

Kingdom of Bahrain



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Snapshot

Area

Archipelago in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, east of Saudi Arabia. 665 sq km, or 3.5 times the size of Washington, D.C.

Population

1,050,000 approximately, including 530,000 citizens (Human Rights Report, 2008)

Official Language

Arabic is the universal language, English is widely spoken, Farsi and Urdu less so.

Ethnic Groups

63% Indigenous Bahrainis (northern Arab)
19% Asians
10% other Arab groups
8% Iranians
6% other ethnic groups
(Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2002)

Median Age

30.1 years

Children under 5

65,000 (UNICEF Bahrain, 2007)
Children with disabilities: Data is not available

Source

CIA. The World Factbook. Bahrain.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ba.html>

"Almost all children respond to music. Music is an open-sesame, and if you can use it carefully and appropriately, you can reach into that child's potential for development."

Clive Robbins, Nordoff-Robbins Center, New York

Demographics

Music therapy in early childhood education in Bahrain, 2008:

Number of music therapists: 1
Workplace conditions: Sessional
Setting: Special education school

There is no music therapy education program in the Arab Gulf region. The music therapists working in the region are trained in Europe (in Dubai), Canada (in Bahrain), and the USA (in Qatar). The only music therapy service available in Bahrain at the moment is at the Children's Academy. The program started in October, 2008, and provides individual and small-group interventions to children with various diagnoses such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, PDD (NOS).

Background Information

Children with special needs in the Arab Gulf region have long been excluded from or have not received adequate education. According to Al-Hilawani, Koch, and Braaten (2008), "this is a culture where efforts have been made to hide individuals with disabilities from society" (p. 3). Children with special needs have traditionally attended special centers. However, the concept of inclusive education is gaining more attention now. This concept was developed as part of the "Education for all" issued in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. It means that all children, regardless of their sociocultural background or their abilities, have rights to the same standards of education. However, there still exist some barriers to this principle, and they are listed in "The development of education: National

report of the Kingdom of Bahrain (Inclusive education: the way of the future)" (2008, p. 67):

- Shortage of specialized human cadres in the field of the provision of care for students with special needs
- Shortage of financial resources to execute projects for inclusive education for students with special needs. The equipment and other requirements of this group are also too costly.
- Lack of data and information about the cost of education for students with special needs whether they are in schools or private centers
- High expectations of the parties concerned (society and parents) to get quick results following the integration of these children into formal schools can have a negative effect on the development process.

Music therapy in Bahrain is not yet a state-recognized health care profession, but the future projects of the Ministry of Social Development might include music therapy as part of their therapeutic services available to the public.

Common Approaches

The music therapy approaches used in early childhood education include Developmental Approach, Behavioral Music Therapy (ABA), the Nordoff-Robbins Creative Music Therapy Model, as well as music educational approaches (Dalcroze, Orff-Schulwerk). Techniques used are active music making and improvisation (instrumental, vocal), singing, chanting, music and movement, painting to music, music listening.

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Resource

Al-Hilawani, Y. A., Koch, K. R., & Braaten, S. R. (2008). Enhancing services for students with mild disabilities in the Middle East Gulf region: A Kuwait initiative. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus*, 4(5) Article 1. Retrieved May 10, 2009 from <http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/tecplus/vol4/iss5/art1>

Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain (2008). The development of education: National report of the Kingdom of Bahrain (Inclusive education: the way of the future). Retrieved May 10, 2009 from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/bahrain_NR08.pdf

About the Author



Aksana Kavaliova-Moussi, Belarus-born, graduated from the University of Windsor, Ontario, in 2008. During her academic years, she provided music therapy for children with special needs, expectant teen mothers, had been a member of the "Music Therapy in Medicine" project working with the oncology patients. As a music therapy intern, she worked with a hospice population in Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit Metro area, Michigan, and with pediatric patients at the Windsor Regional Hospital. She joined her husband in Bahrain in 2008, and now works at the Children's Academy.

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