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Editorial

We want to have inclusive education in all European countries. Inclusive education is good for everyone. Inclusive education means everybody is seen as equal. In April 2008, Inclusion Europe organised its conference "Europe in Action" in Vienna. A lot of speakers from Europe and Canada spoke at this conference. They spoke about how to make schools more inclusive. We have also heard about good examples from different countries.

Wir fordern inklusive Bildung in allen Ländern Europas. Inklusive Bildung ist gut für alle. Inklusive Bildung bedeutet, dass alle als gleichberechtigt angesehen werden. Im April 2008 hat Inclusion Europe seine Konferenz „Europa in Aktion“ in Wien veranstaltet. Viele Redner aus Europa und aus Kanada haben auf dieser Konferenz gesprochen. Sie haben erklärt, wie man Schulen inklusiver machen kann. Wir haben auch Beispiele guter Praxis aus verschiedenen Ländern gehört.

Nous souhaitons que l'éducation inclusive puisse exister dans tous les

INCLUSION NEEDS TO START EARLY – with good support to families and an inclusive system of education - if we are to build communities across Europe which welcome diversity and value everyone as equal citizens. This was the key message from the most recent 'Europe in Action' Conference organised by Inclusion Europe.

Between 10 and 12 April, 250 of us from across Europe – disabled people, family members, teachers and policy-makers – met in Vienna to identify together how best to play our parts in achieving inclusive education for all.

We took encouragement from the commitment all EU member states have made to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This includes the key Article 24, which requires governments to 'ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life-long learning'. We heard from the best international research that when inclusive education is done well, all children benefit. And in eloquent testimony from self-advocate Michaela König, we learnt about the importance of good teachers and genuine inclusion in gaining the self-confidence and personal skills to take one's rightful place in adult life.

We were able to hear in detail about some of the best examples

of inclusive practice from places as different as the Brčko District of Bosnia & Herzegovina and the East End of London; to understand not just what constitutes good practice in the classroom but also how national education systems can properly support the shift to inclusive schooling; and to share our own experiences of opportunities and challenges, so as to end the Conference by making our own personal commitments to positive action over the coming year.



David Towell, Leader of the moderator's team at Europe in Action 2008 conference

In the spirit of 'Europe in Action', we are looking to our national associations (like Lebenshilfe, Austria) and Inclusion Europe to help us ensure we maximise progress and mutual support through linking local, national and Europe-wide initiatives.

David Towell

pays d'Europe. L'éducation inclusive est positive pour tous. L'éducation inclusive veut dire que toutes les personnes sont égales. En avril 2008, Inclusion Europe a organisé sa conférence 'Europe en Action' à Vienne. Beaucoup d'intervenants d'Europe et du Canada ont pris la parole à cette conférence. Ils ont expliqué comment on peut rendre les écoles plus inclusives. Nous avons également écouté des exemples de bonnes pratiques de différents pays. ★

Europe in Action 2008:

Education for All!

Joanna Gill,

Information Unit Inclusion Europe

The annual conference of Inclusion Europe “Europe in Action” took place in April 2008 in Vienna. People from Europe and North America gathered to discuss inclusive education. The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities says that State parties are responsible for an inclusive, educational system at all levels. The



Theatre performance during the Opening ceremony of the conference in Vienna.

conference looked at different questions. One of them was “how to move from the situation today with special schools to a situation with inclusive schools?” Another one was “how to influence teachers, headmasters and policy-makers so that they deliver an inclusive education?”

La conférence annuelle d’Inclusion Europe “Europe en Action” a eu lieu en avril 2008 à Vienne. Des personnes d’Europe et d’Amérique du Nord se sont réunies pour parler de l’éducation inclusive. La Convention des Nations Unies sur les droits des personnes handicapées dit que les Etats sont responsables de la création d’un système d’éducation qui soit inclusif à tous

les niveaux. La conférence a permis de discuter de différentes questions. L’une d’elles était « comment faire évoluer la situation actuelle avec des écoles spéciales vers un système d’écoles inclusives ? » Une autre question était « comment encourager les enseignants, les directeurs d’écoles et les responsables politiques à concevoir une éducation inclusive ? »

Die jährliche Konferenz von Inclusion Europe „Europa in Aktion“ hat im April 2008 in Wien stattgefunden. Teilnehmer aus Europa und Nordamerika diskutierten über inklusive Bildung. Die UNO Konvention über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen stellt fest, dass die Staaten für den Aufbau eines inklusiven Bildungssystems auf allen Ebenen verantwortlich sind. Die Konferenz beschäftigte sich mit verschiedenen Fragen. Eine davon war, wie man sich von der heutigen Situation mit Sonderschulen hin zu einem inklusiven Schulsystem entwickeln kann. Eine andere Frage war, wie man Lehrer, Schulleiter und Entscheidungsträger dazu bringen kann, inklusive Bildung anzubieten. ★

With the ink of the final signatures still drying on the newly ratified UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), people from all over Europe and North America gathered in Vienna in April 2008 to discuss inclusive education. The subject of this conference was made all the more relevant by Article 24 of the new Convention which makes State parties responsible for ‘an inclusive, education system at all levels.’ Working from the legal basis of the Convention, the conference looked at what inclusive education is, what is needed to make the transition, and how to deliver the transition by influencing

politicians, pedagogues, parents and pupils, and inevitably, what concrete actions must be taken towards making inclusive education a reality.

