



United Nations  
Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural  
Organization

# Towards Inclusive Practices in Secondary Education

A background image showing the silhouettes of a group of people, likely students and a teacher, in a classroom setting. The silhouettes are dark against a lighter background. Two horizontal yellow bars are overlaid on the image, one above the other, partially obscuring the silhouettes. A thin white vertical line is positioned to the left of the text at the bottom.

Secondary Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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ED-2003/WS/59

# **Towards inclusive practices in secondary education**

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Submitted to

The International Working Group  
on Development and Disability



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# Preface

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Secondary schooling influences adolescents at those crucial moments when they make the career decisions and life choices that will determine their future. The steady evolution of the social, cultural, economic and technological worlds in which today's youngsters will live calls for a new vision of secondary education. UNESCO aims to nourish this new vision by identifying good practices and promising innovations wherever they can be found.

Two crucial issues are equity and quality. Education must be available to all adolescents: girls, boys and those with special needs or disabilities. The 1994 Salamanca Declaration and Framework for Action, which clarified both the principles and the practice of inclusive education, was a milestone in the 'Education for All' movement. It affirmed that all children, without exception, have the right to go to school. Inclusive education seeks to transform school systems by removing the barriers that deny pupils access to learning. It affirms that each child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and needs and that education systems must address the wide diversity of backgrounds and expectations that children bring to learning.

The Salamanca statement was reaffirmed at the Dakar World Education Forum in April 2000, and at an international expert meeting, General Secondary Education in the Twenty-first Century, held in Beijing in May 2001. Sadly, despite some encouraging developments, current strategies and programmes have largely failed to meet the needs of adolescents who risk being marginalized or excluded. Programmes for these groups tend to operate outside the mainstream and have focused on early childhood and primary education, often neglecting secondary education.

UNESCO's Section for General Secondary Education and the International Working Group on Disability and Development (IWGDD) have joined forces to produce this publication. It demonstrates that successful examples of inclusive practices at secondary level do actually exist in all parts of the world. By showing that success in this endeavour is directly linked to the goodwill and commitment of the stakeholders it shows how these examples can be generalised.

This selection of successful examples is a first step. More thorough investigation and research will determine with greater precision the conditions that make inclusive secondary education programmes successful. The results will illuminate the development of policies and guidelines that will allow countries to implement programmes effectively.

Some of the outcomes of the projects presented here suggest that it is important to study the impact of inclusive education on students in general as well as on their classmates with special learning needs. Its influence on the attitudes and behaviour of all students, and most particularly on how they respect difference and understand each other, has wider implications for values education and the reduction of conflict.

UNESCO hopes that this publication will stimulate the academic community to strengthen research on inclusive education at secondary level. Networks of scholars can be an important force for bringing greater equity and higher quality to the education of our youth.



**John Daniel**

Assistant Director-General for Education



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# Introduction

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by Phyllis Magrab

*To promote inclusive education as part of the 'Education for All' initiative, the International Working Group on Disability and Development (IWGDD) worked collaboratively with UNESCO to identify and describe illustrative examples of inclusive approaches to education in secondary schools in multiple regions around the world.*

*This study is about secondary schools that have changed the ways in which supports and services are provided to all students, including those with disabilities. The schools and countries were selected to represent a diverse view of inclusive practices in secondary schools in countries from different regions of the world. The study provides examples of how schools have begun to implement change towards providing inclusive environments. Each case study provides issues to consider in the relationship between inclusive practices and the structuring of secondary school education.*

*It is important to note that general education reforms profoundly affect students with disabilities in secondary school settings and the implementation of inclusive practices.*

*Inclusive education starts from the belief that the right to education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society. Over half a century ago (1948) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserted education to be this basic human right, a right that was reaffirmed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). The Convention also recognized that there are particular problems to overcome in order to truly ensure educational opportunities for all children.*

*For this reason, the Convention has been followed up in recent years by a movement that has sought to turn the educational rights of the child into a reality. This movement, 'Education for All' (EFA), was launched at the World Conference on Education for All, in Jomtien (Thailand), in 1990.*

*In the year 2000, a decade later, 176 countries gathered in Dakar (Senegal), at the World Forum on Education for All to review the progress made towards this goal. While, in general, countries have worked to address the educational rights of children, the tendency of countries to focus on the 'easy to reach' and neglect those excluded from basic education for social, economic or geographic reasons was notable in this review of progress. As a result, the forum declared that 'Education for All' must take into account the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged, which includes, among others, those with special learning needs. The forum also recognized that inclusive education is at the heart of ensuring access to basic education for these excluded groups.*

*So what is inclusive education and how do countries achieve it? Inclusive education is an approach that recognizes each child to be a unique learner and requires ordinary schools to be capable of educating all children in their community regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other differences. Inclusive education draws on a social model to understand educational difficulties – a model that shifts the attention from the ‘personal tragedy of the individual’ towards the way in which social environments act to exclude individuals from full participation in society. This approach implies that, in part, learners experience difficulties in the educational system because of the barriers to learning implicit in the system, not because of their individual impairments. Inclusive education is about removing barriers and increasing educational opportunities.*

*To establish inclusive practices in secondary schools some specific challenges must be addressed. Creating a responsive climate in secondary schools requires a commitment to the mission of inclusion, strong principal leadership, and a collaborative spirit. Traditionally, teachers in secondary schools work in isolation from each other as do groups of students. A significant transformation in both the structure and culture of the school environment must occur.*

*To achieve inclusion, all students must have access to the curriculum, regardless of their disability, gender or ethnicity. This requires flexible, creative planning for accommodations and adaptations. In secondary schools, all academic departments must be involved and committed.*

*Adolescence, in itself, represents a developmental period that presents unique challenges to schools. The adolescent’s drive towards independence, risk-taking and experimentation serves as both a resource and deterrent to learning. Secondary schools must address these specific developmental needs as they develop inclusive practices.*

*The transition to the world of work and/or higher education is a unique responsibility of secondary schools. The planning and implementation of these transitions must also be focused on inclusion. Assessment, planning, and opportunity are at the heart of successful inclusive transitions.*

*The examples of inclusion in secondary schools that follow represent a variety of ways schools have initiated, implemented and sustained inclusive practices. In some cases, there are strong national policies to support the work; in others, inclusion is an emerging national goal. The definition of children and youth with disabilities, or children and youth with special needs, is variously determined in each illustration. It is important to understand each example in its specific context. Each example reflects not only the will of those who have worked towards inclusion in the particular secondary school, but the ecological and political supports and barriers.*

# Chile: a story of inclusion

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by *Rene Varas*

## **The Chilean education system**

The school system in Chile is organized on three levels: pre-school, primary education, and secondary education. The pre-school level, for children from 0 to 5 years of age, is not compulsory. According to 1998 figures, the total number of children enrolled was 270,267 (30.3 per cent). This level is served by both public and private institutions, with the latter prevailing for the under-5 group. Between 0 and 2 years of age, coverage is only 4.6 per cent. Between 3 and 5 years of age, this proportion increases to 42.2 per cent. The government subsidizes the last grade level (kindergarten); coverage is 80 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Primary education lasts for eight years and is compulsory. It serves young people from 6 to 13 years of age. The total number of students enrolled is 2,355,594 (98 per cent). This level is served by: (a) municipal schools, financed completely by the government; (b) subsidized private schools, co-financed by the families of students and by the government; and (c) private schools, which are wholly financed by fees paid by the students' families.<sup>2</sup>

Secondary education lasts for four years and is not compulsory. It serves young people from 14 to 17 years of age. The total number enrolled is 822,946 (86 per cent). This level presents two curricular modalities – humanistic/scientific, with 456,246 students enrolled, and technical/professional with 366,700 students. Secondary education is provided by municipal, subsidized private, and private institutions.

Some 90 per cent of students enrolled in primary and secondary education are in schools that receive at least some government funding. Of the total number of these schools, one-third are municipal, and the other one-third are private institutions that receive a government subsidy.

Educational reform, carried out since 1994, responds to new demands made by society, knowledge advances, communications and education. One of the major components of this effort is curricular reform. The new reform framework defines fundamental objectives and minimum required content, organized into two primary school cycles – from the first to the fourth grades, and from the fifth to the eighth

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1. Figures on enrolment and coverage at the pre-school level are from the publication *Cada escuela es un barco*, Santiago de Chile, 1999.
  2. Data on primary and secondary education have been obtained from the *Compendio de Información Estadística Educativa Año 2000* of the Ministry of Education.

– and one secondary cycle. Curricular reform has progressed gradually since 1997, focusing on the first years of primary school. Beginning in 1999, it continued to be implemented at the rate of one grade per year, both in the second cycle of primary education and in secondary education. The process will be completed during 2002, with the incorporation of the eighth year of primary education and the fourth year of secondary education.

## **Special education in Chilean schools**

Special education has been included as a modality within the Chilean school system since the 1970s. The development of special education created an education option for children with disabilities who did not have access to education. But it also meant that many such students who failed in regular schools ended up in special schools. Special education is co-ordinated by the General Education Division of the Ministry of Education. Today, the intention is to provide a new response to the needs of children with disabilities, incorporating them into regular schools within the education system, with full equality of opportunity and accompanied by necessary support.

The following are offered to children and young people with special education needs:

**Special schools.** These are for children and young people with a disability – intellectual, visual, auditory, motor, or with severe limitations in their communicative and relational skills. The physical and social segregation of these individuals within the educational process has been the norm in all of Latin America. This unequal treatment of students with disabilities includes a curriculum with differentiated plans and programmes, depending upon the type of disability, resulting in distancing these students even more from the learning opportunities offered to students in regular schools.

**Regular schools.** These include students with special education needs, disability related and, through the development of school integration projects, provide such schools with subsidies. Another service modality in these schools, called ‘differential groups’ is led by a specialist teacher who serves a limited number of students who have special needs related to disabilities, learning difficulties, and school adaptation problems. Each differential group receives annual financial support for the acquisition of specific teaching materials.

**Hospital-based classes and schools.** These offer compensatory education to students enrolled in the regular and special education systems who, for various health reasons, must receive hospital care (resident or out-patient) for specific periods.

The Chilean Government supports the agreements reached at the 'Education for All' world conference held in Jomtien in 1990, those of the World Conference on Special Education Needs: Access and Quality, that met in Salamanca in 1994, and the Seventh Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean, in Cochabamba, 2001. The policy of transforming the segregated special education model for people with disabilities is based upon the agreements reached in those meetings.

Recognizing the principle adopted in Salamanca that schools should serve all children, independent of their personal conditions, ministerial authorities have proposed to foster inclusive schools that value diversity as an element that enriches individual development. The principal strategy has been to encourage the integration of students with disabilities.

The 1980s witnessed isolated and spontaneous cases of school integration of special-needs students. Such experiments received neither official financing nor support until 1990. In that year Decree Law No. 490 was approved; for the first time it provided for the implementation of such school integration projects. Through this law, a number of pilot projects were begun in this area. In 1994, Law No. 19284 called for the full social integration of people with disabilities. Among other measures, the law created FONADIS, the National Disability Fund, which provides financial resources and technical support for various school integration initiatives. The legislation also required that regulations be created to assure access of individuals with disabilities to education. These regulations were approved in 1998. This favoured the creation of new and varied experiments in school integration throughout the country, designating special funds for regular schools which enrolled disabled students with disabilities. Resources now are distributed by the Ministry of Education to municipalities and to private schools for the contracting of specialized support teachers, the acquisition of specific teaching materials, and teacher training, so that teachers can be qualified to serve the special education needs of the integrated students. Special education professionals, who are not in all cases affiliated with special schools, carry out support tasks to foster school integration.

The regulations established four modalities, varying in the degree to which students with disabilities are incorporated in regular school activities. These modalities range from participation in all classroom activities, and complementary support in support classes, to all curricular activities being carried out in these classes, with the possibility of sharing time with other students only during recreation periods, ceremonies and other extracurricular activities.

During the last five years, central, regional and provincial teams in the area of special education within the Ministry of Education have presented sensitivity workshops regarding the education rights and needs of people with disabilities for different members of the school community. Furthermore, School Integration Project (PIE) workshops have been conducted for primary school teachers, as well as interchange workshops to disseminate successful school integration practices.

There are 69,608 children and young people (a coverage of approximately 25 per cent) enrolled in special education in both special and regular schools and receiving government subsidies.<sup>3</sup> Enrolment of students with disabilities who are integrated into regular schools grew from 5,339 in 1998 to 11,500 in 2001. This growth has not been accompanied by a decrease in enrolment in special schools, which during the same period grew from 45,504 to 58,108 students.

Of the individuals with disabilities who are attending school, both in special and regular institutions, 25 per cent have mental disturbances; 39 per cent have language problems; the remaining 6 per cent of students in special education programmes, in descending order of numbers, have auditory, motor and visual difficulties, and autism. The enrolment in differential groups remained fixed between 1998 and 2001 at about 68,000.

In the year 2001, 2,115 government subsidized primary schools were involved in special education school integration projects. This number represented 10.4 per cent of all primary schools. Because special education is legally defined as 'special general primary education', such integration has taken place almost entirely in primary schools. There are legal difficulties that impede the support of its development in pre-school and secondary education.

## **Francisco de Miranda School**

Located in a residential neighbourhood in the eastern part of the city of Santiago, the Francisco de Miranda School is a private institution that was founded in 1968. It serves 610 students from 4 to 18 years of age. Twenty-seven courses include pre-school, primary and secondary offerings. The school day is from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Organizationally, a unique characteristic of the Francisco de Miranda School is that primary and secondary courses are each six years long. This is in contrast to other schools which offer eight years of primary education and four years of secondary. With this six/six arrangement, the Francisco Miranda School provides continuity between levels of education which are normally offered in separate institutions.

The student body is composed of children and young people coming from households within the neighbourhood where the school is located, as well as from adjacent areas, and from various economic levels. Monthly tuition is 100,000 pesos (U.S.\$150).

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3. Currently the Ministry of Education is working on the design of instruments to produce a data base of enrolment and education coverage for people with disabilities. The data presented in this report are official estimates, and have been constructed based on information related to the granting of government subsidies.

