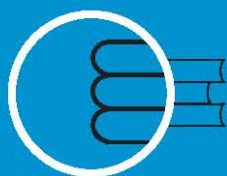


RESEARCH ON

THE RESPONSE OF THE BASQUE EDUCATION SYSTEM TO THE SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Introduction

The attention to pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) has undergone substantial changes in the past decades as a consequence of the consecutive variations in the theoretical assumptions affecting the educational practice.

The adoption of a social integration philosophy in the Basque Country has brought about important changes in the educational field –detailed in the Plan for Special Education in the Basque Country¹– in order to put into practice the principles of normalizing, sectoring and individualizing the educational response. The Plan states that instead of two parallel education systems –one for ordinary pupils and the other one for pupils with disability– there is a unique education system with a common curriculum that must be adapted to the specific characteristics of each pupil.

The concept of Special Educational Needs was introduced by M. Warnock² and brought about a theoretical change in the way of understanding the term disability, as well as a change in the way of responding to disability from the educational field. The difficulties are considered to have an interactive origin and a relative nature, since they not only depend on circumstances inherent to the disability itself, but also on external circumstances such as the setting, the stimuli provided, the resources available, etc. The assessment of the experience so far, as well as the educational proposals based on this new approach, are described in the report “*Una escuela comprensiva e integradora*”³ (A comprehensive and Integrative Schooling).

The Inclusive Schooling is nowadays the theoretical framework of reference to focus the treatment of pupils' diversity. According to this approach, the learning process of these pupils is a consequence of their inclusion into the school. The approach of the Inclusive Schooling is based on three conceptual pillars. The first one is the social dimension of the learning difficulties, which goes far beyond the clinic scope in use in this field. The second one are the "barriers for learning and participation", which in its educational dimension means overcoming the barriers that some pupils may find along their schooling. And finally, the third one is the concept of support, which, far from a specialized view, includes the intervention in mainstream settings and the cooperation of all the school and community staff, as well as peer cooperation.

The legislation governing the educational intervention has adapted to these changes and to the different ways of understanding the response to pupils with SEN. The Decree⁴ in force details the principles of normalization, integration and comprehensiveness of education and states the foundations of an inclusive schooling whose main aim is to respond properly to all the pupils. Thus, the new role of the teachers and the schools as a whole is fostered, since they have to design coherent projects to respond to the pupils' comprehensive development bearing in mind the individual needs of everyone of them.

The development of an inclusive schooling requires that the resources available in the education system be used in ordinary settings. Thus, the duties assigned to the supportive staff attending

¹ Plan de Educación Especial para el País Vasco. 1983. Departamento de Educación y Cultura del Gobierno Vasco. Servicio de Publicaciones. Vitoria-Gasteiz.

² M.Warnock. 1981. "Informe sobre Necesidades Educativas Especiales" En Siglo 0: nº 130. Julio-Agosto. 1990

³ Report of the Special Education Committee "Comprehensive and Integrative Schooling" 1989. Servicio central de Publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco. Vitoria-Gasteiz.

⁴ This Order 118/1998 of 23 June regulates the educational response to pupils with SEN within the framework of the comprehensive and integrative schooling. http://www.euskadi.net/cgi-bin_k54/bopv_00?C

pupils with SEN focus, to a great extent, on cooperating with school teachers and form teachers and advising them on how to adapt their teaching to the pupils' needs and how to respond to these needs in an ordinary classroom setting.

Taking into account that inclusive schooling is based on the cooperation of all the educational agents involved, this research includes some elements of analysis concerning the families of pupils who need an Individual Curriculum Adaptation (ACI)*. It also includes some other elements of analysis concerning the school setting and the form teachers, in order to assess how these resources are managed and the type of educational response given to pupils with SEN in Primary Education schools.

The research on the duties of the supportive staff attending pupils with SEN in Child and Primary Education and the assessment of their intervention –duties and roles directed to the attention to pupils with SEN– will provide a very useful information about the real situation of the resources and the type of attention received by the pupils with SEN. At the same time, this research will provide qualitative elements and some orientations for an optimal use of the resources in the education system, and, therefore, for a higher quality of the educational response.

