

Rising to the top



A child suffering from Down's syndrome receives a prize at an event organised by the Centre

Project on way to help more patients suffering from Down's syndrome take up jobs in various sectors



Children suffering from Down's syndrome take part in an event.

● Down's syndrome continues to be the most common chromosomal disorder with the number of patients rising every year.

● The new programme sets a probationary period of one year to assure that the rights of both employers and employees are guaranteed.

TDT|Manama
Supriya Reginald

Efforts are on to involve people with Down's syndrome in the local job market, according to the director of the Centre for Down Syndrome Care Dr Mohammed Abdul Karim Mannai.

Statistics provided by the Centre reveals nearly 1,500 people, of different ages, in Bahrain, suffer from Down's syndrome.

A new milestone project aimed at involving them in the banking sector, supermarkets and salons is on the way. People with Down's syndrome have proven their capability to undertake other jobs rather than just being in the field of agriculture, painting and simple jobs, he asserted.

The new programme sets a probationary period of one year to assure that the rights of both employers and employees are guaranteed and to give people with Down's syndrome the chance to prove what they are capable of performing at their new workplaces.

Also known as Trisomy 21, Down's syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by the presence of all or part of the third copy of chromosome 21 whereas typical individuals have two copies. Physical growth delays, characteristic facial features, and mild to moderate intellectual disability are associated with Down's syndrome.

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most common chromosomal disorder with the number of patients rising every year. "Over 1,500 individuals with Down's syndrome live in Bahrain and out of them around 400 are registered with our society," Dr Mannai said. "For reasons unknown, the remaining individuals haven't approached us yet," he added.

With patients ranging from the age of one to 56, the society plays a dual role in supporting those with Down's syndrome. "We have different services and tasks for the community; we hold workshops, help train family members as well as members of the society on how to deal with those with Down's syndrome. Within the walls of our society, we conduct lectures twice a week on Monday and Thursday to train specialised including teachers

from the Ministry of Education," said Dr Mannai

"Activities for the students include speech therapy and for our younger students we provide early intervention," he added.

Established in 1998, the Bahrain Down syndrome Society, first of its kind in the GCC, caters to the social and developmental needs of those with Down's syndrome through educational and physical activities. Their efforts have been supported prominently by the Government while private sector also offers some help and support.

"We receive a huge financial support from the government, nearly 80 per cent, the remaining 20pc comes from the private sector. We have a wonderful relationship with the private sector," said Dr Mannai. "On an annual basis our funds add up to BD180, 000," he revealed.

The society currently has all hands on deck with their new milestone project dedicated to paving a salient path for those with Down's syndrome with regard to their career.

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The new programme states that if a company has an agreement with the society to employ one of their students, the employee will not be handed to the company unless the company is satisfied with their work, a one-year contract will be honoured to give them an opportunity to prove themselves at the job.

"Our society is trying to integrate these individuals in schools and we have succeeded. Yet we require the Ministry of Education to take more action with regard to this situation," said Dr Mannai.

"The integration is not simple, it is a huge method that requires facilities and budget. The ministry is doing its best but we need more," he added.

