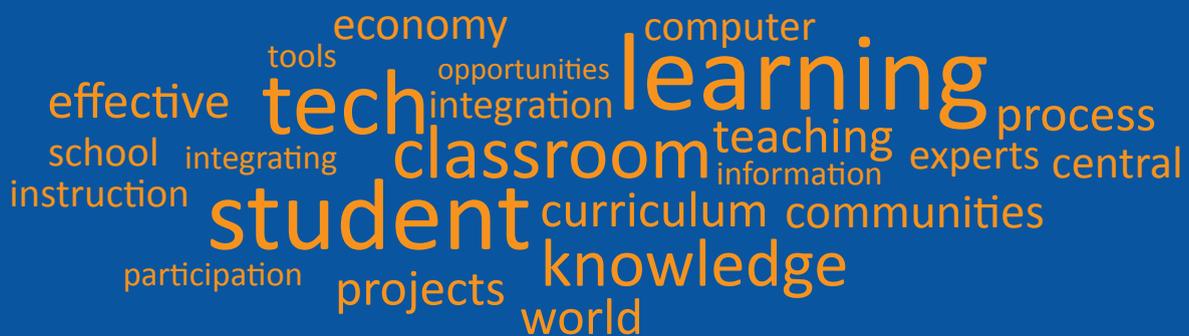


INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

Reflections and Messages: A policy and technology perspective



Ádám KÓSA MEP

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This publication has been made possible thanks to the reflections and messages provided by a number of relevant contributors. My most sincere gratitude to all of them, MEP Ádám Kósa

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PREFACE



MEP ÁDÁM KÓSA

This publication has the merit of presenting the situation regarding inclusion from different perspectives: which are the progress and support at European and International levels; how countries are implementing inclusive policies; and, to which extent technology provides a valuable technical support.

The publication offers a very good opportunity to discuss inclusive education from a



TIBOR NAVRACSICS

European perspective, to highlight the benefit of the work done and to identify where more can be done and what can be done better. Our focus today is on persons with special needs but our work goes far beyond this. We are working to support Member States in cohesive societies and ensuring systems to have common values and enable upward social mobility for everyone.

Inclusive Education is the main objective of the work conducted by our organisation



PER CH GUNNVALL

since 1996. Important progress has been made regarding policies but also on inclusive practices. Too often we forget to talk about the big changes and progress taking place. We are aware that countries still face challenges. We know this and we take them very seriously trying to support ministries of education to overcome them. This publication is a good occasion for countries to talk about changes, progress and challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Sixty years ago, on a cold November day in 1956, Helen Keller delivered a remarkable speech on education. Even though there was an audience, she did not see or hear anybody in front of her, because she was deaf-blind. A deaf-blind person who wrote 12 books on disability and education and was later awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, one of the United States' two highest civilian honours. On this specific day, she remarked that:

Civilization and justice demand that the exiles of the silent night who are teachable be rescued from soul-destroying isolation and morbid tendencies. Therefore I shall watch with thrilling interest your endeavors to start a new attitude in those you train to be eyes and ears to the loneliest of human beings on earth (delivered before Perkins School for the Blind, Boston, Massachusetts, 14 November 1956).

Education has come a long way since the time Helen Keller was strongly advocating against isolation and in favour of changing attitudes. All actors involved in education are aware of and support the positive changes taking place, but they are also conscious that there are still many gaps, needs and challenges.

Young people and their families play an essential role. They permanently remind professionals of their rights to be respected and to receive a quality education, as well as equity and their rights concerning their social and working lives. Respect, tolerance and mutual understanding are their key messages:

I believe that society needs to accept everyone, the way they are. Not only with their disability. But also with their gender, with their race, with their hobbies. I believe we are at a quite good level of tolerance. Nonetheless, there is still some work to do. The best instrument to fight against discrimination is tolerance. We need to raise awareness about the differences between us (Young participant at the European Hearing for young people with and without disabilities, October 2015).

The research and educational community in general support empowerment and learners' central role as an essential part of the learning process:

Without motivation, there is no push to learn; without engagement, there is no way to learn; and without voice, there is no authenticity in the learning (Toshalis and Nakkula, 2012).

The Paris Declaration, adopted in March 2015 by the European Ministries of Education, called for strengthening education's role in promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination. It acknowledged education's major role in tackling violent radicalisation and promoting inclusion and ownership of Europe's fundamental values in order to help children and young people become responsible,

open-minded members of our diverse society. We need to be aware that disabilities will become more relevant as European society ages.

The European Union (EU) joined the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD – 2006) as a regional organisation in 2011. Article 24 of the Convention recognises the right of persons with disabilities to education, with a view to realising this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. States' parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels of education. In addition, the UNCRPD Committee also adopted its fourth General Comment dealing with inclusive education this September.

All European countries are committed to working towards ensuring more inclusive education systems. They do so in different ways, depending on their past and current contexts and histories. Inclusive education systems are seen as a vital component with the wider aspiration of more socially inclusive societies that all countries align themselves with, both ethically and politically.

Inclusive education implies a systemic change in education involving all stakeholders: learners, their parents and families, education professionals, community representatives and decision-makers (European Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems, 2015).

A new element is now entering the picture: technology. This publication will provide some responses and guidelines from decision-makers and the technology industry to learners with disabilities and/or special needs as far as educational changes are concerned.

Today, the IT industry representatives that develop accessible and assistive technologies have also become important players in formulating inclusive education.

This publication presents some reflections and messages regarding inclusion from different perspectives:

- Progress and support at European and international levels
- How countries are implementing inclusive policies
- To which extent technology provides valuable technical support

As Helen Keller said, several decades ago when technology did not play such an important role in our lives:

No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit.

PROGRESS AND SUPPORT FROM EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES – How European and International Policies are Supporting Inclusive Education

Ádám KÓSA, Member of the European Parliament, Co-Chair of the Disability intergroup

Our main goal is to achieve education for all people, for all children

There are several reports that need to be mentioned regarding inclusive education. The first one is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRP). And, in particular article 24, which focuses on education. Under article 24, there is a strong statement about inclusive education. Children with disabilities cannot be excluded from the general education system, reasonable accommodation must be provided for the individual's requirement. Other relevant reports to be mentioned concern the European Parliament report on mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 which was adopted in 2011. This last report describes mobility and inclusion for persons with disabilities. Article 59 confirms inclusive education should be the focus.

Inclusive education represents the most effective means of

1. combating discriminatory attitudes,
2. building an integrationist society and
3. achieving education for all

Helen Keller 60 years ago, gave a speech specifically about education, about the isolation of learners with disabilities. Children with disabilities are facing the same obstacles, 60 years later. A lot of changes are taking place but, the problem still exists. It is not yet solved.