The school seeks 'to train individuals who are open to knowledge and conscious of their social obligations, guided in their daily activities by love for their fellows and for their natural surroundings'. The institution fosters the development of a people-centred curriculum which is sensitive to diversity, as well as encouraging teaching practices that recognize each student as an individual.

In 1999, the school began to integrate children with special educational needs, disability-associated, within its classes. The first such integrated students came from the Sumalao School, which at that time was closing. In 1998, the directors of the Hineni Foundation, sponsors of the Sumalao School, contacted administrators of the Francisco Miranda School in order to ensure that Sumalao students would continue their studies after the closing of the school. Among these students, there were a number of children with Down's syndrome. Meetings were organized between Hineni Foundation professionals and Francisco Miranda School administrators and teachers to discuss the possibility of integration of these students. The result of these meetings was the programming of a series of activities preparatory to the entry of Sumalao School students at the pre-school and primary levels for the parents who had decided to enrol them in the Francisco de Miranda School at the beginning of the new school year.

At present, seventeen students with disability-associated special education needs are enrolled in various levels of primary education, and in the first two years of secondary school. Among them are two boys and four girls with Down's syndrome, one boy and one girl with severe attention deficit disorders, and another with dysphasia, two boys who are neurologically immature, another with delayed intellectual development, and one with Asperger syndrome.

The school failed in three attempts to integrate students with other kinds of disabilities: a tetraplegic girl, a deaf student, and another with low intellectual functioning with emotional trauma that blocked his ability to communicate. When these students were integrated, their education requirements were not foreseen. Moreover, they did not receive special support. Teachers felt unprepared, and regular students did not accept them. Their parents were dissatisfied, and they eventually left the school.

At present, nine of the seventeen students with disabilities receive support from Hineni Foundation specialists: six students with Down's syndrome, one boy with severe emotional difficulties, a girl with severe attention disorder, and another with dysphasia.

The oldest of the integrated students is David, who is 15, and has Down's syndrome. He has recently been promoted to the third level of secondary school. For the first time, the entry of David into secondary school mobilized his teachers as well as administrators on the subject of integration in the secondary school, given that the programme initially only foresaw inclusion at the primary and pre-school levels.



David is slightly less than five feet tall, and has the facial features characteristic of Down's syndrome. He underwent successful heart surgery, provoked by a coronary insufficiency, when he was 6 months' old, and was weak until the age of 8. Since then, he has enjoyed very good health. He suffers from a spastic cerebral paralysis that limits his motor and mental abilities, a slight auditory deficiency and muscular rigidity below the ankle that hinders walking and running. In order to lessen his motor difficulties, David has received kinesiological therapy since he was 2. David's very short fingers makes it difficult for him to do such things as write or tie his own shoes.

In everyday communication situations, David expresses himself curtly and has difficulty with grammatical constructions. But in demanding situations, such as in the classroom, speaking on the telephone, or reading aloud, his performance improves considerably. David began pre-school at the age of 2 at the Sumalao Pre-School, which later became Sumalao School, where he attended until the fifth grade. There he learned the rudiments of writing, a skill he subsequently developed further at Francisco de Miranda School. He is now able to express himself spontaneously.

### ***Re-thinking the school's goals from a diversity-sensitive perspective***

David loves attending Francisco de Miranda School, and almost never misses a day. Three times a week, after completing the regular school day, he goes to the Hineni Foundation, where he receives psychological support and participates in a workshop on social skills and vocational development. During the week, David also meets with his kinesiologist and participates in the activities of Maccabi, a movement organized within the Jewish community, similar to the Boy Scouts. He has been a member since he was 4 years' old. He is now preparing to be the assistant to one of the group leaders and a monitor for the activities of younger members. This year, due to lack of time, David will not be able to play soccer, his great passion, as he has done other years. He dreams about working in the future as a soccer instructor for young boys whose families are members of Colo Colo, an athletic club of which David is a fan.

All the buildings of the Francisco de Miranda School are single storey, except for the library, which has two, and where David 'works' as an assistant to the librarian, in an attempt to make him familiar with the world of employment.

The decision to integrate disabled students in the school was taken considering that this would be an opportunity to enrich the school experience by recognizing the value of diversity. This occurred when the opening of new private schools with innovative programmes had negatively affected enrolments at Francisco de Miranda, and when several highly respected teachers had been recruited by the competition.

Recognition of the value of diversity was not a novelty for the school; but until that time, the subject had not been treated as systematically as it was with the integration of students with disabilities. Previously the school received several children whose parents had returned from political exile in the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, many of whom presented emotional difficulties and problems of cultural adaptation. Some of them did not speak Spanish. These were times during which the school was considered to be the vanguard, enriched by the diversity of the students it served.

That experience, recalled by teachers who participated in it, increased the value they placed on integration as a possibility to recapture the innovative spirit of the school, reinvigorate the work of teachers, and favour student learning. 'Now we are pioneers in this area. The specialists who support us are pioneers as well, because all of us are learning', said Georgina, language and communication teacher.

## ***Sensitivity and overcoming initial fears***

In order to carry integration forward, a technical co-operative agreement was signed to provide for the participation of specialists from the HINENI Foundation during the initial implementation of integration. These specialists would provide psychological and teaching support to students, and aid teachers for a three-year period.

Before the closing of Sumalao School, the Hineni Foundation professional staff also met with parents of students of Francisco Miranda School to inform them about the integration project and listen to their concerns. In general, the parents were supportive of the new students who were about to attend the school. Some parents expressed concerns about the possibility that regular students would not show tolerance and respect to their peers with disabilities, although they hoped that a spirit of sensitivity and solidarity would develop. Some parents also expressed their concern about the ability (skills and working conditions) of teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, without negatively impacting the attention given to the rest of the students.

From the beginning, the teachers admitted their lack of knowledge of the characteristics of people with Down's syndrome, a disability of six of the students about to enter the school. The teachers who received the students with disabilities reported feelings of fear and anguish, not feeling prepared to teach them, since their former training had not included this, or other kinds of diversity. They were particularly concerned with the commonly expressed statements that people with Down's syndrome can be loving and tender, as well as over-active and difficult to control. In order to calm the fears of parents and of teachers, a series of activities were organized, such as teacher training sessions – some of which received the support and the participation of UNESCO – during which the theme of integration was discussed and case simulations were carried out. Chat sessions and meetings between teachers from both schools and among students were also organized, in order for them to get to know one another and to increase mutual sensitivity.

Knowledge acquired by teachers and the confidence given to Hineni Foundation professionals made it possible to overcome initial fears before the school year began. Daily contact with students with disabilities dissipated these fears and helped teachers to develop a pedagogical intuition for which they are proud.

## ***Renewing teaching practices***

At the beginning of the 1999 school year, a group of thirty former pre-school and primary students of the Sumalao School were enrolled in Francisco Miranda. It was decided not to integrate more than one student with a disability per classroom, in consideration of the other students. The fact that classroom size was small (ranging from fifteen to twenty students) facilitated group integration and assistance from teachers.

The initial worry among teachers opened the way to a revision and transformation of their work routine. The teachers recognized that integration had made possible the enrichment of their professional skills, making them more creative in the classroom, and opening up their perspectives by using differentiated assessments and adapting the curriculum. These were the work strategies used to understand the special education needs of all children. Among the most noteworthy transformations of teaching tasks of those who began to serve the needs of students with disabilities is the incorporation of a greater number of classroom play and motor skills activities. This change in the dynamics of the classroom occurred along with a difference in terms of thinking about school discipline. Classes became less restrictive and more participatory. Another interesting aspect resulting from inclusion is the utilization of classmates to serve some of the special education needs of other students, whether through planned group activities or with the personal help of a more advanced fellow student.

## ***Learning to accept differences***

Living with diversity fosters inclusion and has stimulated considerable development of values among the student body, generating acceptance and solidarity in the face of differences. Positively valuing diversity was the result of the spontaneous attitudes of students and of activities directed by teachers that, through active give-and-take discussions, fostered equal, tolerant and co-operative treatment of those who are different. In some classes, regular students took an almost maternal interest in caring for their classmates with disabilities, watching out for them and helping them in almost all of their movements. Gradually, they tired of this relationship. In other cases, where teachers stimulated 'normal' relationships between students with disabilities and their classmates, the result was a more equal and stable treatment. When students assumed an over-protective attitude towards children with disabilities, teachers intervened in order to reduce student apprehensions. Too much help towards these children in the carrying out of their school activities prevented them from developing their potential.

In those classes where a more equal treatment has been encouraged, some limitations of children with disabilities turn out to be differences that provide educational opportunities. In David's class, when his classmates noticed the progress he was making in reading aloud, in spite of difficulties, these students began to demand more of him. On the other hand, differential treatment given to integrated students sometimes can create difficulties with other students. In the case of some of David's classmates, because sufficient explanation was not provided to them about the purpose of the special treatment that he was receiving, the classmates became upset because David, completing tasks that they considered to be easy, received the same grade that they did by completing more complex tasks. As David became more integrated and made progress, his classmates adopted a more critical attitude of him and considered him to be lazy.

### ***Meeting the challenges of diversity: personalized educational programmes***

All students with disabilities enter into a regular course of study at levels corresponding to their abilities, and received psycho-pedagogical support during the regular school day. The principal referent for the educational process of integrating children is the regular curriculum, along with adaptations considered to be necessary to facilitate group integration and academic learning. Currently, as in other schools in the country, the curriculum of the school is undergoing a process of change within the context of a general reform of education. The curriculum is constructed through the selection of objectives and content, within the new curricular framework of the country, that are judged to be pertinent for the development of the school's academic programme.

David has a good relationship with students in his class and with other older and younger students. His classmates are aware of his disability and help him without protecting him. David has a group of reference classmates (boys), with whom he spends time regularly in the school. However, when it is a case of attending parties, for example, he interacts more with the girl students, who often protect him when it is his turn to be teased. Although David has a good relationship with his classmates, they are not always interested in interacting with him, and he tends to increasingly relate less with them outside of the school context. At this age, relations begin between boys and girls, an area in which David has few possibilities. David has also developed friendships with other boys and girls who attend a social skills workshop and who have personal characteristics similar to his.

While in primary school, the curriculum is organized into disciplinary areas that are taught mainly by the same teacher. In the seventh grade, the number of academic subjects increases considerably and more teachers are involved in each child's education. In the ninth grade, the curriculum is even more complex, with science divided into three sub-sectors: physics, chemistry and biology.

Teachers carry out semester and annual planning tasks based upon objectives and curricular content, selected for each level of education and learning area, which are part of the study plans and programmes of the school. In order to foster integration, teachers make curricular adjustments for children with disabilities in order to meet the special educational needs that they present. Objectives, content, methodologies and assessment practices are established, in accordance with the conditions and possibilities of these children. Acceptance of the idea that, among students, different educational needs exist, without denying the existence of a common range of needs, has made the teaching task more flexible. Inclusion has an impact on the pedagogical treatment given by teachers to all their students.

The curricular adaptations that students with disabilities require are planned annually and jointly, between the head teacher of a student, and a Hineni Foundation specialist who provides teacher support according to the academic subject. This planning takes material form in a Personalized Education Proposal (PEP), a document that is also discussed with the parents of the student in question. The PEP sets forth over-all objectives, as well as specific objectives by subject that are to be met, and assessment criteria. Personalized support modalities and content are also established, as well as recommendations for parents.

## ***Reorganizing teachers' tasks***

In order to facilitate a smooth transition to inclusion, some aspects of teacher team activities were reorganized. The primary school counsellor was appointed as co-ordinator of activities for the integration programme, whose main activities were to supervise and support the classroom teachers.

Co-ordinated teacher assessment of the academic progress of students with disabilities took place initially within the regular teacher meetings, where the subject was not always treated adequately, due to the various topics that require attention during such meetings. Eventually, a special time was dedicated to the subject, which became an important self-training opportunity. Co-ordinated assessment and planning among the teachers and specialists gradually occupied the time originally reserved for teacher training activities.

The development of David's individual programme for the eighth grade took into account the programming of the subjects corresponding to that year of study\*, as well as cross-cutting objectives associated with programmes for the development of social and vocational skills and of psycho-pedagogical and speech and auditory support developed by the Hineni Foundation and which complement David's education. These special classes reduce David's participation in physical education by two to four hours a week.

Due to his difficulties in the handling of written and spoken language, and to his lack of motivation, David does not participate in English and French classes. During these classes, David carries out individual tasks in the computer centre and helps in the library. David has easily mastered the computer, a skill encouraged at an early age by his family who acquired appropriate software from abroad. David uses the computer at home and in psycho-pedagogical sessions. In the computer centre, David does his homework independently and very rarely requests help. He transcribes texts, prints and photocopies as required. Many of his tasks are designed to reinforce and to build skills in areas that he masters best, such as mathematics, a favourite subject, and one for which he demonstrates considerable aptitude.

The support that David has received since his earliest years has made his continual progress possible. But its continuation through time may possibly exercise a negative effect on the development of his autonomy. Thus, one of the major over-all objectives proposed for him is that he be able to request help in an adequate and timely manner, for completing tasks and activities, or to resolve conflicts when necessary. The goal is for him to continue his tasks and acquire greater autonomy, developing necessary social skills to increase his participation in co-operative activities.

Another over-all objective for David is to raise his degree of responsibility in complying with agreements, especially in terms of being on time for classes, and completing tasks in the library and in the computer centre, taking responsibility, and accepting the consequences of non-completion.

As for specific objectives by academic subject, in the area of communication and language, one of these objectives is to strengthen his comprehension of short- and medium-length texts, while differentiating characters, actions, and settings. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen and develop his oral and written expression through its active and ongoing use, integrating his school tasks with those of the group.

In music, an objective is to develop his skills in reading notes and in understanding rhythms he has learned with different percussion instruments, allowing him to execute different rhythmic accompaniments.

In the other school subjects, objectives from the previous year will continue to be pursued, increasing demands in terms of autonomy and the mastery of concepts. In mathematics, for example, the objective is to increase the numeric range within which he carries out the mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, applying them to every-day routine tasks (the use of money and the calculation of distances) and systematically in class (calculation of areas).