Theoretical basis

Any research project requires defining some theoretical principles against which the adaptation of the process in progress can be measured. In the case of the SEN subsystem, the principles are considered as trend-objectives that will help check the interventions carried out in the education system and assess the achievements obtained.

The following theoretical and legal frameworks are the most significant and useful references to assess the current situation and trends of the attention to pupils with SEN within the Basque Education System:

I. Comprehensive and integrative schooling

The philosophy of the comprehensive and integrative schooling for all the pupils is based on the principles of normalizing, sectoring and individualizing the educational response. According to these principles, the intervention within the educational field includes providing pupils with SEN with all the necessary support and services, an adapted curriculum, and a school setting as less restrictive as possible. This approach presents important qualitative changes such as the shift from a medical model to an educative model when defining disability in terms of special educational needs; from a segregated model of Special Education to a mainstream schooling system and to promoting curriculum adaptations according to the individual's pace and needs.

II. Principles of the Inclusive Schooling

The principles of the Inclusive Schooling are a useful reference to approach the attention to pupils with SEN. The concept of Inclusive Schooling implies in practice transferring the central point of the educational response –focused exclusively on pupils with special needs– to the ordinary school setting. Thus, the special education –characterized by a separate and specialized methodology– comes steadily closer to mainstream schooling and makes teachers face the challenge of adapting to the school reality with its diverse educational needs. A change in the school structure and organization as defined in the Index for Inclusion is necessary⁵. This change focuses on three aspects:

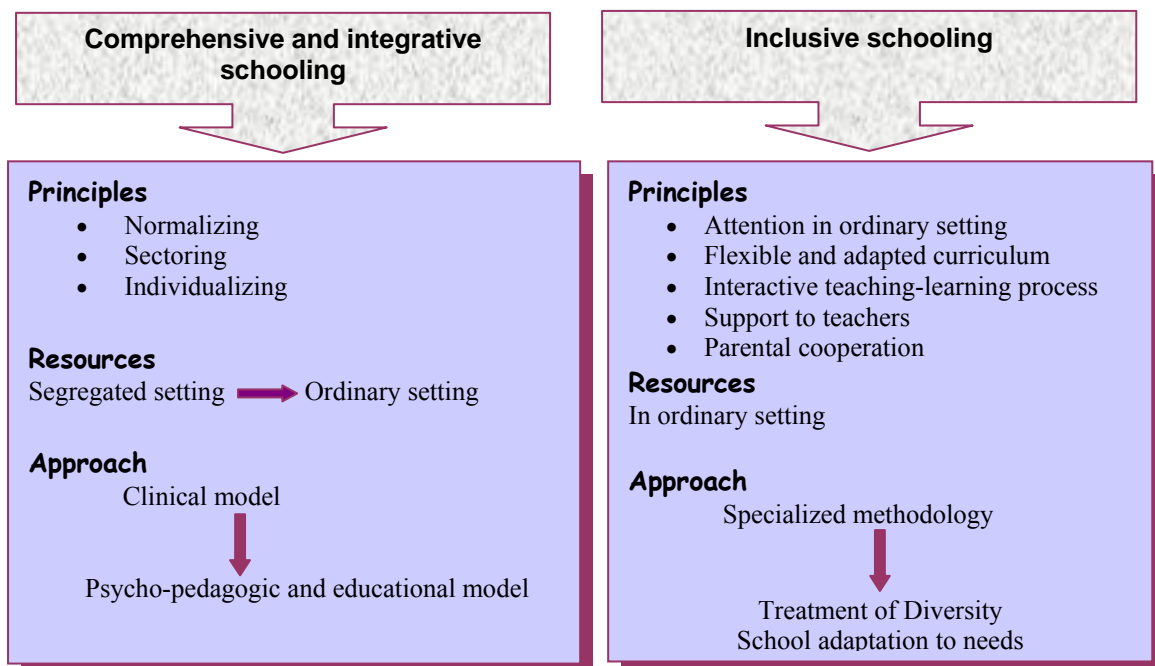
* In Spanish Adaptación Curricular Individual (ACI)

⁵ Ainscow y Booth: *Index for inclusion*. 2002. Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) Bristol, UK.

