



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Resource sheet

Educational policies and integration practices

Section D for/Define

1/Report :

This study analyzes the development of policies and instruments to protect the rights of people with disabilities, starting with the first international classification of disability in 1980 by the WHO to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 by the General Assembly of United Nations. It therefore addresses a comparative analysis of educational policies and integration practices for people with disabilities in European states.

2/ Approach - demonstration:

The aims of this research are essentially three:

- to demonstrate how international collaboration is crucial in achieving important results in the protection of the rights of disabled people and in the process of school and social inclusion ;
- to reflect on the diversity and common elements in integration policies adopted by European countries ;
- to highlight difficulties, trends and progress in integration practices in Europe.

The development of policies and instruments to protect the rights of disabled people.

In 1980, the World Health Organization (WHO) (1) produced a first International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicap (ICIDH) (2), which provides the following definitions:

IMPAIRMENT : any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

DISABILITY : any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

HANDICAP : a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex, and social and cultural factors) for that individual.

In 2001, the World Health Assembly, the highest WHO decision-making body, approved and ratified the new International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (3), recommending its use in the Member States.

From this moment on, ICF becomes a WHO tool to classify health and disability. The emphasis is shifted from the disability of people to people's health, assuming that any person at any time of life can have a health condition that in an unfavorable environment becomes DISABILITY.

In December 1993, the United Nations General Assembly drafted the "Standard Rules for Equal Opportunities for Disabled Persons" (4). This tool constitutes the basic guidelines for government actions that can be used to monitor policies targeted at people with disabilities.

The "Standard Rules" contain social change directives that should allow all citizens with disabilities to participate equally in the life of society. In fact, they address in an analytical way all the areas that are

related to the social inclusion of people with disabilities. On 20 December 1996, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted a Resolution on Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities, which puts the "Standard Rules" underpinning all future actions, programs and directives in Europe.

The cultural value of this measure is very important because, on the one hand, it shows that the condition of people with disabilities is not a condition of compromising health but of discrimination and of lack of access to social life because of the barriers, obstacles and prejudices that the company places among themselves and the same people with disabilities; on the other hand, it transforms that negative view that segregation and exclusion practices have produced for centuries of separate and medicalising solutions.

The "Standard Rules", therefore, represent the instrument that has given decisive input to the inclusion of people with disabilities in all policies that concern them. They also sanction the shift from a medical perspective to disability (not just medicine as such, but primarily involving institutions), focusing on illness, on inability, care and assistance, to a social perspective, based, on the other hand, on full citizenship, the protection of rights and the means to support an adaptation of opportunities and social inclusion.

The "Standard Rules" begin to influence individual governments - which are required every five years to present reports on their implementation status - and further raise awareness of the need for the implementation of an international Convention that protects the rights of people with disabilities.

On December 13, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly approved the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (5), which through its 50 articles finally indicates, in a binding way, the road that the states of the world must travel to ensure the rights of equality and social inclusion of all citizens with disabilities. It represents an important achievement achieved by the international community and shares the conception of the "social model of disability" (6), according to which disability is due to the interaction between the individual's operational deficit and the social, cultural and personal context to which he lives (7). The Convention does not recognize "new" rights for people with disabilities, but "systemizes" them, ensuring that all individuals living in such a state can enjoy equality with others.

Access to everything for everyone, the promotion of rights, the strengthening of the representation of organizations and the mainstreaming of disability into the overall development process are the four priorities underlying the convention. Alongside these, fundamental principles are confirmed such as dignity, individual autonomy, and independence of people ; non-discrimination ; full and effective participation and inclusion in society on the basis of equality; respect for differences and acceptance of disability as part of human diversity and humanity.

Its highest value lies in having been written in four hands : governments and associations. It never happened before. The associations have secured a decisive contribution to the entire process of development, confirming that people with disabilities are the primary actors in building a world that is fit for everyone. There are many relevant points, including a definition of discrimination on the basis of disability that "indicates any form of discrimination, exclusion or restriction based on disability that has the purpose or effect of compromising or abolishing enjoyment, at the same level as others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil and other fields "(8).

No less important are aspects related to the promotion of accessibility, to legal protection and security, to the right to social protection and education, for which the States are committed to ensuring "an inclusive system at all levels, long-term learning" by ensuring that people with disabilities "are not excluded from the general education system and that children with disabilities are integrated into the primary and compulsory primary school" (9).

In the last thirty years, the trend in the European states has been the implementation of educational policies that include disabled pupils in ordinary schools by providing teachers with different types of support in terms of additional staff, teaching materials, training and technical equipment.

A comparative analysis of the various forms of school integration in European countries, carried out by the European Agency for the Development of Instruction for Disabled Students (with the contribution of the National Units of EURYDICE) in 2003 (10), shows that, according to Integration policy adopted on its national territory, states can be divided into three categories:

- The first (one-way approach) concerns countries where educational policies and implementation practices tend to involve almost all pupils in the ordinary school system. This choice is based on a wide variety of school-focused services. Examples are Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Iceland, Norway and Cyprus.

- Countries belonging to the second category (multi-directional approach) present a variety of approaches to integration. They offer a variety of services between two school systems (ordinary and differentiated). Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, England, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia belong to this category.
- In the third category (bi-directional approach) there are two distinct educational systems. Disabled pupils are placed in special schools or classes. Generally, most students officially recognized as 'having special educational needs' do not follow the standard curriculum provided for by the norm. These systems are (or at least were up to now) regulated by specific legislation, with standards other than ordinary school. In Switzerland and Belgium, the differentiated school system is very wide. In Switzerland, there is a mixed system: in short, there is a special legislation for schools and special classes (which includes, however, services provided within common classes). At the same time, there is a system of specific services in the common classes in the Cantonal dependencies.