David's PEP contains an agreement with his parents about reviewing his homework and school exams, the supply of materials, and timely arrival at the beginning of the school day.

*Although the school's programme is directed towards preparing students to enter college, uncertainty regarding the cognitive potential of students with disabilities has resulted in seeking employment training alternatives for them.*

Different initiatives have been taken in David's case. He helps in the library and in the primary school classroom. At the Hineni Foundation, he participates in the social and vocational skills programme twice a week. He also works as a carpenter's assistant in a furniture workshop. These guided and vocational activities seek to improve his social skills, develop more general skills, such as arriving on time, co-operating with others, and carrying out assigned tasks. The generation of these vocational skills have made both his needs and his worth apparent to the other students.

\* Language and communication, mathematics, natural sciences, history, art, music, physical education, computer skills, English and French.

The lack of opportunities for teacher co-ordination in the secondary school, and the need for co-ordination among a larger number of teachers who shared the same misgivings as had their primary school colleagues, became evident two years ago with the arrival of David.

At the end of 2001, a sensitization project began for secondary school teachers so they could better confront the inclusion of students with disabilities at this level. The fact that such training was late in coming was aggravated by the kind of initial training that secondary teachers received, which placed emphasis on the mastery of disciplinary content rather than the development of teaching skills.

Lack of clarity on how to carry the inclusion process forward at the secondary level provoked uneasiness among teachers regarding David's cognitive potential, and regarding their own teaching abilities. This situation was complicated by the high degree of teacher turnover in recent years, which has prevented the school as an institution to accumulate experience. A number of teachers originally trained no longer work at the school. This situation, in fact, has affected David's education. His teacher/counsellor left the school, and the new teacher was not able to handle the demands adequately.

## **Supporting the educational process: the role of specialists**

Teachers appreciate the support provided by specialists from the Hineni Foundation.

*'I learned from them how to adapt the curriculum. I learned to be patient. I learned to set reasonable, realistic goals. This has been extremely useful'* – Ximena, primary school teacher.

Two school psychologists and a speech and hearing specialist from the Hineni Foundation support integration within the school. Their work is financed by the parents of the children with whom they work. The specialists provide personal attention to students with disabilities and support teachers in the development of curricular adaptations and other methodological strategies that permit them to meet the special education needs that these students present. The level of participation of the specialists in the school's integration programme has decreased through time, in order to move teachers from initial surprise and paralysis to autonomy with support. For the specialists, the first months of integration involved intense tracking of events and included carrying out demonstration classes in co-operation with teachers, with activities that stimulated the learning of students with disabilities and which integrated

all members of the class. The specialist also attended regular classes in order to provide personalized support to the students with disabilities in specific activities. But the presence of the specialists became increasingly infrequent. Currently, it is at a minimum, and is aimed basically at assessing the progress of the students.

*'The first year was controlled [recalls Manuel, a Hineni Foundation speech and hearing specialist] in the sense that what is sought with the children is in large measure generated by those other than the teacher, by the specialists. After this first year, we decided to go on to the second level, in which we constructed criteria for the selection of objectives and methodologies in order to face working with the children.'*

The work of the specialists is centred on the schooling process of the student, seeking to develop and to strengthen in the student language, communication and logical reasoning skills. This support is always linked to what happens within the regular classroom, both anticipating and providing continuity for class content. Specialists support teachers by providing activity guides, teaching material and differentiated assessment strategies. In the third year it was decided to integrate the support of the Hineni Foundation Resource Centre, located next to the school.

The transfer of individual support outside the school resulted in a reduction of time spent by specialists in the school itself and, therefore, of opportunities to interact with teachers. Such contacts had often been informal in nature, such as 'meetings in the hall'.

In the face of the existing organizational void in secondary education to carry out integration, David's education support specialist was required to co-ordinate activities of the programme, as well as support teachers and offer David personalized psycho-pedagogical and speech and hearing therapy. Personalized support is provided twice a week in 90-minute sessions. It is intended to reinforce David's areas of greatest difficulty and to help him in the preparation of class presentations and in test achievement.

In order to develop David's ability to request help in a pertinent manner, during the personalized support sessions the specialist does not constantly oversee his work or point out each error. Rather, he proceeds with his own tasks and lets David define what he needs in order to interrupt the specialist and ask for help; thus, David learns to formulate what he needs and attempts to resolve problems without waiting for help to arrive.

Emphasis placed on group work, besides developing David's communication skills, helps him become more outgoing, so that the subject of his conversations are not based upon his needs, but rather he is able to be open to others and to value the efforts made by others to maintain a good relationship with him. It is also hoped that this will make him want to respond to the treatment of others in a responsible manner, avoiding disruptive interactions when his demands are not met.



## **Learning opportunities of students with special educational needs**

Students who have disabilities benefit from school inclusion. It provides them with learning opportunities through interaction with a variety of people, not only with others who have disabilities, as is the case in special schools. Thus, for example, the constant demand of David's classmates for him to make clear what he wants, or what he has begun to say, has helped him to develop his communication skills.

Upon entering the school in the sixth grade, David wrote words and short sentences with much difficulty. Although his manual ability has improved, it is much easier for him to write using the computer, upon which he prepares his written exercises. But he does copy texts to his workbook and writes dictations in a faster and more orderly fashion. He now more frequently reads and writes in group situations (copying titles, citations, etc.).

During the time that he has attended Francisco Miranda School, David has gone from reading short sentences to longer texts, developing the capacity to understand content, recognize present and past verb tenses, and making simple lists of questions while requiring help in different degrees. David can now present more complex and longer oral descriptions. The literature workshop, held within the area of communication and language, has increased his abilities, permitting him to express the richness of his inner feelings through poetry.

In mathematics, David can use a calculator to solve simple operations involving percentages and to calculate areas and circumferences of squares and rectangles with the guidance of an adult. In the recently concluded school year, he expanded his range of numbers and the effectiveness of calculations.

In the subject of history, David can identify important dates, recognizing historic buildings and the relations with their surroundings. He achieved this by copying texts and working on guided research, based on his personal interest and life experiences. It should be noted here that the tasks are carried out using photographs taken by David and his family during trips to different places in the world, which include historic monuments (the French Revolution was approached from this perspective, for example).

In natural sciences, David can identify cause and effects, and carry out guided research. During the first semester, he participated in the general work of the class, doing research and giving a report on the phenomenon of acid rain. In the second semester, he will do individual work that is different from that of the rest of the class, since the biological concepts utilized to treat sexuality are considered to be too complex for him. On occasion, David's lack of motivation to carry out his work resulted in disruptive conduct in the classroom, where he would raise his voice, or send written messages that distracted his classmates. But, when David was strongly motivated by his work, (when he dissected a flower, for example) he requested to be permitted to finish his work outside the classroom because the environment was too noisy.

In physical education classes, David proves to be increasingly interested in participating. He arrives at his work place carrying his P.E. equipment, and does not hide in order to avoid participating, as he does (although not frequently) in other subjects. In physical education, as in other subjects, although his participation is not continuous, he tends to tire easily and abandons that which does not interest him. Thus, in the area of fine arts, although finishing assignments without asking for help, and becoming increasingly better at accepting suggestions, on some occasions he has not entered the classroom and has not completed the work assigned.

In the library, David requires support and supervision in order to carry out assigned tasks. Otherwise, he leaves them incomplete and has little motivation. When he is directed verbally, he is able to satisfactorily do things such as stamp books and magazines and make cuttings with scissors. Work has been done with David in the development of information search strategies using books, dictionaries, telephone books, and directories. This he does by pronouncing the initial syllable, in spite of not having mastered the alphabet. He understands the concept of searching in a book for its author or subject, copying the location code. He requires help in order to control his impulsiveness, and on occasion to complete tasks that present difficulty, as well as help to identify books according to their catalogue numbers.

One of the things that David has learned in regard to the social and vocational skills programme is that not fulfilling his obligations may cause difficulties for other people – upon realizing the problems he caused by not attending his woodworking sessions when he preferred to remain at school to play soccer, for example. On the other hand, his role as assistant to a first grade teacher has allowed him to have experience expressing himself before groups, with his many opportunities to participate in ‘story-telling time’ with the young children.

## ***Involving parents in the educational process***

Parents of children with disabilities participate in the educational process of their children very intensely, as is the case of other parents of Francisco de Miranda students. They are aware of the PEP and, in some cases, are requested to participate in specific areas, such as helping with various subjects, or in preparing their children for a specific activity. But, just as with other parents, they are not assigned a special, pedagogical role. On the other hand, not all parents face the disability and school inclusion of their children in the same way. As the children begin to show achievement through time, all parents become enthused and begin to raise their expectations, to increasingly commit themselves to the school activities of their children, and to value the efforts made by teachers.

## ***The affective link: a key to learning***

Among teachers, integration has put into relief the fact that children's learning is mediated by an emotional bond that is established with learners and with their classmates. This affective link that teachers create reinforces the principle, emphasized in the training course (taking into account emotional aspects as mechanisms to advance learning) and is included in the design of teaching strategies. Certainly, affective links are not one-way. Just as teachers emphasize the importance that such links have for students, when they feel that they are liked by their classmates and teachers, they also emphasize the personal gratification that they derive from this affection. However, establishing an adequate affective bond is not always possible, and the fragmentation of academic subjects, which is a fact of life in the secondary curriculum, creates special difficulties in this sense.

With children who have Down's syndrome, first of all one must work on integration at the affective level [says Georgina, David's teacher, when he entered secondary school]. With David, we talked; we went out together and walked in the schoolyard. We observed; he asked me questions; and I asked him about his everyday life. I could see that this was an extraordinarily sensitive child. This provided the basis for me to be able to understand my other special education students. The affective aspect and social aspects are very important for me. The children need to be integrated with their classmates. They need to feel loved and accepted.

# Hungary: getting started

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by *Melinda Gönczi*

## ***A national context***

### **Forming a national policy**

In 1985, the first step towards inclusive education in Hungary was taken with the introduction of the Public Education Act, which advocated for inclusive education for the first time. In 1993, the Act was amended for the last time and remains to this date. It is important to note that the Public Education Act (1993) gives parents of children with disabilities the right to demand that the local mayor ensure that the local school is able to integrate their children into its education system (Act LXXIX, 1993).

However, the success of such demands is not guaranteed by the Act. The Act does not leave the decision to integrate solely to the parents; they must have the consent of the committee charged with assessing the child as well.

Another important aspect of the Act is that it adds two extra years to the minimum legal schooling requirements for children with disabilities. Where fully able children are required to attend school from ages 6 to 16, children with special needs are able to extend this to 18. This enhances the opportunity for success in an integrated school for children with disabilities. The Act also states that there must be a specialized teacher either at the school permanently or visiting regularly.

Additionally, the National Core Curriculum has been made more flexible so that it can be adapted to the individual special needs of a child with a disability. This revision has allowed for the introduction of alternative educational methods into schools as well.

One of the most important pieces of legislation in support of integration of children with special needs is the 1998 Act on Equal Opportunities. It states that if it is beneficial to the development of the child's skills he/she should, if possible, be educated in a common class or group with other children.

## **National research and children with special educational needs**

In December 2000, two important research efforts were initiated in the Programme and Curriculum Development Centre of the National Institute of Public Education in Hungary concerning the situation of children with special educational needs: 'The State of Schools for Children with Special Educational Needs at the Turn of the Millennium in Hungary' and 'The Situation of Children with Special Educational Needs Receiving Inclusive Education.'

The first investigation, 'The State of Schools for Children with Special Educational Needs at the Turn of the Millennium in Hungary' was a survey conducted in segregated schools to determine the number of students with special needs compared to teacher numbers: 40,505 students in 6,337 classrooms with the help of 8,386 teachers (947 of them men).

The second study, 'The Situation of Children with Special Educational Needs Receiving Inclusive Education' was part of a national research effort conducted by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in three districts: Budapest (the capital), and two provinces: Baranya and Hajdú-Bihar. In Budapest, sixty principals of different institutions responded to questionnaires and interviews (3 per cent of these institutions were run by foundations); in Baranya county, 27 responded; and in Hajdú-Bihar county, 29. The total number of students counted in the research was 24,537. The number of students with special educational needs was 742 (3 per cent).

## **Funding inclusive education**

The budgeting laws of Hungary ensure that children with special needs receive additional funding at the school they attend. After an assessment by a national rehabilitation committee to determine the severity of a given disability, a child can receive twice to three times the funding of a fully able child. Children who are visually impaired, physically challenged, severely mentally challenged, or have hearing disorders, are all eligible for this significant additional funding. Children with milder mental disorders are allocated slightly increased funding, almost double the norm. This extra funding is an incentive for schools to include children with special needs.

When determining class sizes the children with special needs count as three children. This makes it possible to have classes with fewer children and, thus, increase the amount of attention a teacher can give to all the students and, thereby, improve the education they receive.

The funding flows from the state to the local councils who in turn distribute the funds to the individual schools. The only exceptions are the foundation schools that receive their funding directly from the state.

There is a National Foundation for Disabled Children; this was set up to provide assistance to the public education of children with special educational needs. It receives funds from charity and the national health insurance fund. This fund is crucial to schools that are not equipped to include students with special needs.

## **Training teachers in inclusive practices**

The training of teachers for children with special educational needs began in Hungary in 1900. Currently, teachers are trained in a four-year programme at the 'Bárczi Gusztáv' Teacher Training College in Budapest. Since January 2000, the college has functioned as the Faculty of Education for Children with Special Educational Needs within the Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE), Budapest. The training is divided into specialized subjects related to the main disability groups. Another prestigious institution, the Hungarian Pető Institute, trains experts to work with children who are physically challenged. It is not uncommon for regular teachers to take postgraduate training in specialized teaching, just as specialized teachers sometimes obtain a second non-specialized teaching diploma.

Although there is a drive towards inclusive practices within schools in Hungary, there is still much work to be done. To quote Dr Yvonne Csányi in 1995: 'Hungary is in a state of pre-integration.' Hungary sees the benefits of integration; however, the implementation is made difficult by the fact that the changes from the old system are only approximately ten years' old, adequate funding is largely unavailable and the practical expertise is missing.