- **Creating an inclusive culture**, shared by all the teachers, students, families and the community, to lead the decisions and to develop the inclusive values. In our education system this would be included in the School Educational Plan.
- **Devising inclusive policies** to increase the capacity of the school to improve the learning and the involvement of all the pupils, especially those with the greatest difficulties. This is to be detailed in the School Curriculum Plan.
- **Developing inclusive practices** to make sure that classroom activities and out-of-school activities encourage all the pupils' involvement.

The theoretical framework of the Inclusive Schooling defines the following general principles:

- **Inclusive classrooms.** The mainstream classroom takes in the diversity of pupils and it becomes the basic unit of the attention and individualization of the educational response. It is a space for all the pupils' active involvement, where peer-support frequently occurs. The inclusive classrooms are intended to give a response to pupils' heterogeneity and the human and physical resources are provided in an ordinary setting and according to the educational needs.
- **Wide and flexible curriculum.** The curriculum can be adapted according to the characteristics of each pupil in different aspects such as the intended objectives, the different ways to achieve them, the learning strategies, etc. It includes a wide range of measures: proposals for multi-level activities, use of cooperative learning techniques, stating short term objectives, continuous assessment, strategies to improve understanding of the differences, etc.
- **Interactive teaching-learning process.** Working in small groups is encouraged to facilitate peer learning and pupils' different capacities and potentialities are accepted.
- **Support to teachers.** Natural support networks among teachers (form teachers, consultants, supportive teachers, etc.) are fostered. Moreover, teacher training aims to develop teamwork strategies and different ways of teaching and learning in settings respectful of diversity.
- **Parental cooperation.** Cooperation and involvement of the families through a close communication and through agreement about the learning objectives. The planning is devised taking into account the information the families provide about their children.



III. Recommendations on Education in the European Union

A.- “Special Needs Education in Europe” EURYDICE report⁶

The “*Special Needs Education in Europe*” report was written by the European Agency for the Development of Special Education and it groups the different countries in three categories according to their policy and schooling practices from the highest to the lowest level of integration of pupils with SEN.

The first category (“*one track*” approach) includes countries that develop policies and practices geared towards the inclusion of almost all pupils within mainstream education. This is supported by a wide range of services and resources focused on the mainstream school.

In the second category (“*multi-track*” approach) there is a multiplicity of approaches to inclusion offering a variety of services and resources from both the mainstream system and special education schools.

In the third category (“*two track*” approach) there are two distinct education systems. Pupils with SEN are usually placed in special schools or special classes. Generally, these pupils do not follow the mainstream curriculum and the two systems are often under separate legislation.

The educational development during the last decades places Euskadi in the first category, along with the countries with inclusion policies for pupils with SEN such as Denmark, Italy, Spain, Sweden or the United Kingdom. The laws developed during the last years⁷ can explain the low percentage of pupils with SEN (0.2%) enrolled in special schools, as shown in the next table.

	Number of compulsory school aged pupils	Percentage of pupils with SENs	Percentage of pupils in segregated provision	Year of reference
Austria	848,126	3.2	1.6	2000/01
Belgium (DE) 1	9,427	2.7	2.3	2000/01
Belgium (F) 2	680,360	4	4	2000/01
Belgium (NL) 3	822,666	5	4.9	2000/01
Cyprus	N/R	5.6	0.7	2000/01
Czech Republic	1,146,607	9.8	5	2000/01
Denmark	670,000	11.9	1.5	2000/01
Estonia	205,367	12.5	3.4	2000/01
Euskadi	239,171	2.3	0.24	2003/04 ⁸
Finland	583,945	17.8	3.7	1999
France	9,709,000	3.1	2.6	1999/2000/01
Germany	9,159,068	5.3	4.6	2000/01
Greece	1,439,411	0.9	<0.5	1999/2000
Hungary	1,191,750	4.1	3.7	1999/2000
Iceland	42,320	15	0.9	2000/01
Ireland	575,559	4.2	1.2	1999/2000
Italy	8,867,824	1.5	<0.5	2001
Latvia	294,607	3.7	3.6	2000/01
Liechtenstein	3,813	2.3	1.8	2001/02
Lithuania	583,858	9.4	1.1	2001/02
Luxembourg	57,295	≈ 2.6	≈ 1.0	2001/02
Netherlands	2,200,000	2.1	1.8	1999/2000/01

⁶ Special Needs Education in Europe. January 2003. European Agency with the contribution of the Eurydice Network.

