



Cap sur l'école inclusive
en Europe



Resource sheet

The limits of inclusion

Section of the module /D

The 2006 UN Convention on Disability doesn't mention the obligation to include all children with disabilities. Moreover, it doesn't constitute a legislative framework which obliges the signatory States to apply it.

It simply advocates the provision of "reasonable means", which implies on the contrary that it is accepted that inclusion has limits when means to be implemented to include are deemed "unreasonable".

The UN Convention doesn't define or classify these "reasonable means". We must therefore interpret the meaning.

When relying constantly on the ethical considerations that underlie the UN's recommendations, it may be thought that inclusive education is not desirable when:

- it leads to suffering of the child to which the school cannot respond, despite a flawless organization. Forced inclusion would be unethical in this case.
- the handicap is such that specific equipments are necessary and can only be found in specialized establishments

Despite these limitations, which only scientific progress can reverse, the scope of inclusion is largely open to most children with disabilities or Special Educational Needs.

In practice, however, there are still many obstacles that limit the goals of inclusion. For example, on the panel of partner countries, we frequently find:





- An insufficiently disability-aware educational staff and management. As long as the way people look on disability hasn't changed, and as long as the notion of educability isn't part of teachers' and managers' training, the tendency to create specialized structures to deal with certain forms of disability, especially mental handicap, will be a short-term easy solution that moves us away from inclusion goals. In long-term perspective, this option is a mismanagement, both financial and societal, because it induces risks of desocialization of the person, and a high probability that he should be supported by society throughout his life.

- An insufficient training of teachers who, despite strong involvement, find themselves disarmed in the face of the educational challenge that is being proposed to them.
- The compartmentalization of interveners, which is detrimental to the effectiveness of educational actions, whereas the means implemented are often important.

In most European countries, the path leading to inclusion is still a long way to go. It will necessarily go through the debate on deinstitutionalization, that is to say the (almost total) removal of specialized structures. The Italian example is instructive and was able to make the objectives of inclusion advance considerably. Pushing back the limits of inclusion has a cost, but it is possible.

First of all, to achieve this, a strong political will is needed, which addresses the problem of deinstitutionalization in a comprehensive way. It is not enough to make laws if they are not respected in fact, and if the objectives are not clearly understood by those who are responsible for applying them.

In the long run, it is in the states' interest to advance on the path towards inclusion, the only option aiming at the socialization of individuals and at their autonomy.