Tibor NAVRACSICS, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

I don't see any reason why children with disabilities should be excluded

New technologies are unmatched vectors of integration for all, and especially for persons with disabilities. In many ways, technology can offer the extra push needed to make sure that deaf or blind pupils, for example, have the same access and opportunities as the other students in the classroom and therefore, later on, the same

access and opportunities as their colleagues in the workplace or other young people doing voluntary work, other independent, confident citizens.

Because this is our shared goal: to give a very concrete meaning to "inclusion" and make sure that persons with disabilities, and their families, are naturally integrated in mainstream schools and in our communities. Schools are the best place to start a virtuous circle of integration.

Inclusive education that enables students of diverse abilities and backgrounds to play, socialise and learn together teaches respect and understanding for differences. And I don't see any reason why children with disabilities should be excluded from this path. Strengthening the inclusion of learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms is a choice, and reflects the society we want. Put in simplest terms: when all children, regardless of their differences, are educated together, everyone benefits.

Today around 45 million EU citizens of working age have a disability, and 15 million children have special educational needs. Learners with special needs are still sometimes placed in segregated educational institutions – or in mainstream educational settings, but with inadequate support.

Inclusive education also implies change outside the classroom. On the one hand, it is about opening up schools and fostering collaboration between them and the communities they are based in. Principals, teachers, learners, parents, professionals and community members all have a role to play in providing adequate support for each young person. On the other hand, because schools are no longer the sole provider of education, there are new possibilities for children with special needs to acquire knowledge through non-formal ways.

We therefore need to differentiate and provide extra support for those who need it, because equal treatment will not necessarily result in equal outcomes. Schools must cater to the needs of all learners. Sometimes, it is as simple as placing a deaf child in the first row so that he can read his teachers' lips; or to train the latter to better articulate words.

At other times, indeed, it is much more complex. And this is precisely where new technologies can make, and already are making, an enormous difference. Here, the key word is accessibility. But while we have seen a lot of progress in overcoming physical barriers, we often forget about the importance of content. In a school, inaccessible knowledge can exclude pupils as much as or more than a poorly designed

building. And with the possibilities offered by new technologies, there are little reasons not to render school materials accessible for all. I very much look forward to hearing about what the industry is doing to make this happen.

In most Member States inclusive education is taken very seriously. Many of them have made progress, and are working hard to implement truly inclusive education at all levels.

This is thanks to a number of factors: innovative research and pilot projects, as well as very welcome political will. But we should not underestimate the importance of supranational frameworks, whether European or international. The European Commission has the expertise and coordination capacity to support Member States, as does the European Agency for Special Needs, And the funds we make available, undoubtedly have an impact. This must be clearly said.

Moreover, the European Union was the first international organisation, six years ago, to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention includes a strong commitment to the principles and practice of inclusive education (in Article 24), and this has set a positive precedent in public international law. The European Union as a whole is now accountable to the UN for the implementation of the Convention.

In October last year, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued several recommendations to the EU. With regard to education, the Committee called on the EU to facilitate access to mainstream inclusive quality education for all students with disabilities. It recommended that the EU monitor schools on their non-rejection policy and set disability-specific indicators in the Europe 2020 strategy. The Commission services are currently working on these recommendations.

Earlier this year, we saw with satisfaction the European Parliament Resolution on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Let me thank Ms Helga Stevens for her key role as rapporteur.

Our focus today is on persons with disabilities and special needs. But the Commission's objectives and work go far beyond this. We are working to support Member States in maintaining open, cohesive societies and ensuring that education systems transmit common values, provide basic skills and enable upward social mobility for everyone.

Our road map to reach this objective is the well-established Paris Declaration on citizenship and inclusive education which EU Education Ministers and myself adopted in March 2015, several weeks after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. This joint effort is bearing fruit. One year ago, I made sure that EUR 400 million from the Erasmus+ programme were made available to help achieve the objectives of the Declaration.

So far, more than 1200 projects have been selected for funding amounting to more than EUR 200 million. We are working to implement flagship initiatives like the Erasmus Virtual Exchanges which will bring young people from the EU and third countries together for online discussion. And we are supporting the creation of a network of role models for visits to schools, youth and sport clubs. As of next year, they will they will meet and hopefully inspire young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We have seen tremendous achievements over the past few decades. A pupil with disabilities has a much easier life today than thirty or twenty years ago. Let's keep working to overcome the remaining barriers so that pioneers like Helen Keller, who much inspired this event, keep watching with thrilling interest how those she described as the "loneliest of human beings" increasingly become fully engaged citizens.

Silvia COSTA, Member of the European Parliament, Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education

There is a need for starting a real inclusive process

To read the book on Helen Keller's life was an experience because she showed and saw the importance in creating an environment, in which the capability, the awareness and also the special needs of a person are considered.

It is not only a challenge to give children with disabilities opportunities for inclusion, but also to understand what the energy, possibility and the determination that many of these students with difficulties possess that enables them to be included in school programs.

Next year Italy will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the schools. There was recently a movie on television featuring the work of the minister, Franca Falcucci. She worked against all of the obstacles that she found

in her path. It was not a perfect system, but the principle of inclusion was clearly inserted in schools. We no longer have segregated schools in Italy.

Inclusive education has not always been a priority in the European Union agenda. The 2010 Council conclusions on the social dimension of education and training, stated the importance of inclusive education systems. These inclusive systems uphold high standards of quality for all and strengthen accountability. It promotes an inclusive approach that supports early intervention and target learners, which can be powerful drivers for such inclusion.

The recognition of skills in order to facilitate learning and labour mobility, to invest more in the quality of the education and training systems, are imperative priorities in the context of developing inclusive education.

Article 24 of the UNCRPD, states that inclusive education offers the best educational opportunities for learners with disabilities; it is not only for them, it concerns education for all students. It is a way to better understand what is an inclusive society, aiming to develop a student's personality, talent and physical abilities. It is a way for persons with disabilities to participate in society.

On the 7 July 2016, the European Parliament, with the cooperation of many associations adopted a resolution on the UNCRPD. Several committees took part in this important decision. The following were the main requests addressed to the Commission and the Member States. They were asked first, to reinforce measures in ensuring persons with disabilities to have an effective and equal access. Not only to key areas such as education, culture and sport, but also to extra-curricular activities such as theatre and arts. This is a very important challenge to share as part of the Europe 2020 strategy. They were also asked to adopt effective measures to tackle segregation of students with disabilities that still exists in Europe within schools and learning environments. Also to give students access to reasonable accommodation and the support they need so as the learner is reaching their full potential at all levels of education.