⁷ Normativa del País Vasco sobre Necesidades Educativas Especiales. CEI-IDC . Servicio Central de Publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco. Vitoria-Gasteiz 1999.

⁸ Child Education pupils included. Pupils with non permanent SEN not included. Data from Eustat and from “Informe Necesidades y accesibilidad de las personas con discapacidad en la CAPV” Departamento de vivienda y asuntos sociales. Eusko Jaurilaritza. Vitoria-Gasteiz 2004

Norway	601,826	5.6	0.5	2001
Poland	4,410,516	3.5	2	2000/01
Portugal	1,365,830	5.8	<0.5	2000/01
Slovakia	762,111	4	3.4	2001/02
Slovenia	189,342	4.7		2000
Spain	4,541,489	3.7	0.4	1999/2000
Sweden	1,062,735	2	1.3	2001
Switzerland 4	807,101	6	6	1999/2000
United Kingdom	9,994,159	3.2	1.1	1999/2000

Source: European Agency for the Development of Special Education and Eurydice Network.

8. Data from Euskadi: Report on the needs and accessibility of people with disability in the Basque Country.

1. German Community. 2. French Community 3. Flemish Community

4. Statistics do not allow for differentiation between pupils with SEN in inclusive and segregated settings

B.- Quality indicators of the European Union

The countries of the European Union, through the "Education and Training in Europe: diverse systems, shared goals for 2010"⁹ programme, have established a set of educational goals, some of which expressly refer to pupils with SEN, such as:

- *Objective 1.2:* Making attainment of basic skills genuinely available to everyone, including those less advantaged, those with special needs, school drop-outs and to adult learners.
- *Objective 2.3:* Supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion.
Indicators:
 - Participation of pupils, parents and other stakeholders in school governance.
 - Fostering models for integration of and giving access to disadvantaged groups to education and training.

Some indicators related to school education quality and aimed to assessing the school education systems in Europe are also included (Activities of the European Union. Summaries of legislation). Only those indicators affecting the educational response to pupils with SEN are mentioned here, although all of them could be included, bearing in mind that the response is given within the mainstream schooling system.

- Participation of parents. Influence of parents according to the added value they provide and to the circumstances in which their contributions are most useful.
- Initial and continuous education and training of the teaching staff.

C.- "Education and training 2010: Key competences for a lifelong learning"¹⁰.

This programme defines and selects the so considered key competences for the proper functioning of a society. These competences are stated as educational objectives that every person should achieve and they are defined as follows:

The key competences represent a multi-function and transferable set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that every individual needs for his personal realization and development, for his social and work inclusion. These competences should be fully developed by the end of compulsory education or training and should act as a base for a further lifelong learning.

⁹ "Education and Training in Europe: diverse systems, shared goals for 2010". European Commission. November 2004

¹⁰ "Education and Training in Europe: diverse systems, shared goals for 2010". European Commission. November 2004

This programme –the acquisition of key competences– is intended to be developed in different school settings and one of them is the school setting concerning pupils with SEN:

- Educational provision for pupils with special educational needs. Although it is admitted that all the pupils will not be able to acquire all these competences, they have the right to access to an educational provision that will help them achieve learning objectives as near as possible to the key competences. This means that pupils with SEN should have access to properly differentiated and individual learning programmes so as to acquire these competences.

Legislation on SEN in the Basque Country

A simple way to know how an education system adapts to the advances in the theoretical frameworks of education and to the social requirements is to analyse its capacity to legislate on educational matters. Thus, the regulations affecting pupils with SEN in the Basque Country in the last years have been of crucial importance. These regulations have allowed adapting the education system to the shifts in the most important theoretical approaches and have directed the work of the different professionals attending pupils with SEN in the schools.

