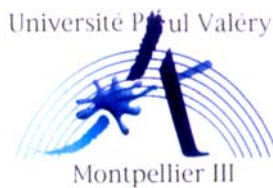

Educational Policies that Address Social Inequality

France case study report 4 Handiscol Project: Inclusion for pupils with special needs

This report was written by Richard Étienne on behalf of the France Country Team:
Richard Étienne with Pascal Tozzi and Chantal Étienne



Département de Sciences de l'Éducation
Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, France

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Handiscol Project: Inclusion for pupils with special needs

Rationale and Aims

The right of children and young people with specific educational needs to be in ordinary schools was in the Orientation Law of 30 June 1975 about people with a handicap. The Orientation law about education of 10 July 1989 was completed by some other texts.

The Handiscol project was launched in 1999 by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity. It had to coordinate actions to welcome in schools children and young people with specific educational needs. There are twenty steps to take and they are divided in five tendencies.

At school, pupils can combine different ways of schooling during some years or during the same year. They are collectively or individually integrated but they are also partially in medico-educative schools. From the 80s special education at home, and from the 90s there have been some steps to accompany children with specific educational needs.

A new law (11 February 2005) and a new President changed the way to work with children with specific educational needs. We cannot tell if Handiscol Project is under way or if there is a new policy towards inclusive school.

Description, Implementation and Financial aspects

20 steps for a project

1. Priority was given to inclusion in ordinary school
2. Workshops in two Ministries with two aims: to simplify and to improve children with special needs schooling
3. To edit a booklet for parents and families
4. A phone number (AZUR 08 01 55 55 01) to answer any question about children with special needs schooling
5. To have and to publish reliable statistics on that issue
6. To have a new application for local commissions
7. To improve commissions' efficiency
8. To create in each county a 'Handiscol group' whose aim is to assess consistency and to coordinate actions from each partner
9. To have each year a National Committee for people with handicap meeting whose aim is the evaluation of Handiscol project. There are also Regional Committees who work with reports of counties
10. There are two kinds of classes for children with specific educational needs: classes with schooling integration (CLIS) in primary schools and educational units of integration (UPI) in secondary schools
11. Specific departments to give home help have been increased from 1999 to improve public assistance given to children and families
12. Inclusion auxiliaries may help a child who cannot do ordinary gestures (to walk, to eat, to speak, to seat at table, etc.)
13. National Open Centre for Education (CNED) has a specific department for children and families who will be helped if they need it and if they ask for it
14. National Teachers Training Centre is now a Higher School and in charge to produce resources for teachers

15. In each Region and in each County, local authorities have to search material needs for children and families. And then, they have to buy those that are considered as a priority
16. Access to school is a local competence. Some financial help should be provided when there is a very high cost for local authorities
17. Professional training in ordinary schools and in specialised schools must be improved so that young people with educational specific needs can be employed
18. Initial and in-service teachers training on that issues must be developed
19. Inspectors have to be sensitised to inclusion of young vulnerable people
20. There will be a collaborative work between Employment and Education Ministries to give diplomas the same value.

We cannot find financial aspects because of the French administrative accountancy: people are paid by the State but if there are some additional costs, it is to the Region or to the County (département) to finance them.

Evaluations, Outcomes and Recommendations

Due to change of policy, Handiscol Project was not assessed. We do not know if it is under way or stopped. The first outcome is to calculate the number of children and young people with educational specific needs in schools.

Children and young people with educational specific needs in schools

Preschool and primary school

- Part time: 6,000 pupils.
- Full time: 18,000 pupils.

Individual inclusion in secondary school

- Part time: 1,200 pupils.
- Full time: 15,000 pupils.

Collective inclusion in secondary school

- Mental handicap: about 20,000 pupils
- Physical handicap: 1,200 pupils.
- Sensory handicap: 2,000 pupils.

Inclusion in a special educational unit (unité pédagogique d'intégration: UPI)

- Mental handicap: about 800 pupils

Source: Ministry of Education, 1999-2000.

Due to political changes in 2002, there was no evaluation about Handiscol project. It was the first national project for the inclusion of children and young people with educational specific needs. But, in fact, Inspectors and Directors have understood how important it is to include these pupils into ordinary schools, part or full time. The first outcome is that France has to consider that issue with the French motto: "Freedom, equality, solidarity" and not as the old Le Chapelier law (1905) wrote: "Specific school for specific needs".

Today, there is a new policy: everybody has the same rights and it is the State responsibility to give the same things to children with specific needs and to the others as well. But, there are new issues because of that policy: it is more a consumer's right than a question of equality. Parents and families play a new role. They are consumers with rights and go from school to school to have the

best for their children. It is not a collective duty and costs are increasing for material equipment. In 2008, 3000 specialised teachers, aiming to help pupils in difficulty are taken from their teams (RASED: networks to help pupils with specific educational needs) to be working in ordinary classes.

We have only three recommendations:

1/ To carry on and to achieve the policy of access to school for all students in accordance to the 2005 law

2/ To accompany this inclusion which is a right of a complementary operation that allows this right to be fully exerted thanks to the cooperation between professionals coming from several institutions. Inclusion must be carried out depending on each person within his or her family background, social and school background, even medical if his or her disability requires it.

3/ To develop a technological awareness at all levels: the Higher National Institute in charge of the education of disabled people (INSHEA) must be maintained and its journal (*Nouvelle Revue de l'Adaptation et de la Solarisation*) helps transmit the last results of research. The network of Inspectors and Special Advisers who deal with schooling and inclusion in the school must be reinforced. Lastly, the RASED issue should be solved through concentration rather than decreasing the number of staff, whose skills are acknowledged but whose working methods would improve if they were regulated and broadcast.

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Websites

www.inshea.fr : website of the Higher National Institute in charge of the education of disabled people (INSHEA)

www.eurydice.org: monographies on different European countries

http://archives.handicap.gouv.fr/dossiers/enfants/enfants_scola114.htm: records on Handiscol project

<http://handicap.gouv.fr>: essential governmental website