There are technical and financial shortcomings of programs in the Member States affected by the crisis. It will be important to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in the European Union Erasmus+ programme. It is also important to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the youth exchange programmes. An important issue is the recognition of some financial support for the students and the staff with disabilities in the Erasmus+ programme. There was a

proposal in the previous legislature but it is not enough. As it is recognized in practice, disabled students still face numerous barriers.

The Committee on Culture and Education work towards the achievement of more inclusive schools. We still have a very long way until we reach this objective, it is not already done. There is a need for starting a real inclusive process, eliminating special schools and teaching teachers for the concrete realisation of such a model. Taking into account the UN Convention and the best practice that we have around Europe, we need to guarantee equal opportunities and equal future for their lives.

Helga STEVENS, Member of the European Parliament, Co-Chair of the Disability Intergroup

Education is the foundation and a basic human right for all

As the rapporteur of the report on the implementation of the UNCRPD at EU level, the main focus of the presentation will be on the concluding observations of the UNCRPD committee. The report was adopted with a large majority in the July plenary session of the European Parliament. It is relevant for this publication to explain the part of the report dealing with the institutions' compliance of the UNCRPD and in particular that of inclusive education, which is article 24 of the UNCRPD.

The most important element to be raised is that the European institutions act as a good example and show best practice before calling on our governments to do the same.

As the report states, it is imperative that our European schools ensure inclusive quality education. This can only be achieved by the Board of Governors, which also includes the Commission.

The following areas must still be improved as mentioned in the report. These areas are: multi-disciplinary assessment of disabled students; the inclusion of children with disabilities (at the moment they are not included in European schools); the provision of reasonable accommodation; and inclusive participation of parents with disabilities, regardless of whether their children have or do not have a disability. A lot of work still needs to be done. The points mentioned before were noted in a letter by the European Ombudsman. The report was a follow-up on the lack of inclusive education at European schools, so it can be rectified. Education is key for ensuring students with disabilities can lead an independent life. It is the start of many people's lives. If that is

not ensured, quality of life cannot be ensured. Education is the foundation and a basic human right for all.

László G. LOVÁSZY, Member of the Committee of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

A smart application could be a small step for society, but a big leap for persons with disabilities

This December the world will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). As a member of the UNCRPD Committee, my job is to scrutinize the implementation of the Convention in those countries that have ratified it so far, now more than 160.

Ten years after the Convention was introduced, we are beginning to encounter entirely new issues that no-one could ever have dreamt of, whilst technology and science have been developing at a previously unprecedented speed. This is not a danger, but rather an excellent opportunity. Technology has been evolving much faster than we ever anticipated. Looking back on history, classical industrialization took almost 90 years in 18-19th centuries, computers have evolved over 4 decades, and the Internet needed just 2 decades to be ubiquitous. The first popular touch-screen phone is less than 10 years old. Currently we are producing electronic circuits functioning about a million times faster than biological ones. These newer machines process information about a million times faster than the minds that built them. It means they will perform 20 000 years' worth of human-level intellectual work week after week.

When I was born, my parents were told that I would have the life of a seriously hearing impaired person with depressing, demotivating limitations and I would have to be humbly accustomed to it all my life. What if that were no longer true? What if my disability was not relevant in the future? For example my hearing capacity or its alteration could be corrected, or even restored with modern technology and solutions.

Even though a notion of rehabilitation had been abandoned by the time the Convention was adopted, a new world may come, in which everybody can have fully individualized and much more efficient support with smart technology, people with disabilities included. It will change everything we know and even more.

As the Convention says, we have to make more efforts in terms of research and innovations; however, we also have to cherish the value of freedom in technological development and services. We should not close the door on new things, even unusual ones. We must not curb innovation and freedom in science, as science and technology shall serve the people themselves. We cannot forget those with special, even extreme needs, either – in the future everybody might be somehow disabled in one way or another in comparison to intelligent and smart software and services.

The UN Committee has just recently adopted its fourth General Comment, inclusive education is concerned. Within this Comment, a great deal of references can be found on technology and assistive technologies. Inclusive education is not only about teachers and pupils with disabilities, but it is also about an integrated and technologically upgraded and driven environment, in which all obstacles and barriers can be torn down.

One may think it is expensive. Perhaps in some cases it is true for the time being. However what can be more important than our children? Furthermore, what can be a better investment in a sustainable society, in which lifelong learning is not a luxury option but an everyday practice and necessity?

The UN convention is not about maintaining a right to remain disabled, but about ensuring choices and chances. It is our turn today to open our eyes together with governments and stakeholders; as well as to seize the opportunity to learn more about what the future will offer.

A smart application could be a small step for society, but a big leap for persons with disabilities.

Catherine NAUGHTON, Director of the European Disability Forum

We need to learn from the successes and promote them more.

European legislation from different areas complement inclusive education. We are working towards a strong European Accessibility Act that will enable the provision of more inclusive services in Europe. This will be complementary to the European exchange programme on education. Much progress has been made in recent years to ensure students with disabilities are taking part in this programme. This needs to be enhanced. We need to learn from the successes and promote it more. It is important

that young people with disabilities in Europe also see the benefits of European citizens on an equal basis with others.

In relation to the General Comment on education, the issue of inclusive education is a struggle for many governments.

The General Comment adopted by the UN committee mentioned in detail all the components we need to work on to make inclusive education a reality.

We need action across all sectors including the sector of transport: accessible transport facilitates children with disabilities getting to school.

Another important issue for the EU is the lack of inclusivity in the European schools.

While the Commission has one seat on the board, all of the member states have ratified the UN convention except Ireland. This means 27 countries. Children with disabilities in the European Schools cannot be left aside and ignored in terms of their rights. This is still the case today. This is something we need to work on together, to make sure the parents and the children concerned in the European schools are part of inclusive education system.

It is very important when we consider non-discrimination within the EU, to note that the European Commission published a draft directive on non-discrimination in 2008. This includes the Horizontal equal treatment directive which would bring protection against discrimination of persons with disabilities, beyond the field of employment. It has been important and useful into other domains. This is still something we hope remains on the Commission's agenda as anti-discrimination legislation is essential in Europe and will facilitate inclusive education.

We have over 100 members in Europe working at national and European level, focused on the educational rights of children with disabilities from different impairment groups in different countries. I hope in working together, the European Parliament can continue these discussions which can promote inclusive education in Europe today.

IMPLEMENTATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL –

Examples of Implementation of Inclusive Policies at National Level

Cor J.W. MEIJER, Director European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

How to implement inclusive education.

Our Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education has changed its focus in the past 20 years. Actually, we are celebrating our 20 years' anniversary. We have changed our focus from questions like: What is inclusive education? And: Why is it needed? To: How to implement inclusive education?

With this focus change we would like to approach the challenges that countries and that policy makers have. Not as problems or as failures, but as challenges, even as opportunities.

