1.1. NATIONAL PANORAMA OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: DIAGNOSTIC STUDY AND CHALLENGES

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1.1.1. INTRODUCTION

This text is a summarised version of the study carried out for the World Bank, National Panorama of Inclusive Education in Brazil¹, the objective of which was to characterise the trends seen in Inclusive Education in our country and the challenges to implementation of this educational approach. The study looks at the different aspects directing school inclusion – legal bases, projects and experiences linked to public policies for inclusion, the vision of members of the community involved in inclusive practices – presenting data and discussions that lead towards the proposal and evaluation of innovative practices relevant to the area.

As far as possible, we sought to gather data that let us show a general summary of the reality of Inclusive Education in Brazil, presenting a range of experiences and views on current practices and possible ways of overcoming the enormous challenges that are still present.

The report is organised in 6 topics or chapters, including the introduction. Legislation and public policies on Inclusion shows how the subject of school inclusion – or more precisely, the insertion in school of pupils with special educational needs – has been dealt with in legal texts and in policy actions in recent years, normally associated with Special Education. Data from recent educational censuses are presented, showing the trends in the enrolment of these pupils. This chapter also gives a profile by regions of Inclusive Education in Brazil, noting the implementation status in Federal and state units, based on data sent to the Workshop “Inclusive Education in Brazil – Diagnosis of Current Situation and Challenges for the Future”, organised by the World Bank and the Education Department of the city of Rio de Janeiro in March 2003.

Indicators resulting from the Seminar on Inclusive Education in Brazil presents some highlights from the discussions held during the Workshop and the Internet Discussion List that followed, on aspects more directly related to the objectives of this text, with the intention of demonstrating the atmosphere of the multiplicity of voices and visions evident in these discussions.

¹ The study was coordinated by the teachers Rosana Glat and Júlio Romero Ferreira. The teachers Eloisa da Silva Gomes de Oliveira and Luiz Antonio Gomes Senna participated in the study, as did the research assistants Cleide Câmara; Kátia Machado; Márcia Imaculada de Souza; Márcia Pletsch and Gabriel Glat Jaber. The technical team was comprised of Ana Cristina Freire; Marcelo Senna Miranda and Elizabeth Ladislau dos Santos
School trends in Inclusive Education presents the results of a survey carried out with teachers in Rio de Janeiro State to find out their perceptions on the process of inclusion in their schools. Then we present the innovative experiences reported by the States and Municipalities in the pre-Workshop questionnaire that was sent in with the participants’ registrations. Finally, as a part of the experiences, we present a study of a case of school inclusion in the public education system of Santa Maria, RS. This study was chosen as it describes an experience that has been going on for several years and it shows how the relationships between Special Education / General Education are established and re-designed in educational practice.

The Conclusions contain summary points and indicators of the challenges and future outlook suggested by the different sources that were involved or consulted for this analysis.

1.1.2. LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES ON INCLUSION

1.1.2.1. LEGISLATION, PUBLIC POLICIES AND EVOLUTION IN EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

The first challenge facing us from the point of view of education and the practices of social inclusion is that we are dealing with a country with more than 50 million poor people, with the fourth worst income distribution in the world and which is ranked at nº 73 in the world Human Development Index. Brazil has not yet developed universal or sufficiently wide-reaching programmes in the areas of education, health and social services. Consequently, nor do we yet have inclusive schooling in the various levels and types of teaching.

13.6% of the population older than 15 years is illiterate and it is estimated that about 30 million Brazilians are functionally illiterate. In basic schooling, for every 100 pupils that start the first level, only 59 pupils complete it. Furthermore, a study recently published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (http://www.mec.gov.br) gave poor ratings to the pupil performance as measured by the 2001 National Basic Education Evaluation System: 59% of the pupils in the 4th level of Basic Education show performances in Portuguese and mathematics considered to be poor or very poor.

The education of people with special needs is a relatively recent phenomenon in Brazil. There have been special classes in public schools since the 1930s, but the access of these people to regular schools only happened to any significant extent in the second half of the last century. Until then, the services provided by philanthropic institutions were of greater importance in a setting where there was a shortage of public programmes in health and education.