The session opened with compelling discussions on the legal obligations of European countries for delivering a quality education. It was made clear that the tide has turned for policy-makers with the advent of the new UN Convention, integrative education is no longer acceptable, and preparations must be made for inclusive education. Anna Nilsson noted other legal precedents in the progress

towards inclusive education, such as the case of the Roma children in the Czech Republic who were arbitrarily segregated in 'special schools'. The European Court of Human Rights saw this as a clear case of discrimination. This reiterates the idea that inclusive education is for all children regardless of ability or background. Having established the legal obligations, the social responsibilities were subsequently addressed. The recurring theme underlying the discussions of inclusive education was the '*celebration of diversity*'. It was explained that by celebrating diversity in education, every child is celebrated as an individual and as part of a whole. Consequently, it was asserted that society itself can reproduce this inclusive setting beyond the school gates – thus spreading the positive benefits of diversity to the wider community.

Discussions then progressed from what inclusive education is, to what structural changes need to be made to current education systems. Initial teacher training emerged as of primary importance for delivering an inclusive education. If teachers are trained before they set foot in a classroom to be open and positive towards teaching pupils of varying abilities then they can promote co-operative learning. Within the classroom itself, teaching assistants were seen as playing a crucial role in the success of inclusive education. However, these assistants must not be attached to the children with disabilities as this creates a dependency. Structural changes were seen as not only the responsibilities of those directly involved in pedagogy – it was noted that parents and families must also be involved in the education system. The children themselves were seen as important learning tools. Peer learning through mentor schemes was mentioned as an appropriate way of providing a social education for all children. With these changes in mind, many of the speakers restated the need to take a flexible approach to inclusion. Flexible approaches were defined in a myriad of ways such as: having small



Ingrid Körner and Germain Weber at the Press Conference in Vienna.

groups in order to accommodate changes, as having 'mixed age' classes, or adjusting learning materials to fit different learning abilities.

Once inclusive education had been defined, and the best practices were noted, the discussions began to centre on how the changes could be made at the next level. Influencing policy-makers is perhaps the most difficult task. Strategies such as networking, and creation of alliances with businesses committed to Diversity principles as well as getting positive representations of men and women with disabilities advertised in the media were all put up for debate. What was clear was that everyone has a role to play, and each person left the conference with their own Action Plan to follow-up.

After three long days of enlightening presentations, insightful discussion and collaborative actions, the conference came to a close but the progress towards a quality education for all does not. With the words of Peter Marshall echoing in everyone's ears, 'A different world cannot be made by indifferent people', the participants took with them the tools and the task of creating an inclusive future. ★

Facts and Challenges of Inclusive Education

By Peter Evans,
OECD Department of Education, France

In Europe, people with disabilities are often included in some sort of education at some point of their lives. But this does not mean that the education system is inclusive. In fact, most of the education systems in European countries are not inclusive. To have inclusive education people need to change many things at all levels of the system. They also need to think about how schools work. They have to see how to adapt the schools so that they meet the needs of all students.

En Europe, les personnes handicapées mentales sont souvent incluses dans certains types d'éducation au cours de leur vie. Mais cela n'implique pas que le système d'éducation soit inclusif. Pour créer une éducation inclusive, les gens doivent changer beaucoup de choses à tous les niveaux du système. Ils doivent aussi réfléchir au fonctionnement des écoles. Ils doivent regarder comment adapter les écoles afin qu'elles répondent aux besoins de tous les élèves.

In Europa haben behinderte Menschen meistens Zugang zu einigen Bildungsangeboten. Dieses bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass das Bildungssystem inklusiv ist. Dazu müssen viele Dinge auf allen Ebenen geändert werden. Man muss auch die allgemeine Funktion der Schule bedenken. Die Schulen müssen so umgestaltet werden, dass sie die Bedürfnisse aller Schüler treffen. ★



Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts. It is therefore useful at this stage to look at the facts and challenges of inclusive education using quantitative and qualitative data. Dispelling the myths and misapprehensions surrounding inclusion is one way of clearing the path for change. The following data has been collected by the Organisation for Economic

Co-operation and Development (OECD) in order to assess the successes and pitfalls of inclusive education. The OECD is interested in education for both individuals and countries. For individuals the obvious benefits are quality of life and economic returns. For countries, the potential benefits are in economic growth and a shared set of values underpinning social cohesion. Including children with special needs in mainstream education is still a work in progress as is proven by the data. However, the research also acts to highlight how changes in certain countries have come about to encourage inclusive education.

between the provision of education from one country to another are striking. For example Germany demonstrated a low attendance of disabled pupils to non-disabled, with just under 20% of disabled pupils attending mainstream schools in 2003. In contrast, Spain had almost 90% attendance of disabled children in mainstream schools by the same date. However, statistics may hide a lower amount of disabled students in general, or result from diverging definitions of disability itself. One truth that can be claimed, is that most countries are far from being inclusive. The OECD has collected data from countries and schools which have developed inclusive education, and it is clear that effective inclusive education requires substantial reform at a number of levels of the system.