The work of the Agency is to assist and support countries to provide evidence on the *how* question of inclusive education and how to develop and implement inclusive systems. There are two recent developments in our work that fit perfectly with this new *how* perspective. The first one concerns some audit work we are conducting for countries. The objective is to look at their inclusive education policies and practices. Last year we have finished an extensive audit in Malta. We are now close to finalising an audit in Iceland. We are also currently discussing conducting a new audit with a third country. This is in addition to the work that the Agency regularly does.

Further, we have recently started a new activity: Country Policy Review and Analysis (CPRA). This is an activity in which the ministries of the education of the member countries concerned get feedback of the work that has been done in the Agency throughout the previous years.

The CPRA activities work within a multi-level framework that examines the link between inclusive education policies and the ability of the education system to foster social cohesion. The CPRA activities will aim to provide concrete information on the ability of inclusive education policies to reduce school dropout and exclusion, to promote high quality education and to meet learners' educational needs in order to ensure greater social cohesion. It gives feedback regarding the policy situation in their country in the framework of inclusive education. At the moment we have finalised

this work for eight countries and we are starting to work with another seven countries.

Raffaele CIAMBRONE, Ministry of Education, Italy

It is the duty of the Republic to remove any obstacles constraining the freedom and equality of citizens in order to ensure the full development of the human person.

The UN Convention was ratified by Law n. 18/2009 in Italy. The Italian legislation states, by Constitution, that it is the duty of the Republic to remove any obstacles constraining the freedom and equality of citizens in order to ensure the full development of the human person.

These are the pillars on which our school system is based.

There are two fundamental laws that guarantee the rights to education of pupils and students with specific learning disabilities: Law number 104 of 1992 and Law number 170 of 2010.

It is important to highlight that in 2012, the concept of special needs was introduced in our school system. Therefore, we started from addressing severe disabilities up to learning difficulties.

Italy was the very first country to effectively integrate students with disabilities into; in 1971, students with non-severe disabilities and in 1977, all students.

Our policies are articulated in 3 main areas: Laws, school organisation and teacher training. There are about 8.7 million students in Italian school system of which 238 000 are pupils with disabilities and about 300 000 are pupils with learning difficulties, dyslexia and so on.

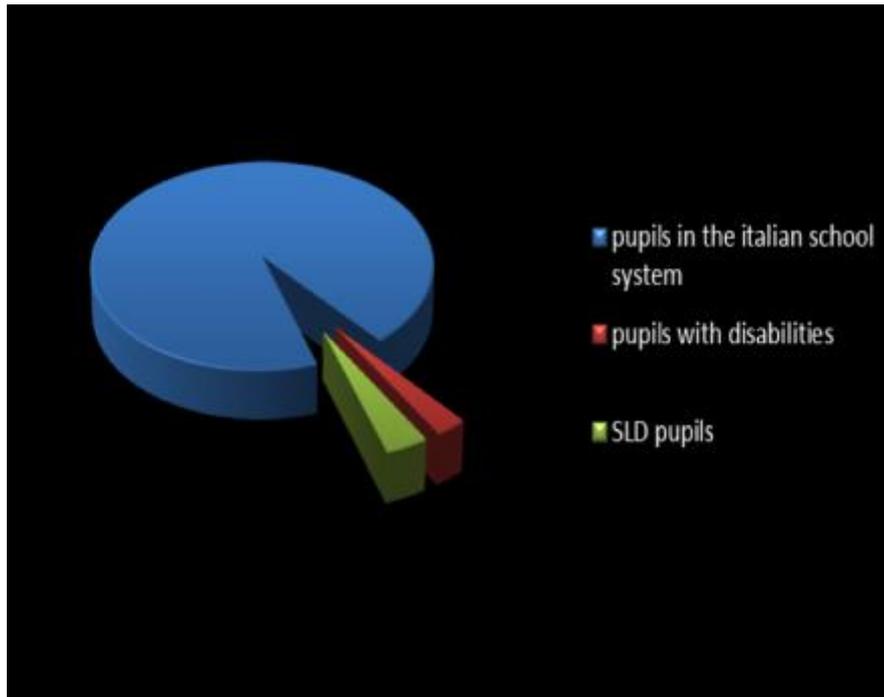


Figure 1 Pupils in the Italian school system

Italian legislation is unanimously recognized as being among the most advanced in the world. Even so, there are different and non-homogeneous levels of the application due to the service and financial organisation, as well as human allocation resources. Students' inclusion is realised through cooperation among ministries, regions, provinces and municipalities. The Ministry is responsible for inclusion and funding; local authorities for service and assistance; regions regulate school assistance; and municipalities offer support services and assistance to personal autonomy.

Our aim in a short time is to optimize organisation, through better settlement.

A few years ago, Centres for Territorial Support (CTS), were created. They represent a net of support for school inclusion that connects the central and peripheral administration with the schools. There are more than 100 CTSs for teachers specialized in inclusion. They are employed in each centre to give support to their colleagues. The core aim of the CTS lies in the realisation of a territorial permanent net. They are able to retrieve and diffuse best practices in knowledge and training courses, as well as resources. These resources include hardware and software for the inclusive teaching through the new technologies.

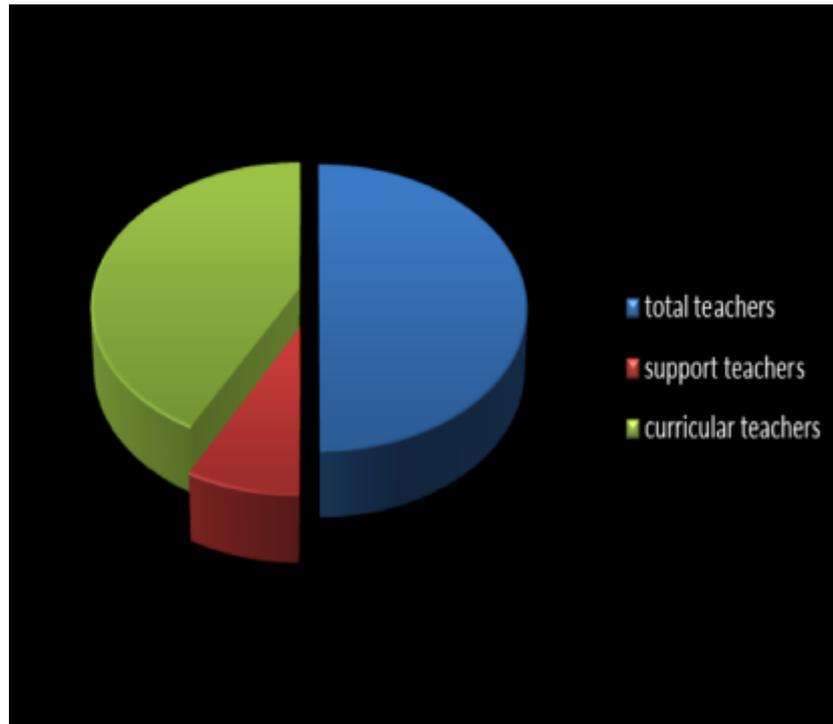


Figure 2 Teacher ratio

The strongest point in the inclusion process is represented by support teachers. Their main role is to facilitate the inclusive process. Support teachers are appointed to a class, not to the students. They collaborate with teachers and offer others in the educational plan. Together with the curricular teachers and others, they draw a plan for each student with a disability. Both disabled and non-disabled students have the right to a tailored plan but, since they are regulated by different laws, there are a number of differences between these plans. Furthermore, educational and communication assistance have been made available in the classroom by the local authorities.