In the 1980s, with the re-democratising process and with the arrival of opposition parties in the governments of the most important states of the country, important reforms were made in state educational policies, based on the principles of universal access and democratisation of basic teaching and public education. At that time, experiments were developed with basic school levels, full time schools and other initiatives aimed at reversing poor academic achievement. Discussions also began on the configuration of the so-called Special Education field.
The 1988 Constitution, in addition to affirming the public and individual right to Education for all citizens, stated in Article 208, as a duty of the public authorities, the guaranteeing of *specialised educational services for disabled people, preferably in the regular teaching system*. The three key words/expressions (specialised, disabled people and preferably), that were contained in all subsequent documents related to Special Education – *Law of Directives and Bases for Education (LDB,1996), National Education Plan (PNE, 2001) and National Directives for Special Education in Basic Education*, by the National Education Council (CNE, 2001) – still seem to cover the aspects that are most discussed in this area.

In 2001 and 2002, there was an exchange of written viewpoints between the Republic Attorney and the Basic Education Chamber of the National Education Council as the former were of the opinion that the Directives produced by the latter did not fulfil the constitutional requirements with regard to access to schools. Another element that keeps the discussion going is the fact that in 2001 Brazil signed up (Decree nº 3.956, of 8/10/2001) to the “Inter-American Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against disabled people”, that allows the differentiation by the State of various ways to promote integration, as long as these do not limit the right to equality or signify that disabled people must accept differentiation.

These discussions and disputes that have marked the process of building and divulging all the legal instruments and political priorities related to the Education of people with special needs, bear witness to the fact that although there has been a marked – but still insufficient – increase of the presence of these people in schools and in the presence of the subject itself in educational policies, there are still many of the traditional signs of polarisation between the public and private sectors, between education and social services, and between segregation and non-segregation.

In this context, we present the numbers referring to the enrolment of pupils with special educational needs in Brazil. In 2002, the Educational Census (http://www.inep.gov.br) recorded the enrolment of 448,601 pupils with special needs in the Basic Education system, either in regular classes or in special classes or schools. These pupils represent about 0.8% of the total of more than 50 million pupils enrolled in Basic Education.

With regard to disabled people, in the 2000 Demographic Census the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (http://www.ibge.net) recorded that 14.5% of the population had some form of visual, hearing, motor or mental disability (24,600,256 out of a total population of 169,872,856 individuals).

With regard to the financing of actions related to Special Education, the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture set aside, on average, during the period from 1996 to 2000, slightly less than 0.4% of its total for the *Special Education Development Programme*. If we consider that the Special Education headings covers all the actions aimed specifically at this section of the population, directly or indirectly, then it is obvious that there is a shortage of resources. The 2001 *National Education Plan* contained the target of increasing the resources allocated to this area in such a way that in 10 years’ time the minimum budget level should be 5%, to be used for actions that would also involve partnerships in the areas of health, social assistance, labour and social services.

In the past five years, enrolments continue to be very concentrated in specialised private institutions where nearly half the pupils are taught. There has been an increase in the number of places available in regular classes, mainly in the municipal systems, which were responsible for about 60% of the 110,536 places in regular classes, with or without special support, in 2002. However, there is still a significant concentration of enrolments (3/4) in
special schools and classes, types of assistance considered as being segregated. With regard to
the administrative nature of the services, 81% of the special schools were private and 98% of
the special classes were in public schools. To summarise, the public schools have concentrated
their expansion in the initial levels of basic teaching, leaving children between 0 and 6 years
and young people and adults still dependent on philanthropic institutions or without any
assistance whatsoever.

There were very few enrolments of gifted pupils, or at least very few were identified as
such in the records. The enrolments of pupils with special types of behaviour and hearing,
mental or multiple disabilities were concentrated in the special schools and classes. Whereas
such a concentration could have been expected in the area of multiple disabilities, it is
significant – and worrying – that this index reaches 86% in the area of mental disability and
nearly 70% in the area of deafness. It is also noteworthy that there is a very large number of
enrolments of pupils classified as “others” (12% of the total), that do not form part of the
classical classification categories for this area.