The acceptance of the social integration philosophy implies some changes in the regulations whose aim is to put into practice the principles of normalizing, sectoring and individualizing the educational response. The Plan for Special Education in the Basque Country (1982)¹¹ introduces substantial changes in the philosophy and structure of the special education services. The reference point is the mainstream school, around which a basic infrastructure of resources is created to support the integration of all the pupils. Instead of two parallel schooling systems, one for mainstream pupils and the other one for pupils with disability, a unique schooling system is adopted, with a common curriculum that must be adapted to the specific characteristics of each pupil. According to this, the regulations state that the schooling of pupils with disability must be done in a school setting as less restrictive as possible.

In order to assess the experiences of the Plan a Special Education Committee was created in 1987 and it produced the "A Comprehensive and Integrative Schooling" report¹² with reflections, proposals and recommendations about the regulation of the educational practice. This report was based on the philosophy of the Warnock Report (1981), where the concept of pupils with special educational needs appeared for the first time and which brought about a conceptual shift in what was meant until then by Special Education.

The legislation in the Basque Country¹³ distinguishes between permanent and temporary educational needs and defines 5 types of permanent educational needs derived from mental retardment and/or pervasive developmental disorders, deafness and hearing impairment, visual impairment, motor disability and cerebral palsy, and intellectual giftedness¹⁴.

The temporary educational needs include those derived from underprivileged social or cultural background, severe school maladjustment, hospitalization and long term diseases, slow learning disabilities and severe learning difficulties, and those generated by a low intellectual level. Most European countries distinguish between 6 and 10 types of special educational needs.

¹¹ This Plan is detailed in the Order of 2 September 1982 of the Department of Education that regulates the Special Education in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country

¹² Report of the Special Education Committee "Comprehensive and Integrative Schooling" 1989. Servicio central de Publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco. Vitoria-Gasteiz.

¹³ This Order 118/1998 of 23 June regulates the educational response to pupils with SEN within the framework of the comprehensive and integrative schooling.

¹⁴ Directive of 24 July 1988 of the Vice-ministry of Education that regulates the guidance on the educational response to pupils with SEN related to intellectual giftedness.

In most of the European countries there is a trend to describe disability in terms of the educational needs it generates and in terms of the services and support it requires for an appropriate response. The legislation in the Basque Country includes this aspect, since there is a specific regulation that defines the measures to be taken according to the needs detected in the initial assessment. Among these special measures are the initial curriculum adaptations and the significant Individual Curriculum Adaptations (ACI)¹⁵ whose benchmark is the mainstream curriculum.

The ACI is the core of the educational intervention of teachers and schools attending pupils with SEN. The legislation states how to write this individualized document, in which the learning objectives adapted to the needs detected in the initial evaluation are defined together with the necessary resources to achieve them and how to assess the level of achievement of these objectives. The legislation also defines the participation of the families in these cases and ensures them their right to choose the school for their child and provides them with the necessary resources.

The advance in the legislation affecting the integration is obvious. Turning the specific Special Education schools into resource centres is a present trend in several European countries and a step already taken in the Basque Country. The resource network that started with the creation of the Multi-professional Teams has developed into a much wider support structure –the Berritzegune centres*– where the SEN advisers are now integrated.

Schools have been supplied with internal human and physical resources in order to improve their educational efficiency, particularly the capacity to improve the quality of their educational response to pupils with SEN, in the belief that a school that attends appropriately all its pupils is an efficient school.

Objetives of the research

The overall aim of this research is to analyze the type of response given by the education system in the Basque Country to pupils with SEN in Primary Education.

Specific objectives:

1. To know the schooling situation of the pupils with Individual Curriculum Adaptation (ACI) and other types of SEN in the Primary Education sample schools.
2. To describe the educational strategies developed by school professionals to attend to pupils with Individual Curriculum Adaptation (ACI) and other types of SEN.
3. To know the relationship between the school and the families of pupils with ACI.
4. To assess the satisfaction level of the families with the educational response given to their children.
5. To assess the suitability of the intervention of the supportive staff and the school form teachers when attending pupils with Individual Curriculum Adaptation (ACI) and other types of SEN, using as a benchmark some indicators of the Inclusive Schooling.