There is a fear manifesting in the educational process. We call it 'tendency to delegate'. It is a phenomenon we spot when we see curricular teachers avoiding taking care of pupils' difficulties and shift the burden to others, usually the support teacher. These tendencies sometimes occur in our classes and we must overcome this habit. It is the first step in raising inclusion level.

What could be the antidote to break this circle? More and more teacher training is our answer.

The new school reform law, “La Buona Scuola”, confronts the topic of in-service training for teachers. The new law states that each teacher with at least one disabled pupil in his or her class should receive compulsory in-service training on that specific disability before school opening. Training courses for school employers and teachers have to be provided too.

The Italian Ministry of Education has also signed an agreement with 32 Italian universities to foster high education training. Since we know that there is more than just training, we have developed a cooperative model of good practices, experiences and knowledge mutual exchange. Teachers need to be able turn to someone, a consultant, when need of help.

A new initiative, among others, is the “ASD Help Desk” a support point for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), it is a model of good practices, experiences and knowledge to mutual exchange. It is an additional service for promoting exchange between teachers in the same district, meeting colleagues of a nearby school. A team of teacher specialists in autism work for a CTS. Each specialist is available weekly for a pre-arranged amount of time; they go directly to the school, providing the pedagogical action support to their colleagues.

Lastly, in order to ensure consistency in the meanings to words used when drawing up an educational plan, we are introducing the International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF) model from the World Health Organisation in the school and health care context. In 2015, the Ministry of Education collected the results of a pilot project, started with more than 500 schools, which standardised medical and educational language using the ICF model. It is a complex model and we are seeking to adapt the ICF model, to better fit the Italian system in educational rather than clinical language.

Tiina KIVIRAND, Ministry of education, Estonia

The Estonian Basic and Upper-Secondary Schools Act stipulates the principle of inclusive education as a basic right for all children.

Inclusive education has been a very topical issue throughout the last decade in Estonia. We have had some success, but we also have many challenges to achieving a meaningful impact.

The Estonian Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act stipulates the principle of inclusive education as a basic right for all children. In addition, Estonia has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a result, we are proud of the good results in PISA tests. The Estonian comprehensive educational system has been successful in supporting the learning of all students where there are the lowest level of low performance in reading, maths and science in Europe. This demonstrates that Special Educational Needs (SEN) students are generally supported in mainstream schools. On the other hand, there are a high percentage of students who learn in special schools or special classes, which shows that Estonian schools are not equipped to teach SEN students. This group of students unfortunately consists of mostly disabled children.

There is a broad definition of SEN students in legislation. According to the Estonian Education Information System, approximately 17% of the total number of pupils in the general education system are labelled as having different types of SEN, 88% of which are studying in mainstream schools. Approximately 12% are studying in special schools, which is 2.2% of the total number of all students. The image below shows the number of students are studying in special schools has decreased from year to year.

This is an encouraging trend but at the same time, the number of students in special classes in mainstream schools has increased. This is even 0.3 percentage points higher than the increasing number of students learning in special schools.

Compared with their peers, the percentage of SEN students who continue their studies after finishing compulsory education is too low. Not all students who continue in vocational school finish their studies.

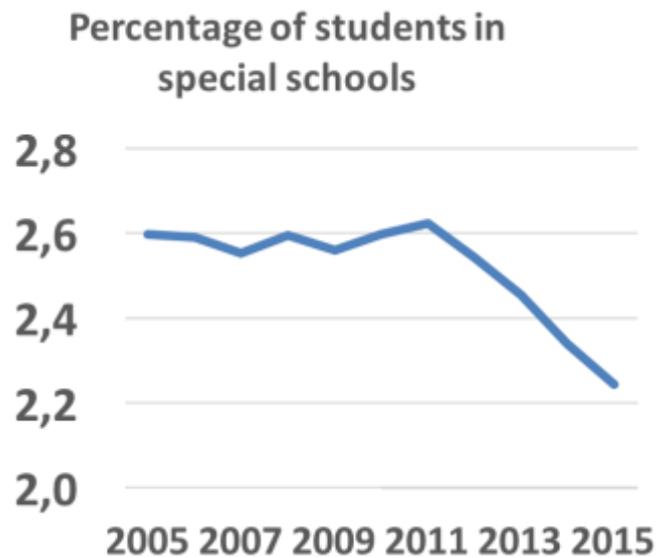


Figure 3 The percentage of students in special schools

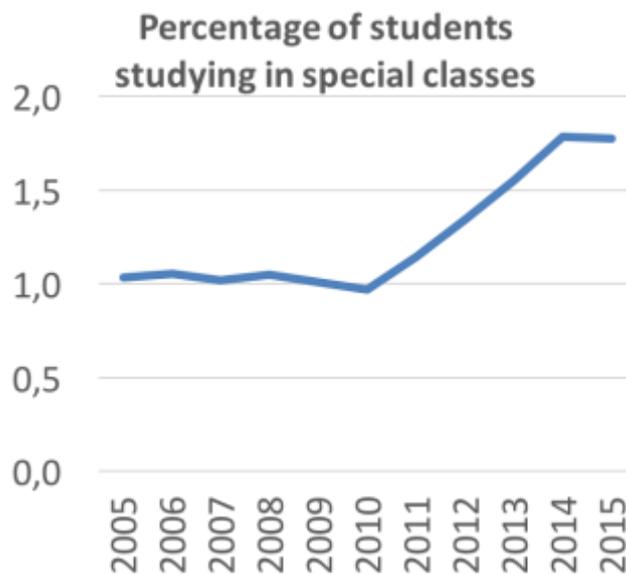


Figure 4 The percentage of students taking special classes

There are therefore three main goals to overcome the current problems. Firstly, raising the capability of mainstream schools and reorganising special schools; secondly, integrating support services provided by different state sectors; and thirdly, ensuring simple transition from one educational level to another.