The data and information presented up to now show a potentially favourable outlook
for the expansion of the access to pupils with special needs to general education, as well as
indicating major challenges. The positive aspects of the scenario include legislation and some
policies that have allowed and guaranteed, in a still insecure way, the presence of some of
these pupils in educational programmes and a trend towards less discrimination and growing
commitment on the part of the public schools.

On the basis of the 2001 National Education Plan the states and municipalities are
preparing their education plans. This task should be completed by next October. The states
and municipalities must also alter their directives and rules to conform with the requirements
of Resolution 2/01 of the CNE and the directives and deadlines referring to the qualification
of regular teachers and specialised service teachers.

Initial and on-going training of teachers is a central question. The Ministry of
Education (MEC) has developed regular programmes for the training of teachers in Regular
Teaching and Special Education through agreements with states and municipalities. These
programmes, with the emphasis on distance training, use texts translated and prepared by the
MEC on special educational needs and, according to the reports of the Special Education
Department (SEESP), have reached about 70,000 teachers in the past three years. The target is
to reach a total of 1,200,000 teachers (http://www.mec.gov.br/seesp). In these projects,
financed by the FNDE, 22,860 teachers were qualified in 1997, 11,927 in 1998, 14,000 in

In addition, the national directives for teacher training and the criteria for evaluating
courses and pupils have emphasized aspects of Inclusive Education. It seems that the
presence of pupils with special needs, or at least some of them, is today much more evident in
education documents and in schools.
1.1.2.2. REGIONAL PROFILE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

From the data obtained from the questionnaires sent by the World Bank before the holding of the Workshop “Inclusive Education in Brazil – Current Situation and Challenges for the Future” and answered by the Education Departments of the States and Municipalities, we can sketch out regional profiles of inclusive education in Brazil according to the evaluations and data supplied by each department. The tool, called the “Questionnaire on Special / Inclusive Education” sought to obtain the information on the following matters: The existence or not of specific legislation for Special Education and details; the existence of State or Municipality public policies for Special Education; the existence of a body responsible for Special Education; the numbers of regular, special and inclusive schools in the public education system of the Municipality or State; the number of schools that offer physical access for people in wheelchairs or with locomotive difficulties; the number of schools that offer just infant education; only basic education; only middle level education, and those that offer infant and basic education; the total number of pupils in the State or Municipality public education system in infant education, basic education, and middle level education, and the number of disabled pupils in the three education levels; budget allocation for Special Education in the regular system and for institutions with which there are agreements; the number of pupils benefiting from the referred budget sum in the regular education system and in institutions with which there are agreements; the most frequently used ways of assisting disabled pupils (Special School in education system, regular classes with special education support, special classes and agreement with institutes, or any others); number of teachers qualified in special / inclusive education; manner in which training is given to teachers for acting in inclusive schooling and, lastly, a listing and summary description of examples of successful and / or innovative experiences in the area of inclusive education in the municipality / state.

In total, 28 completed questionnaires were returned. The participating states were Amazonas, Tocantins, Roraima, Rio Grande do Norte, Amapá, Pará, Piauí, Bahia, Ceará, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Mato Grosso, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, plus the Federal District. The participating capital cities were: João Pessoa (PB), São Luís (MA), Teresina (PI), Maceió (AL), Salvador (BA), Fortaleza (CE), Belo Horizonte (MG), São Paulo (SP), Recife (PE), Goiânia (GO), Curitiba (PR) and Porto Alegre (RS). It is important to note that this represents a significant part of the country as it includes 15 states; the Federal District and 12 capital cities, six of which represent states.

It was found that all the states and municipalities participating in this survey have a body responsible for Special Education, normally linked to the Education Department, and all of them use documents to guide their actions in Special Education and Inclusive Education.