## ***'Equal standards, unlimited support': the János von Neumann Secondary School of Informatics***

The János von Neumann Secondary School of Informatics is situated in the 14<sup>th</sup> district of Budapest (called Zugló), a densely populated, urban area among high-rise flats. (This district also contains several segregated schools for children with special educational needs.) The school is easily accessible by car and public transport and serves children from the entire city. It also offers accommodation for out-of-town children.

There are a total of 651 students being taught at the school, aged 14 to 19 (sometimes older). Of these, twenty-six have special educational needs: three have hearing impairments, five are visually impaired, and nineteen are physically challenged (one of these students is both physically challenged and suffers from a hearing disorder).

There is a boarding house where forty to fifty students stay; three of these students are physically challenged and the boarding house has been adapted to fit their needs.

Regarding the ethnic mix of the students there are no records since questions regarding ethnicity are prohibited on the application form; the school is one of equal opportunity. None the less, it is known that there is a mixture of children from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds.

Of the sixty-two staff, fifty are teachers. None of these teachers have received any further training (beyond standard teacher training) concerning the special needs of students. The teachers who feel capable voluntarily take responsibility for students with special needs.

## **Funding for the school**

The primary source of funds for the school is the City Council who distribute the money given to them by the Ministry of Education. As noted earlier, the funds assigned to a child with special needs are almost three times those for a fully able child. Teachers' wages are also supplemented for the extra hours that are sometimes needed to teach the challenged students, up to a maximum of eighty hours.

The school has received grants from the European Union for projects such as a mathematics textbook in Braille, and for the production of a CD-rom that helps the students who are visually challenged with the use of maths and physics formulae. This was such a success that there are currently plans to translate it into German and English.

Lastly there is a fund called 'With Clear Heart', set up by the school itself to raise money for its own purposes. Parents also give 1 per cent of their taxes (up to 2 per cent of one's yearly tax can be donated to charities in Hungary, with a maximum of 1 per cent to any single charity).

These various sources of income, according to the headmaster, are adequate for the day-to-day running of the school.

## **Inclusive practices**

Teachers receive little or no extra training or development; they do, however, consult on a regular basis with the different institutes responsible for the various disabilities. Teachers take a lot of initiative to prepare for their students with disabilities. In one instance two teachers went abroad with money received from a European Union grant, to see inclusive practices in a foreign context. There is also one

teacher at the school who is capable of sign language; this, however, is a contingency as students with hearing impairments are encouraged to lip-read and talk.

There are two different curricula taught at the school. One is the so-called 2+1 system where students leave school at the age of 16 to 17, roughly comparable to the British GCSE or the American Junior High. The first two years consists of general education; the last year focuses on informatics. The other curriculum is the so called 4+1 system which includes two more years of general education, and a final specialized year with students leaving at the ages of 18 or 19. It compares to a British A-Level or American High School where students are eligible for university. There is an initiative to create a third 2+3+1 system for students with a disability. This would be, in essence, the 2+1 system with three extra years to complete the curriculum.

The assessment of students with a disability is the same as for all other students. In certain cases, however, extra time is given to the students to complete the written exams. Students with visual impairments take their final exams in a separate room, because they use laptops. The students with hearing impairments have the option of having someone sign for them; they are also allowed to substitute their foreign-language subject (required by the curriculum) for another subject of their own choice.

The management of the school ensures that the extra funds granted to the students with special needs are actually allocated to things beneficial to them – such as new resources and improvements in the school infrastructure. New, dedicated gymnastics equipment and adapted lap-tops for the blind come to mind. In the library there are books on cassette tapes and scanners for use with the adapted lap-tops.

## **Moving on to higher education and/or employment**

The initiative to create the third curriculum (the 2+3+1 system) will have a major impact on chances in the job market for students with disabilities.

The high standards demanded of the students by the school means that it is not uncommon for a child with a disability to go on to further education. Students have gone on to universities and colleges. For example, a student with a hearing disorder went on to the technical University of Budapest to study informatics and engineering; another, a blind Roma child, went on to a college in Komló to study informatics where he completed his studies and is now busy following a teacher-training course in Pécs.

## **Parent and community involvement**

As mentioned above, there is a fund set up by the school to which parents regularly donate money. Parents also help out when there are school trips or



excursions. Parents quite often act as scouts or go-betweeners to the various institutes responsible for the various disabilities, and inform the school of special events grants or courses.

In the neighbourhood there is a primary school where classrooms and teachers are made available to the school for teaching humanities. A particular teacher at this primary school has had training in working with children with special needs and gives support and advice to the school on a regular basis.

The city council used to send representatives to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, but this is no longer the case, as they had little effect on the running of the school.

## **Co-ordination with others**

Like all schools in Hungary, there is a physician assigned to the school. The physician visits twice weekly and, once a week, a nurse accompanies him. This physician is employed by the youth health-care service, a national institution. Twice a week a psychologist is available for the students. She is not employed, only contracted by the school.

## **Co-operating with the private sector**

Various companies where parents are employed donate some of their vocational training fund (up to 75 per cent) to the school each year. These contracted companies include banks, mobile phone companies and others.

There are also links with software dealers who provide educational software at 20 per cent of the cost. There is also a contract with a taxi driver who provides transportation on a regular basis for children with disabilities who live in the boarding house.

## **International support**

As mentioned earlier, the school has received European Union grants for projects to produce equipment and tools that aid the education of children with special needs anywhere. The CD-rom that was made with the aid of one of these grants is about to be translated for use in other countries.

## **András's success**

This is the story of András, a 19-year-old boy from Budapest, Hungary. András suffers from severe difficulties with muscle co-ordination and speech due to oxygen starvation suffered as an infant. The medical name for his condition is Infantilis Cerebralis Paresis Athetosis Dysarthria. Because of his condition, he must use a walking frame to move about. The son of an electrician and a district nurse, he is the younger of two children. He has an older sister.

András is driven the ten or so kilometres to school every morning by one of his parents. His school career started at the Institute for the Physically Disabled where he attended the first two years. He found the pace there too slow for him and wanted more of a challenge; this prompted the move to another primary school. Years 3 to 8 were spent at a dedicated primary school, where he was in the hands of specially trained teachers and physiotherapists. The curriculum there was taught at a more suitable pace for him.

For his secondary education András moved to the János von Neumann Secondary School. The reasons for choosing this school were these: first, he knew he wanted to specialize in informatics, since this is a career with the most opportunities for someone with his affliction; second, the school was already integrating students with disabilities; and third, the layout of the school was such that he was able to move around freely.

It took a few months for his peers to get used to him and his differences, just as it took him a while to adapt to fully able children. Now, however, he quite enjoys attending the school. András enjoys the full support of his fellow students and staff. He is never short of help. If he needs to get to the second floor, someone always comes to his aid. The librarian is always on hand to help him pick books off high shelves. He is also given extra tuition in certain subjects to ensure that he stays in touch with the class.

The motto of the school is: 'Equal standards, unlimited support'. This is not in intellectual terms but in practical application. András takes more time to write things Down's for example. When it comes to assessment, however, he is graded like any other child, but he has more time to complete written exams.

On a social level András is fully involved in the school activities. He goes on school trips aided by a parent; he eats in the canteen, again with aid either from parents or staff. He also participates with friends in extra curricular activities (such as cinemas, discos and playing videogames).

This is András's fourth year. He wants to stay and complete the final specialized year. In the meantime he is applying to the Technical University here in Budapest for a place to study informatics. Due to the high standards of the János von Neumann School, and his own high achievements, he stands a very good chance of being accepted by the university.

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# Nepal: the beginnings

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by *Vidya Vaidya*

## **National context**

Nepal is a country with an area of 5,400,000 square miles, lying in south Asia and landlocked by China and India. It has a total population of approximately 20 million with a per capita income of U.S.\$220. Of the total population, 38 per cent live below the poverty line (Economic Survey, World Bank, 1999). The current literacy rate of the country is approximately 59 per cent. With the restoration of democracy in 1990, the country enjoys a multi-party democracy. The country is divided into seventy-five districts; Kathmandu is both the capital and the business centre of the country.

## **Education of children with disabilities**

Education for children with disabilities only started in Nepal in 1964 with the intake of ten blind and visually impaired students in one of the schools for regular students in the capital, the Laboratory Secondary School. They were admitted under the integrated system. In 1966, special schools for children who were hearing impaired were established. In 1969, the Nepal Disabled and Blind Association was established. In 1971, the National Education System Plan was implemented under which, in 1973, the Special Education Council (SEC) was established. It was after the establishment of the SEC and under the jurisdiction of SEC, schools for children who are blind, hearing impaired, and mentally retarded were established. In 1982, a special school for children with mental retardation was established.

Following the 'International Year of the Disabled' in 1981, different integrated and special schools were opened in urban areas under the active participation of different INGOs and NGOs. The government of the country declared that all people of Nepal were to be provided with basic and primary education, consistent with the Jomtien declaration of 'Education for All'.

It was in 1990 that the Ministry of Education formed a task force under the chairmanship of the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education. The task force

recommended the reorganization of the Special Education Council and new programmes to be implemented. The Special Education Council then operated programmes in thirty-three different schools for four different disability groups: blind and visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded, and physically handicapped. Of these thirty-three schools, eleven integrated schools were established for children who were blind and visually impaired; six special schools for children who were hearing impaired; four special schools for children with physical disabilities; and twelve special schools for children with mental retardation.

In 1993 the Nepal Government and the Danish Government signed an agreement to make the National Special Education Programme (NSEP) an integral part of the Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP). In 1994, BPEP developed NSEP as its component and which is being implemented through the school cluster and resource centre structure (Chirag, 1999). BPEP is currently running 40 schools for children with disabilities and 228 resource centres (blind, 51; mental retardation, 84; and deaf, 93).

## **Who and where are the children?**

It is estimated that there are approximately 600,000 students with special educational needs in Nepal. In the case of disability, different surveys have reported different percentage rates that are presented in the table below:

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Percentage of disability</b>	<b>Concerned agency</b>
1980 sample survey	3 per cent	IYDP, Sample Survey Sub-Committee
Ministry of Education in 8 districts	4.55 per cent	Special Education Section, BPEP, Ministry of Education
1976	10 per cent	WHO

In the Nepal context, the disability rate appears higher than estimated as data revealed by some agencies have shown higher percentages: e.g. 16.6 per cent deaf and hearing impaired only (conducted by Tribhuvan University, Teaching Hospital and Britain Nepal Otology Service, 1990); Banepa Municipality, 7 per cent (all types of disability); and Kanchanpur District 5.04 per cent (conducted by the Institute of Health Services, 1995).

The Ministry of Education Special Education Council (2000) has estimated that there were 120,000 children of school age of whom 3,500 were receiving education at school in twenty-six districts. The summary report of the Interaction Programme on Special Education Policy, organized by the National Federation of the Disabled of

Nepal and Save the Children (United Kingdom) in 2000 states that the total number of children with disabilities enrolled in different schools throughout the country has not exceeded 4,000. This number includes government-supported schools and NGO-supported schools. If the figure as published by the Special Education Section is to be believed, less than 4 per cent of these children are educated in ordinary schools.

In Nepal, under the present system, children with visual and locomotive impairment are in regular schools (under integrated education) where as children with hearing and intellectual impairment are in special schools. The government has no programme as such to facilitate the regular schools to conduct classes for children with special needs in the country. Therefore, children with special needs in the remote and rural areas do not have a chance to receive education at all.

The Ministry of Education Special Education Council was established in 1974 with the objective of providing special education to children with disabilities. The council formulated policy on special education with some modification in 1996. This policy has made provisions for educating children with disabilities in special and integrated schools, as per the nature and the need.

In Nepal there are about 200 students with disabilities attaining higher education.

## ***Inclusive education: a new concept for Nepal***

The concept of inclusive education is new to Nepal. A pilot programme on inclusive education was started by the Basic and Primary Education Program (BPEP II) through the Special Education Section under the Ministry of Education Department of Education since the year 2000. However, none of the national policy statements, legislation and/or non-statutory guidance that are relevant, support inclusive educational practices ñ except for international declarations.

As of today, no national funding has been in practice to promote inclusive education. However, BPEP II has started inclusive education programmes in two districts (Banke and Udaypur) on a pilot basis. DANIDA has contributed its support through BPEP II and has channelled the necessary funding through the Ministry of Education.

There are no training facilities available at the university level for special teachers right now. Therefore, teachers do not receive training regarding inclusive practice in either their initial or in-service training. However, BPEP II has managed to organize in-service training to the teachers selected to work on the pilot programme on inclusive education in co-operation with NGOs.

Nepal does not have a system to collect data, even for people with disabilities. Therefore, addressing inclusive education practices while collecting data and evaluating activities is very far away. However, for its regular and official works, the Ministry of Education Department of Education BPEP II conducts monitoring and evaluation activities for updating its information. For this, a statistics section has been established in the Ministry of Education.

## ***The Namuna Machindra Secondary Boarding School (NMSBS)***

The school is located at Lagankhel, an urban area in the centre of Lalitpur district. It lies within the Kathmandu Valley. The city where the school is located is also identified as Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City. The city has a total area of 15.47 square kilometres. The Newar ethnic group is the dominant residing group. The literacy rate for the city is approximately 66.38 per cent. Most of the residents of the city are involved in business, agricultural farming and services. The city is famous worldwide for wooden and metal handicraft.

The school was established in 1965 as a secondary boarding school for regular students. It is one of the oldest boarding secondary schools in the region. In 1987, as the movement for establishing integrated education to students who are blind and visually impaired began in six different districts, NMSBS was chosen for the Lalitpur district. Integrated education started in the school with eight blind students in the resource class. After a year in the resource class, these students were sent to their respective class according to their capabilities. The integrated class was started under the same facility provided to regular students with no modification.

The school has a total area of 38,332 square feet where more than 200 students study. It is a combined school offering education from nursery, kindergarten to class 10, with students ranging from ages 5 to 20. The regular students in the school are from the same locality and represent a mix of upper-middle class, middle-class and lower-class families.