These objectives could be summed up in three areas:

- The school as a whole, its functioning and organization to respond to these pupils.
- The professionals attending pupils with SEN, particularly form teachers of pupils with Individual Curriculum Adaptation (ACI) and the supportive staff appointed to the schools:

¹⁵ In Spanish Adaptación Curricular Individual (ACI)

Order of 24 July 1988 that regulates the initial adaptations to access the curriculum and the significant Individual Curriculum Adaptations for pupils with SEN

* Educational Support Centre for innovation and improvement of non-University Education.

Therapeutic Pedagogy (PT) teachers and consultant teachers. Taking the duties assigned to these professionals as a benchmark, the objective is to analyze the tasks they perform both in ordinary settings and in support settings, as well as the type of response they give to pupils with ACI and other types of SEN.

- The family is the third key area, since it is highly interesting to know its relationship with the school and its satisfaction level with its child's schooling.

**SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH
AND
PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS. SUMMARY

The advances in educational experience during the last years and the theoretical evolution in relation to the response to special educational needs have turned into a shift in the concept of a segregated school for pupils with certain disabilities. Nowadays the concept of Inclusive Schooling is making its way, but not without difficulties. According to this concept, all the diversity of the pupils has its response within the same classroom and with all the appropriate resources for the needs generated by personal and social situations.

The term "Inclusive Schooling" refers to a transformation process along which schools evolve to adapt their response to their pupils' diversity. It is also defined as "*a process of developing different ways of facilitating the involvement and learning of pupils with special educational needs within mainstream schooling*"; "*inclusion is not assimilation, it is not an action of integrating or diluting the difference in the school dominant culture*"¹⁶. Inclusive Schooling is a rather complex matter and it requires not only a shift in methodology, but a shift in the structure, organization and functioning of the education systems and school. "... *It is illusory to expect deep changes in the learning level and the progress of all the pupils without schools that facilitate these changes by means of specific policies on matters such as the organization, functioning, coordination, involvement of the school community or permanent training of their members among others.*"¹⁷

Some of these principles are taken as a benchmark to analyze and locate the Basque Education system in relation to the response to pupils with SEN. The indicators detailed below are referents to assess the educational strategies in use and to know the trends toward a steadily more inclusive schooling:

- Attention in settings as normalized as possible
- Teaching adapted to pupils' characteristics
- Support to teachers
- Coordination among professionals
- Parental involvement
- Satisfaction level of parents with the educational response

1. Attention in settings as normalized as possible

Primary Education schools are generally in good conditions to ensure the physical integration of all the pupils, since they usually have enough resources for a majority of pupils with disabilities to be in mainstream schools. The two types of supportive teachers – consultant teachers and Therapeutic Pedagogy (PT) teachers– generally attend the pupils in ordinary classrooms, but some measures should be taken for this to become common practice. In other words, the process is under way, but the goal of giving most of the attention in mainstream classrooms has not been yet achieved.

Summary and suggestions

2. Teaching adapted to pupils' characteristics

The duties of the supportive staff are very useful to individualize the curriculum, but they do not ensure by themselves the attention in ordinary settings and they are not intended to progressively develop a mainstream classroom methodology that makes it possible. The physical integration into the mainstream classroom is becoming more and more common, since pupils spend all the time in the ordinary classroom, except while they are in the support classroom. However, there still is a long way to go before the functional

Summary and suggestions

¹⁶ Mel Ainscow (2001) Desarrollo de escuelas inclusivas. Madrid. Editorial Narcea

¹⁷ Gerardo Echeita y Marta Sandoval (2002) Educación inclusiva o educación sin exclusiones. Revista de Educación núm. 327, pág. 31-48

integration is achieved, which would mean a common learning by providing each pupil with everything he needs to learn within the mainstream classroom with or without the help of the supportive staff.

3. Support to teachers

Teachers are in a training process about SEN and the structure of the education system allows such a continuous training. Form teachers have the lowest participation level and their involvement should be fostered. The support and training network is wide enough, but it mainly deals with aspects not directly linked to the overall classroom activity, but with aspects more related to the specificity of the individual SEN. Teacher advising is carried out by both internal and external professionals it mainly consists of writing the Individual Curriculum Adaptations (ACI). The training on SEN specific matters and the training on the treatment of diversity are not planned in an integrated way under the same approach. Planning them under the same approach would provide teachers with some clues and certainty to develop inclusive classroom activities.

