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CONSELHO
NACIONAL DE
EDUCAÇÃO

Advice N° 1/2014

Conselho Nacional de Educação (CNE)

Portuguese Education Council

PUBLIC POLICIES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

UN Convention

Article 24 – Right to inclusive quality education

Changes in culture, policies and practices.

Why?

With the Deliberation n.º 2 -PL/2014, the Parliament requested the Portuguese Education Council (CNE) to produce advice on *Public Policies on Special Education* and the use of *ICF** for the *elaboration of Individual Education Plan*

**ICF – International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health*

How?

(Interna)national concepts and practices of
SEN

International
Conventions/Statements/Declarations

Legal framework

Review of Literature and Research

Hearings of stakeholders

Current Situation in Portugal

- . Inclusive educational environment as a principle
 - Early Intervention system
 - Use of ICF
 - Inclusion Resources Centres
- Special Units – Structured teaching (ASD) and Multi disabilities
 - Specialist teachers

Major consensus

- ✓ The assumption of inclusive education as a principle , which is also stated in all key public education policies;
- ✓ The centrality of the school in the process of construction of responses to special educational needs.

The responsibility of Inclusive Schools

- Responsibility for having all SEN children and young people in schools as places of *genuine* inclusion.
- Conditions to build educational responses for all and each of them, with equity, without which inclusion is a mere rhetoric construction.

Major issues

- ◉ Legal framework
- ◉ Coordination and Transitions:
- ◉ Professionals and Training

Legal Framework

- ***Eligibility of SEN students (normative, non normative disabilities)***
- Focus on ***permanent*** Educational Needs;
- **Certification** and ***recognition*** of Individual Specific Curriculum/ Functional curriculum.

Coordination and Transition

- Transition between the Early Intervention and the inclusion of SEN students in Primary and Secondary Schools;
- External and standardised evaluation in the context of inclusive education;
- Transition between the Functional curriculum and the working life;
- Special education allowance — Spelt out in parallel with the work carried out in schools-different ministeries ;

Schools and Ministries

- **Lack of coordination of the action by the central services and ministries responsible for Special Education, involving constraints in developing educational responses in a timely manner;**
- **Absence of clear criteria for allocation of resources and funding to schools and partner schools, and of special education teachers.**

Schools and Ministries

- **Inequity in the provision the educational responses nationally : Early Intervention System, national net of Inclusion Resource Centres;**
- **The principles of relevance and urgency of intervention are not always followed both by Schools and Services;**
- **Involvement of families in the educational process of students.**

Teachers/Training

- Teacher education and training – In an inclusive environment all teachers must be prepared to teach SEN students and coordinate their Individual Educational Plan
- Teacher education curricula don't include compulsory modules on the conception and implementation of strategies, methodologies or curricular development tools in order to accommodate and effectively include all students.

Training of Specialist Teachers

Lack of quality of specialized training for teachers, mainly in practical intervention/technical knowledge.

In short...

The main threats to the establishment of inclusive schools in the context of a whole school approach:

- Mismatch between the establishment of policies and their implementation;
- Placement and organization of resources and professionals;
- Quality of teacher education and training in SEN – technical knowledge/insufficient education of all teaching staff

Our contribution

To build a democratic, inclusive school system, oriented towards the educational success of all and each of its students.

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