Since the establishment of integrated education in the school (initially with eight blind students), fourteen blind students have already completed secondary education at the school. At the moment, the school is offering education to twenty-five students with disabilities. Of these, eighteen are totally blind, four have poor vision, two are blind and hearing impaired, and one is blind and learning disabled.

The school has a teaching staff of twenty and an administrative staff of ten. Three teachers have received special education training, and are responsible for the children with special education needs.

## **Funding**

For the establishment of integrated education, funds were received to establish: (a) a resource class; (b) buy resource material, furniture and lodging; (c) provide food expenses of students with disabilities; (d) support one teacher with special education training; and (e) support two other aides. The Special Education Council has been providing funds for five staff in the field. A private funding group and NGOs sponsor the students with disabilities.

The concept of educating children with disabilities is slowly growing among the parents and in the local community itself. Most of the parents of children with disabilities are unable to sponsor their children for formal education. The local community is yet to contribute substantially to the development of formal education for children with disabilities. Most of the funds available in the field are received from foreign donors. Direct government funding as received for education of regular students is yet to be received for special education.

## **The educational programme**

Education for children with disabilities is managed in such a way that, when the students are admitted to the school, they are first placed in a resource class. Here they receive mobility training, social living skills, general skills and basic educational skills required to attend regular classes. Their stay in the resource class normally lasts one year, after which, according to their speed of learning in the resource class, they are sent to respective classes along with regular students.

In the regular class they learn under the supervision of teachers with no special education training. A special teacher assists by helping these students receive proper books, translation of normal script to Braille or, as applicable, logistical support and assistance in coaching them in their formal education. Teachers with special education training also co-ordinate with the regular classroom teachers in solving the problems they face teaching the students with disabilities.



## ***Inclusion and socialization***

In the initial stages of the integrated programme, students with disabilities faced problems of socialization with other regular students. But, after the orientation of regular students by teachers in the field, and after fifteen years of inclusion, students with disabilities have now been accepted by the regular students. They do not hesitate to socialize, and the non-disabled students are willing to assist their classmates with disabilities in their socialization and education. Because of this, the students with disabilities are able to identify themselves as part of the group rather than as a separate, marginalized minority. Their stay in the resource class assists them to socialize with the regular students with ease.

## ***The curriculum***

In the regular class, children with disabilities study the same curriculum as the other students. The school follows the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education. However, the curriculum has been designed without considering the needs of special education. Hence, children with disabilities face problems understanding the courses, and finding appropriate teaching materials and teachers for higher studies in the school. Special teachers assist them but, for higher studies, they are not always able to help. In this regard, the need for knowledge of special education is required for regular teachers teaching at higher levels.

Students with disabilities take their examination along with the other students in the same format and same place. For internal assessment, special teachers translate the paper in the required version for both the students with disabilities and for the teacher who is assessing their papers. For final assessment, the school provides teachers as scribes for students with disabilities (in the case of students who are blind) and conducts the examination at the same place and same time. In addition, the school allows an extra half hour for students taking their examinations in Braille. The school also allows the selection of an alternative subject when a student with a disability cannot take the subject because of resource unavailability or other reason.

Although the management team has not supported special education financially, they have been positive about the development of field work. The school has been involved in contacting sponsors for the development of special education. The same positive attitude has been found with teachers teaching the regular class. This was not the case when special education was initiated. The change in attitude can be attributed to the time necessary to adapt, and to the realization that the need for inclusive education is a necessity.

## ***Transition from the school***

The school provides education up to Class 10. After Class 10, students select a college of their interest, capability and ability, and must find funding on their own. The school does not help its graduates gain access to higher education. The school does refer those who are unable to receive formal education because of a learning disability to vocational skill development programmes.

## ***Supporting teachers***

The school conducts in-house training for trouble-shooting minor problems faced in daily activities. The school also encourages its staff to participate in training programmes conducted by different organizations in the field. Unfortunately, there have not been any advanced training programmes conducted in the country. The training programmes conducted are mainly short courses for new entrants in the field.

## ***Community support***

The local community has slowly become aware of special education and has shown keen interest in the field. They have accepted the fact that an individual with a disability can lead a normal life, can receive education and be a contributing member of society. Parents of regular students have accepted, valued and encouraged their children to study with children with disabilities in the same class. But they have yet to contribute financially to the development of this. It was not long ago when people were amazed to see a blind person walking along the road with a cane. It is, therefore, the role of government, local welfare institutions, and even the school through special education, to arrange for the participation of the local community and the private sector in funding this development.

The school is able to receive external assistance for funding the students at the personal level. It is not able to receive funds from international agencies as they must directly co-ordinate with the government. Funds received at a personal level are used to build not only the education programme for children with disabilities, but are used to develop extra curricular activities for them.

## **Problems faced**

**Lack of resources.** Parents of children with disabilities are becoming aware of formal education. However, because of financial problems, they cannot afford to send them to school. Further, with the lack of government funding, all the requests cannot be met.

**Lack of trained teachers.** Teachers teaching regular students are not aware of special education. Hence, students studying in higher classes face problems in accessing the subject-matter.

**Rigid school curriculum.** Schools follow the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. The curriculum had been designed without considering the needs of children with disabilities. Hence, students with special needs, especially blind students, face problems in learning geometry and courses involving figures.

**Lack of resources available for extracurricular activities.** Negligible participation in terms of funding from the local and private sector.

**Lack of policy at the government level** to facilitate and upgrade living standards of both educated and uneducated individuals with disabilities.

**Lack of direct funding by the government** for the development of the field of education for children with disabilities on par with the funding for basic and primary education to regular students.

**Government or non-government agencies** are not continuing the process that BPEP sponsors began for primary education.

### ***The keen learner: Manoj***

The school had been conducting a village visit programme to study the situation of people with disabilities in the district. One of the health officers in the village reported a blind child 8 years of age.

Ten years ago, when we first met Manoj, he was begging in the street. When he met us, he asked for 5NPR to buy a biscuit. We asked him how willing he was to study in a school. He said, he would study if we gave him money. We went to meet his family; he had a father and two brothers. When we asked them about sending Manoj to school, they were surprised. They were sure that Manoj would not be able to study, but they agreed to send him to us because they would not have to bear the cost for his living with them.

Manoj is Hindu. He is from the lower caste in the society. Because he is blind, he was completely neglected by his family. He spent his days begging in the street. He was discarded by the society. We found a Japanese sponsor for him and with those funds we admitted him to Namuma Machhindra Secondary Boarding School. He stayed in the school hostel. Even in the school, because of his low caste and economic status, he was badly behaved. Since he was neglected, he had rude behaviour and knew little of cleanliness. He used to fight with all of his classmates in the hostel, and was very difficult for the house warden to manage. But, with strong assurance to everybody, we managed to keep him for two years in the resource class.

Slowly, Manoj became accustomed to the school environment. He turned himself into a keen learner and learned the social way of living. He slowly made friends in the hostel, both regular and blind. He learned to be clean and sociable. When he went to class with regular students, it was like a paradigm shift for him. He made friends with children who used to reject him. He learned things from them that were completely unknown to him, and learned to see the world through their eyes.

Now, Manoj is an understanding and hard-working student. He goes to and from school independently. He is now able to make other blind children understand the importance of education and guide them. He studies in Class 9 and he has been identified by his society and family as one of their important members. His brothers visit him to find out about his development. He says he has the aim of becoming a teacher and teach other blind students to be a sensible and productive resource for the country.

Manoj feels he is fortunate to receive formal education in the school. The school feels, however, that he still lacks the opportunity to learn things that he wishes for. He has not been able to receive technical knowledge (for example, how to use a computer). He has not been able to play sports because of a lack of a trained sports teacher and appropriate sports material. He has not been able to receive the music training that he has always wished for. The school can care for him through grade 10, after which he needs to pursue higher studies or employment on his own.

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# South Africa: inclusive education policy and practice

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by *Nithi Muthi**Nithi Muthukrishna*

## **National context**

The 1996 census data indicated that the population of South Africa amounted to 40,580,000 (Statistics South Africa, 1998). Children under 20 years form 44.22 per cent of the population. Six out of every ten children in South Africa live in poverty. In this case, 'poor' is defined as the poorest 40 per cent of households (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). Biersteker and Robinson (2000) suggest that children living in rural areas are more likely to be poor than those in urban areas. They explain that the poverty share of rural compared to urban areas is 70 per cent, which means that seven out of every ten poor people in South Africa live in rural areas.

The Schools Register of Needs Survey, completed by the new government in 1996, reveals the stark deprivation in the majority of schools in the country (Education Foundation, 1996). This situation persists despite the fact that South Africa's budgetary allocation to education is high. In 1998/99 the consolidated national and provincial education budget comprised approximately 22.2 per cent of public expenditure. However, the legacy of the apartheid past is vast, and inequalities in education are profound. Achieving equity, redress and quality education for all is an immense challenge. (See box below.)

## **Educational policy transformation since 1994**

In the last seven years, the democratic Government of South Africa has been committed to transforming educational policy to address the imbalances and neglect of the past. The notion of a democratic society based on human dignity, freedom and equality is entrenched in the Constitution. One of the key provisions in the constitution is that dealing with equality of rights. Section 9(3) reads: 'The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth' (Muthukrishna, 2002).

A strong human rights emphasis is evident in educational policy and legislation. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 commits the government to the principle that all South African citizens have a fundamental right to a basic education.

## **A snapshot of the lives of children in South Africa**

South Africa has approximately 12 million schoolchildren.

Approximately 5 per cent (337,000) of poor children between the ages 10 and 16 do not attend school.

In schools across South Africa there is a shortage of more than 57,000 classrooms.

Approximately 24 per cent of schools have no water within walking distance.

Approximately 13 per cent have no toilet facilities.

Approximately 57 per cent have no electricity.

Approximately 69 per cent have no learning materials.

Approximately 83 per cent have no library facilities.

Approximately 6 per cent are in such poor condition that they are not suitable for education.

Approximately 11 per cent are in serious need of repair.

Approximately 80 per cent (280,000) of school-age children with disabilities do not attend school.

The 380 special schools in the country accommodate only about 20 per cent of children with disabilities (approximately 64,200).

The Child Protection Unit in 1996 reported 35,838 cases of crimes against children. Of these, 45 per cent were cases of sexual abuse.

The estimate of the number of HIV-positive adults and children for 2000 was about 4.2 million.

In 2000, approximately 201,000 children were estimated to be HIV positive.

By 2010, it is forecasted that there will be approximately 2 million AIDS orphans.

In 1998, it was estimated that approximately 200,000 children between the ages of 10 and 14 were child labourers.

In 1998, 8,000 children were permanently living on the streets.

In 2001, it was reported that approximately 280,000 learners with disabilities had no access to schooling.

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Source: Education Foundation (1996); Biersteker and Robinson (2000); Statistics South Africa (1998); Whiteside and Sunter (2000); Department of Education (2001).

Since 1994, various policy documents and legislation based on the Constitution emerged, such as the 'White Paper on Education and Training' (Department of Education, 1995), the South African Schools Act of 1996; 'White Paper 2: The Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools' (Department of Education, 1996); 'White Paper on a National Integrated Disability Strategy' (Office of the Deputy President, 1997). These documents and legislation have articulated the principles of human rights and social justice for all learners, participation and social integration, curriculum access, equity, redress, efficiency, quality, and the right of all learners to equal access to the widest possible educational opportunities.

The most significant initiative for the areas of special education and education support services began in December 1995 when the Minister of National Education approved the establishment of a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and a National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). The commission and committee were mandated to develop a future vision, principles and strategies for education provision, with respect to 'special needs' and 'support services', with a particular focus on the transformation of the system in line with the principles entrenched in the Constitution and all other policy documents that emerged since 1994. The Report of the NCSNET and NCESS was released in November 1997. In July 2001, following this report, the 'White Paper 6: Special Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System' was released.

### ***A paradigm shift from 'special needs' to 'barriers to learning and development'***

The 'Report of the Commission and Committee' (Department of Education, 1997) argued that in South Africa, historically, the notion of 'special educational needs' has been used to categorize all learners who, for various reasons, did not fit into the mainstream system, and to identify deficits within these learners. The report points out that there was little attempt made to explore the causes of learning breakdown that may be embedded in the system. The NCSNET and NCESS report argued that a range of needs exists among learners, and within the education system, that need to be met if effective learning and development is to be provided and sustained. Therefore, the education system must be structured and must function in such a way that it can be responsive to a diversity of learner and system needs (Department of Education, 1997).

The most significant outcome of the process is the paradigm shift from the concept of 'special needs' to a focus on 'barriers to learning and development'. The 'Report of the Commission and Committee' stressed that the priority of an education system should be to address those factors that lead to the inability of the system



to accommodate diversity, or which lead to learning breakdown, or which prevent learners from accessing educational provision. The 'Report of the Commission and Committee' conceptualized these factors as 'barriers to learning and development' (Department of Education, 1997).

In 'White Paper 6', the Ministry accepted that a broad range of learning needs exists among the learner population and, when these are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively, or may experience exclusionary pressures. The Ministry explains that in South Africa, it is clear that applying the concept 'special needs education' to categorize a small group of learners according to their defects or disabilities is problematic. The reason is that various social, political and economic factors prevent access to basic education for large numbers of learners. There are many children for whom the system is failing, and to whose needs the system remains unresponsive. In adopting this conceptualization of 'barriers to learning and development' 'White Paper 6' engages with the realities of life within local contexts and communities (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 7, 17-18).

'White Paper 6' identifies key barriers in the South African context that render a large number of children and adults vulnerable to learning breakdown and sustained exclusion: (a) problems in the provision and organization of education; (b) socio-economic barriers; (c) factors that place learners at risk, such as high levels of violence and crime; (d) HIV/AIDS epidemic and substance abuse; (e) attitudes; (f) an inflexible curriculum; (g) problems with language and communication; (h) inaccessible and badly constructed environments; (i) inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services to schools, parents, care-givers, families and communities; (j) disability; (k) lack of enabling and protective legislation; (l) lack of human resource development; and (m) lack of parental recognition and involvement (Department of Education, 2001, pp. 17-18). The White Paper argues that it is only by focusing on the nature of these barriers that problems of learning breakdown and exclusion can be addressed.