Summary and suggestions

4. Coordination of professionals

Most schools include in their regulations a coordination timetable. Coordination is more frequent among internal professionals (ordinary teachers, PT teachers, consultants and form teachers), but there is a trend to collaborate regularly with other services (SEN advisers from the Berritzegune centres and community services). The main subject of these meetings is the Individual Curriculum Adaptation (ACI). These reflections should be directed towards methodologies that consider the ACI as a part of the treatment of the classroom diversity.

Summary and suggestions

5. Parental involvement

A full parental involvement means taking part in all the decisions made during the schooling process, from the initial planning to the evaluation. However, the role of the families is still mainly receptive; some improvement is still needed in relation to what inclusive schooling defends about the parental involvement in the educational process and in relation to the importance of taking into account the opinion of parents about their children's education.

Not all the parents are aware that their child's curriculum is an Individual Curriculum Adaptation (ACI), a fact that every parent should know.

Summary and suggestions

6. Satisfaction level of parents with the educational response

Parents are generally very satisfied with the educational attention given to their children, although they are seldom asked to give a straight opinion in their meetings with the form teacher.

They think that the support for their children's inclusion into the non-teaching areas of the school and for their social involvement in the school should be improved.

Summary and suggestions

MAIN FEATURES OF THE RESPONSE OF THE BASQUE EDUCATION SYSTEM TO SEN IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

- The Basque Education System has its own regulations that allow adapting the educational practice to the conceptual changes about Special Educational Needs.
- In order to unify the assessment criteria and the psycho-pedagogic diagnosis a common code ("Codes of Special Educational Needs")¹⁸ is used. This code defines the special needs in such a way that allows the education system summarizing the information required for a better decision-making and a better resource management.
- As most of the pupils with ACI started their schooling when they were two or three years old and with the necessary resources, it can be considered as an early educational intervention.
- The individual support to pupils with ACI is mainly given in the schooling language.
- A majority of schools write some documents stating the priorities of the attention to pupils with SEN. These pupils' needs and the decisions for a proper educational response are included in the school organization.
- Most schools have at least a Therapeutic Pedagogy teacher to attend pupils with SEN. Moreover, most of the state schools have a School Consultant teacher for Primary Education.
- Pupils with SEN are enrolled in both state and private schools; however, these pupils tend to gather in certain schools with plenty of human resources.
- All the schools have an external support resource in the SEN adviser in the local Berritzegune centre.
- The supportive staff has a high level of training and skill. In the last three years, the trend in the training subjects has shifted from a specialized training on the different disabilities to a more generic training on SEN within the treatment of diversity. The local Berritzegune centres play a key role in the management and organization of the training activities.
- The type of training provided focuses more on updating and developing the individual knowledge than on training teams of professionals working together in the same school.
- The support professionals spend more time outside the ordinary classroom than inside it. Their work focuses more on the individual attention to pupils than on advising form teachers about more generic subjects of overall classroom intervention.
- The presence of a pupil with ACI in the mainstream classroom does not necessarily mean a shift in the classroom methodology. It does not mean any change in the way of teaching, in the classroom layout or in the multi-level activities. The ACI is generally a parallel programme to the mainstream classroom programme.
- The demands of form teachers to PT teachers and consultant teachers are similar, and, therefore, their duties are similar. However, PT teachers work generally closer to the pupils, while consultant teachers tend to focus on teacher advising activities.

¹⁸ Reference manual for exclusive use of SEN advisers in the Berritzegune centres

- The development of the Individual Curriculum Adaptations is a task performed in close cooperation by the form teacher and the support staff. Most of them consider that the ACI is a useful tool to meet the pupils' educational needs.
- In a high percentage, parents give great importance to personal interviews about their children's evaluation and to general meetings where their children's specific characteristics are discussed and that make their integration with classroom peers easier.
- Most parents think that the human and technical resources are appropriate and sufficient. Most form teachers consider these resources appropriate but insufficient to respond to the existing needs.
- The satisfaction level of the parents of pupils with ACI with their schooling is very high.