Also in the thematic publication "The Integration of Disabled People in Europe" (11), it is highlighted that sometimes it can be difficult to classify a country according to the type of integration policy due to the continuous changes. For example, Germany and the Netherlands were classified as two-way systems in 2003 but have recently been moving towards adopting a multi-directional system.

Of course, the evolution of countries varies greatly. Sweden, Denmark, Italy and Norway have chosen and applied clear integration policies since the beginning of the current legislation. In these countries, legislative choices have been adopted years ago, so major changes have not occurred in recent years. However, in most European countries, there are significant legislative innovations, some of which are reported below:

- Already in the 80's, some countries have defined the differentiated school system as a resource of ordinary school. Today, several nations follow this route, such as Germany, Finland, Greece, Portugal, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.
- The choice of parents has become the subject of legislative changes in Austria, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Lithuania.
- Decentralization of responsibilities for the reception of disabled pupils is a matter of legislation in Finland (local authorities), in the UK, in the Netherlands (local school authorities), in the Czech Republic and in Lithuania. In the United Kingdom, there is a growing number of schools that require funding from local school authorities to gain greater decision-making in the use of the institute fund to meet the educational needs of all students enrolled, including those with serious problems.
- Changes to the financing system for handicapped pupils are a major innovation in the Netherlands.
- In Switzerland, the issue of funding has been discussed politically: the education of disabled pupils was entirely under the responsibility of the cantons (in force until the present confederation).
- In the Netherlands, Austria and Spain, legislation on pupils with disabilities for secondary school is now under consideration or has been recently amended.

Research from the European Agency for the Development of Instruction for Disabled Students (12) also reveals that some countries have a long political and practical history of integration, while others have only recently begun to implement educational policies for inclusion in common classes. The same research reveals a series of trends and advances that can be summarized as follows:

1. Two-way approach countries (a differentiated education sector outside the ordinary system) are developing a continuity of services between the two sectors. Moreover, more and more special schools are being transformed into resource centers for common schools.
2. Many countries have adopted legislative measures in the field of integration. Above all, countries with a differentiated training system have approved new regulations aimed at involving disabled pupils within the ordinary school sector.
3. Some countries have modified the funding system to improve the services needed for integration. In others, the awareness of the importance of an adequate funding system is growing.
4. Parents' choice of faculty in education is becoming one of the crucial issues of development in some countries. The attempt is to achieve integration by offering a growing number of options.
5. Transformation of special schools into resource centers has been realized in most European countries. In others, the model was introduced and is being implemented.

6. The adoption of the Individual Education Plan in specific teaching for pupils with special educational needs is a common tendency for European countries.

7. Countries are trying to overcome the psycho-medical paradigm with the search for more pedagogically or more interactive oriented definitions.

NOTES

(1) <http://www.who.int/en/>

(2) International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicap - A manual of classification relating to the consequences of disease, World Health Organisation, Geneva 1980

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/41003/1/9241541261_eng.pdf

(3) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/> (Trad. it. ICF, Trento, Erikson, 2002, pp. 14 – 22)

(4) The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its 48th Session on 20 December 1993 (Resolution 48/96) and published in 1994 by United Nations Department of Public Information, New York
<http://www.arpnet.it/ahs/NU93-NORMEDIS.htm>

(5) O.N.U., Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Developed between 2003 and 2006 and open to the signatures of the States on 30 March 2007, the Convention was signed by 155 States (and regional organizations), and ratified by 132. It was ratified (first in history) by the Union European. To ensure the full implementation of the principles and instruments envisaged, a UN Committee of Experts is set up with monitoring tasks, including through the analysis of the national reports that States are required to send.

(6) BARNES Colin, Mercer Geof, The Social Model of Disability: Europe and the Majority World, Leeds: the Disability Press, 2005

(7) CANEVARO Andrea, Pedagogia speciale. La riduzione dell'handicap, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 1991. According to Canevaro, the "handicap situation" does not primarily consider the damage itself, as it would be easy to assume, but it is a multifactorial concept, closely linked to the historical, cultural and environmental context: the handicap situation is in fact the combination of many elements.

(8) O.N.U., Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convention_accessible_pdf.pdf

(9) With regard to education, Article 24 of the Convention states: "States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life long learning directed to:

(a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

(b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;

(c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society."

(O.N.U., Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convention_accessible_pdf.pdf

(8) European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education: www.european-agency.org Agenzia Europea per lo Sviluppo dell'Istruzione per Studenti Disabili (con il contributo di EURYDICE, la rete di informazione sull'istruzione in Europa), L'Integrazione dei Disabili in Europa, Pubblicazione tematica Gennaio 2003, autori: Cor Meijer, Victoria Soriano, Amanda Watkins. https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/special-needs-education-in-europe_sne_europe_it.pdf

The text offers a comparative analysis of the various forms of school integration in European countries, provides information on funding of schools, training of teachers and the use of new technologies in the field of special education, all adequately correlated from synthetic synthesis tables.

(9) Ibidem

(10) Ibidem

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<http://www.unric.org/html/italian/pdf/Convenzione-disabili-ONU.pdf>,
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OMS Organizzazione Mondiale della Sanità, ICF Classificazione Internazionale del Funzionamento, della Disabilità e della Salute, Trento, Erikson, 2002

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