In making this shift to the concept of 'barriers to learning and development', the Ministry of Education commits itself to a vision of an inclusive education and training system that will provide educational opportunities for those learners who experience barriers to learning and development. White Paper 6 defines inclusive education and training as follows:

- 1.** Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.
- 2.** Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all children.
- 3.** Acknowledging and respecting difference in children, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV status, or other infectious diseases.
- 4.** Providing broader than formal schooling, and acknowledging that learning occurs in the home, the community and within formal and informal contexts.

5. Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners.
6. Maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of educational institutions, and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning.

'White Paper 6' has more than a disability focus. It targets all barriers to learning and participation that learners experience in their schools and communities. With this in focus, the Department of National Education is grappling with the realities in the South African context that are discussed in the first part of this chapter. One of the first steps outlined in the White Paper is an audit of special education provision in the country that is currently under way. A national database will be the main outcome. The aims of the audit areas follow:

1. To gain clarity on the available capital, material and human resources in special schools and other special education facilities in mainstream schools.
2. To identify barriers to learning and participation that learners experience in current service provision.
3. To ascertain whether current resources are being used in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.
4. To ascertain the range of learner needs (from low need to high need) in the current learner population.
5. To ascertain what resources special schools would require to enable them to be transformed into resource centres for mainstream schools.
6. To ascertain the available human resources in education support services (ESS).
7. To find out whether current ESS sections are providing an efficient and cost-effective service.

The key strategies and levers for change outlined in 'White Paper 6' are as follows:

1. Qualitative improvement of special schools and their conversion into resource centres to support mainstream schools.
2. Overhaul of the process of identifying, assessing and enrolling learners.
3. Expansion of access and provision. This would involve the mobilization of 'out of school' disabled children and youth of school age.
4. Establishment of full-service schools. At least one primary school per district will be designated a full-service school, and will be provided with the necessary resources to accommodate a diverse range of learning needs. This concept will be piloted in thirty districts in the country.
5. Providing support for curriculum development, assessment and institutional development.
6. Strengthening education support services.

7. Establishment of district support services to provide co-ordinated support to all schools.
8. National advocacy and information programmes to support inclusive education policy.

The vision and goals in the White Paper reflect a twenty-year developmental perspective. In the first five years, a three-pronged approach to funding is proposed: new conditional grants from the national government, funding from the line budgets of provincial departments, and donor funding for short-term activities such as the national audit of special education provision. Regarding the staffing strategy, it is envisaged that there will be no increase in the short term. What is proposed is a much more cost-effective use of specialist educators than is currently in practice. The national audit of special education provision will inform this process. The Ministry plans to undertake further investigation into the magnitude of expenditure that the whole policy implementation process will involve, and how change may be phased in over twenty years.

## ***Siyafunda Secondary School***

The target school is an ordinary public school situated in the Estcourt District, Ladysmith region of the province of Kwazulu-Natal. This is one of the poorest provinces in the country. Transformation in this province has been very slow since 1994 due largely to political and economics factors, and the problem of a lack of capacity within the education sector.

The province has a population of 8,412,021. The local language is Zulu. The unemployment rate of those aged 15-65 was 39.1 per cent, according to the 1996 census. The number of economically active people in the age group 15-65 (employed and unemployed) in the province is 2,579,517 - 30.6 per cent of the population (Statistics South Africa, 1998).

The province of Kwazulu-Natal has eight regions. The school is situated in the Ladysmith region which is largely rural. As in many developing contexts, the most marginalized learners reside in the rural areas of the country. In the Ladysmith Region there are 701 schools of which 485 are primary, 181 secondary, 6 pre-primary, 25 combined (primary and high schools on the same campus), and 4 special schools; 222 schools are without water, 384 without power, 400 without telephones and 34 with buildings not suitable for education. Out of the 181 secondary schools, 124 are without libraries. The learner enrolment is 383,129 with 10,665 teachers. The average number of learners to a classroom is approximately 48.

Siyafunda Secondary is situated approximately 17 km outside the town of Estcourt. It adjoins the Eastview<sup>4</sup> Special School for the Physically Disabled – a school funded jointly by the state and the Lutheran Church organization. The management style at the school appears very democratic – with parents and teachers involved in decision-making. The governing body is representative of parents, and adheres to guidelines in the South African Schools Act of 1996. The principal is also a community leader in the area, and is highly respected.

The school is constantly engaging with barriers to learning and participation that may be embedded in the ethos, cultures, and curriculum of the school. Poverty and unemployment rates are high amongst families of learners who attend the school. In addition, there was a great deal of political unrest in 1995-96. However, the community has worked hard to resolve the problems, and for the past few years there has been peace and stability.

There is a yearly 5-10 per cent teenage pregnancy rate at the school. Substance abuse is a problem in many families. According to staff, *dagga* (marijuana) is grown in the area by the community as a source of income.

The principal identified the issue of a 'rigid curriculum' as a major barrier to learning and participation. The principal explained that apart from 'Home Economics', there is no definite vocational stream at his school. The emphasis is very much on academic subjects. Efforts have been made to address this issue, but with little success.

He added that he strongly believed that this was essential if all learners were to be employable at the end of their schooling. He believed that employability should be one of the key goals of schooling and the curriculum.

Other barriers that the school experiences are inadequate teaching aids, inadequate number of classrooms, and inadequate stationery and textbooks. Most parents are unemployed and therefore unable to afford to buy these items.

## ***Inclusive responses***

Despite large class sizes (approximately 1 : 65) and limited resources, the matriculation pass rate in recent years has been exceptional. In 2001, the school achieved a 79 per cent pass rate in the matriculation examination. (The pass rate in the province was 62.8 per cent, and in the Ladysmith region, 57.8 per cent). The principal attributed this success to the commitment of his staff and students. The staff initiated a study programme for matriculation students because the poor home

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4. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the schools and their learners.

environments are not conducive to learning. The programme runs for one and a half hours in the morning before school begins, and for another two hours after school hours. Both teachers on duty and students leave as late as 5 p.m. each day. Study groups also meet at the school on Saturdays. Teachers supervise these groups on a rotation basis. This has been an ongoing practice at the school over the last few years.

The school has an open policy towards the enrolment of learners with disabilities. Learners with physical disabilities are transferred from the adjoining Eastview Special School for the Physically Disabled to Siyafunda to complete the secondary phase of schooling. The staff at the Eastview School have been very supportive of the school and are partners in this initiative.

Of the children with physical disabilities at present at the school, the principal stated: 'Other children do help them to get around, but we just want to treat them as normal. We don't want to make them feel like they are handicapped. Even if they need to be disciplined, then they are also disciplined like the other learners.'

The school has developed good partnerships with community organizations and the private sector. Improvements to the school have been made through sponsorships from the local company, Masonite.

## ***A pilot project on inclusive education***

The school has been included in an inclusive education pilot project that began in 1998. The project emerged as a result of a partnership between a community organization, the Ladysmith Co-ordinating Committee on Disability (LCCD), the Ladysmith Regional Education Department, and the University of Natal, Durban. There was concern regarding the large number of children in mainstream schools with varying degrees of disability and learning difficulties with no support whatsoever. The project began as a series of workshops for teachers on how to deal with diversity in their classrooms. The project has since grown, and the school has been included in the National Department of Education's pilot project on inclusive education – focusing on implementing the recommendations of White Paper 6. This pilot project currently under way in three provinces is funded by the Danish Government.

The overall objective of the project is to support the implementation of government policy on the development of an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001) that will benefit learners experiencing barriers to learning and participation. The project emphasizes educator development through the development of training and resource programmes to enable existing educators to meet the full range of diverse needs in the learner population. The project has four broad aims: (a) develop capacity and raise awareness on inclusive education at the

provincial, regional and district educational departments; (b) design an inset course on inclusive education for teachers in the district; (c) train educators on developing inclusive schools and communities, and inclusive curricula; and (d) conduct action research to engage teachers and school management staff in the various stages of action, reflection, questioning, exploring, drawing conclusions, evaluating options, and planning further action in their inclusive education practices.

A key outcome has been materials development for use during two staff development sessions held once a week in the project schools. The materials comprise three modules on inclusive education:

**Module One:** Inclusive Education Policy. Units include the following topics: (a) committing to quality education for all; (b) looking at barriers to learning and participation; (c) building an inclusive education and training system; and (d) moving towards an inclusive education system.

**Module Two:** Developing Inclusive Responses through the Curriculum. Units include the following topics: (a) inclusive schools through whole school development; (b) reflecting on practice through action research; (c) welcoming learners with disabilities; (d) building community based support in the inclusive school; (e) conflict resolution in inclusive schools; and (f) dealing with discipline in the inclusive school.

**Module Three:** Inclusive Curricular Responses. Units include the following topics: (a) promoting reading in the inclusive classroom; (b) supporting the abused child; (c) dealing with substance abuse in schools; (d) HIV/AIDS awareness and sexuality education; (e) responding to diversity and (f) teaching strategies in an inclusive classroom.

Disability issues are integrated into each of the three modules. Issues dealt with include (a) education policy related to learners with disabilities, (b) promoting inclusive attitudes towards learners with disabilities; (c) parents of learners with disabilities as partners; and (d) peers as support. The materials are currently being field-tested in the pilot schools that include Siyafunda Secondary. In the development of materials, and in educator training, there has been an active involvement of local disabled people's organizations (DPOs) in the district. The DPOs provided valuable input into the materials development process, and four members of the DPOs participate in training sessions at the school.

## **Helping those who suffer: Bongani Dlamini<sup>5</sup>**

My name is Bongani Dlamini. I am 18 years' old and a grade 9 student at Siyafunda Secondary School. My family live in Ladysmith, about half an hour drive away. I live at the Diaconia Centre near the school and pay R150.00 per month for board and lodge. I did my primary schooling at the Eastview Special School, which is next door to Siyafunda.

I am physically disabled. When I was 2 years' old I was badly burnt on my legs and back with boiling water. As a result my walking is very difficult and I have to use crutches. My mother feels very guilty about the accident. I enjoy schooling at Siyafunda because I find that the teachers respect me. I do not feel that I am treated differently from other learners at the school by teachers. I know that teachers at Eastview do come to Siyafunda to speak to the teachers about learners with disabilities.

I think the teachers try to teach each learner, and help each one. They are able to do this because my class has only 29 learners. If I do not understand anything in class I feel quite comfortable to tell my teachers. All my teachers take the time to explain again. The learners are tested twice a week. If the results are low, the teachers do get angry sometimes but they encourage the learners to do their work, and try to improve.

I have a girl friend at the school. We are going out for eight months. If I have a personal problem, I speak to my friends about it. Other learners sometimes go to the teachers about their problems. I do not have any problems with my school work. My grades are good. My favourite subjects are Natural Sciences and Life Orientation. I like group work that happens in Outcomes Based Education (OBE) lessons. I enjoy sport. My favourite is athletics. This year I went to Cape Town for the Athletics Meeting for the Disabled. I won three gold medals and a trophy for javelin and discus. My school principal and teachers were very proud of me.

I also enjoy music and love playing the marimbas. I played marimbas with a group of disabled students at Eastview School. I don't play it anymore because we do not have marimbas at Siyafunda. I would prefer to have my own desk in my classroom. There should be more space between the chair and the desk. Another problem I have is during science lessons. When the teacher is doing an experiment, we all have to stand and watch. It is difficult for me because I miss what the teacher is demonstrating.

I feel that it is important for children to learn about disability in primary school. I think teachers need to talk to grade 7 when they are still at primary schools so that they will not tease us when they come to Siyafunda Secondary for the first time. They must be spoken to about disability so that they will not tease us, stare at us, and call us names.

When I leave school, I want to study nursing at the Estcourt Technikon because I want to help people who are suffering with HIV/AIDS. If I am a nurse I will be able to provide assistance and care for the people in the community.

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5. See footnote 4.

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# Ukraine: initiating inclusion

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by *Natalia Sofiy*

## ***A statistical perspective***

The number of school-age (6-17 years old) children with disabilities in Ukraine is about 110,000 (according to different sources):

Approximately 7,200 (6.5 per cent) of children with disabilities study in special classrooms within the regular (ordinary) schools. About 500 teachers work with them teaching different subjects (biology, history, etc.) according to the curriculum.

Approximately 60,500 (55 per cent) of children with disabilities study at the special schools (internats) of different types, where about 10,900 special teachers work with them. There are 393 such schools.

Approximately 40,000 (35 per cent) of children with disabilities study in regular classrooms in regular schools, but most of them without any control or special care. The majority are children with mental retardations and with psychological delays.

There is no information on the number of children with disabilities who do not receive any education at all in Ukraine. However, it is supposed that the majority of children with disabilities of school age receive some form of education.

It is also necessary to mention that there are 16,000 children with disabilities in the 179 kindergartens of a compensatory type; 60,000 children with disabilities attend special classrooms in 1,400 regular kindergartens. This creates the basis for their further integration into mainstream education. This is a rather unique feature of the special education system in pre-school education in Ukraine.

There is neither a complex nor planned process of data collection for research conducted in the field of education of children with special needs; only separate data from different institutions exist. Thus the development of policies is not based on data collection.

## Legislation and policy

In Ukraine, there are no specific laws directly in support of inclusive education. Only recently has the concept of integration/inclusion of children with disabilities begun to draw public attention. In the *National Doctrine of Education Development in Ukraine in the Twenty-first Century: Equal Access for Children and Youth in Getting Quality Education*, it is declared as one of the priorities. In the *National Doctrine*, a specific section is devoted to children with special needs and in which the following principles are declared: (a) access to free education for children with disabilities; (b) identification and diagnosis of children with disabilities; (c) provision of different forms of education for children with disabilities; (d) development of support systems for parents; and (e) development of a network of educational rehabilitation centres. Even though there is no mention of 'inclusive education', the declaration supports 'different forms of education for children with disabilities' which provides the opportunity to start the official movement towards inclusion. It should be noted, however, that this doctrine is a policy identification document, but not Law.