REFLECTION ON THE SITUATION

The educational response to pupils with SEN is integrated into the mainstream education system, which has appropriate specific resources, both human and physical. It can be considered that the aim of the social integration into the school has been met to a great extent, although this integration should be extended to the non-teaching spaces in the school. The existing regulations about different aspects of the SEN have helped organize the response and provide for internal and external resources.

There are significant differences across provinces in the amount of pupils considered as having SEN, most probably consequence of different interpretations in each of them of the "Code of Special Educational Needs".

Although the objective stated at the beginning of the process that all the pupils should be schooled in a setting as normalized as possible –a mainstream school– has been achieved, this same objective should be extended towards the Inclusive Schooling approach, in which mainstream classrooms include all kinds of pupils and give them an appropriate educative response.

The changes that the presence of a pupil with SEN causes in the ordinary classroom are still scarce. The ACI is a programme parallel to the mainstream classroom programme and in many cases it is not developed by the pupil's form teacher. Anyway, there has been a significant advance, since part of the ACI is developed in the ordinary classroom and not exclusively in the support classroom.

It is a fact that pupils with ACI receive individual attention especially from the supportive staff. Obviously, in their opinion as specialists the system does respond to the pupils' learning needs. However, schools should establish as trend objective a response more closely linked to the mainstream classroom activities. In other words, the mainstream classroom programme should include pupils with ACI as well as some other aspects of the treatment of diversity.

Teacher training plays a key role in developing educational policies that foster an inclusive schooling. This training aims to some extent to improve the functioning of the more and more inclusive schools and could be devised from the experiences and knowledge of the different staff members involved in the educational work in the same school.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. To increase the advice to form teachers. Action Training in the school

Form teachers acknowledge themselves as responsible of all the pupils in the classroom, included those with special educational needs. However, they consider that the greatest difficulty to include the ACI in the mainstream classroom lies in arranging the classroom so as to make the treatment of diversity easier.

For this purpose, it is necessary some advice and training aimed to:

- Help form teachers devise inclusive classroom practices that foster the treatment of the individual needs within the group.
- Devise an Action Training scheme within the school based in the cooperation between professionals to deal with the treatment of diversity even when it is linked to SEN.
- Foster advice directed to Action Training within the school.
- Devise a continuous training scheme in the schools, e.g. seminars. Each school should be able to plan its most suitable training scheme. This planning should be lead by the school management and should have the necessary advice and help for each phase of the planning.
- The Action Training within the school could include some aspects of classroom observation as a basis for reflection and group-analysis of the educational practices: the values fostered in everyday activities, the educational practices that allow the involvement of all the pupils in the classroom, how to optimize the existing resources, classroom arrangement models that favour the individual attention, main features of the planned activities that allow different levels of response, what kind of classroom layout is most suitable for peer-learning, how to achieve a cooperative or competitive learning, etc.

2. To promote inclusion-oriented School Plans

To take steps to encourage schools to take part in overall school projects aimed to a more and more inclusive system. In this respect, an inclusive response should be ensured in all the teaching and non-teaching activities and spaces within the school.

3. To unify the interpretation of SEN identification criteria

The differences across provinces when defining pupils with SEN are worth discussing. They could be a consequence of different readings of the diagnostic criteria or a consequence of interpretations intended to obtain resources. In any case, and with all due respect for these differences, the identification criteria should be revised, since pupils' benefit or damage should not depend on the place they are schooled, nor the diagnosis be twisted to obtain extra resources.

4. To make sure that parents or the legal representatives know the proposal of ACI and to foster their involvement

Most parents declare to have been informed about the preparation of the ACI for their child. However, bearing in mind the importance of this fact, it should be made sure that parents receive all the information and it should be put on record that they know the ACI proposal for their child.

Parents should be involved in and fully informed about decision-making and should know the reasons and benefits of the ACI. They should also take part in the follow-up, so they could add different elements of daily life that are frequently linked to the school plan.

5. To assess the resources of the system and to do research into the response to pupils with SEN

To devise processes to assess the resources of the system in order to optimize their efficiency when attending pupils with SEN.

To do research into different models of educational response to pupils with SEN.

6. Diffusion of good practices

To collect systematically and spread among teachers the experiences of good educational practices from different schools.