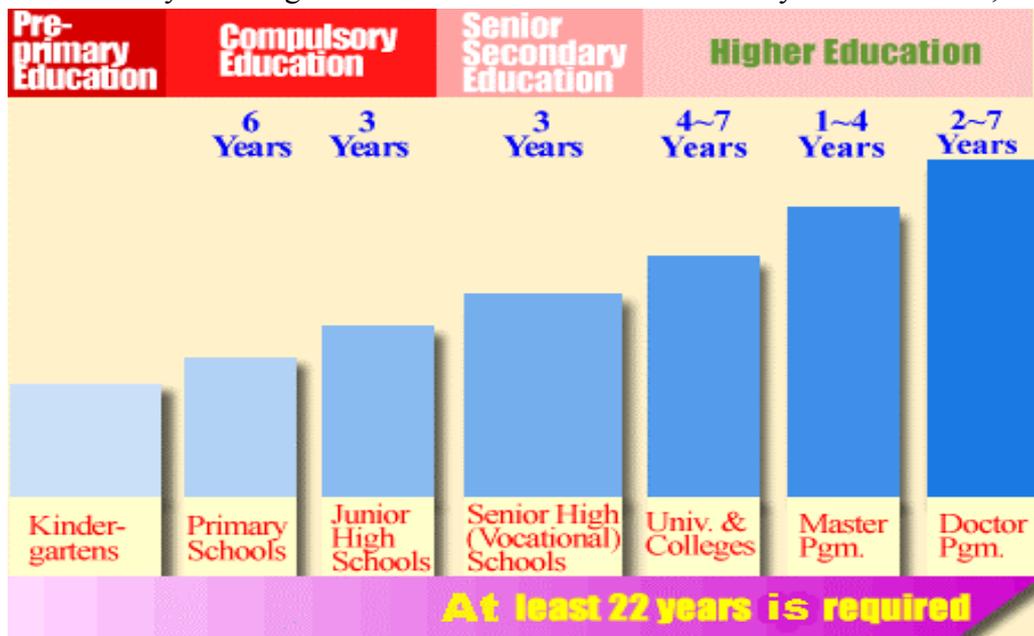


Figure 1 Current Educational system in Taiwan, ROC.

From Figure 1, we can see the compulsory education is 9 years from age 6 to 15 normally. Once compulsory education has been completed, a distinction is made between academic education and vocational education systems (See Figure 2). The academic education consists of senior high school, university and college, and graduate school three levels. Junior high graduates need to get into the senior high schools either through the application, special selection, or entrance exam. In the vocational education system, junior high school graduates enter three-year senior vocational schools or various kinds of five-year junior colleges, either by passing an entrance exam or through special selection. After graduation, students can either undertake various kinds of technical and vocational employment, or they can go on to a higher level of education. For instance, graduates of a senior vocational school can, either through passing an entrance exam or through special selection, enter a junior college for a two-year period of study, or an institute of technology or university of technology for a four-year period of study. After graduation from a two-year or five-year junior college, students can through entrance exam or special selection enter an institute of technology or university of technology for a two-year period of study to obtain a bachelor's degree. Therefore, we can see at least 16 years' study is needed to get an undergraduate degree and at least 22 years is required to complete the whole educational system.

