

Abstract

This document is a brief abstract of the Dossier d'actualité.

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Some figures

In France

- 174,600 handicapped children are being educated;
- 78,900 are being educated in hospital or medico-social structures;
- 5,000 are being educated in Belgium, through lack of available places in France;
- 20,000 are said not be in education.

Sciences Humaines, Feb. 2010

Worldwide

- 10% of the population are affected by a handicap (or 650 million people);
- 75 million children have no access schooling. 1/3 are handicapped.

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School and Handicap: from separation to inclusion of handicapped children

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The French law of February 11th, 2005 for equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of handicapped people comes within an **international context which recommends inclusive education**.

The right to schooling in an ordinary environment closest to home is in particular recognised, with continuous and appropriate curricula, special support and special examination conditions.

Parents have an active role in the process. This law considered as being an innovative one makes it necessary to reconsider the work of institutions and the training of professionals. School plays a central role in making the other transformations mentioned by the 2005 law effective in higher education, the world of work and the everyday environment.

In France, this law is part of a historical approach which underlines **the move from a stream logic (separation) to a curriculum logic (inclusion)**, in which the school bases its reasoning on the abilities of the child and proposes appropriate teaching solutions.

The situation is highly contrasted throughout the world and it is hazardous to make comparisons. Legislations are changing, but the conceptions of inclusion differ. Certain countries (Italy, Northern Europe) have been following an inclusive policy since the 1960s or 1970s; in others (including France), inclusion is gradually replacing special education; other countries have a restrictive conception of inclusion.

A common culture is now necessary; **initial and in-service teacher training must at all costs be reconsidered**, especially by establishing ways of **bridging the gap between the medico-social sector, specialised institutions and the ordinary school system**.

In France, the term **"special needs"**, inherited from international authorities, is tending to replace that of "handicap", and **obliges schools to question their teaching methods** and not to limit themselves to the medical approach alone. The sphere of action is then broadening and **does not concern handicapped children alone**. The relationship between inclusion and education for all (EFA) therefore sets inclusion within a broader field: in France, inclusion is focused on education, whereas for the Unesco, inclusive education is a mean to develop a social inclusion.

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