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Administrative Order No. 69  
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SUBJECT: **Guidelines on the Implementation of the Work Center for High Functioning Mentally Challenged Individuals**

## I. Rationale

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 3% of any given population in the world are persons who are mentally retarded or now known as mentally challenged persons. Considering this number in the light of our present Philippine population of 75 million, it will mean that 2.2 million Filipino fall under the category of mentally challenged.

The 1995 National Census indicates that a total of 919, 292 persons with disabilities are on the range of 0-29 years old. The age range of 18-29 has the most number of persons with disabilities including mentally challenged persons. This age range belongs to the working group. In studies and reports on mental retardation, it is indicated that 84% of the mentally challenged population are educable. They can be trained and enabled to become self-reliant and useful citizens. Mentally challenged individuals, however, take longer time to learn. They require specialized care and training considering the nature of their disability. Nevertheless, they have the same rights as any other individual to do productive work and meaningful occupation.

Acquisition of skills and work will give the high functioning mentally challenged persons self-esteem, feeling of accomplishment and worth. It will give adult status and dignity to them. Thus, they should be given all the necessary opportunities to prove their worth and to live a productive life to their optimum capacity.

The Work Center was thus envisioned as a practical approach in helping high functioning mentally challenged persons acquire productive skills, develop positive work habits for income-generating activities, gain employment and earn money.

## II. Legal Basis

- A. Article II, on Declaration of Principles and State Policies of the Philippine Constitution, mandates that: "The State shall promote a just and dynamic, social order that will ensure prosperity and independence of the nation and

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free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, raising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all”.

- B. Republic Act No. 1179 passed in 1954 provides for the promotion of vocational training for the blind and other persons disabled by natural and/or accident causes resulting in job handicaps, and preparing such persons for jobs suitable to their disabilities and talents. It further provides under Section 7, Item 7 of Republic Act no. 1179, the establishment of the sheltered workshop as an outlet for the employment of persons with disabilities.
- C. Republic Act No. 5416, Otherwise Known as the “Social Welfare Act of 1968”, provides that vocational rehabilitation sheltered workshops shall be established in each of the one hundred nine (109) then congressional districts of the country. Section 3, of this Act mandated the Government to provide a comprehensive program of social services designed to ameliorate the living conditions of distressed Filipinos particularly those who are handicapped by reasons of poverty, youth, physical and mental disability, illness and old age.
- D. R.A. 7277 of 1991, Otherwise Known as “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons” provided for sheltered workshop employment to PWDs who cannot be absorbed in open employment.
- E. Proclamation No. 125 of 1993, declaring the nationwide observance in the Philippines of the Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, (1993-2002), which seeks for the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities.

### **III. Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this Order:

1. Mentally Challenged– refers to those who have significantly sub-average intellectual functioning resulting to or associated with concurrent impairments in adaptive behavior, in coping with any demand of daily life manifested through their sensory motor, communication, self-help, socialization, academic and vocational skill.
2. Work Center – refers to a facility or a venue for work, in this case for high functioning mentally challenged individuals or with learning difficulties and for those who are capable of learning skills but who are unable to carry out a job under ordinary competitive conditions. The Work Center shall enable this special group to be members of the community workforce and paid in accordance with the value of their work.
3. Sheltered Employment – refers to the provision of productive work for disabled persons through workshops providing special facilities, income-

producing projects or homework schemes with a view of giving them the opportunity to earn a living thus enabling them to acquire a working capacity required in open industry.

4. Open Employment or Competitive Employment - refers to employment in industry or under normal competitive conditions in factories, offices, shops.
5. Project Worker – refer to the person with disability/working in the work center.
6. Rehabilitation – refers to the process of restoring the high functioning mentally challenged to their optimal physical, social, emotional and economic functioning
7. Rehabilitation Plan – refers to the specific activities which the social worker and the rehabilitation team formulate with the client and family in order to help them in the client's rehabilitation.
8. Rehabilitation Team - refers to the multidisciplinary team who works coordinatively to plan, monitor and evaluate the rehabilitation plan.

#### **IV. Objectives**

##### General:

To enable the maximum social and economic adjustment of high functioning mentally challenged individual for life, within the level of their mental and physical impairment, through vocational skills training and employment in a Work Center.