With regard to specific legislation, five of the respondents stated they do not have any. These were Maceió, Recife, Salvador, Ceará and Fortaleza. In a further three — Amapá, Pará and Bahia — local legislation is in the process of being approved or revised. Most of the respondents stated that they have public policies for Inclusion. Of all the participants, only the state of Amazonas stated that it had no defined policy and, therefore, no inclusive school or any that offers physical access for people in wheelchairs or with locomotive problems. Of the others, all the states and one municipality stated that they have regular schools and special and inclusive schools, with the majority being regular schools. In the case of Belo Horizonte and the state of São Paulo the numbers of regular schools and inclusive schools are nearly equal. The former stated that of all the schools in the municipality, 50% are regular, 0,82% are special and 49,59% are inclusive. Of all the schools in the state of São Paulo, 50% are regular, 0,26% are special and 49,87% are inclusive. We also noted in this survey that there are few special schools in the municipalities and states and that only a small number of schools
offer physical access for wheelchair users. Pará was the state with the largest percentage of schools, 70%, adapted for this group of pupils.

With regard to the number of enrolments, there are only small numbers of disabled pupils. Among the states and municipalities, Teresina was the city that had the largest number of special pupils enrolled in the education system: 2.91%. With regard to the most frequent ways of attending to these pupils, common classes with Special Education support was mentioned by 20 participants; agreements with other institutions by 14 participants, special classes by 14 participants and special schools by 7 participants. In addition to these, two other types of service were mentioned: pedagogic support rooms and resource room.

1.1.3. INCLUSION FORUM – INDICATORS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: WORKSHOP AND VIRTUAL DISCUSSION LIST ON INCLUSION

With respect to the main issues addressed in the on-line discussion list, it is important to note the participation of professionals from all over the country who work in various positions in the government and civil society and who objective in participating was to present and analyse data and successful and/or innovative experiences in the area of Inclusive Education. The discussion via internet lasted six weeks, covering the six themes debated during the Workshop: curriculum, accessibility, family/community, pedagogic material/assisting technologies, human resources, and public policies.

In relation to the curricular aspect, the paradigm modification required by inclusion, in the view of the participants, does not refer only to the adaptations made to accommodate pupils with disabilities or other special needs. Curriculum changes should also take into account the diversity of the pupils in the school. In other words, irrespective of the composition of the class, the teacher should be able to prepare and coordinate classroom activities, making them more interesting and compatible with social reality and less boring for pupils. From this new curricular perspective, the emphasis and responsibility for learning is moved from the pupil and directed towards the teaching procedures.

The greatest barrier pointed out, however, is the lack of preparation of the teachers, particularly when dealing with sensorial or psycho-motor disabilities, or serious recognition, behavioural and/or communication problems. In addition, there is also the fear that Inclusive Education might end up becoming a way of denying the special and specific educational needs of each pupil. For this reason it was proposed on the list that we should not speak about “inclusion for all” but “inclusion for each person”, since the individualisation of the teaching-learning process is the basis for constituting an inclusive curriculum. It is considered important to recognise the individual characteristics and difficulties of each pupil so that we can determine the type of adaptations that may or may not be necessary so that they can learn. However, the big challenge facing teachers is to carry out individual assessments that are not “biased” by the clinical-pathological focus that is still predominant in the sectors responsible for Special Education in most of the school systems in Brazil.

With regard to accessibility and the democratisation of access to knowledge, for most disabled people, particularly those who live far from the major cities, the barriers are currently insurmountable. Since the 1990s it has been known that the adaptations related to accessibility should follow the paradigm of universal design; in other words, the environments, means of transport and adaptations in general should be designed for everyone and not just for disabled people. However, there are few works started between the end of the 1980s and the early part of the 1990s that show evidence of accessibility design and/or the possibility of easy adaptation. Inclusion is made more difficult by the lack of communication between
government departments. This results in wasted time and money and poor quality with respect to improving accessibility and public policies for expanding suitable public transport. Apart from this, Brazil ranks very poorly in terms of access to information technology, adaptations to teaching materials and free access to communication resources.