There are several national strategies in Estonia for achieving these goals. The main document outlining this is the Lifelong Learning Strategy for the years 2014 - 2020 that guides the most important developments in the area of education. The ultimate goal of the Lifelong Learning Strategy is to provide all people in Estonia with learning opportunities, tailored to their capabilities throughout their life. Five strategic aims were established to achieve this. These are changes in the approach to learning; competent and motivated teachers and school leadership; concordance of lifelong learning opportunities with the needs of labour market; a digital focus on lifelong learning; and equal opportunities and increased participation in lifelong learning.

The strategy for inclusive education was compiled in 2013. The operational program of the strategy focuses on activities for improving initial and in-service training for teachers; learning tools and materials, including e-materials; educational support services; and the national curriculum for all.

A state strategy for the reorganisation of special schools is also in focus.

The number of special schools has decreased throughout the course of the previous years. The majority of segregated special schools have been designed for pupils who have severe disabilities with several of those being for students with learning disabilities and emotional behavioural disorders. There are a few special schools that are acting as resource centres; this transition is an ongoing process in Estonia.

The fundamental principles and actions of special schools are evolving.

Firstly, in supporting inclusive education within mainstream schools, acting as resource centres. Their role includes counselling teachers and parents, preparing appropriate materials and compiling individual learning plans.

Secondly, in providing high quality education and support services to the students with severe and multiple disorders.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs, a cohesive model for educational health, rehabilitation and social services for pupils with SEN and the operational programme thereof will be drafted in 2018. The aim is that services provided from different state sectors must be sufficient, available and take into account the interests of both child and family. Services should also support the development of children, be close to their residential areas and be integrated. This means, moving from a system based approach to a child and family centred approach.

According to the operational program of the Government of the Republic of Estonia, a memorandum and action plan have been developed for the smooth transition of youth with special needs from the general education system to vocational training and after the completion of the studies, to the labour market.



Figure 5 A model for the smooth transition of children with SEN

To reach the objectives, the Ministry of Social Affairs in coordination with the Ministry of Education has planned activities for the period up to 2019.

It is also necessary to stress the importance of achieving meaningful educational inclusion from the students' perspective. There are three very tightly connected components to consider for implementing all strategies. These are academic inclusion, social inclusion and emotional inclusion. Students should feel that they are able and that they participate. Emotional satisfaction and the feeling that they belong is equally important.

Collaboration between state, local governments and schools whilst involving parents and students voices is a key factor for moving towards more inclusive society.

Mary HOEY, Ministry of Education, Scotland

Equality legislation places a duty on schools not to discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics, including disabilities.

Introduction

The UK Government has devolved education to the Scottish Government and as a result Scotland has a very different education system to the rest of the United Kingdom (UK).

This summary provides information on:

Scotland's approaches to inclusive education by outlining the legislative framework, key policy drivers including Getting It Right For Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence and the Framework for professional standards for teachers.

It includes information on Scotland's approach to supporting policy development and implementation in practice as well as highlighting the strong self-evaluation culture to support improvement.

Finally, it details some of the challenges in implementing equity and excellence in education in Scotland and how these are being addressed.

Legislative framework

We have a wide range of legislation to support inclusion and equality in education including *Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records (2002)*; *Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended 2009)*; *Equality Act (2010)*; *Children and Young People Act (2014)*; and the *Education (Scotland) Act (2016)*. All promote a child centred approach to encourage every child reaching their 'fullest potential'.

Children have the right to be supported and educated within mainstream education along with their peers and to use their rights to affect decision making about them.

Our additional support for learning legislation requires services to take account of barriers to learning arising from the learning environment, health and disability, social and emotional factors, and family circumstances.

Equality legislation places a duty on schools not to discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics, including disabilities.

Education authorities' duties include identifying, planning and making provision for the support to be provided and reviewing that support to ensure it is appropriate. For some pupils, a co-ordinated support plan may be required. This is a statutory plan which co-ordinates and records the support to be provided. This plan has specific rights attached to it. Schools and local authorities are also required to have accessibility strategies to ensure pupils can fully access the curriculum, the physical environment as well as information about education.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act, 2009 requires Scottish Ministers to report to the Scottish Parliament in each of the 5 years following commencement of the Act on the progress made in each of those years to ensure that sufficient information relating to children and young people with additional support needs is available to effectively monitor the implementation of this Act.

In 2015, there were 679 840 pupils in Scotland's local authority primary, secondary and special schools and grant-aided schools. Of those, 153 190 were identified as having an additional support need, around 22.5% of all pupils. This represents a 1.7% increase on the previous year 61% were boys, and 146 240 (95%) are learning in mainstream schools. Pupils with additional support needs represent 21.7% of mainstream school pupils.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

The Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach has been national policy since 2010. Its purpose is to ensure an inter-agency approach across education, health and social work to improve outcomes for children and young people.

It helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference through developing a shared understanding of wellbeing. It promotes a collaborative approach to assessing needs, agreeing actions and outcomes to best support the child. Children and families are at the centre of the process. Agencies should work together to support streamlining of planning, assessment and decision-making so that the child gets the right help at the right time.

Most children get all the support and help they need from their parent(s), wider family and local community, in partnership with services like health and education. Where extra support is needed, the GIRFEC approach aims to make that support easy to access and seamless, with the child at the centre. It is for all children and young people because it is impossible to predict if or when they might need extra support.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) provides an inclusive, flexible framework that can be used to provide a range of progression pathways appropriate to learners' needs and local circumstances.

Children's Rights and entitlements are at the heart of CfE. It places learners at the centre and offers a personalised approach for all children. It provides universal and targeted support and promotes approaches to ensuring children and young people are included, engaged and involved in their learning. CfE is underpinned by a positive

ethos and climate of respect and trust based on shared values - wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity.

The purpose of the curriculum is encapsulated in the four capacities - to enable each child or young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor. The curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future, and to appreciate their place in the world.

CfE aims to raise standards of attainment, advance equality of opportunity, reduce disadvantage and meet the needs of all learners, including those with additional support needs.

Professional standards for teachers

Scotland's inclusive education system and flexible curriculum framework highly values teacher professionalism. We have been investing in building teachers' skills and capabilities and since 2012, have a suite of Professional Standards accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

The standards for initial teacher education and registration, career-long professional learning and leadership are all underpinned by a set of values aligned to social justice and commitment to inclusive education.

Supporting policy development and implementation in practice

Scotland has a well-developed approach to supporting policy development and implementation. This example relates to our policy on relationships and behaviour to illustrate this approach. The following table outlines a long established approach to the policy development, relationships and behaviour.

