



## Portuguese on-going process on Inclusive Education

**Where we are now?  
Where do we go?**

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## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

### Portugal

Signed: 30 March 2007

Ratified Additional Protocol: 30 July 2009

Ratified the Convention: 30 July 2009





## Policy Recommendations from the National Education Board

- Inclusive education should be part of an overall strategy of education;
- All aspects of education - including assessment - should be subordinated to the main priority: building an inclusive school;
- The actions addressed to special needs should not be isolated, but should be part of a whole comprehensive policy for education.



## Increasing Inclusion

### Law 2008: Key points

- Aiming to increase the level and quality of inclusion within mainstream schools, while protecting and enhancing specialist provision for those who need it.
- Redefining the the role of special schools to bring out their contribution in working with mainstream schools to support greater inclusion.
- Defining the responsibility of the mainstream school and mainstream teacher for children with SNE and for the development and implementation of the IEP.



## Law 2008 - Key points

### Defining SNE

The law states that special needs education could be provided if the child has:

- a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or a disability which makes it difficult to use the educational facilities generally;

and if that learning difficulty calls for:

- special educational provision i.e. provision additional to, or different from, that made generally for children of the same age in local schools.



## 2008 Law – By inclusion we mean...

- Pupils/students with SEN should not only receive their education in a mainstream school, but also fully join their peers in the curriculum and in the school life;
- Children with SEN should generally take part in the mainstream class rather than be isolated in separate units;
- Separate provision in regular schools can occasionally be necessary for specific purposes;
- Schools should review and adapt their approaches in order to achieve greater inclusion.



## 2008 Law - Key points

Assuming responsibility for all learners,  
whatever their individual needs

- It's responsibility of *all* teachers and support staff in the mainstream school:
  - To be aware of the school's responsibilities for *all* children;
  - To have regard to the legal guidance;
  - To apply that guidance effectively in assessing and teaching children with SEN; and
  - To work together in the classroom to raise standards for *all* pupils.

# 2008 Law - Key points Provision

- Pupils/students with complex needs should be appropriately assessed and have an IEP in place.
- No assignment to special schools.
- Assignment to special units within a school is an exception, only possible when it is clearly demonstrated that education in regular classrooms is unable to meet the child's educational or social needs or when it is essential for the child's welfare.
- National standardized testing is developed allowing accommodation of differences.