Historically, in most countries the systems of education made the assumption that the problem was with the student, and not the school. This assumed 'failure' on the part of the student led to exclusion which is evident from the OECD figures. Inclusive education challenges this assumption and looks to schools to meet the needs of the students. The figures show that in Canada, exclusion does not have to happen. Thus, the first principle is that educational systems must recognize diversity and should plan around it. Following 10 years of educational reform in Spain, Marchesi (1997) stressed that inclusion requires a total re-think from the school – from its educational aims, organization, assessment systems and methods it uses to

In OECD countries almost all students with disabilities are included in some sort of education. However, the differences

between the provision of education from one country to another are striking. For example Germany demonstrated a low attendance of disabled pupils to non-disabled, with just under 20% of disabled pupils attending mainstream schools in 2003. In contrast, Spain had almost 90% attendance of disabled children in mainstream schools by the same date. However, statistics may hide a lower amount of disabled students in general, or result from diverging definitions of disability itself. One truth that can be claimed, is that most countries are far from being inclusive. The OECD has collected data from countries and schools which have developed inclusive education, and it is clear that effective inclusive education requires substantial reform at a number of levels of the system.

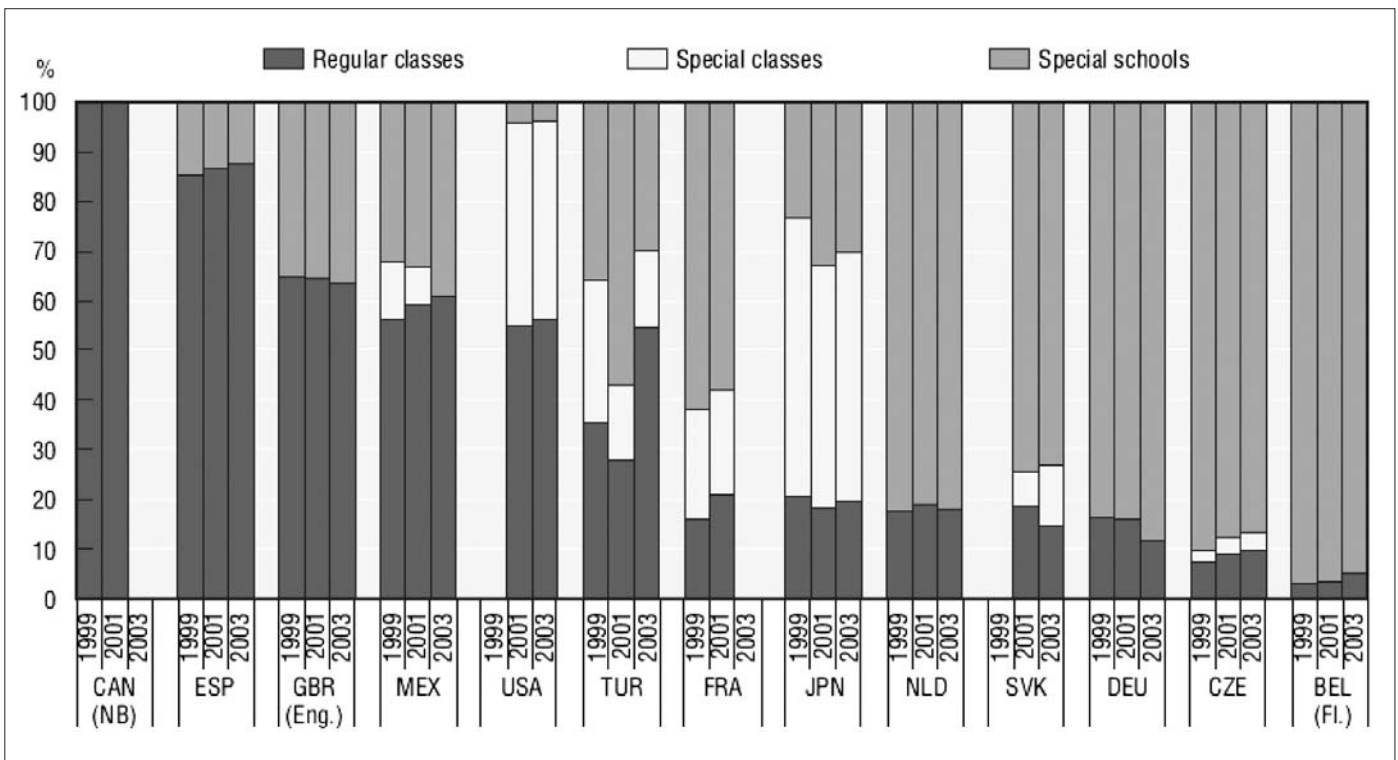


Table: Percentages of students with disabilities receiving additional resources over the period of compulsory education by location, 1999, 2001 and 2003

provide education to all students. This must also be a flexible system, which is sensitive to changes in society and changes in the conceptions of human relations.

The following analysis will focus on ten areas which emerged as being significant for achieving inclusive education. They are **funding, accountability and evaluation, training, out-of-school support services, within school support services, between school support, parental and community involvement, school organization and management, curriculum development and classroom organization.**

Funding

FUNDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION is a complex topic. The most basic analysis to be drawn from cross-country analysis is that special education per capita costs around 2.5 times that of regular education. This is mainly accounted for by salaries, since teacher:pupil ratio is more favourable for students with disabilities. In inclusive schools this figure fell to 2.0, however, it must be noted that there were substantial differences between countries.

Accountability and Evaluation

ACCOUNTABILITY IS A POLICY ISSUE of great importance which can be furthered by school inspection systems or comparisons of examination result. However, these practices can work against inclusion if they do not account for the students' abilities at school entry. Negative views of mixed ability classes is often expressed by governments. In Italy, for instance, inclusion is predicated on small class sizes which are associated with improved performance for students with disabilities. Accountability also discourages schools from taking on children they believe will perform poorly in examinations. Therefore, flexibility in examination programmes is essential for inclusion.