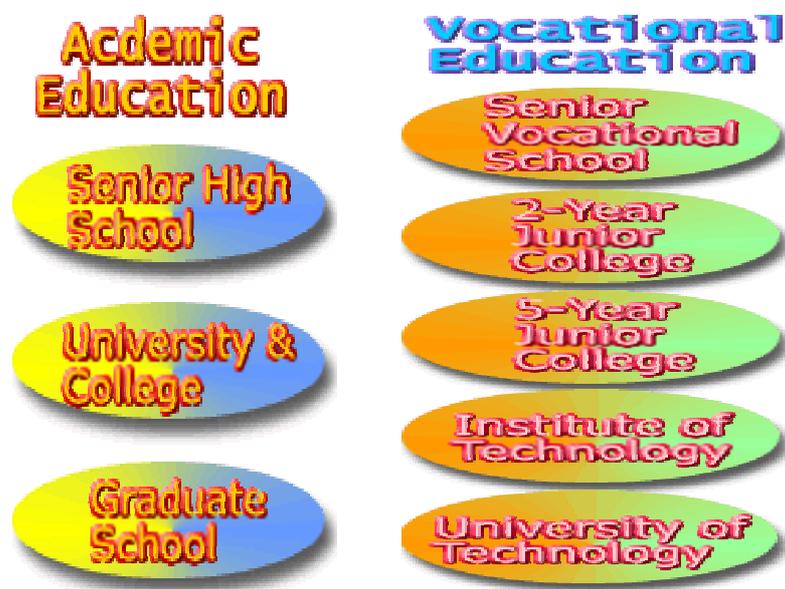


Figure 2 Academic education and vocational education system

Besides the academic and vocational education systems, supplementary schools have also been established to provide the general public with wider opportunities to improve their education. In addition, the ROC also provides special education for gifted and disabled students at both academic and vocational education systems to ensure adequate educational opportunities suited to their needs.

9. Medical/ Health System:

Taiwan's health administration organization is divided into the central level and local (county, city) level. At the central level, the Executive Yuan's Department of Health (DOH) is the nation's highest health administration agency, responsible for the administration of health matters nationwide and the guidance, supervision and coordination of local health bureaus. At the local level, each of the 23 county and city governments and special municipalities of Taipei and Kaohsiung operates a health bureau, responsible for advancing health and medical operations within their respective jurisdiction. Each health bureau also runs public health center in urban/rural townships and health offices in remote areas. There are a total of 25 health bureaus and 371 public health centers in Taiwan area. Figure 3 shows the structure of Taiwan's current medical/health system

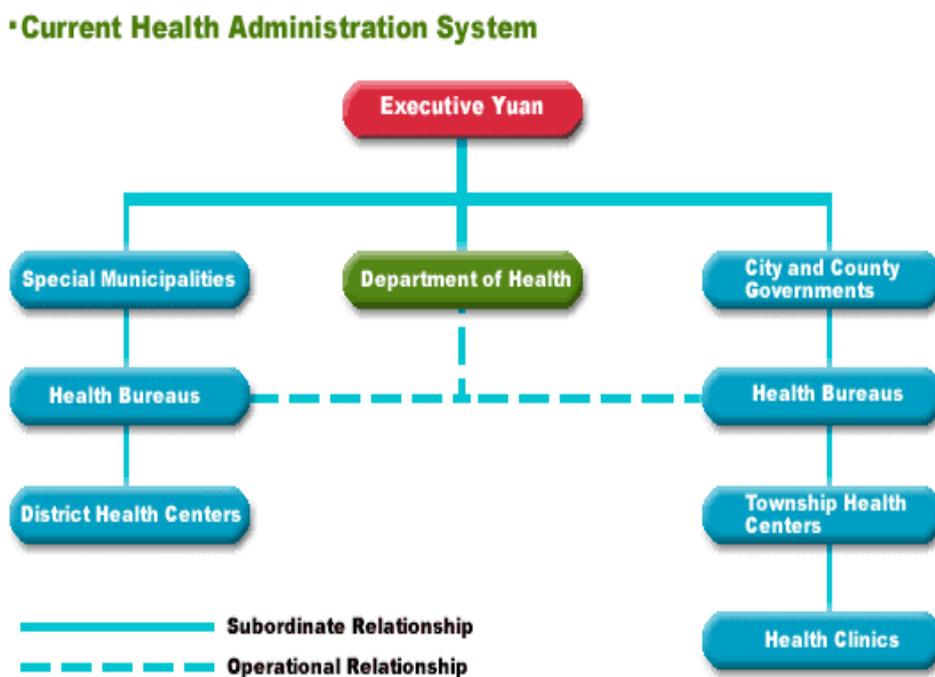


Figure 3 Current Medical / Health System in Taiwan

Operational units under the DOH include the Bureau of Medical Affairs, the Bureau of Pharmaceutical Affairs, the Bureau of Food Sanitation, the Bureau of Planning, the Central Taiwan Office and the National Health Insurance (NHI) Work Group. Affiliated agencies include the Bureau of National Health Insurance, the Center for Disease Control, the Bureau of Health Promotion, the National Food and Drug Laboratories, the National Bureau of Controlled Drugs, the Committee on Chinese Medicine and Pharmacy, the NHI Oversight Committee, the NHI Dispute Review Committee, the NHI Medical Fee Coordinating Committee, the National Health Research Institute, the Center for Drug Evaluations, the Taiwan Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation, the Drug Poisoning Rescue Foundation, and 24 hospitals, the Center for Chest Diseases and five therapeutic care facilities.