With regard to the lack of knowledge by professionals and administrators about the equipment and technology — “assisting technology” — necessary to facilitate the process of inclusion of disabled pupils, the discussion group argued that one of the causes is the fact that the pupils are attended to, partly, in specialised institutes. Indeed, the use of assisting technology in Brazil is recent and although its use is spreading, it is still available to just a very small proportion of disabled people (one of the techniques that that is still relatively unknown but which was spoken about in good terms in the discussion group was the Brazilian Sign Language (Língua Brasileira de Sinais – LIBRAS)). According to reports, there is a lack of modern tools for use by people with special needs. These include special computer and software laboratories for the blind, production of specific teaching material, the adaptation of furniture and the physical environments, as well as other actions involving assisting technology that will facilitate school inclusion.

It is worthwhile emphasizing that, in spite of the lack of policies for accessibility and the spreading of assisting technology, in the opinion of the participants of this list, the inclusion of pupils in the school happens essentially though the changing of attitudes rather than just by the making technological resources available or by providing special conditions. This is why most schools are able to overcome difficulties by using the creativity, improvisation and commitment of the professional who work there. Accordingly, the social and educational inclusion of disabled people can only be achieved through close interaction of the school and the community.

Family and community was another point discussed on the Internet. In general the parents of disabled pupils resent the charges made by regular schools so that their children can continue to attend such schools. Furthermore, there is the problem of confining the relation between family and school to a process of listening to school complaints about their children’s learning and attitudes. In this struggle for the constitutional right to enrol their children in schools, parents come into conflict with the schools that say they do not have the conditions to receive disabled pupils. The discussion group believed, however, that the barrier attitude is the strongest element of resistance to the process of the building of Inclusive Schooling in Brazil.

There are many matters to be resolved in order to achieve real Inclusive Education. But, in all the areas, without any doubt the aspect that comes most to the fore in all discussions is the training of human resources. Thus it is considered that the training of the “inclusive educator” should be something planned for and guaranteed by public policies. Although most of the school systems invest in teaching skills, inclusive school needs are still not taken into consideration. Basic training (in teachers’ preparation courses) in Inclusive Education is still rare and on-going training does not meet the immediate demands of the teachers.

Irrespective of the themes in question, one factor is clear here: public policies appear as a “back drop” that can favour or obstruct inclusion. Thus, according to one of the conclusions of this Internet discussion list, some points are fundamental for Inclusive Education. These include: the preparation of a public service policy to meet the special educational needs of all students, including those with disabilities; the incorporation of the principle of inclusion in the public programmes already in place in schools – Pedagogical Policy Project, School Development Plan, and others; the development of tools for systematic monitoring (indicators) of the programmes put in place and the carrying out of qualitative and
quantitative research that provides evidence of the results of the programmes and identify successful experiences; the creation of ways for the participation of the school communities in the construction of strategic plans of actions to make their schools more inclusive, making full use of the resources already existing at the school; the development of strategic action plans for the programmes that take place inside the schools, taking specific contextual features into consideration; the creation of programmes for providing human resources with skills, including training of teachers within the real context of the schools and in the regular classrooms of the teaching system; the dissemination, in the public system, of materials produced by the federal, state and municipal governments on the education of disabled pupils, and, in the special schools/institutions, the dissemination of the materials produced by the Basic Education area; as well as the dissemination of information on successful academic work experiences involving pupils who were at risk of failing or dropping out.

1.1.4. SCHOOL TRENDS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1.1.4.1. TEACHERS’ VIEWS

With a view to implementing the proposal for inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular classes in everyday school life, a questionnaire was sent to 121 teachers in both the public and private school systems in 14 municipalities in Rio de Janeiro State.

Although 72% of the teachers stated that there are pupils with special needs in regular classes at their schools, in more than half of these schools there is no specialised support to help the regular class teachers, and in most of the schools in which such support exists it is considered insufficient for the teachers’ demands.

The teachers in the survey highlighted their main difficulties in implementing the proposal for inclusive education as being their lack of preparation, overcrowded classrooms without any structural or furniture adaptations, no teaching resources, pupils with social acceptance problems and diverse learning processes and capabilities that frequently diverge from those of the rest of the class.

As this is just a small sample, the data obtained should be considered as being merely indicative when compared with the results of other, more detailed, studies and research. Nonetheless, the results of this study are significant as they present the views of the teachers, the main players – together with the pupils themselves – in daily school life.