Among the main state policy documents, which confirms the right for education for all, are the following:

1. 'Constitution of Ukraine' (adopted on 28 June 1996), Article 53: 'Everyone has a right to education. General comprehensive education is obligatory.' The Article also says that the state has to provide, free of charge, an accessible education at different levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education.
2. 'Ukrainian Law on Education' (adopted on 4 June 1991). There are two Articles (Article 51 'On the Rights of Students' and Article 60, 'On the Rights of Parents'), where it is declared that students and parents of children under 17 years of age have the right to choose an educational establishment. The State National Programme 'Education in Ukraine in the Twenty-first Century' (adopted in 1991) within the priorities of the secondary education reforms declares the 'improvement of education for children with special needs in the system of different kinds of educational establishments'.
3. The recently adopted 'Ukrainian Law on Comprehensive Secondary Education' (1991) declares the guarantee of secondary education for all children and recognizes such forms of education as group and individual forms of education. As for education of children with special needs, the Law identifies the Psychological-Medical-Pedagogical Commission, which is in charge of routing children to either the regular or special educational setting.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has instructed regional educational authorities to conduct experimental studies on some of the aspects of inclusive education for children with disabilities. Recently the work on development

of the package of necessary legislative documents has been started ('Document on Inclusive Classrooms', 'Document on Inclusive Schools', etc.).

## ***Funding practices***

A centralized financial supportive mechanism for the inclusive educational model does not exist, partly because there is no legislative base for development or further implementation of this mechanism. The existing system of funding provides additional funding for children with special needs; this includes free nutrition, partial provision of clothes and shoes, and additional staff and equipment, but only within the special educational system (special schools, internats).

The approximate cost of educating a child with special needs in the special educational setting costs about \$112 per month; this is covered by the state. If the child with special needs attends a regular school, he/she loses these additional funds. (Parents have to pay for nutrition; the school does not provide clothing or shoes; no additional staff nor appropriate equipment is provided.) The cost of educating a child with special needs in a regular school (so that the child stays in the family and does not live in the internat) has not been calculated.

Some of the schools, where the inclusive classrooms exist, apply for financial aid to different non-government donors.

## ***Training of teachers***

Teachers who work with children with disabilities in regular classrooms do not receive any special training on inclusive practices. Only recently, within the pedagogical experiment 'Social Adaptation and Integration into Society of Children with Disabilities through their Education in the Regular Schools' (Instruction 586 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 10 August 2001), initiated by the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation together with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine Institute of Special Pedagogy, has such training begun. The special course, (72 hours), has been developed by specialists from the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation and the Institute of Special Pedagogy for teachers who work in the experimental inclusive classrooms. The course is aimed at providing the knowledge about the development of children with different kinds of disabilities, how to organize a programme, and specific educational approaches for such children within the regular settings.

Solving the problem of teachers' preparation for the work in inclusive classrooms is critical. Involving the state and non-governmental groups for financial as well as professional support is essential. Trainer resources, research, and literature are among the specific needs.

## ***Secondary School No. 82***

The school is situated in a community of approximately 4,800 people; there are 2,200 children up to the age of 17. The school district is a distance from the centre of the city of Lviv (population about 700,000). The majority of the population in this district work at factories and plants in the area or at the agricultural farms near Lviv city.

### **The school**

The school includes first grade (children 6 years of age) up to eleventh grade (17 years of age). There are thirty-four classrooms in the school (eleven are primary classrooms).

There are approximately 1,000 children, aged 6 to 17 years, attending the school. Among these are Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Tadjik and Armenian children. There are twenty-one children with special needs. Twelve children with special needs are included in the regular classrooms, seven children attend separate classes, and two children study at home using home-based individual programmes. (In this case, each subject-related teacher visits the child at home.) Within the home-based individual programme, each child has 10 hours of education per week.

The teaching staff comprises eighty-two teachers. Additionally, there are four care-givers, two rehabilitators, one psychologist, one speech therapist, and one social pedagogue with higher education at the school.

### **'Inclusion of Children with Special Needs Programme'**

The 'Inclusion of Children with Special Needs Programme' was implemented at School No. 82 in 1996. Since the Dzherelo Educational Rehabilitation Centre (for children with cerebral palsy) is situated next to School No. 82, the decision was made, together with the director of the school and the director of the centre, to provide educational services for children who attend the centre. That process was supported

by the general policy of Lviv City Educational Authority, which had adopted the priority of education for city development in 1999, thus supporting changes within the existing system of education.

Because children who were to be included into regular classrooms were in wheelchairs, a series of challenges were posed: teacher-training, physical accessibility of the school, and adaptation of learning materials.

## **Funding for children with special needs**

The state provides specific funding for nutrition of children with special needs, the salary of the teachers, and school-related expenses (light, water, heating, etc.). It is necessary to mention that parents of children without disabilities have to pay for their children's nutrition. Through donors' grants, the Rehabilitation Room at the school was established in 1996; equipment for the room included four computers, furniture (table, chairs, book-shelves) and some of the special equipment (balls, rehabilitation devices). Also, four personal computers were purchased for the children with cerebral palsy.

In 2001-2002, through the support of the International Renaissance Foundation (National Soros Foundation) and the Embassy of the United Kingdom (Human Rights Fund), professional development of the teachers in inclusive classrooms was provided. Training is conducted by the trainers of the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation. Also, within the project 'Actualization of Human Rights through Accessible Education', supported by the Human Rights Fund of the Embassy of the United Kingdom, ramps have been built, toilets have been adapted, and a bus has been provided.

## **School programme**

Almost all aspects of the school (class organization, curriculum, assessment, school management policies, teachers' support, resources, staff development) remain the same as they were in 1996, the year of initiating the inclusive programme, because of state requirements. In the model of inclusive education at secondary school (middle-school level, grades 6-7), children study the content of the regular curriculum, but teachers implement individualized educational programmes. The following is the scheme for providing educational services for children with special needs: (a) ten children attend school every day, using the regular curriculum together with individualized educational programmes; (b) six children attend some classes together with the rehabilitator; (c) two children study at home because they cannot move; and (d) children with cerebral palsy can attend the school because of the bus provided by the Dzherele Educational Rehabilitation Centre.

The programme at School No. 82 starts at 9.00 a.m. and finishes at 3.15 p.m. Classes are combined with rehabilitation time. There is also a Parent's Room that also serves as a Rehabilitation Room, providing rehabilitation services, services provided by a language specialist and a psychologist. This room also serves as a place for teacher communication, and where children who are tired can re-new their energy.

## **Transitional programme**

Because the first children with special needs will graduate from the school in 2004, there is no specific transitional programme yet. The school administration, together with the staff of the Dzherelo Educational Rehabilitation Centre, plans to establish workshops (studios) where children can gain specific craft skills and then sell their products. Also, they plan to establish connections with vocational colleges, where the children could study a specific profession, as well as with Lviv State University, the 'Social Pedagogue' specialty.

## **Parent involvement**

There is strong parental involvement in the school through the following forms:

**Parents' clubs:** These unite parents of children with special needs. Parents' Club activities include developing and publishing booklets, such as 'We Will Live'; 'We Live and Give Happiness to the People'; 'Self Identification'; and providing assistance to other parents, etc.

**Parents' Day (monthly):** One of the activities during parents' days is the Drama Programme, conducted by the mother of a child with special needs. Parents are introduced to different kinds of plays which might be used and performed by children with special needs.

**Parents meetings:** These are conducted by classroom curators in the inclusive classrooms.

**Team meetings:** Here, parents meet with social pedagogues, care-givers, rehabilitators, school administrators and teachers, and discuss the child's progress.

## **Community involvement**

The 'Nadiya' Association, a non-governmental organization, supports the inclusion of children with special needs by providing resources and seeking additional sources of funding.

The school has links with the private sector, organizations and individuals who provide charitable donations (computers, holiday presents, etc.)

## International support

The school, together with the Dzherelo Educational Rehabilitation Centre, develops different projects for donors to support inclusive practices in the school. Examples include the following:

1. Human Rights Fund of the Embassy of the United Kingdom (building ramps, establishing the Rehabilitation Room, providing necessary equipment, supporting teachers' training, and providing a bus for transporting children with special needs).
2. International Renaissance Foundation (National Soros Foundation) who publish teachers' manuals and support teacher-training.
3. Canadian programme 'Partnership in Health Care', initiating and realizing the rehabilitators' training programme, based at Lviv Institute of Physical Culture. Because of this programme, forty-four Canadian specialists worked in Ukraine, and twenty-four Ukrainian specialists studied and gained practical experience in Canada in 1992.

### Making friends: the story of Yurko

This story is about Yurko, who was born on 13 April 1985 diagnosed as having 'cerebral palsy'. His parents were afraid that it would be difficult for him to attend the regular school and so they chose an individual home-based programme for him. Yurko studied at home for four years, and completed the elementary school programme. However, Yurko wanted to communicate with other children, wanted to have friends, and his parents understood that this way of education was not the best one. His parents therefore decided to put Yurko into the Dzherelo Educational Rehabilitation Centre, where he studied again for two years in the elementary school. Yurko studied in the group for children with mental retardation although his intelligence was normal. Located close to the centre was the regular School No. 8, where the programme of inclusion of children with special needs was started in 1996. Within this programme, some of the Dzherelo graduates studied. Teachers and care-givers at the centre advised Yurko and his parents to try to enrol him in this school.

Yurko was both very excited and nervous at the same time. After a short time everyone understood that it was the best environment for the boy. He adapted very quickly, started to succeed in his studies, and he made many friends. It was what he aspired to the most. Now Yurko studies in the seventh grade.

# The United States: Vermont as a model

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by *Linda Carroll*

## **Vermont as a context**

Burlington, Vermont's largest city, with a population nearing 40,000, has six neighbourhood schools, ranging in size from 180 to 400 students. It supports two middle schools, one high school, a technical centre, and an early education programme. In terms of race, ethnicity and the socio-economic field, Burlington is a diverse community in comparison to the rest of the state. The Burlington schools provide 8 per cent of their students with English as a second language (ESL) services. It is also a refugee resettlement city that has brought a wide range of ethnicities to the schools. Within the Burlington School district, twenty-seven languages are spoken.

## **Hunt Middle School**

Hunt Middle School is one of two middle schools in Burlington. It has a student population of 465 in grades six to eight. Of these, 14 per cent receive special education services, compared to 13.2 per cent at the state level. Thirty-two students at Hunt Middle School receive ESL instruction, where nineteen different countries of origin are represented among the student body. In terms of the socio-economic blend, 43 per cent of the students receive free/reduced lunch.

Hunt Middle School employs forty-two full-time professional staff and fourteen paraprofessionals. The professional staff are certified in their content areas, and the school is organized into teaching teams. Sixth-grade students are members of a team that offers students a transition year from an elementary setting. Students spend most of their day with a home-room teacher and leave that classroom for exploratory, physical education and classes of their own choice.



Seventh- and eighth-grade students are on multi-year, multi-age teams. Seventh-grade students are assigned to one of four teams and remain with that team for two years. One of the goals of this design is to offer continuity for students, parents and teachers. Using an interdisciplinary approach, teachers from different subject areas work together to design curriculum units and activities that are often interrelated. Students leave their team for foreign language, exploratory, physical education and classes of their own choice (e.g. chorus or band).

The core curriculum at Hunt Middle School includes language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Each student participates in these classes every day. Sixth-grade students participate daily in physical education classes. Additionally, exploratory classes of healthy living, music, technology education, and visual arts are offered to every student in the sixth grade for nine weeks. Sixth-grade students may elect to take band and chorus classes.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students take healthy living, music, technology education and visual arts for eighteen weeks. Two of these classes are offered in seventh grade and the other two are offered in eighth grade. In the school year, students participate in physical education for two quarters of the year; they may also choose band and/or chorus.

## **Special education at Hunt Middle School**

At Hunt Middle School, sixty-five students receive special education services, as determined by their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). In addition to special education students, thirty-seven students receive Title I support and fourteen qualify under Section 504. In total, 32 per cent of the students who attend Hunt Middle School qualify for special supported programmes and services.

Of the sixty-five students receiving special education instruction, forty-six students are learning-disabled, with all but two of these in the area of written language. All of the students participate in a full schedule of classes and participate in the mainstream setting. Although a few participate in foreign-language study, most are exempt from this requirement and receive support in a study hall that is staffed by a special educator and a paraprofessional. These are small study halls, usually ranging in size from ten to fifteen students, and they offer support to students to be successful in their mainstream content area classes.

Physical education is offered to seventh- and eighth-grade students every other quarter of the year. During the quarters when students are not taking physical education, special education students are enrolled in small classes for instruction in the areas of language arts and maths. The purpose of these classes is to focus on skill development, not necessarily related to their content area classes.

Nine Hunt Middle School students are receiving special education services because they are learning-impaired. In addition to the programmes described, these students receive small group or individualized instruction in content areas that parallel the main content areas. Students do not necessarily participate in mainstream classes for certain areas, but receive the key elements of those content areas in a small group of three or four students.

As a primary disability, eleven students at Hunt Middle School are emotionally disturbed; in addition to these, several dozen present challenging behaviours, a disability that may be considered their secondary disability. Within the continuum of services offered within the school, an alternative programme has been developed that offers students with emotional challenges the opportunity to participate in mainstream classes for the majority of their day. This programme serves eight to ten students, with a professional special educator and a paraprofessional assigned to this programme. Students meet daily for a morning meeting and then begin their schedule of classes. Students return to the programme at midday for a language arts class and lunch, go back into the mainstream for the afternoon, and finish their day in the programme. If students have been successful in their behaviour and completed their work, they leave 40 minutes earlier than the rest of the school. If they have not been successful, they stay for the remainder of the school day.

If students in this alternative programme have difficulty managing their behaviour while in their mainstream classes, they return to their room to process the problem with their special educator, are refocused, and make an attempt to continue their day. Most of the disciplinary issues for students in the alternative programme do not follow the same process as the rest of the school.