The information in this table is one example of an approach to supported policy development and practice. A key feature of this example is the leadership of one of the Scottish Government Ministers who leads the Advisory Group which includes a range of stakeholders. This group includes a range of stakeholders and has evolved over a number of years going back to 2001, when it was first called the Discipline Task Group. This group manages and steers a range of work in developing, reviewing and implementing the policy.

The Group has a commitment to commissioning national research into behaviour in Scottish schools every three years. After consideration of the research findings, policy

guidance is then developed in response. The involvement of a range of stakeholders in developing the policy ensures buy-in and contributes to successful implementation.

The infrastructure in place to support implementation of this ‘Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour’ policy includes a dedicated team within Education Scotland. This team provides:

- A trainer-for-trainer programme to build capacity
- A range of materials to support the development of social and emotional wellbeing
- It also facilitates a network of link local authority officers to identify and share effective practice.

Table 1 Table describing the support for policy development and implementation in practice

2001	Discipline Task Group – Better Behaviour Better Learning – Behaviour IS an additional need
2004	Additional Support for Learning legislation restates and confirms above
2006	Discipline Stakeholder Group commissioned National Behaviour Research – low level disruption the main problem
2007	Evidence based approaches identified and backed by Discipline Stakeholder Group – Restorative Approaches, Solution Orientated... <i>Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Attendance (IEI)</i>
2008	Discipline Stakeholder Group “Improving Relationships and Promoting Positive Behaviour”
2009	Behaviour research – “Building Curriculum for Excellence Through Positive Relationships and Promoting Positive Behaviour”
2011	<i>Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: Exclusions</i>
2012	Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research
2013	<i>Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour</i> Scottish Advisory Group Relationships and Behaviour in Scottish Schools
2013	GTCS Professional Standards & Professional Update
2016	Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research and new policy guidance (2017) Revised Included Engaged and Involved Part 2

Self-evaluation and monitoring

An important part of any policy implementation is ensuring effective monitoring. Scotland has a strong tradition of self-evaluation and inspection using a shared quality indicator framework.

Since 1996, *How good is our school?* has become a nationally and internationally recognised brand, which underpins effective self-evaluation as the starting point for school improvement.

How good is our school? provides a suite of quality indicators that support staff in all sectors of education to look inwards, to scrutinise their work and evaluate what is working well for learners and what could be better. It is a key aspect of the Scottish approach to school improvement. The framework is designed to be used to support self-evaluation and reflection by practitioners at all levels.

The recently updated edition of *How Good Is Our school? 4* has equality and inclusion as permeating themes throughout the quality framework.

To emphasise the high priority given to this important feature of our education, from August 2016, *Quality Indicator 3.1 Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion* is evaluated in every pre-school and school inspection. This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements.

Overcoming challenges

We were pleased with the OECD evaluation that Scottish education is highly inclusive with an impressive range of actions focused on improving outcomes for learners. We are however very conscious that there is much work still to be done to achieve excellence and equity and have a number of on-going priorities to support improvements.

These include:

- **Tackling the socio-economic attainment gap** – through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. This programme promotes innovative projects and inter-authority collaboration to raise attainment in literacy, numeracy and improvement in health and wellbeing.

- **Improving sustained positive destinations** for young people with disabilities and care leavers. We are improving careers guidance and support at transitions including through the Developing the Young Workforce programme.
- **Improve data collection** to inform system improvement and the cost effectiveness of inclusive education. We are developing the National Improvement Framework which will see new and better information being gathered to support improvement with a focus on closing the attainment gap between children in the least and most deprived communities in Scotland.

THE ROLE PLAYED BY TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY – How the Technology Industry is Supporting Inclusive Education

Hector MINTO, Microsoft

Attitudes towards disability, inclusion and employment have evolved beyond all recognition.

Background and an analogy

I have been at Microsoft for a mere six weeks, having worked in the field of Assistive Technology for more than 19 years. The world has changed an awful lot in that period of time and attitudes towards disability, inclusion and employment have evolved beyond all recognition. The first piece of technology I ever worked with was a vacuum pump page turner for books. You pressed a switch which actuated the vacuum pump, sucked a page up before a car aerial swept the page round. At the time, I thought this was the pinnacle of engineering. Now, of course, we have e-books!

One need only look at the simple prosthetic limb to understand all aspects of the inclusion argument.

When I was a young man, prosthetic limbs were not really known about. Many people had them but they were somewhat ugly, came in one colour, were extremely uncomfortable and most importantly were **always hidden**. The medical model was there. In simplistic terms a doctor would recognise the need for the leg to be replaced, measure up and supply. The doctor's work was done.

In the intervening 19 years a few things have happened. The materials have changed. The choice is limitless. The price has decreased. The functions are many (Aimee Mullins famously gave a TED talk about her 12 pairs! I would strongly encourage you to watch and listen to it). The limbs are becoming functional. We are creating exoskeletons. US footballer Steve Gleason has used eye movement to control a robotic arm to sign his shirts despite having amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). These are all extensions on the original limb replacement strategy. It is amazing to watch all of these ideas evolve. However, it would have seemed somehow inappropriate to see many of these projects through without societal change. The single most important thing is now how many prosthetic limbs we see in society and the pride with which they are worn.

The Paralympic Games has done extraordinary things. Supported by governments all over the world, disabled people from all corners of the world have showcased their talents, put their prostheses on display and normalised it for everyone in society. I now see people with extremely technical, branded, expensive looking limbs in coffee shops, business meetings and schools on a regular basis. Society now views prostheses as normal and perhaps even fashionable.

Human beings do come in all shapes and sizes and, therefore, working within some consistent guiding principles the absolute solution for each individual is just that: unique and individual. It is customised.

What are the key ingredients of this story? I would list them as follows;

1. Recognising the need
2. The expensive first solution
3. Exposure
4. Change in societal attitude/Inclusion
5. Explosion in numbers, increased competition and lower pricing
6. Further advancements in technology due to higher demand

Fundamentals of Inclusive Education

In 2016 we sit here with varying understanding across the world of what is meant by inclusive education. I like to see it defined as a constantly evolving effort to remove barriers and integrate without bias those with disabilities across all aspects of the education programme: academic, social and emotional.

Research and Design at Microsoft

It is important for you to understand how Microsoft interpret this challenge. We see disability in three ways: Permanent, Temporary and Situational. If we make solutions which cater for those with permanent disability, then we will naturally make great solutions for those with temporary or situational disability. This in turn will, in the majority of cases, create great intuitive solutions for everyone. We call this Inclusive Design and we have a toolkit for it.