1.1.4.2. INCLUSION EXPERIENCES OF THE MUNICIPALITIES AND STATES

In this section we will present a very brief summary of the indicators taken from the set of reports sent by the Education Departments in response to the World Bank questionnaire on successful and/or innovative inclusion experiences, including references to the actions carried out by the states and some municipalities.

From the experiences chosen by the Education Departments we highlight some relevant points: There are clear signs of interest and attempts to expand the access of pupils with special needs to common classes; the reports show the importance given to making professionals and the community aware of what is involved in the inclusion proposals, reaffirming the need to improve professionals’ abilities; the actions as a whole do not demonstrate deep changes in views regarding pupils with special educational needs, but they do show greater willingness to take on the challenge of guaranteeing the education of these
pupils; the importance of the Special Education initiative stands out in the reports on inclusion experiences, nearly all of which involve the use of several types of specialised support.

In general, the reports show the intention of the Brazilian public education system to invest in the development of Inclusive Education projects, largely through improvement of the capabilities of education professionals. It is recognised, however, that there is still a long way to go to consolidate this project.

### 1.1.4.2.1. CASE STUDY

In order to give an impression of inclusive educational practice in daily school life, we describe the situation at a public school in the south of Brazil which has taken pupils with special needs into regular classes for more than a decade now. This report shows how the expansion of access and the inclusion viewpoint lead to, and make necessary, the redefining of relations inside the school.

The inclusive experience of this school was based on an existing, solid structure of special classes that, in addition to the specific assistance given to the pupils, directs much of its efforts towards integration with Regular Teaching at the school. This integration is one of the important aspects ensuring the success of this process.

It was further noted that the inclusion work in this school was an initiative of the Special Education sector and the main intermediaries in the process have been the teachers in that sector. They look after solving and / or improving all the scholastic difficulties that the pupil faces in the regular class, as well as the difficulties that the teacher comes up against in attending to the pupil.

In this way the specialist teachers end up taking responsibility for the success or failure of the pupils in the eyes of the other school professionals and the families. We note in passing that this exclusive and absorbing involvement (that sometimes takes the form of paternalism and over-protection) of the Special Education professionals with their pupils is commonly found in this area and has been mentioned in several studies.

Although the support of the Special Education sector has been important for inclusive work in this school, when the pupil enters the regular class the responsibility for his/her learning should belong to the governing teacher, as happens with regard to all the other pupils in the class.

Another important point is that, although the school accepts the idea of inclusion, the regular class teachers, in general, still lack knowledge and preparation for attending to pupils with special needs.

### 1.1.5. CONCLUSIONS

This study was based on indicators of the status of Inclusive Education in Brazil, with data coming from the following sources: a) official documents of the Brazilian Federal Union (legislation, policy proposals, censuses); b) state and municipality documents; c) reports of representatives of State and Municipality Education Departments on Inclusive Education actions and projects; d) reports and opinions of educators, Special Education specialists, professionals in connected areas, families and other people interested in the question of school inclusion.
The following specific resources were used for assembling the indicators: (i) extracts of tables from reports given by the State and Municipality Education Departments in response to the questionnaire sent out as part of the Workshop held in the city of Rio de Janeiro; (ii) extracts from research carried out with Basic Education teachers using a questionnaire and a case study referring to an experience in a school; (iii) descriptive reports of the contributions made at the Seminar and the Internet discussion list on the main aspects of Inclusive Education.

Although they are not exhaustive, the research data used are valid and relevant for drawing up a consistent profile of the general status of Inclusive Education in Brazil with regard to the following points:

1. Support for building the culture and practice of Inclusive Education through public policies;
2. Conditions and requirements, both formal and material, for the implementation of the public policies on Inclusive Education.

The first point covers all the formally developed State initiatives for supporting the execution of public policies on school inclusion. We should point out that the social cost of disabled people is proportional to the socio-economic level of their families. Access to functions associated with inclusion policies is most difficult for the poorest people. Accordingly, as long as high levels of social inequality exist in Brazil, inclusion policies should be linked to initiatives that ensure unimpeded access to inclusive practices, particularly for those people whose social profile represent a factor for exclusion.

