

An Inclusive Education Guide for Professionals



*Professional
Partnerships for
Inclusive Education*



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

The Partnership

This toolkit has been created by the six partners involved in the "Professional Partnerships for Inclusive Education" project, funded by Leonardo. The project partners are:



Alliance for Inclusive Education (UK)



APF-Association des Paralysés de France (France)



UNAPEI (France)



Associazione DarVoce (Italy)



Asociata RENINCO (Romania)



Sjalfsbjörg ISF (Iceland)

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An Inclusive Education Guide for Professionals

Professional Partnerships for Inclusive Education

Introduction

The Professional Partnerships for Inclusive Education project was set up to create opportunities for professionals to meet and work with disabled learners and families to have a better understanding of the practices of inclusive education in different countries; what the barriers are; and to identify solutions to make inclusive education a reality for ALL. It was also set up so that professionals would gain a greater understanding and broader experience of what is possible to develop inclusive education practice across all partner countries and beyond.

There are specific aims for each of the groups involved with the project. For professionals the aim is:

To increase the understanding of professionals (education/ social care) about the role they must play in supporting young disabled adults to be properly involved in all decision-making about their lives and in particular their education - 'Nothing about us without us'.

A key outcome for the project was to develop a guide to increase the understanding and confidence of professionals to support the transition from segregated education to inclusive education. This guide includes information and good practice from each partner country about the current barriers to inclusive education and solutions for overcoming these barriers. This information could be used to increase a wider understanding of the benefits of inclusion across all areas of society.

The guide will also include information about the legal International and European frameworks which support inclusive education, such as the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the European Fundamental Rights Charter, the UNESCO Salamanca Declaration and how to use them.

What do we mean by Inclusive Education?

It is the accepted view in countries around the world that the right to education is a fundamental right for everyone. However there is still a wide gap between this understanding and reality. This is particularly the case for the 77 million disabled children and young people around the world 90% of whom don't attend school.

This is despite the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 28, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights' Article 14, the 1994 Salamanca Declaration and more recently Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24 states:-

1. 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 lifelong 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. (full text of article 24 can be found at appendix 1)



Primary school
in Nottingham

For some time now it has been the aim of the Inclusive Education movement across Europe to shift the debate away from 'inclusion versus segregation' because all evidence shows that education that is inclusive benefits not only disabled learners but the whole of society. This project will assist in moving the debate on by focusing on current good practice in inclusive education across each of the partners involved and will enable us to disseminate that good practice widely across Europe. Professionals from each of the project partners have all signed up to the following set of principles:

Principles for Inclusive Education

Diversity enriches and strengthens all communities

All learner's different learning styles and achievements are equally valued, respected and celebrated by society

All learners to be enabled to fulfil their potential by taking into account individual requirements and needs

Support to be guaranteed and fully resourced across the whole learning experience

All learners need friendship and support from people of their own age

All children and young people to be educated together as equals in their local communities

Inclusive Education is incompatible with segregated provision both within and outside mainstream education

The professionals from each of the project partners believe Inclusive education is a human rights issue and can only be achieved by a fundamental change to existing education systems and an end to segregated schools, classes, units, courses and programmes.

About this Guide

This guide has been developed by professionals from each of the project partner organisations and is based on the learning they have shared together as well as the experience of visiting schools and meeting local professionals during each of the transnational visits to France, Italy, Iceland, Romania and the UK.

During each visit professionals worked together to learn more about the education system and progress that is being made to include disabled learners in mainstream education opportunities. Each country has different legal and policy frameworks, but it is clear that many of the barriers that currently prevent or limit the inclusion of disabled learners, are similar.

Inclusive Education Guide for Professionals

Some of the barriers identified by professionals include:

"Disablism" creates systemic attitudinal, environmental and financial barriers to the inclusion of disabled learners in mainstream education.

The negative impact of public policies that do not actively promote inclusion.

Inclusive education good practice not shared at a national policy level - there is a disconnect between practice and policy.

Lack of qualitative or quantitative statistics/data to support the wider benefits of inclusive education.

Teacher training has a medical approach, not a social model of disability approach.

Teachers' fear of change in terms of the methods they use to teach children - children are expected to conform to traditional methods of teaching.

Traditional competition between children in school disadvantages many disabled children and young people.

Inflexible assessment and testing of learning and ability.

The professionals' view that some disabled learners are not ready for mainstream school.

The imbalance in funding between special and mainstream schools in terms of equipment and support for learning for disabled children and young people - specials schools consistently receive more funding.