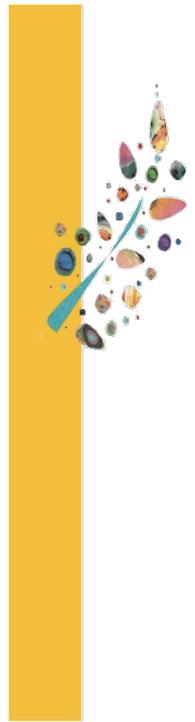
## Law 2008 - Key points

### Using ICF-CY (WHO)

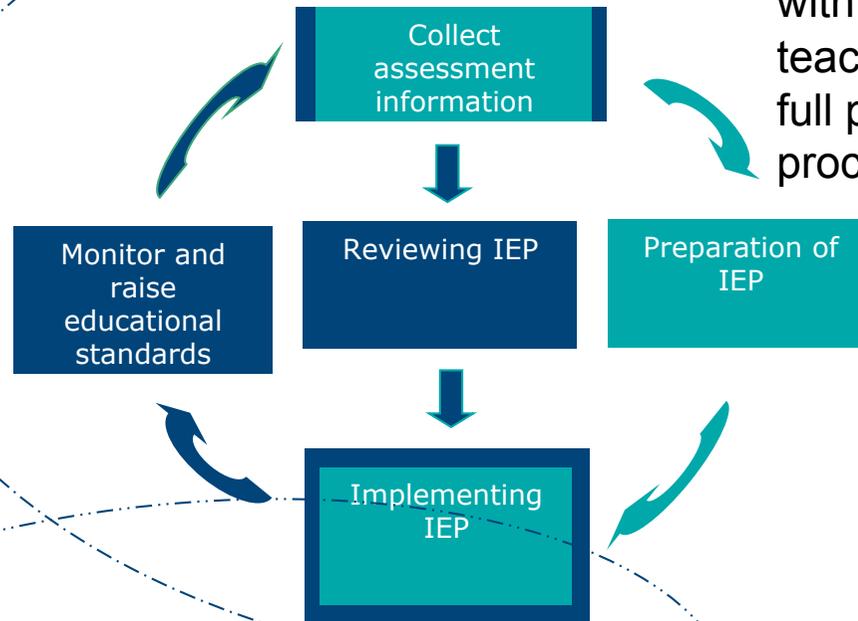
- to overcome the linguistic barrier;
- to identify shared criteria to assess individuals and make decisions about placement and provision;
- to allocate financial, material and human resources according to equitable principles;
- to provide environmental adjustments;
- to remove all architectural, cultural, political and economic barriers.

# Challenging Role of Mainstream Teacher

## Skills and abilities



Multi-disciplinary teams carry out initial identification assessment with mainstream classroom teachers, parents and pupils as full partners in the assessment process.



Working with individual learners as well as heterogeneous groups



## Funding Policy and Inclusion

Every regular school has a whole-school budget and decides about special needs provision.

To meet special educational and social needs (IEP) is allocated to regular schools:

- additional staff (special education teachers and other professionals)
- learning materials in accessible formats, equipment and assistive technologies;
- teachers with disabilities, qualified in sign language and/or Braille;
- schools with arrangements and facilities for pupils/students with very complex special needs ( low incidence) have an extra budget for accessibility.

## Funding Policy and Inclusion

- Schools decide the best to use their human resources and budget to meet the needs of all their pupils/students, including those with an IEP;
- School staff: allocation of special education teachers to support pupils/students with an IEP:
  - ✓ 1 teacher for each 350 pupils/students of the total school population, and
  - ✓ additional teachers, based on the identification of specific needs, (low incidence: Braille, sign language, augmentative or alternative communication ...).

# Funding Policy and Inclusion



- The school staff includes teachers for learning support (portuguese, maths, home work ...) according to a formula:
  - ✓ 1 teacher for each 3 classes (classroom size: 28 pupils)

# Funding Policy and Inclusion

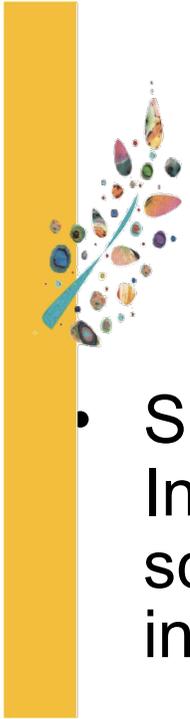


## Special Schools operating as RCI

Special schools operating as RCI are funded to provide specific services to mainstream schools, in mainstream settings, clearly defined in a four years Action Plan, prepared in cooperation with the regular schools to meet the needs they have:

- specialized services addressed to pupils in mainstream settings;
- supporting teachers and families;
- helping mainstream schools to implement inclusion policies;
- inclusive assessment.