Training

A SURVEY OF TRAINING programmes in OECD countries identified the professional development of teachers through pre-service and in-service training as a key issue for developing inclusive systems. Inclusive attitudes of the teachers impact the success or failure of inclusive systems. It was suggested that the following training was given: working as the special education co-ordinator, team teaching, developing mutual support networks, pedagogics of curriculum differentiation, development of individual education programmes, and monitoring progress. In Canada, these were all aspects of teacher training, and once in service more training was provided.

Out-of-school support services

IN ALL COUNTRIES VISITED, schools received additional support for working with disabled students. Professionals from peripatetic teachers with a wide range of specialisms to occupational therapists as well as parents and communities were all involved in supportive roles. Local education authority advisors worked closely with formal assessment arrangements to make special arrangements for students with special needs. However, some countries saw external advisors as problematic. A head teacher from Berlin was quoted as saying, 'If the school can handle the sparks the fire brigade is not required.'

Within school support services

THE EXTENT to which class teachers are able to provide support for special needs students depends not only on their skills and experience but also on the way in which the school organized itself. In Germany and Italy smaller school sizes worked. In Denmark and Iceland class teachers remain with the same children as they progress through the years. In the UK special education co-ordinators have the task of coordinating the school's work in supporting special needs students.

Between school support

IN DEVELOPING inclusive practices, the skills of special school teachers are frequently used to support and train teachers in regular schools through outreach practices. In a school in Berlin, primary teachers follow their students for short periods into the secondary school to help them settle in the new environment.

Parental and Community involvement

THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS is well documented in literature. In Canada, parents are well represented in school governance and can directly influence school policy. Elsewhere, they can support children in classroom work. However, community involvement is variable. For example in Italy, professionals and parents alongside other members of the community work with churches and other voluntary agencies in local provision.

School organization and management

EDUCATING CHILDREN with special needs is an issue for the whole school, not just individual teachers. Teaching

should go beyond traditional subjects and pay attention to the social and affective side of development. In the UK, in an effort to move away from exclusion they implemented an 'assertive discipline' programme adhered to by teachers and enforced by parents. If a child felt the disciplinary action was unjust, there was an appeals procedure. Thus, striking a balance of power between all the stakeholders.

Curriculum Development

THIS IS ANOTHER KEY AREA for sustaining inclusion and meeting diversity. In the UK and Canada, pupils follow the standard curriculum and teachers made the necessary adjustments for them. Added to the curriculum were life skills and functional independence for those with severe learning difficulties. Teacher's time plans have also been subject to change. In Italy, primary teachers work on modules comprising two teachers per three classes with each teacher taking responsibility for a cluster of subjects. Educational materials should also be adjusted to allow for changes in curriculum, often there was a special education resource room.

Classroom Organisation

IN DELIVERING inclusive education classroom teachers usually had the assistance of at least one other adult who

The Index for Inclusion

Mark Vaughan OBE, D Univ (Open)
Director, Educational Change Consultancy, UK



Mark Vaughan, a well-known expert in the field of inclusive education.

might be assigned for students with moderate or severe disabilities, but they would work in the classrooms more generally. Often these posts were filled by mothers of children of primary school age who required part-time work.

Conclusions

THE DATA PRESENTED CONFIRMS that inclusive education in the sense of including all children in education facilities or in regular schools is not widespread, although there are good examples to be found in many countries. These cases highlight the directions in which policies and practices must evolve in order to achieve inclusive education. Inclusive education requires a problem solving approach in schools to enable them to reflect on their practices and adapt them to meet the needs of all their students. This idea is closely linked to the notion of the 'learning organisation' which has been developed in organizational science and the private sector to help businesses develop and adapt to the changing commercial world. This picture of inclusive education is both systemic and dynamic – allowing teachers to become problem solvers. It is very different from integrative methods whereby the child changes to fit the school, the school changes to fit its pupils. ★

The "Index for Inclusion" is a set of materials and documents. It was published in June 2007 in the UK. It supports schools which want to become more inclusive. It says that to really make school life inclusive we have to:

- Create inclusive CULTURES
- Produce inclusive POLICIES
- Develop inclusive PRACTICES

Each of these 3 sections has criteria to measure them. For example, there are criteria to measure how inclusive the policies are. There are also questions and advice on how to change the situation. It is an interesting guide for people who want to have inclusive education in their country.

"L'index pour l'inclusion" rassemble des outils et des documents sur l'éducation inclusive. Il a été publié en

juin 2007 au Royaume-Uni. Il vise à aider les écoles qui veulent accueillir tous les enfants. L'index dit que pour qu'une école soit réellement inclusive, il faut:

- Créer une culture de l'inclusion
- Définir des politiques inclusives
- Promouvoir des bonnes pratiques "inclusives"

Chacune de ces 3 sections propose des critères pour mesurer les progrès accomplis. Par exemple, il y a des critères pour mesurer l'efficacité des politiques. Il y a aussi des questions et des conseils sur les solutions pour changer la situation. C'est un guide intéressant pour les personnes qui veulent mettre en place une éducation inclusive dans leur pays.