II. Situation of People with Intellectual Disabilities

1. National Policy for People with Disabilities (Intellectual Disabilities)

To let every student with special needs to get free and appropriate education since age 3 to 18 is the current national policy for people with disabilities, including the intellectual disabilities for preparation to extend the compulsory education to 12 years. Inclusion now is the trend toward this goal, however, continuing placement such as special education school, special education class, and resource room programs still exist to suit for the least restrictive environment placement needs. As we all know, inclusion will only be succeeded if the regular education is well - prepared to accept and educate the students with special needs into the regular settings. During the past few years, ROC government put a lot of efforts on the regular education reform. The beliefs of regular education reform for the nine-year compulsory education (from elementary to junior-high levels) are "to take good care of every student" and "to cultivate the students' basic competencies in ten areas and let them take-to-go for the rest of their lives." This reform also brings up the issue to alter the former subject-based curriculum to the domain-based curriculum, which is more real life-oriented and is more possible and flexible to adapt for intellectually disabled individuals. In addition, the government also put much emphasis on the revision of the Special Education Law and the Disabled Citizen Welfare Law, their regulations, and related acts. Hundreds of hearings all around Taiwan were held to gather the ideas and data from various persons and resources, including the experts, the teachers, the administrators, the parents, and the disabled adults in the past few years. Many new policies and provisions were implemented. For instance, inclusive and non-categorical

education was provided to all disabled children in preschools from age 3. The label of these children was the developmentally delayed. All preschool programs have to accept the disabled children and include them with the regular children by rendering special education personnel as coordinators and remedial teachers. Besides, Program evaluation for all special education classes needs to be implemented at least once every two years by the local government. The Ministry of Education also needs to evaluate the local government at least once every two years and budget will be allocated according to their accomplishments.

2. Number of Children and People with Intellectual Disabilities

Till Dec. 2002, Number of the disabled is about 830, 000 which stand for the 3.7% of the total population. Among them, 76,976 were intellectually disabled (9.3%) and 81,667(9.8%) were multiple disabled.

3. Law Concerned with People with Disabilities

Special Education Law /Regulations and related acts firstly promulgate in 1984, then revised in 1997. This new version brought a lot of changes and new visions based on the international development trends of special education, i.e., the integration, Regular Education Initiative, and inclusion. Its regulations and 16 related acts were announced respectively by the Ministry of Education during 1997-1999.

Besides, our government promulgated the "Disabled Citizen Welfare Law" in 1980 and 1985. The Ministry of Interior further amended this law and renamed it the "Physically and Mentally Disabled Citizens Protection Law" promulgated in April 1997 and partially revised in Nov.2001. It includes the responsibilities of medical care, education, employment services, welfare services, transportation, barrier-free environment and preferential tax treatment for each institution. This law also depicts the regulations of health rehabilitation, educational rights, vocational training, welfare services and institutions, punishment articles for those who do not follow the law.

4. Government Agencies/ Department Concerned with Disabilities (Intellectual Disabilities)

Three main government agencies in the central level take charge of affairs of the disabled. Ministry of Education takes care of the disabled children in the educational system, Ministry of Interior takes charge of the social welfare part, and Department of Health is in charge of the medical and health part.

In the educational system, a special executive section was set up in Ministry of Education and in each city and county respectively taken charge of all special education affairs since 1997. Also, special education center in 5 universities and 8

teachers colleges at national level helps the government to supervise the development of special education and to give supportive services to the local special education programs nearby its areas.

In the social welfare system, there are 13 public institutions accommodated 2,100 persons, 151 private institutions accommodated 10,477 persons, 49 public owned but private run institutes accommodated 3, 486 persons in Sep, 2002. The Department of Social Welfare in Ministry of Interior supervises all the above institutions.