BARRIERS...

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	PACE OF LIFE	CAN'T DO ATTITUDE	LACK OF UNDERSTANDING BY PEERS	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATIONAL POLICIES
GLOBAL NEGATIVE ATTITUDES	LACK OF SUFFICIENT FUNDING	RIGID EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS	LACK OF TEACHER TRAINING	NOT ENFORCING LAWS	LACK OF TEACHER CONFIDENCE
LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS + TEACHERS	LACK OF JOINING UP THINKING	LACK OF LEADERSHIP BY HEADTEACHER	EXISTENCE OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS	"NORMAL CHILD" ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS	GRADED LEARNING VALUES
NO FAITH IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (POWER)	MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT	NO FAITH/BELIEF IN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY	FEAR OF INCLUSION	LACK OF TRUST IN YOUNG PEOPLE BY PARENTS/TEACHERS	COMPETITION OF EXCLUDED GROUPS
LACK OF STUDENT EMPOWERMENT	OPPRESSION OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN SOCIETY	ASPECT OF INDIVIDUALISM	LACK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS + STUDENTS	PRIVATISATION OF EDUCATION	TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS + TRADE UNIONS "INCLUSION = MARK LEAD"
IDEOLOGY OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS	VIEWING STUDENTS THROUGH A MEDICAL LENS	EMPHASIS ON NEEDS AND NOT ON DISABILITY			

It was also the case that where solutions and facilitators for inclusion were identified, these too were similar between partner countries. Some of the facilitators that the professionals identified include:

A national strategic law and policy that supports a right to inclusive education ensures that policy and practice changes are made at regional, local, or municipality level.

Education systems that do not have separate schools for disabled learners (special schools) ensure that mainstream schools build their capacity to be able to include a wide range of learners including those with additional learning needs (special educational needs).

School and college building are fully accessible to disabled learners.

Schools and colleges take a Social Model of Disability approach to their inclusive education planning.

Schools and colleges follow a broad and flexible curriculum that encourages collaboration rather than competition.

Teacher training that focuses on inclusive teaching methods so teachers feel confident supporting the learning of a wide group of students.

A Learning outcome qualification certificate can be a facilitator if it has a broad a flexible measurement framework.

Disabled learners have a right to be supported to learn and to access extra-curricular activities.

The role of a support teacher in both primary and secondary education can increase inclusion because they can facilitate friendship and relationship building with other students. It is important that good training is available for support teachers so they understand their role is to not act as a barrier but to facilitate inclusion.



Using this Guide

This guide focuses on supporting professionals working in the area of education to promote inclusive education, equality of opportunity and full participation. The guide gives professionals some ideas for talking about inclusion and organising possible training and awareness raising activities on inclusive education.

There are five tables that are split into five areas that professionals have identified as the cornerstones for change. The five Cornerstones are:

Core Values

Law, Policy and Obligation

Leadership and Persuasion

Empathy and Understanding

Problem Solving and Practical Solutions

Each cornerstone for change has been evidenced with practical examples professionals saw for themselves in schools they visited in France, Italy, Romania, Iceland and the UK. To assist other professionals each example of practice or policy has a clearly identified strength, which highlights how the example could contribute to the development of a more inclusive educational environment.

It is important for Professionals using this guide to understand who we mean when we talk about disabled people:

Who are Disabled People: What is Disability?

Over the last 30 years and since the 1981 International Year of the Disabled and the formation of the international movement for change led by disabled people, the understanding and awareness of disability has changed from a traditional model to a model that is about empowerment and liberation.