The general implementation conditions of Inclusive Education in the school context reflect the still uncertain state of affairs on a legal and regulatory level in states and municipalities. With regard to bringing inclusion into the everyday reality of curricula, we have noted the impact caused by the absence of national directives for fixing parameters on the basis of which local authorities could set their local policies for the pedagogic and administrative aspects of everyday school life.

With regard to inclusive school practices, most of the experiences gathered indicate that the Brazilian inclusion experiences start with and come under Special Education authorities that take on the responsibilities for supporting and coordinating all actions concerning the pupil, including routing him/her to regular classes, planning pedagogic practices, supporting regular education teachers and raising the awareness of the school community.

This fact merely corroborates the incipient relationship between the early initiatives of school inclusion and the administrative moves behind the Education policies, since, although Special Education is formally integrated in Education Departments on federal, state and municipality levels, in reality in most cases there are two parallel operating systems, even when we are dealing to pupils occupying the same physical classroom space.

As a consequence of this, the way the teacher acts toward the included pupil still retains the same ambiguity reflected in the nature of the two types of pupils, the “included ones” and the “regular ones”.

Another notable factor is the lack of clarity regarding the format of Inclusive Education in the school context. There are regional and even local differences as each system or school operates according to its own resources, sometimes in a very individual and random way very dependent on the availability of administrators or teachers. The absence of an organised system for exchanging inclusion experiences contributes to this heterogeneity and considerably weakens the national structure of Inclusive Education.
The conditions under which Inclusive Education is put into practice leave much to be desired as this process often omits the building of features that support the principles already set out in the legal support behind inclusion. The basic material support for the consolidation of Inclusive Education fails principally by not adapting the training model for teachers and school administrators to make them agents of inclusion.

In Brazil, the training of human resources, teachers and other professionals linked to Education, still follows a traditional model, one that is outdated and totally unsuitable for meeting the demands of Inclusive Education. The few Pedagogy and Teacher Training courses that include content and / or units on pupils with special needs still do this within the “specialised” and segregated model, with clinical guidance, as was adopted for Special Education in the 1970s, with little emphasis being given, even in courses in which the curricula have recently been reformulated, to the question of Inclusive Education as a complex and current phenomenon.

Very much as a function of the above, schools have still not yet equipped themselves to receive included special needs pupils as pupils. There do not appear to be any well defined references for supporting the actions and the minimum changes required for inclusion in a regular classroom, seeking to improve the academic performance of pupils with different types of disability, principally those with strong cognitive and / or communication disabilities.

On the other hand, the education system itself does not have the data to provide support for promoting the evaluation of the school inclusion process through the voices of the actual included pupils. The life histories available are based on the experiences of people who are now adults and who have managed to become included in society by “being imposed” and / or by “persistence”. They achieved this largely by their own efforts at a time when there were no public policies to guarantee their rights, nor methods, processes or resources for adaptation. These people, in addition to having different histories of inclusion, constitute a very small group and what they have to say does not necessarily help in assessing the impact of inclusion experiences involving the disabled citizen who enters the school system today. For such an assessment the public policies on inclusion are the only alternative that can be used at this time.

Studies on included pupils and on the strategies adopted in their schools to promote their inclusion could help to overcome the isolation apparent in the national experiences on Inclusive Education and would generate material of immediate interest for providing teachers with skills concerning how to deal objectively with the situation of a disabled person as a pupil, as well as setting out pedagogical practices, adaptation of contents, teaching methodologies and alternative assessment models.

Finally, it is important to re-emphasize, as many teachers have said, that giving material support to the academic aspects of implanting Inclusive Education will not on its own overcome other structural problems. The reality of the Brazilian basic school system, with teachers working in two shifts in most system, without space or time to study or discuss cases, and, above all, working with overcrowded classes, under pressure to include in the school culture all the communities historically marginalised in Brazilian society, whether disabled or not, makes it very difficult, in the eyes of those people involved with schools, to implement proposals for inclusion.