As to the medical and health system, Department of Health has set up a linking bridge between the social welfare and educational systems. For example, medical hospitals should inform the other two systems about each newborn baby with disabilities or high-risk child for the follow-up detection and intervention.

Nevertheless, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary team service model is ROC government concerns, so the above three main agencies' cooperation and transition is the major effort currently. For instance, Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Interior has established an early intervention service promotion team with the purpose of coordinating child welfare efforts among health and educational organizations, and various experts, scholars and private sector professional groups. Some other free early intervention programs by integrating the educational, medical, and social welfare disciplines in metropolitan areas are also rendered for children with special needs under age 3.

5. Activities of Non Governmental Organization for People with Intellectual Disabilities (including parent organizations and self-advocacy activities)

Professionals, parent organizations, and runners of the private institutions also did a lot of efforts to the progress of special education in Taiwan. For instance, parents are working on establishing parent organizations and advocating disabled individuals' rights. At least 20 non-governmental associations have been set up to promote the education and welfare of the intellectually disabled. Our association, Special Education Association of the Republic of China, is the biggest with special education teachers and professionals as members. We have over 5000 members all over Taiwan to advocate the education and welfare policies and practical issues for the disabled including the intellectually disabled. For the past few years, we are busy on leading the revision of laws, holding many seminars and conferences to disseminate knowledge, research findings, and new trends concerning disabilities to its members, and helping the Ministry of Education to evaluate local governments' accountabilities and accomplishments on special education development.

As to the parent organization, delegates from local parents associations all over

Taiwan founded Parents Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PAPID) in 1992. The reason for establishing such a central administrative body was to speak for all intellectually disabled in Taiwan for their rights and protection and to assist all families with intellectually disabled persons to bravely deal with problems they must face. On the other hand, this organization try very hard to appeal to the government to work out a comprehensive life-long care-taking policy for the intellectually disabled so that they may have a chance to fully develop their potential, to share life in their communities and to lead a life that is meaningful enough and with dignity, like everyone else. It consists of 37 local chapters in Taiwan. Up to 2000, over 15,000 families joined different local chapters. During the 1998-2000, 228 delegates from all local chapters meet once a year, 46 directors and supervisors meet once every three months, and 12 standing directors and supervisors meet once one and half month. All participants are unpaid elected volunteers.

As to the activity of Self-Advocates, although we have some associations and initiatives advocated by the disabled themselves, by people with intellectual disabilities, as I know, still needs to be strengthened in Taiwan, ROC at present.

6. Services available for People with Intellectual Disabilities

1) Medical Service

With the implementation of the Bureau of National Health Insurance (BNHI) in 1995, all citizens in Taiwan have obtained comprehensive medical care such as health prevention, clinical care, hospitalization, resident care and social rehabilitation. Starting from the Year 2000, the BNHI was committed towards establishing a proactive management-style for the National Health Insurance Program, upgrading healthcare services and public satisfaction levels, as well as providing excellent healthcare services. After paying premiums and obtaining NHI cards, the beneficiaries of NHI are entitled to receive comprehensive medical services. Services are available at contracted healthcare institutions such as hospitals, clinics, contracted pharmacies, and appointed medical laboratories, in the case of illness, injury, or childbearing. In addition, to provide continued long-term nursing and medical care, the BNHI has also included home care and hospice care within the scope of National Health Insurance. The package of medical services covered under the NHI program includes outpatient service and inpatient care, Chinese medicine, dental care, childbirth, physical therapy, preventive health care, home care, and rehabilitation for chronic mental illness. Preventive health care includes prenatal examinations for pregnant women, children's preventive healthcare, cervical PAP smear test, and preventive health care examinations for elders. The scope of care services includes diagnosis, examination, testing, consulting, surgery, drugs, supplies/devices, treatment, nursing care, and

wards. The above provisions of NHI system provide the intellectually disabled secure and good quality medical services.