The Medical Model: Disability as Personal Tragedy

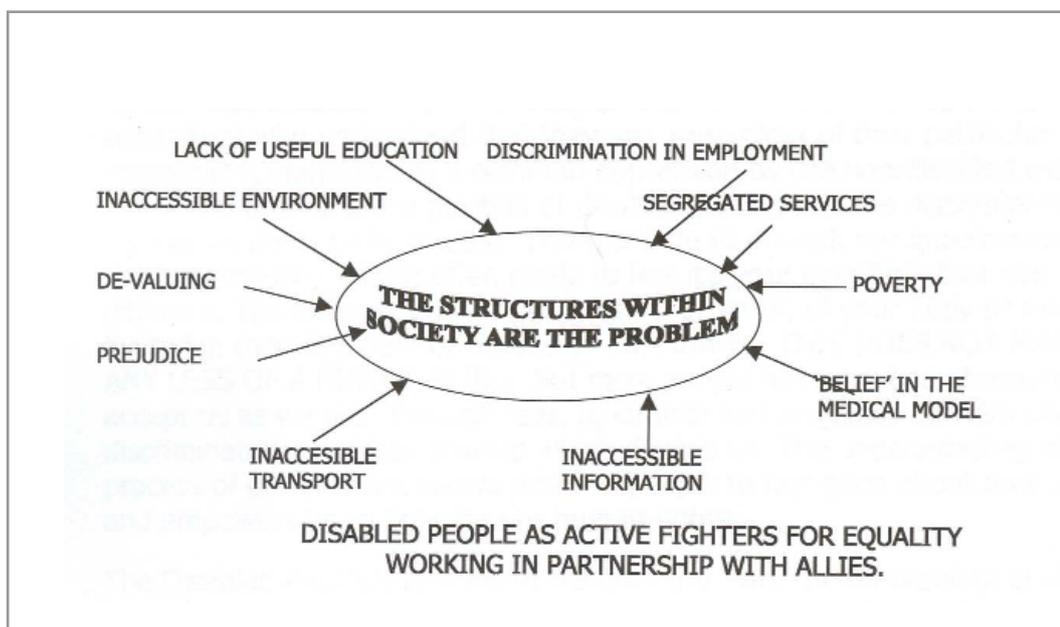
This is the traditional explanation of disability and is based on the understanding that impairment or health condition is to blame for the low status of disabled people and that it is the responsibility of individuals with impairments and health conditions to fit in with society - to be 'normal'. In other words, we are disabled as a result of our individual physical, intellectual or sensory limitations. This explanation is known as the individual or medical model of disability, because it has mostly been the view of the "experts". This model of disability has been rejected by disabled people and is now generally recognised by academics and professionals as well to be an inadequate basis for understanding disability.

Medical and Social Models



The Social Model: Disability as Social Oppression

The disabled people's movement believes that there are economic and social barriers which prevent people with impairments and health conditions from participating fully in society. This explanation is known as the social model of disability because it shifts the focus away from individuals with impairments and health conditions towards society's disabling environments and barriers of attitude. The social model was developed by members of the global disability movement.



Suggestions for Using the Guide

When working with families to plan future education options for their disabled child

When working with mainstream professionals to help their understanding about the benefits of inclusion

When working with schools or colleges who do not have the skills or expertise to adapt their practice to enable the inclusion of disabled learners

When working with local or national policy makers to assist with planning education provision and support for disabled learners

The information in the following five tables is there for you to include or adapt into a different format depending on which is most appropriate for your work needs, the stakeholders you may work with or different audiences.



Information for parents



Friendship Bench

Facilitating Inclusive Education

CORE VALUES

These are the fundamental principles for an education system that welcomes all learners whatever their difference or learning style. These values are the starting point of an education system that will be inclusive and accessible to all.

CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES FROM VISITS	STRENGTHS
Diversity enriches and strengthens all communities	Positive welcome for all cultures, children and families (UK)	The school system adjusted to the potential of children
All learner's different learning styles and achievements are equally valued, respected and celebrated by society All learners to be enabled to fulfil their potential by taking into account individual requirements and needs Support to be guaranteed and fully resourced across the whole learning experience	Individual Educational Plans for all children (Italy)	Differentiation of curriculum and learning: curriculum encourages more effective learning Commitment to student empowerment and peer to peer support
All learners need friendship and support from people of their own age All children and young people to be educated together as equals in their local communities Inclusive Education is incompatible with segregated provision both within and outside mainstream education	Environmental and school accessibility: ecological approach, inclusive community spirit (Iceland)	Schools which have an Ecological commitment - focus on the natural world and community life

Nottingham session for professionals



Inclusive Education Guide for Professionals

LAW, POLICY AND OBLIGATION

This section highlights legal and policy frameworks that support a progression towards an education system that is inclusive of disabled learners. The law or policy could be national or local and be applicable to national agencies (such as government, local authorities, municipalities) or education providers (such as schools or colleges) or education professionals (such as teachers, support staff psycho social professionals)

CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES FROM VISITS	STRENGTHS
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (All Countries)	Monitoring process of legislation according to new needs and challenges and evolution (Iceland)	International accountable and measurable progress framework Professionals can be involved in submitting an Article 24 Progress report to the UNCRPD Monitoring Committee
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (All Countries)	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is on wall of each school (Iceland) 'Something for everyone' posters is displayed everywhere in the school (UK)	Children and staff become familiar with a culture of human rights which leads to greater aspiration and inclusion for all
National Laws	Inclusive Education Law since 1977 ending of special school (Italy) Equality Act in 2010 (UK) Legal Decree that national education system must work with others partners to progress inclusion (France) Legal Decree has deleted the word "integration" and "specialized education" (France) Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in each school is a requirement of Education Codes of Practice (UK)	Closure of segregated schools, classes and programmes Funds can be amalgamated to build the capacity of mainstream schools and colleges. Collaboration between partners increases confidence and shares knowledge and skills between professionals. Clarity in Law encourages education providers to develop the right kind of education practice so integration becomes inclusion A dedicated inclusion role in schools supports the development of good practice and a focus of information and knowledge

<p>National Laws (cont.)</p>	<p>2011 Education law promoting a requirement on schools to provide individualised curriculum (Romania)</p> <p>Increased autonomous decision making for schools in terms of funding, curriculum and vision (UK)</p> <p>Focused Teacher training: 30 hours of compulsory module for all teachers which encourages a culture of aspiration and confidence when teaching a diverse group of learners.</p> <p>Legal requirement to making environment more accessible - sound proofed classroom in resourced school supporting deaf children - tennis balls on the ends of chair legs. (Iceland)</p> <p>School uniform equals a sense of belonging (UK, Romania)</p>	<p>An individualised curriculum based on personal progress allows for a flexible framework for learning.</p> <p>Schools can be more flexible in terms of their practices and policies in support of inclusion - it is important however, that flexibility is within the framework of equality and human rights</p> <p>The school decide the organisation and the teaching approach/path</p> <p>Teaching training focused on inclusive teaching methods gives teachers the confidence and knowledge they require to adapt their practice in relation to the diversity of their students.</p> <p>Legal requirement on Accessibility - encourages inclusive practice</p> <p>Country wide culture of respect for education</p> <p>Total inclusion in school life</p>
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Inclusive Education Guide for Professionals

LEADERSHIP AND PERSUASION

This section focuses on the role that leadership and persuasion play in progressing inclusive education. Leadership can come from individuals such as disabled people (of all ages), family members or professionals working in education. Leadership can also come from organisations that provide education or agencies that set policy and practice. Persuasion is the activity undertaken by individuals and organisations in leadership positions and is the work they do to encourage others to have aspiration about what is possible for disabled learners.

CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES FROM VISITS	STRENGTHS
Leadership of Disabled People	Disabled People's organisations and allied organisations leading campaigning work for inclusion in each country (All Countries)	System change is lead by the people who benefit from lifelong inclusion
NGO Leadership	Project partners have new commitment to promoting inclusion (France) Dimension and power of national association (France, Romania)	Collaboration with allies adds strength to the movement for change - working together increases confidence and aspiration for what is possible
Leadership in Schools	Heading for Inclusion network of head teachers (UK) Commitment to voice of the children in schools (Iceland, UK, France)	Increased confidence amongst teaching staff to work in inclusive education methods Head teachers are made aware of their responsibilities The teachers think beyond the school system; creativity of teachers, autonomy actors
Parents as Leaders	Parent led associations to promote the voice of families (UK, France, Iceland, Italy)	High levels of parental involvement and radical leadership of parents
Professionals as Leaders	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in each school is a requirement of Education Codes of Practice (UK) University research centre influences inclusion policy (Iceland)	Child focused education system - young voices are valued/leadership of young people - commitment to democratic learning mirrors the country's commitment Professionals will benefit from accessing evidence of 'what works' to develop their inclusive education practice.

Empathy and Understanding

EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

This section focuses on the change that is required both in individuals and in the culture within organisations and agencies. It is the change in people's and organisational attitudes, thinking and behaviours that will create the paradigm shift necessary to facilitate inclusive education.

CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES FROM VISITS	STRENGTHS
School Ethos	<p>School based Ethos of Welcoming all kind of diversities (France, UK, Romania, Italy)</p> <p>Open attitude of teachers (Romania)</p> <p>'Can Do' approach of teachers and support staff (UK)</p> <p>Revolution not evolution has led to system change (Italy, Romania)</p> <p>Non discrimination and equality approach supported by legislation (UK)</p> <p>School based ethos of Working, playing, living together encourages empathy and understanding (Italy, UK)</p> <p>Adapting the rules so that everybody can succeed (Italy)</p> <p>Recognising 'gifts' of every child - all children are equally valued (UK, Iceland)</p> <p>Continuity of education good transition into adulthood (from 6 to 16) (Iceland)</p> <p>Student led Discussion groups set up by schools on various topics - taking a holistic approach to education (UK)</p>	<p>The inclusion of children from different cultures/backgrounds will bring about a changes in wider societal attitudes</p> <p>The presence of inclusive education leads to a culture of sharing and openness to others</p> <p>The community is supporting the individual's development: e.g. collaboration after school - community life learning, collaboration with local services</p> <p>Students are listened to by teachers in terms of their individual learning plan</p> <p>Culture of respect between students and teaching staff</p> <p>Open and non judgemental attitude to 'behaviour'</p> <p>This encourages student to student support (peer to peer) and stronger friendships</p> <p>Varying Length of School day creates the best learning environment for children</p> <p>This approach encourages a sense of partnership and mutual respect between teacher and learner</p>

Inclusive Education Guide for Professionals

PROBLEM SOLVING AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Professionals want and need practical examples that work in terms of the inclusion of disabled learners in schools and colleges. This section identifies practical examples that professionals saw when visiting schools in France, Italy, Romania, Iceland and the UK.

CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES FROM VISITS	STRENGTHS
Relationship Building	Friendship bench in UK that encourages the intentional building of relationships between young people (UK)	Children develop an understanding of the role they play in supporting others Friendship increases confidence which in turn supports a greater willingness to learn
Effective Learning	Learning improves if Individual interests are encouraged (Iceland) Good curriculum differentiation (UK) Learning measured against individual progression rather than standardized measure (Iceland)	Children will learn more effectively if their interests are recognised and valued. Recognising and supporting different learning styles will enable disabled children to participate more effectively. Flexible methods of measuring learning progression support the inclusion of disabled learners because it does not measure against a non-disabled norm.
Flexible Teaching	Teacher/learner meet weekly to assess learning needs (Iceland) Good Gender mix for teachers in schools at all levels (France) Equal value given to academic and non academic subjects for learners of all ages (Iceland) Good understanding of the purpose of lessons for all (UK) Introducing alternative pedagogy (e.g. Step by step method - individual learning plans) (Romania)	Teamwork within schools and in partnership strengthens confidence and learning. Regular meetings between learners and teaching staff builds a relationship based on respect and trust. Teacher training: compulsory module for all teachers that fosters a culture so that everyone feels involved. Many teachers are now seeking opportunities to develop skills in inclusive teaching methods.
Support for Learning	Support teachers assigned to the class and not to the pupil (Italy)	This creates a more holistic approach and does not stigmatise individual learners who may need additional support in the classroom.

Conclusion

Professionals play a key role in progressing inclusive education. This is because they are often the link between the disabled learner and family and the school. With the right skills and experience professionals can assist both families and education providers to have increased confidence about the possibilities for the disabled learner.

That facilitation role can benefit wider stakeholders including funding agencies and those setting education policy and practice at the local and national level.

We hope this guide assists professionals working in education and in other related areas to discuss promote and support the development of inclusive practice for all disabled learners.



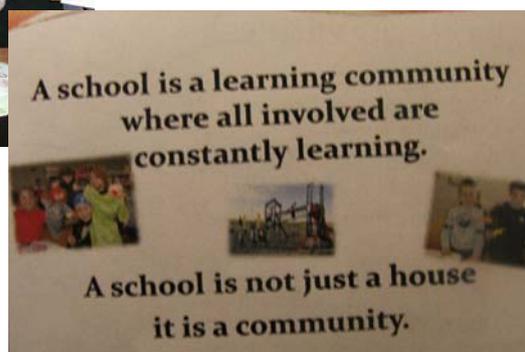
Disabled student in Iceland using visuals to learn



Peer to peer support in Italy



Differentiated learning in Romania



UK School ethos for inclusive learning

Useful Contacts and References

Contacts

Alliance for Inclusive Education - UK based campaigning and information sharing network led by disabled people - www.allfie.org.uk

APF-Association des Paralysés de France - National disability organisation - www.apf.asso.fr

DarVoce - Association of associations set up to support and promote volunteering - www.darvoce.org

RENINCO Association Romania - National Information and Cooperation Network for Community Integration of Children and Youth with Special Educational Needs - www.renincoromania.ro

Sjalsbjorg ISF - National organisation of disabled people - <http://gamli.sjalsbjorg.is>

UNAPEI - National Federation of Representation and Advocacy for People with Intellectual Disabilities and their families - www.unapei.org

World of Inclusion - <http://www.worldofinclusion.com/resources.htm>

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Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/10/contents>



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