Der „Index für Inklusion“ ist eine Sammlung von Methoden und Dokumenten. Er wurde im Juni 2007 in England veröffentlicht. Er unterstützt Schulen, die für alle Schüler da sein wollen. Er sagt, dass folgende Schritte nötig sind, um Schulen wirklich inklusiv zu machen:

- eine inklusive Kultur fördern
- inklusive Politik entwickeln
- inklusive Praxis einführen

Jeder dieser 3 Abschnitte enthält Erfolgskriterien. Es gibt zum Beispiel Möglichkeiten zu messen, wie inklusiv eine Politik ist. Es gibt auch Fragen und Hinweise dazu, wie man die bestehende Situation verändern kann. Es ist ein interessantes Handbuch für die Befürworter inklusiver Bildung in einem Land. ★

The Index for Inclusion is one of the major projects at the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) and was published in 2000. It has been written by Prof. Tony Booth and Prof. Mel Ainscow. There are nearly forty overseas translations/adaptations. It is a unique set of materials, which support ordinary schools in a process of inclusive school development. It is also about school improvement.

In its short history (8 years) there is clear evidence of the Index's positive influence with UK Government Ministers and their Departments, local chief education officers, education administrators and professionals, schools, academics, parents and others. The British Government has promoted it widely in its official documents and placed it in all schools and education authorities in England and Wales.

The Index is a process of investigation, which ordinary schools undertake in order to improve school attainments through inclusive practices. It does this for 100 % of pupils – not the so-called '2 %' of disabled pupils, nor the '20 %' often described as 'having special educational needs'.

Inclusion and exclusion are explored along three interconnected dimensions of school life: cultures, policies and practice. But in the Index we ask you to think about:

- **Creating inclusive CULTURES**
- **Producing inclusive POLICIES**
- **Evolving inclusive PRACTICES**

These Dimensions are the real backbone, the deep structure behind the beauty of the Index process.

DIMENSION A *Creating inclusive cultures*

Section A.1 Building community

Section A.2 Establishing inclusive values

This dimension creates a secure, accepting, collaborating, stimulating community, in which everyone is valued as the foundation for the highest achievements of all. It develops shared inclusive values that are conveyed to all new staff, students, governors and parents/carers. The principles and values, in inclusive school cultures, guide decisions about policies and moment to moment practice in classrooms, so that school development becomes a continuous process.

DIMENSION B *Producing inclusive policies*

Section B.1 Developing the school for all

Section B.2 Organising support for diversity

This dimension makes sure that inclusion permeates all school plans. Policies encourage the participation of students and staff from the moment they join the school, reach out to all students in the locality and minimise exclusionary pressures. All policies involve clear strategies for change. Support is considered to be all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to student diversity. All forms of support are developed according to inclusive principles and are brought together within a single framework.

DIMENSION C *Evolving inclusive practices*

Section C.1 Orchestrating learning

Section C.2 Mobilising resources

This dimension develops school practices which reflect the inclusive cultures and policies of the school. Lessons are made responsive to student diversity. Students are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their

education, which draws on their knowledge and experience outside school. Staff identify material resources and resources within each other, students, parents/carers and local communities which can be mobilised to support learning and participation.

Below each of these dimensions are a series of indicators; and below each indicator is an associated set of questions for schools to ask themselves within a range of suggested practical activities.

The Index carefully and logically guides the user through this investigative process. This work creates a lot of new and useful information for a school. New priorities for inclusive school development and school improvement are established as a result.

Co-ordinating Group

ONE OF THE FIRST TASKS in the Index process, is the establishment of a Co-ordinating Group. Who should be in that Group?

- The head and 1-2 senior staff
- The School Development Planning Team might initiate the work
- Also in the Index Group is the Learning Support Co-ordinator
- The English as an Additional Language Co-ordinator
- And of course the Group should reflect the gender and ethnic composition of the school
- It should also have representatives of parents/carers; students, governors and non-teaching staff
- Representative of disabled peoples' organisation
- Lastly, the Index Co-ordinating Group will vary from school to school, and primary will be different to secondary.

Cycles of work

THERE ARE FIVE SPECIFIC phases or cycles of work, all of which are designed to build on the wealth of knowledge and experience that people in mainstream schools already have. The full cycle lasts about a year, though only a limited amount work can be achieved in that time. We strongly recommend a commitment to using the Index materials for 2-3 years, and more.

What would a school do in that first year?

- i) Use the questionnaires to gather previously hidden information
- ii) Engage in the range of practical activities in the Index
- iii) Ensure feedback to all staff, students & parents etc
- iv) Establish new priorities for change based on information discovered through the use of Index materials.
- v) Review the Index process – did the new priorities for developing inclusion come to fruition?



Michaela Koenig at the Europe in Action 2008, the first integrated pupil in Vienna.

vi) Do as much as you can from the Index materials and share the results fully with all stakeholders.

Two things are true – you can never ‘finish’ using the Index materials because their range is so vast. And of course, you never ‘arrive’ at inclusion in a school and say to yourself: ‘Right! We’ve done inclusion. Now let’s get on with the next job!’ The Index challenges any school to move forward, regardless of how inclusive it believes itself to already be. An inclusive school is one that is on the move. It is an on-going process, involving teachers, heads, students, support staff, parents and governors.

Inclusion language

FROM THE BEGINNING, the language in the Index is deeply inclusionary, replacing the phrase ‘special educational needs’ with the term, ‘barriers to learning and participation’. It invites a school to try and reduce those barriers, by undertaking a deep scrutiny of everything that makes up the life of a school and setting new priorities for development. The schools themselves design these priorities and locate them formally, in the school development plan.