2) Educational Service

Resource room programs for mild disabilities, special classes and special schools for moderate and severe disabilities, and some programs affiliated with the hospitals or institutions for profound and multiple disabilities are still existed in current educational systems. The spirit of inclusion, however, is still the guideline and the regular setting should be the first priority while doing the educational placement. In 2003, 1,219 special classes with 9,967 intellectually disabled students were set up from elementary to senior high levels in regular schools; 25 special schools with 613 classes and 5685 disabled students in total. Among them, only 7 schools are specifically for the hearing impaired, visually impaired, or physically disabled. Among the other 18 schools, 23 classes with 71 students are at preschool level, 65 classes with 346 students are at elementary level, 77 classes with 870 students are at junior high level for the severely intellectually disabled and multiple disabled. Some new provisions within this decade for the intellectually disabled are summarized as follows.

(1) Non-categorical resource room programs for the disabled including the intellectually disabled at the elementary, junior and senior high level. Till 2003, there are 1458 resource room programs with 22,302 disabled students all around Taiwan.

(2) Special classes in regular vocational schools for the mildly retarded at the senior high level were set up in 1994. In 2003, 239 special classes with 3053 intellectually disabled students entered senior high vocational schools. Special schools, however, put the main emphasis on providing senior high education for moderately retarded students. In 2003, there are 18 special schools with 245 classes and 2734 intellectually disabled students at senior high level in total.

(3) Including all the preschool level intellectually disabled children into the regular kindergartens by providing necessary supports and remedial education. In 2003, only 93 segregated classes with 544 developmentally disabled children are set up for different categories of disabled. The other 4666 preschoolers are all in the inclusive settings.

In addition, an annual IEP is required for each of the disabled and needs to be documented within 30 days after placement by an IEP team which should includes teachers both in regular and special education, administrators, parents, and professionals in related services (i.e., OT, PT, & ST). The IEP has to be reviewed at least once in a semester. At present, non-categorical resource room programs for the disabled including intellectually disabled at the elementary, junior high and senior

high level is the main education program for the mildly disabled in Taiwan. It provides direct teaching to the disabled students through pull-out programs and co-teaching as well, or indirect services with collaborative consultation to the general teachers, or providing assisted technology /aids to various disabled students.

Also, ROC government renders free and appropriate education to the disabled adult who has not received or completed the nine years compulsory education before through adult continuing education system.

3) Family Support

Schools in all levels needs to provide parents of children with special needs supportive services such as information, counseling, guidance, and training courses as the Special Education Law requested. Also, the law asked the school to implement an IFSP for parents with disabilities within two weeks when a new school year begins.

4) Job Availability

As to the disabled adults, supported employment especially for the intellectually disabled is followed the inclusion trend. For the competitive employment, quota system is set up to secure disabled persons' job placement. In any government running institute with employees more than 50, 2 % of them need to be disabled. In private sectors, with employees more than 100, 1% of them need to be disabled. The salary for the disabled should be no discriminated and should not less than the basic national salary standard. Besides, all kinds of government exam for getting the job license cannot reject the disabled unless the restriction is obviously shown. Only for the intellectually disabled persons, sheltered workshops, vocational training centers, and supported employment services are rendered based on their needs.

5) Others

'The Physically and Mentally Disabled Citizen Protection Law' states that each city and county government should conduct possible provisions such as various media programs, cultural activities, and talent shows to enrich the cultural and spiritual life of the disabled. Barrier-free environment is required in all public architectures by the law. Both high-tech and low-tech devices are provided to the disabled for them to access to the public places and communicate with their normal friends.

7. Community Based Programs for People with Intellectual Disabilities

The existing large institutions started to alter into small size and community-based ones to include them into the communities within this decade. Many group homes in the communities were set up. Besides, the disabled persons can have 50% discount while buying all transportation tickets, and free for entering the public recreational places. At present, many shops in the communities are run by

the people with intellectual disabilities and normal people together.

III. Conclusion

After all, we can see Taiwan now is doing a lot of reforms in the whole society. Our regular educational reform tries to change the schools, teachers, and curriculum to suit for all students to learn with their own needs. The social welfare and medical systems try to cover all the welfares that the disabled need. All the provisions we implement now make the inclusion of the disabled into the community more accessible and possible. We know it is not to easy to change an original segregated society for the people with disabilities, especially for people with intellectual disabilities, into an inclusion one and we know we still have a long way to go to make everything run smoothly and effectively, however, we see the vision of the future society, a society for all no matter he or she has a disability or not and a society with understanding and loving.