##### Specific Objectives:

1. To develop expertise of staff/workers in operationalizing a Work Center specifically designed to meet the needs of the mentally challenged individuals.
2. To promote a venue for training and learning of positive attitude towards work of the mentally challenged individuals.
3. To provide employment for mentally challenged individuals who can best function under controlled environment.
4. To advocate community support through demonstration to the community of the capabilities of the high functioning mentally challenged persons.

5. To provide opportunity to parents, siblings and community members to actively participate in the rehabilitation of high functioning mentally challenged individuals.

## V. Project Description

The Work Center is a business-oriented facility whose main concern is to provide opportunities for the development of the remaining abilities of clients to realize their aspiration for economic self-sufficiency, thus enabling them to become an asset rather than a burden to their families and community.

The Work Center is initially for high functioning mentally challenged individuals who will serve other individuals with learning deficit due to some mental and physical disabilities.

The Work Center shall have two aspects:

- 1) **A transitional or short term employment preparation and training-** high functioning mentally challenged individuals are trained intensively after which, basing on assessment of the rehabilitation team, will be assisted to seek jobs in the open labor market. They may also be given/referred for capital loan assistance for livelihood project.
- 2) **Long term employment** - are for clients who can engage in productive work but only under protective condition. Such clients shall remain in the work center.

While undergoing training, the clients shall be given incentives for their works to keep them motivated. As products are sold they will be paid in accordance with the value of their work.

The Work Center will be a pilot project with a 3-year duration by the Programs and Projects Bureau to be implemented in selected DSWD Field Offices in coordination with the Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) or other Government Organizations (GOs).

A Manpower Development Officer (MDO) will act as the vocational instructor/counselor and placement officer. The MDO will be hired on a contractual or casual basis. He / She will undergo training on livelihood projects, suited to the type of clientele when necessary, and participate in appropriate trainings available within the region. The Bureau will assist the region in coordinating with TESDA or other agencies to initiate the necessary training. The MDOs will be responsible in training the high functioning mentally challenged as project workers and for the management of the projects assigned to them. The work center staff shall also include a social worker.

The education of parents, siblings and interested community members on mental retardation is also part of the project. This will enable them to understand and help in the rehabilitation of the mentally challenged.

## **VI. Target Project Areas**

The target areas of the project demonstration are those with high prevalence of mental retardation where there is a SPED Center for mentally challenged individuals and where an interested, responsive and cooperative LGU or NGO exists.

The Work Center must be accessible and strategically located. If possible, it should be within the area where the mentally challenged individuals and their families live.

The project is being piloted in Davao City since the last quarter of year 2000, and in Region VIII and Cordillera Administrative Region in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of CY 2001, respectively.

## **VII. Eligibility Requirements**

For the pilot project, the high functioning mentally challenged individuals shall be the target beneficiaries.

The mentally challenged should meet the following criteria:

1. Male or female;
2. Must be of working age (16 years old and over)
3. With an IQ of 50 and above;
4. Assessed to have work potential and capable of achieving employment; and
5. Physically and mentally fit to undergo the activities at the Work Center as certified by a medical officer.

## **VIII. Components of the Project**

1. Assessment - This involves a series of steps taken to help the project staff understand the problem areas and needs of a client. The social worker, as one

of the project staff, shall look into the physical/medical, social, psychological, vocational and economic aspect of the problem.

The social worker in the assessment phase gathers and analyze information about the client to be able to identify the problem and to prepare the rehabilitation plan.

2. Capability Building – This involves the strengthening/harnessing of the knowledge, attitudes and skills of the community leaders, the project staff and other staff involved in the project to enable them to understand, to care and to handle mentally challenged individuals. Capability building will be conducted regularly and as the need arises. It may be in the form of orientation, staff development, attendance to seminars, symposium etc.

The capability building activities are as follows:

- a. Organization and orientation of community leaders and volunteers to get their involvement and commitment to the project.
  - b. Training of MDO on care and management and specific livelihood skills for the project workers.
  - c. Training of social workers and other staff on the care and management of mentally challenged persons
3. Vocational Training - This involves training in a particular trade, arts and crafts to enable the client acquire skills, enhance self-esteem and chance for employment and ultimately become productive. The training may include projects such as chalk/candle/paper making, commercial gardening and other livelihood activities appropriate to their disability. Trainees will be given incentive for their work to keep them motivated. Later, as products are sold, they will be given remuneration commensurate to their level of skills.
  4. Social Skills Training - This involves training the high functioning mentally challenged persons along social skills to prepare them for integration in the community. The social skills training will include among others personal hygiene, self-care, health and safety, communications, travels and working with others, understanding of work preparation and management of saving.
  5. Education of parents, siblings and interested community members – This involves provision of opportunities to parents, siblings and community leaders to be oriented / trained on the subject of mental retardation, and the care and management of mentally challenged individuals. This will enable them to actively participate in the rehabilitation of the mentally challenged members of their families / community.