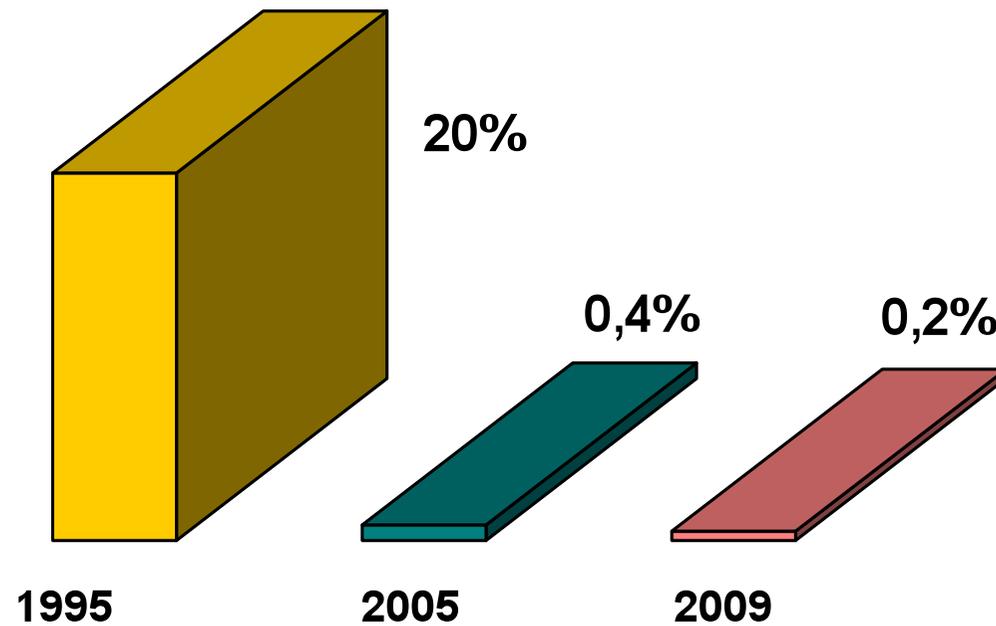
## A new role for special schools

- Special schools operating as Resource Centers for Inclusion (RCI) should work closely with mainstream schools to support classroom teachers and pupils/students in inclusive regular schools;
- 50% of the existing special schools are now operating as RCI, supporting regular schools in their geographic area.
- This reorganization is being led in cooperation with NGOs and is expected to be completed in 2013;

# A Picture of the situation

## Indicators 2009

**% of pupils with SEN in special schools**



## Where are we now? Indicators 2009

Number of compulsory school pupils (including those with SEN)	1.235.464
Number pupils/students with IEP	45.889 (3,7%)
Number of pupils/students in segregated special schools	2.392 (0,2%)
Number of pupils/students in segregated special arrangements in regular schools	2.115 (0,2%)

Compulsory education covers children from 6 to 15 years old. From 2009 covers children from 6-18.

Target-group of SNE: pupils/students receiving special education because they have difficulties in their learning process and participation considering the interaction between inter-related factors and limitations in their functioning.

## Controversy ... Why?

- A common sensibility among both in public and educators that pupils/students with some types of disabilities do not benefit of what happens in a regular classroom.
- A variety of points of view on a sensitive issue: where can individual children with SEN better develop?
- The concerns of some parents about whether and how the needs of their children are met in a mainstream school.

## Controversy ... Why?

- This belief is partly caused by a lack of understanding about the inclusive education aims and the ways how students with different abilities can be successfully skilled in the same environment.
- It may also reflect the belief that inclusion weakens overall educational outcomes.
- There is still some general undervaluing of people with disabilities (particularly cognitive disabilities).



## Progress ... Barriers

- In Portugal, we have made progress,
- Some barriers still remain...
- The REASON – people, institutions and special interests.

## Looking the future: By 2013 ...

- A shared vision of the public education that look at inclusion through meaningful and practical ways and makes it a concrete reality in every community;
- Schools and parents will have higher expectations about the standards children with SNE can attain;
- The great majority of SNE assessments will be completed within the statutory timetable;
- There will be a more effective and widespread use of ICT to support the education of children in need;

## Looking the future: By 2013 ...

- A growing number of mainstream schools will be willing and able to accept all children: consequently there will be no more assignments to special schools;
- Special and mainstream schools will be working together and supporting one another;
- National and regional programs will be in place to support increasing inclusion;
- There will be new arrangements to disseminate positive successful models: classrooms, schools and communities doing a good work and sharing their success and their strategies with others.





Thank you