The Index is organic; it is democratic and works from the grass roots upwards. It does not offer a plan from above or

outside – but facilitates the building of an appropriate agenda for inclusive school improvement and change, designed by the school's stakeholders themselves. And importantly, the Index takes the social model of disability as a starting point; the medical model of disability is outdated and offensive to very many people and rejected by the Index materials.

“Don't do it alone”

SCHOOLS ARE ENCOURAGED to work jointly in clusters of say 3-5 schools, all of them using the Index, and also linking up with their education authority for support. We

strongly suggest to teachers and headteachers: 'Don't do it alone'.

The key concept of a 'critical friend' is introduced to schools for the first time in the Index. This person helps a school in this work; a school can bounce ideas against them; evidence shows the critical friend to be a significant factor in fostering learning and change, amongst teachers. The gathering of students' views of how a school performs, is also a strong characteristic of the Index in action. ★

Schools and local education authorities can purchase training in the Index materials from CSIE and separately from Mark Vaughan, both in the UK.

The Wiener Neudorf Inclusion Project

By Irene Gebhardt,

Volksschule Wr. Neudorf, Austria

Wiener Neudorf is a village close to Vienna. There is an Inclusion project in this village. The partners are: the local municipality and the school leaders (from kindergartens to after-school programmes). Parents are also involved as partners. They will work together on this project for 3 years. They will work with a book called “The Index for Inclusion”. This book will help them to see what are the important things for good inclusion. It will also help them to think about how inclusion can take place in practice.

Wiener Neudorf est un village proche de Vienne, en Autriche. Ce village fait l'expérience d'un projet d'inclusion. Les partenaires du projet sont: la municipalité locale et les différents responsables (y compris des jardins d'enfants et des activités extrascolaires). Les parents sont aussi inclus comme partenaires. Ils vont travailler ensemble pendant 3 ans. Ils vont travailler avec un outil qui s'appelle « L'index pour l'inclusion ». Cet outil va les aider à identifier quelles sont les méthodes pour une bonne inclusion. Cela va aussi les aider à réfléchir à comment organiser l'inclusion en pratique.

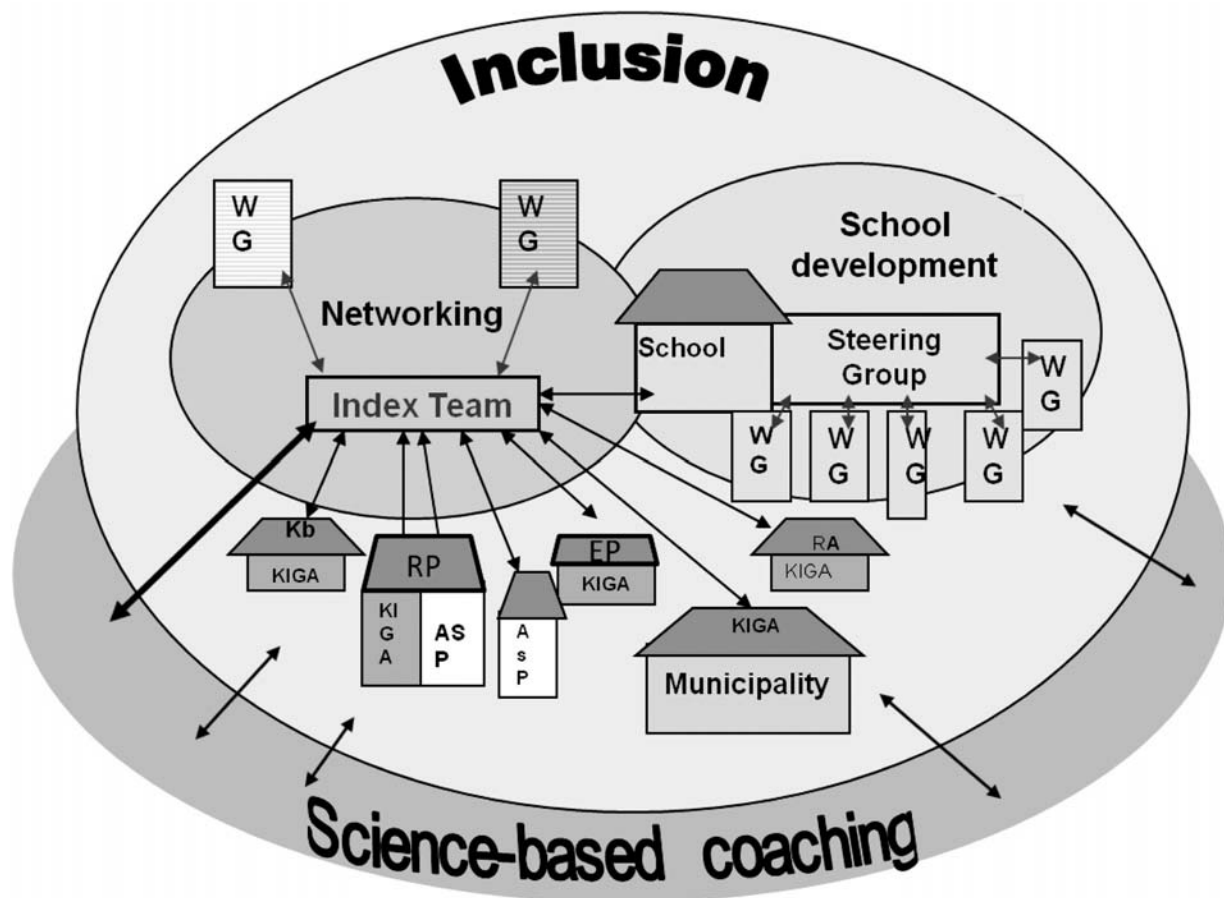
Das Wiener Neudorf ist ein Dorf in der Nähe von Wien. In diesem Dorf gibt es ein Inklusionsprojekt. Die Partner sind die Stadtverwaltung und Schulleiter, vom Kindergarten bis zu nachschulischen Angeboten. Eltern sind auch als Partner beteiligt. Sie arbeiten für 3 Jahre in diesem Projekt. Sie arbeiten mit einer Methode, die “Index für Inklusion” genannt wird. Diese Methode wird ihnen helfen, die wichtigen Dinge für eine gute Inklusion zu erkennen. Sie wird Ihnen auch helfen, Inklusion in die Praxis umzusetzen. ★