**E**mily is a 13-year-old girl with Down's syndrome who is served through this ISN programme. She was born in Burlington, a city her mother cites as, 'a great place to raise a child with a disability'. Emily's family lived in Burlington until she was 3. During that time, Emily received services through the Early Essential Education (EEE) Program. EEE worked with the family in the home setting and also provided a one-to-one assistant in her day-care setting. When Emily was 3 years' old, her family relocated to Maryland. Emily's mother, Katie, describes the Maryland situation very differently. 'This county in Maryland had a population the size of the entire state of Vermont, but there were only three elementary schools that included students with disabilities within the mainstream. We actually moved so that Emily could attend one of those schools, but it was a struggle the whole time.'

Emily's family returned to Burlington when she began second grade. Katie reports that it was, 'such a relief' to return to Burlington and to Vermont's approach to special education services. Emily remained at her elementary school through fifth grade, when the decision was made to have her repeat the fifth grade. She was developing some good friendship groups and socially and developmentally was still young. Her mother feels that, 'In retrospect, it was a good decision for Em.' Because of her disability, Emily can stay in school until she is 21 years' old. Thus it makes sense to assess her needs at various grade levels, and to make adjustments to her programming, rather than to assume that she would enter the high school at age 14 and remain in that setting for seven years.

Emily is currently enrolled as a sixth-grade student at Hunt Middle School. Even though Emily is considered an Intensive Special Needs student, because of her Down's syndrome, her school programme is very inclusive. Emily participates in an ability-based maths class that has fifteen students and three adults. The classroom teacher, the team's special educator, and Emily's individual assistant team teach this class, which serves students who have challenges in the area of maths. Within this setting, Emily participates in all activities and assignments. Within the block time, Emily participates nearly all of the time within the classroom, when the material being presented in the content area of language arts, science and social studies can be accommodated to Emily's level. Nearly all assignments are accommodated so that Emily remains in the class, working on similar assignments to her peers. Her assistant is always assigned to those classes to assist Emily, but can often assist other students who need additional assistance.

Emily receives instruction in a small group setting when the classroom assignments cannot be accommodated in a way that would appropriately include her in the mainstream. Each day she receives individualized reading instruction, with her assistant or with the ISN special educator. As with all students on an IEP, the individual needs of that student are considered, and the way to maximize learning time appropriately is the guiding question. Katie states that she wants Emily included in classroom activities and assignments as much as possible, but recognizes that sometimes 'she needs a pull out; she needs to learn at her level'.

In addition to the core academic classes, Emily fully participates with her peers in physical education classes and exploratory classes including healthy living, technical education, art and music. Emily has elected to take chorus and enjoys daily singing instruction as well as performing at concerts. Her after-school activities include skiing, playing soccer in the Burlington Girls Soccer League, swimming, and summer adventure day camp, sponsored by the University of Vermont. She participates in after-school yoga and attends school dances and all school activities and field trips.

For students with emotional disabilities who are not in the alternative programme, the discipline process is tailored to meet their individual needs. A behaviour plan is often part of their IEP, specifying options within the existing disciplinary procedures. A student with an emotional disturbance cannot be suspended more than ten days during the school year. Disciplinary records are closely monitored by school administrators and special educators. When a student approaches ten days of suspension, a manifestation hearing is held by the student's IEP team to determine if the behaviour is related to the disability and to determine if the student is in need of a different school placement. Students may not be excluded from school activities or programmes because of their disability. Every effort is made to ensure that accommodations are put into place to allow a student to participate.

Seven students at Hunt Middle School are multiply handicapped, and are served through the Intensive Special Needs Programme. All Intensive Special Needs students have individual paraprofessionals assigned to assist them. There are three students who do not participate in mainstream classes as their IEP calls for more of a life skills focus (such as self-care, simplified tasks, physical and occupational therapy and community based activities). Some of the ISN students participate in regular education classes for part of their day and receive individualized instruction for the remainder of their school day. Students may participate in maths, physical education, exploratory arts, chorus, or other content areas, depending upon the functional level of the individual students.

## **Supporting parents**

There are several local and state organizations that help to support parents who have children with disabilities. In Burlington, the director of special education holds monthly meetings for parents. The focus of these meetings is to discuss issues regarding special education, service delivery, and other topics of particular interest. Vermont Parent Information Center (VPIC) also offers support and advocacy to parents. A VPIC representative often attends IEP or evaluation meetings to offer consultation to the parent during this process.

Parent to Parent is another organization that attempts to link parents. Now in its fifteenth year, it offers support to parents who have children with disabilities or children with intense medical needs. This organization is also linked to the University of Vermont, and students who are studying to become physical therapists offer respite care and services to students in need.

There are also specific groups that focus on more specific disabilities, such as the Down's syndrome support group. They offer family gatherings and activities several times each year and also offer workshops and conferences that provide information and support to parents who have children with Down's syndrome.

Children with disabilities also qualify for respite care, and additional funding is allocated to their families. The school works to help families access these services through several private and community agencies in Burlington. Money is also available from the State of Vermont to support families who have children with significant physical, cognitive or emotional needs.

## **Collaborating with others**

Hunt Middle School collaborates with many agencies to provide wrap-around services for students. These may include accessing mental health support, assisting with doctors and counselling appointments, and working with social and rehabilitative services. There are two counsellors who work in the school building, each for one-half day. While this does not meet the needs of all of the students who need counselling, it does provide an in-house option for students whose families struggle with transportation issues. Students with emotional disturbances are often serviced through this model.

Hunt also has a full-time social worker and a part-time truancy social worker. They serve students who are deemed at risk, in terms of social, family, community and school success. Approximately 75 per cent of the students who receive social work services are also receiving special education services. On an individual basis, school counsellors and administrators may, with parent and student permission, communicate with private therapists in order to make a link between family/community and school issues.

## **Funding full inclusion**

Vermont has promoted full inclusion since the implementation of PL 94 142, a federal mandate passed in 1975. At the time that the legislation was passed, it was funded by the national government at a rate near 90 per cent. One of the struggles today is that the federal funding has decreased to 17 per cent of the costs. As a result, the costs of special education have shifted to the state and local community level. One of the fiscal challenges facing Burlington schools has been the ever-increasing cost of special education, resulting in the need for a property tax increase, based upon the value of residents' homes, because that is how the funding of education is determined in Vermont.

In Burlington, the special education budget is approximately \$3,300,000. This covers the costs of all professional and paraprofessional school staff as well as contracted professional services, transportation, supplies and equipment and the costs for students who are placed out of district at various alternative schools and programmes. At present, twenty-six students are in out-of-district placements, and only one student is placed outside Vermont. It is important to keep in mind that this represents only 5 per cent of the special education students, and less than 1 per cent of the total student population.

The State of Vermont currently provides \$528,000 to Burlington to supplement special education costs. This represents approximately 16 per cent of the total special education costs in Burlington. The remaining costs are funded at the local district level. While few people would argue the importance, need and value of special education programmes, the funding sources have become a growing concern in Burlington, in the state of Vermont, and across the country.

## **Assessing student progress**

The State of Vermont has initiated state-wide assessments, the New Standards Reference Exams. These are administered to students in fourth, eighth and eleventh grades. One of the goals of this assessment is that all students will participate in some form of assessment. The state has provided very specific allowable accommodations in order for students to participate, along with a rigorous accountability system to ensure that all students participate. Most students at Hunt Middle School participate in on-grade level assessments with allowable accommodations. These include extended time, reading directions aloud, small group administration, scribing, using Braille, or out-of-level tests. Some eighth-grade students, for instance, take the fourth-grade assessment. Students who cannot participate in the state-wide assessments are required to take an alternative assessment or submit a life-skills portfolio.

## **Transitioning to and from Hunt Middle School**

Hunt Middle School receives students from three elementary feeder schools in Burlington. Each spring, special educators, guidance counsellors and administrators meet to begin the transition process for students entering sixth grade in the following school year. Middle School guidance counsellors and administrators meet with every elementary teacher and guidance counsellor to review the academic, emotional and disciplinary needs of each individual student. Additionally, the middle school special educator meets with the elementary special educator from the elementary schools to review each child's IEP and goals for transitioning to a new school setting. Even though this is a very time-consuming process, it has been invaluable in determining appropriate student placements and matching student's needs with teacher's strengths.

In May of each year, all of the fifth-grade students from the three schools spend an afternoon at Hunt to tour the building, meet the teachers, and participate in a short orientation programme. Students with special needs participate in this programme, with support from the adults in both the sending and the receiving school. Sometimes, students will visit the school prior to this orientation day, in an effort to lessen their anxiety.

Similarly, the eighth-grade students from Hunt begin their course selection process for high-school classes in January of each year. Special education and guidance staff from the high school meet with Hunt guidance, special educators, and administrators to review the IEPs and the academic needs of the eighth-grade students. Individual transition plans are developed, and students begin visiting the high-school site in April. They are introduced to their high-school case manager, tour the building, and meet key staff.

There are also several summer programmes available for students who are transitioning to high school. These range from social skills and work assignments to additional academic and social supports. Many of our special education students are referred to these programmes as a means of making a link to the adults that they will be working with in the next school year. These summer programmes run for about five weeks during the summer vacation.

Extended year services may be part of a student's IEP. These would typically include reading support, academic summer school, or speech pathology. In the case of ISN students, summer programming may include community-based programmes such as attending a summer camp, outdoor activities, speech, reading or other appropriate activities. These programmes are developed as part of the child's IEP and supported with special education staff throughout the summer.

## **'Responsible inclusion'**

At the local school level, the allocation of available resources and the way best to utilize those resources have been topics of constant deliberation. Additionally, philosophical questions regarding special education services have been discussed at length. During recent years, the Hunt Middle School staff have grappled with the challenges of full inclusion and the wide range of students' needs. At Hunt Middle School, the phrase 'responsible inclusion' has replaced the term 'full inclusion', with the hope of truly meeting the diverse needs of the students in a variety of educational instructional settings, as described earlier.

Along with the evolution of a wide variety of programming, the roles of the professional staff also have been examined. There is one full-time professional special educator who is assigned to work with each of the teaching teams. This person is responsible for developing and implementing accommodations to the curriculum for those students who participate in mainstream classes. The special educator attends daily team planning meetings in order to plan curriculum, develop accommodations, develop and modify behaviour plans, and participate in other team-related activities and planning.

The accommodation necessary for the student to be successful is determined by the student's IEP team. This consists of parents, students, special educators,

regular educators, counsellors and administrators. The accommodation that a student should receive is ultimately the responsibility of the special educator. Often, the implementation of this accommodation becomes the responsibility of the paraprofessional and the classroom teacher. The paraprofessional works with a variety of teachers on the team and is often a 'push-in' support within the regular classroom. Classroom teachers assume a huge part of the responsibility for accommodating students' needs. The accommodation is determined through planning meetings. Then the professional special educator, regular classroom teacher, and paraprofessional determine who will implement each accommodation. Training is offered throughout the school year to keep special educators up to date of changes in special education laws, state and federal regulation changes and proper administration of various assessments. An area for improvement here is the updating and additional in-service support for the regular education teachers regarding strategies and guidelines for more effective teaching of students with special needs. There has not been any district-wide approach to this issue.

The staff at Hunt Middle School continue to modify and adjust their approach to inclusive education. This is a topic that is frequently discussed, and efforts are made to improve educational opportunities for students in a manner that allows every student to achieve his or her personal best. The staff are to be commended for their continued efforts.



# Conclusion: Moving towards inclusive practices in secondary schools

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by *Phyllis Magrab*

As we move towards implementing inclusive practice in secondary schools, there are some lessons to be learned from the diverse examples presented in this document. Clearly there were commonalities that lead to the success of creating inclusive environments. Most significantly, in each of the schools, the success of establishing inclusive practices was based on the individual and institutional commitment to principles of inclusion and the dedication to the goal of educating all children, regardless of their special needs. The willingness to create change in the environment and a process to deal with that change was a strongly related characteristic.

The importance of teacher training, particularly teachers in the ordinary classroom, was a challenge for each of the programmes. Often, the training was addressed in an informal, in-service manner. Recognizing the need for teacher training around inclusive practices (especially for general education teachers in the academic areas) is a key issue to the implementation of inclusion in secondary schools.

Seeing inclusion as a benefit for all children and youth in the school environment was another common thread. This further reinforces the importance of attitudinal elements in the success of providing inclusive environments for youth with disabilities in secondary schools.

As we look towards the future, these examples point to the need for more in-depth action research to understand the challenges of and strategies for implementing inclusive practices in secondary schools. Recognizing the specific developmental needs of adolescents, the structure and culture of secondary school environments, and national policies and practices are parameters that clearly affect the implementation of inclusive practices and should be examined.

As nations strive to educate all children, and to develop EFA plans, these parameters are especially important. To reach the goal of 'Education for All' in the next decade, youth with special needs must be a clear part of national EFA plans. Creating educational opportunities in inclusive environments is one of the elements that can lead to this.

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*Published by the*

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

7, place de Fontenoy - F 75352 Paris 07 SP - France

Cover design and Composition by ED/EO/SDI

Printed in France

**U**NESCO's Section for General Secondary Education and the International Working Group on Disability and Development (IW GDD) have joined forces to produce this publication. It demonstrates that successful examples of inclusive practices at secondary level do actually exist in all parts of the world. By showing that success in this endeavour is directly linked to the goodwill and commitment of the stakeholders it shows how these examples can be generalised.

This selection of successful examples is a first step. More thorough investigation and research will determine with greater precision the conditions that make inclusive secondary education programmes successful. The results will illuminate the development of policies and guidelines that will allow countries to implement programmes effectively.

Some of the outcomes of the projects presented here suggest that it is important to study the impact of inclusive education on students in general as well as on their classmates with special learning needs. Its influence on the attitudes and behaviour of all students, and most particularly on how they respect difference and understand each other, has wider implications for values education and the reduction of conflict.

UNESCO hopes that this publication will stimulate the academic community to strengthen research on inclusive education at secondary level. Networks of scholars can be an important force for bringing greater equity and higher quality to the education of our youth.

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