As part of our design strategy we hold events around the world called hackathons, with a special one in Redmond each year called the Ability Summit. This started a few years ago with 7 or 8 disability themed hacks to rapidly develop solutions from early concepts over a week. At the last event, earlier this year, we had over 1 000 employees working on over 80 projects. These events involve the user groups who

would benefit most from them. The Learning Tools in One Note hack (making text readable by kids with dyslexia and colour coding nouns, adjectives and verb) is now a fully featured option in One Note.

We know that we must involve the people who we are building solutions for. In fact, we believe this so deeply that we are now designing our design tools and coding interfaces to be accessible also. We are actively engaging with NGOs and stakeholder groups to involve them in projects we are working on.

One great example of this is the Cities Unlocked project with the Guide Dogs charity in the UK. Together we are working with them and major companies to create audio signposting and augmented reality in major cities across the world. This helps blind people navigate cities in much more than a basic functional way. It brings cities to life with real information in real time.

Trends in technology for Inclusive Education

It is important to recognise the sheer size of the issue we stand here discussing today. In the USA 72% of classrooms have kids with SEN. This is an everyday experience of most teachers. All around the world teachers are reacting to the needs of the disabled learner and, in most cases, they are having to adapt materials every time.

I think there are a few key trends

1. Sharing via Cloud/VLE

Teachers have always shared materials but, in these days of the internet, larger class sizes and limited time they are using SharePoint and Virtual Learning Environments. The documents they now create could end up anywhere in the district and being used by a number of people with a variety of permanent, temporary or situational disabilities. The document could be accessed in a future instance by a pupil with a vision, hearing, cognitive or physical disability. This puts a certain amount of responsibility on them but the time saving, cost saving and results associated with this effort are really exciting.

2. More disabled students in mainstream classrooms

Ten years ago, many children with Cerebral Palsy or Muscular dystrophy would have attended a special school where their needs were specifically catered for. The benefits of inclusion are clear but schools have had to become more physically accessible with ramps, accessible toilets, changing rooms etc. The same process is

happening with computers. We now have touchscreens, portable devices, wheelchair mounted devices, USB devices such as eye-gaze cameras or chin joysticks....and specialist software to make Windows usable.

Specialist software has always been a staple part of the assistive technology ecosystem. It will continue to develop and thrive. Microsoft also wants and needs to play a part in this with tools such as our magnifier, narrator, high contrast views, on screen keyboards with word prediction, sticky keys and closed captions.

3. Inclusive by Design – making accessibility normal practice

By making our products accessible in design, fewer adaptations should be required. By introducing tools for efficiency in the mainstream, inclusively designed, we can make everyone's experience better.

By championing the creation of accessible documents, books and websites we hope to lessen the amount of time educators spend adapting. This is a journey we are experiencing ourselves in Microsoft. The inbuilt accessibility checker in Office 365 has raised the profile amongst all employees, as has the Accessibility 101 training mandatory for all employees.

Learning does not stop when our pupils go home. The use of the cloud now means that learning materials can be used at home, children who are hospitalised can still access their work and parents are now kept more in-tune with school life. Accessibility runs through all of this. Part of this journey will be for us to share our learning and our tuition externally. This process has already started.

The Future beckons

Future technology in education always looks exciting. We are in an era now where gesture based control will become normal. The Kinect for Xbox was a huge hit in the Special Education space. The HoloLens will allow you to bring TinTin into your class! Mathematics problems will be physical and float in front of you.

Other things to get excited about for disabled students might include machine learning (automated alt text in images), situational word prediction, eye-tracking and self-adjusting learning materials. In reality, these things are already on their way....the real future may be even more exciting.

Wouter VAN TOL, Samsung

Our vision is to provide a user experience that benefits all, equally.

Samsung's team of accessibility experts are based in Seoul, Korea. I am here on their behalf to give you an overview of Samsung's work in the area of Inclusive Education.

Let us start not with technology, but with education. Three years ago, Samsung started a huge programme to give young people the digital skills they need to succeed in the future. This is our corporate responsibility programme, in other words there is no commercial aim. Our ultimate aim here is to reduce youth unemployment. In Europe alone, we have reached more than 400 000 young people. Some of them have a disability, many do not.

The reason to start my story here is simply to show that Samsung is invested and experienced when it comes to technology in education.

Now let us move to technology. All Samsung's products, services and content are built around a human-centred philosophy that recognises diversity and embraces difference. Our vision is to provide a user experience that benefits all, equally. We make this happen through our "4C Accessibility Design Principles":

Consideration - we constantly do research to ensure the user interface delivers on the needs of the user, including those with disabilities.

Comprehensiveness - We seek to design for all users, meaning people with and without disabilities. This is built into the planning process from the start.

Coherence – we have a wide range of products, from refrigerators to vacuum cleaners to smartphones and TVs. We ensure the simplicity and functionality works equally well across the different products

Co-Creation – importantly, we develop products in a hands-on way together with people with disabilities, research institutes and other relevant groups. Some of our engineers in Korea even do this as volunteers, working with people with disabilities near their office.

So what is the current capability of school devices (like tablets and smartphones) when it comes to inclusive education?

There is a long list of standard, 'built in' solutions in our devices. There is not enough time to talk about each of these, but broadly they are in four categories: vision, hearing, dexterity and cognition. Some of these are standard in any Android device,

but Samsung also adds some of its own capabilities on top of that. All of these are suitable for everyday use in inclusive education. Does this mean there's a solution for every disability or that these solutions work perfectly? Of course not, we know there's a lot of scope for innovation.

And these are some current examples of innovation based on existing technology. They are not necessarily designed specifically for education, but they can be applied in that context nonetheless.

DoWell is a solution for people with upper limb disabilities. They often have controllers to use a computer. Smartphones are a different matter though, and DoWell is a software solution that overcomes this barrier.

An example of innovation from outside of Samsung: AVA is a text-to-speech app that allows people with hearing disabilities to follow what is being said by who in a group. This is very useful for group work in school. It is still very early stage of development, but this is where innovation is taking us.

And then let us look further into the future.

We believe there is an important, and still largely unexplored, opportunity for Virtual Reality (VR) and augmented reality in inclusive education. Virtual Reality has the potential to minimize or offset the effects of a disability and provide an alternative means for a student to accomplish a particular task.

VR can be tailored to allow a child to focus on their unique strengths and abilities. For example, the number of stimuli can be dialled down for children with autism. The VR environment also allows students to practice skills that can be transferred to real-life situations (like interaction with others, shopping or driving); all within a safe environment.

One nice example is Eye Play the Piano, which allows people with physical disabilities to learn to play the piano via VR technology.

And have any of you heard from Magic Leap, which is a "mixed reality" start-up with more than \$1 billion investment? Have a look online, search for "Magic Leap whale" and you will be impressed.

The opportunity of VR for inclusive education is what excites us a lot. Where will it go? The future will tell.

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