Wr. Neudorf is a village with about 9000 inhabitants 15 km south of Vienna. There are 7 educational establishments there: 4 kindergartens, an elementary school with 14 forms and 2 after-school programmes. Together with the municipality as sustainer, they constitute the core group and the starting point of the Inclusion Project, which is both a networking and school development project, based on the Index for Inclusion. Within three years the structures for a culture of togetherness according to inclusive values like appreciating diversity, equality and equity, cooperativeness,

participation, community and sustainability, as well as for self evaluation according to the Index, should be constituted.

This article presents an overview of the structures of the project, an impression of what has been achieved so far and what is expected for the future.

The following graphic demonstrates the organization of the project:



Four kindergartens, the primary school, two afterschool-programmes and the municipality as sustainer of the institutions of learning have their representatives in the Index Team, including parents. The Index Team meets on a monthly basis to coordinate the Index process and public relations, as well as for contextual discussions about Inclusion and the inclusive value-system and its implementation in everyday life.

The school steering team, representing all the different groups in school, is led by the head. There, school development based on the Index is coordinated.

Working groups deal with the topics of communication and conflict management from different viewpoints. All the groups involved in a subject are invited to participate. There are internal school working groups and some for networking between the institutions.

The Inclusion Project is science-based, accompanied in a formative evaluation process by members of the Pedagogical Hochschule of Lower Austria in Baden (near Vienna).

The idea of initiating the Inclusion Project arose at international congresses. It became apparent that important aspects of Inclusion already existed in Wr. Neudorf, as

- Wr. Neudorf has a 20-year tradition of integrating children with disabilities in kindergartens, school and afterschool-programmes and in the local sports clubs. Adults are integrated in different jobs in local government.

- each institution is extraordinarily keen to support the development of all children.
- children feel welcome in the institutions. They like to be there.

Additionally there were wishes for more cooperation between the institutions and for more intercommunication in school. The Index for Inclusion seemed to be the right medium to meet the needs. So participants of the institutions and parents attended an introductory workshop by Ines Boban and Andreas Hinz, the translators and editors of the German version of the *Index*, and they were all enthusiastic. Preparatory operations started. In February 2006 the Index Team met for the first time and in May the project started with two events:

1. A kick-off: for all the grown-ups with Ines Boban and Andreas Hinz telling them about the Index and for all the children with an inclusive happening - building an enormous mobile as a symbol for the vision of *Inclusion* and for community. Members of all the local sports clubs and students were involved as helpers.
2. A survey: 1600 questionnaires based on the Index were distributed to staff and parents from all the institutions and children of five to ten (who were helped by advisors). Nearly 78% of the questionnaires were returned and the majority of the responses confirmed the impression of feeling welcome in all the organizations. Communication and conflict management were identified as sites to work on.

The big process had started. The expectations were:

- a new reality
- appreciation and respect for everyone
- enthusiasm for a new pedagogical method
- more intercommunication
- opening of borders
- to experience inclusion by oneself
- to offer a positive approach to inclusion to the grown-ups
- to live inclusion in the whole community

What has been achieved so far?

PARTICIPATION, COOPERATION AND APPRECIATION are the most esteemed achievements of the project for all participants: children, staff, parents, members of the municipality and Pädagogische Hochschule. There are the get-together projects for kindergarten children and school children, the Picture Book Cinema and Reading Partnership. Cooperation in managing stress-free transitions by making contacts with the school children accompanied linguistic support and enjoyment in contact with books. The after-school programmes' staff participation in a teachers' conference was another highlight which made appreciation and the will for cooperation tangible.

A milestone for the school community was its first conference in November 2006 including all staff of the school, parents and even Wr. Neudorf's mayor and deputy mayor. This conference was the start to a fascinating phase of learning for all and led to the setting-up of the working groups. Children became equal partners in generating the school vision statement at the school community's second conference. A democracy working group regularly attended by children, teachers and parents helps to meet everybody's needs in everyday life at school.

A very special innovation for all was the sharing of seminars for non-violent communication by all the staff of the institutions of learning, parents, members of the "Pädagogische Hochschule" and municipality, sponsored by the municipality. It was the first occasion for learning about the same topics in mixed groups.