6. Provision of Social Services – This involves provision of social services, directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, such as the following:
  - Health/Medical Services – provision of health/medical/dental services designed to help clients attain good health condition.
  - Social and Auxiliary Services – provision of integrated social services aimed at helping mentally challenged persons to achieve effective work and social adjustment. This include groups/individual counselling, and referrals to other agencies for services such as medical, spiritual, recreational and socio-cultural activities, among others.
  - Psychological Services and Vocational Guidance Services – provision of psychological services to include assessment and diagnosis in order to effect appropriate classification of level or degree of severity of mental retardation. Likewise, to help clients develop healthy attitude toward self, others, and the environment through structured learning experiences and group interaction. This include assessment of work skills, psychological testing and evaluation, counseling and psychotherapy such as play activity, therapy and behavior modification.
7. Vocational Services - Provision of vocational skills training appropriate to the residual capacities of the mentally challenged persons.
8. Documentation – This involves program documentation to record project accomplishments, benefits, good practices and success stories in the pilot field offices as basis for monitoring and evaluation.
9. Monitoring/Evaluation – This involves quarterly monitoring by the central office and field offices concerned. An annual evaluation or program audit shall be conducted to assess effectivity of services for program modification/enrichment and replication.
10. Research – This involves conduct of an evaluative research which shall be conducted at the end of the third year to determine the effectiveness of the project.

## **IX. Delineation of Responsibilities**

### **A. DSWD Central Office**

1. Provide technical assistance to the pilot DSWD Field Offices in the operationalization of the project.

2. Allocate funds for pilot project implementation including fund augmentation for the purchase of services of a manpower development officer, if and when necessary.
3. Conduct initial orientation of the project to intermediaries together with the Field Office
4. Consolidate and analyze reports submitted by the regions as basis for technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation
5. Conduct research and documentation/packaging of the project

B. DSWD Field Office

1. Conduct consultation with intermediaries to determine their interest, readiness, commitment and capability to implement the project.
2. Prepare and sign Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with implementing agency, when necessary. Said MOA shall be in accordance with DSWD policies.
3. Assist in the orientation of intermediaries on the project.
4. Assist in identifying and hiring of a manpower development officer.
5. Monitor and provide technical assistance to intermediaries on project implementation.
6. Develop and maintain linkages with local officials, NGOs and GOs in the areas relative to the project implementation.
7. Assist in the evaluation research and documentation of the project.
8. Ensure judicious fund utilization and disbursement.
9. Prepare and submit quarterly report on the project to the central office.

C. Local Government Units/NGOs/POs/Other GOs

1. Provide the venue for the work center and implement and supervise the day to day operation of the project.
2. Provide administrative support in the implementation of the project including hiring or purchasing of the services of a manpower development officer.



3. Identify and mobilize resources for the provision of social services
4. Develop and maintain linkages with NGOs, POs and other GOs.
5. Conduct public awareness campaign concerning persons with disabilities.
6. Prepare quarterly status reports and submit to field office as basis for further technical assistance.
7. Organize group of volunteers/community leaders to assist in the different services provided.

## **X. Roles and Functions of Project Staff**

### **A. Manpower Development Officer**

1. Teach the mentally challenged vocational courses using special adoptive methods, techniques and devices
2. Prepare and introduce new, adopted and improved instruction aids, method, devices.
3. Participate with other rehabilitation workers in the evaluation of the project worker.
4. Recommend clients for job placement
5. Coordinate with responsible offices in the evaluation of effectivity of training courses and courses of study, method and techniques of instructions.
6. Submit progress report of trainees
7. Attend and participate in seminar workshop conferences and staff meeting and act as resource person, when necessary.

### **B. Social Welfare Officer II**

1. Conduct interviews, home visits, care, and counseling, when indicated.
2. Gather collateral information and accomplish social case study report
3. Conduct case conference, when necessary