Inclusive Education in Action: Workshop in Graz, Austria

Joanna Gill,
Information Unit Inclusion Europe

Inclusion Europe, Lebenshilfe Vienna and Lebenshilfe Styria organised a workshop on inclusive education on 13 to 17 April 2008 in Graz, Austria. The aim was to see how inclusive education works in practice. There were more than 60 participants. They visited 9 different schools in the area of Graz. They discussed about those visits with experts in the field of inclusive education. They wrote some action plans on how to improve inclusion in their country.

What is planned for the future?

MORE INCLUSIVE LEARNING for all in Seminars for Cooperative Learning according to Kathy and Norman Green. Networking will be extended to other clubs and groups in Wr. Neudorf, especially on the programme "Assisted Living" for seniors, which is just coming into being. Mutual support between the Pedagogical Hochschule and the municipality Wr. Neudorf should provide a new form of lifelong learning for all. A municipal philosophy is to be developed with inclusive values as parameters.



Europe in Action 2008 - participants listening attentively to Ms Gebhardt's presentation.

Not all plans will be realized by June 2009.

THE PROJECT WILL END with a sustainability conference to guarantee the inclusive structures achieved so far and with a huge inclusive happening – a symbol of a new beginning, the readiness and the will to continue the never-ending process towards inclusion. ★

For more information, visit our homepage: www.wr.-neudorf.at

Inclusion Europe, Lebenshilfe Vienne et Lebenshilfe Styrie ont organisé des ateliers sur l'éducation inclusive du 13 au 17 avril 2008 à Graz en Autriche. Le but était de voir comment l'éducation inclusive fonctionne dans la pratique. Il y avait plus de 60 participants. Ils ont visité 9 écoles différentes dans la région de Graz. Ils ont discuté du contenu de ces visites avec des experts qui travaillent dans le domaine de l'éducation inclusive. Ils ont ensuite écrit des plans d'action pour améliorer l'inclusion dans leur pays.

Nach der Konferenz "Europa in Aktion" in Wien hat Inclusion Europe einen Workshop in Graz durchgeführt. Das Ziel war es, inklusive Bildung in der Realität zu erleben. Mehr als 60 Teilnehmer besuchten dazu neun Schulen in Graz und Umgebung. Jeder Besuch wurde zusammen mit Bildungsexperten ausgewertet. ★

Continuing the theme of the 'Europe in Action' conference 'Education for All', Gordon Porter began by restating that inclusive education is not 'special schooling' by another name. It is in fact, a different approach entirely. Inclusive education allows disabled children to attend the same school, and learn in the same classroom with their brothers and sisters.

The biggest barrier to inclusive education is not the children themselves but the adults who do not think it is possible. Zuhay Sayeed commented that her own children had demonstrated that *'there are no limits'*, and that every child has a different way of learning. The schools in Graz have adapted themselves to the children, and not forced the children to adapt to the school.

Exploring the different ways to educate children, the workshop visited nine schools in the area surrounding Graz. Each school had unique challenges with unique solutions, and all were examples that inclusive education is a work in progress - a fluid method for achieving full inclusion of children regardless of ability. Thus, not every school had achieved full inclusion. However, they demonstrated the beginnings of inclusive thinking. Each class provided support through assistants, the number of which was determined by the number of children with disabilities in each class. These assistants were available to help those children with disabilities but also provided extra classroom support to benefit all the pupils. In cases where children required special assistance, there were also specially trained physical supporters, or children with intellectual disabilities

were explained their duties in the classroom by specially trained assistants.

An interesting contrast was provided for achieving physical accessibility for children with disabilities. The new and modern school of VS Birkfeld, a primary school, was very well-equipped for children with physical disabilities. In the secondary school, the inclusion was less evident, as the building was older and therefore posed a different problem for physical accessibility.

The children's own experiences provided useful insight into the world of inclusive education. One girl who had recently graduated, was very positive about her mainstream experience. She commented that she enjoyed being classmates with two children, one with an intellectual disability and the other with severe complex needs. She claimed that *'people took it as a matter of fact to have such schoolmates and played with them without feeling strange'*. This is clearly the goal of inclusion, to create an inclusive environment for all children where no one feels 'strange'.

Elevated by this inspirational experience, the participants created 'National Action Plans for Inclusion' in order to take what was learned from the workshop and put it into action. Knowing that inclusive education is already being practised, and looking towards the future, it seems that Europe is succeeding in transforming words into actions. ★

For more information please see Inclusive Education section on our website: www.inclusion-europe.org

Inclusion Europe is a non-profit organisation that campaigns for the rights and interests of people with intellectual disabilities and their families throughout Europe. Respect, Solidarity and Inclusion are the fundamental values shared by all members of our movement of and for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Inclusion Europe is represented in 36 countries by national and regional organisations of parents and self-advocates. We are represented in:

- Austria • Belgium • Bulgaria • Croatia • Cyprus • Czech Republic • Denmark • Estonia • Faroe Island • Finland • France • Germany • Greece • Hungary • Iceland • Ireland • Israel • Italy • Latvia • Lithuania • Luxembourg • Macedonia • Malta • Moldova • Netherlands • Norway • Poland • Portugal • Romania • Scotland • Slovakia • Slovenia • Spain • Sweden • Switzerland • United Kingdom

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Call for contributions

If you would like to inform the network about your events, projects or campaigns connected to intellectual disability issues, please send us a short description of such activities and we will include it in the next issue of our newsletter or post it on the website. Please send all contributions to information@inclusion-europe.org

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