

Access to schooling for people with special needs in Algeria

Abstract

This study aims to address the issue of children with disabilities in the field of education. Such a problem calls today to questions about disabled children's schooling in Algeria and the mechanisms of their inclusion at school. Many such questions are raised to the point of view of the subject? How can we help these children in school? Is their inclusion possible after giving real hope to their parents? And what is the role of associations in this process? To respond to this series of questions, which refract the aspect of inclusion in the Algerian actuality, we will proceed to a study of the statistics of the Ministry of National Solidarity through its different structures in relation to the disabled children schooling. The aim is to show the state of the art of taking care of children through various associations.

Keywords: childhood, disability, inclusive education, association specific needs

Introduction

The question of the handicapped child and its relation with the school is a strong reality of our time, it is significant of a deep evolution, collective and even civilizing. This reality manifests itself on two levels: that of children with disabilities, which concerns the way they look at themselves, which is changing, as well as the conception of the place that must be made for them within society. And that of society as a whole, led by a new focus on disability, to better take into account the difficulties of people with disabilities.¹ The issue of children with disabilities in schools has, in recent years, taken a special place in the concerns of education specialists. Admittedly, this interest is not modern, but the current approaches stand out and in fact reflect an important evolution in terms of care policies. The issue of complex relationships between the family, the handicapped child and the school has been the subject of long discussions between researchers who continue to feed many seminars, symposia and conferences around the world.

In Algeria, although there are a large number of legal provisions guaranteeing the right to schooling for all children without discrimination, there is a huge backlog in the care of disabled children in the field. Indeed, there is a lack of mechanisms for their inclusion in the Algerian educational system, the only aid services are limited to a few specialized public institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of National Solidarity. In short, things seem more theoretical than practical, because the intervention process has lagged far behind developments in the field. It should be emphasized that the absence in this country of a great tradition of research on the family practices of education and schooling of disabled children makes the process of school accompaniment more complex. We will try to address this issue through the following elements: First, we will focus on the concept of disability to try to propose a new design. Then, we will talk about the inclusive education of children with special needs, is it possible after having raised real hopes with parents? We will also discuss the Algerian experience in taking charge of this category, while at the end showing the role of associations in the process of inclusive education.

Towards a new concept of disability

If we look in the classic definition of disability we find that the use of the word appeared at the end of the 19th century. Everyone knows the classic explanations of the Anglo-Saxon origin of the term "hand

in cap" meaning hand in the hat and the use of equalizing the odds of horses in horse racing by handicapping them with extra weight,² but the term appears for the first time in an official text in the law of 23 November 1957 relating to disabled workers, handicapped signifying here disabled. The Robert, alphabetical dictionary of the French language, edition 1993, considers that the term handicap which has replaced other terms as invalid, abnormal and unsuitable, is one of "these social reductions masking the painful realities", therefore the concept of disability is defined as follows: "It is said that they are handicapped because they suffer as a result of their physical, mental, temperamental or social status, disorders that constitute for them" handicaps "³, that is to say, weaknesses, particular servitudes compared to normal, this being defined as the average of the capacities and chances of most individuals living in the same society.

This definition is more global and extensive and applies to the field of all physical, mental and social difficulties. The concept of disability thus seems to be more a pragmatism and utilitarian convenience than a scientific knowledge of clinical description. This notion may even constitute an epistemological obstacle that hinders the process of knowledge and gives it a kind of "false clarity".⁴ Disability is not an objective reality that science can study. Some specialists talk about the concept of disability as an "unsuitable subject", that is, the state of maladjustment of the subject to the community, or the maladjusted person suffers from an environment that does not meet his needs.⁵

Through this conception of the term, we see that the concept of disability is not situated at the level of an attempt at semiological classification. It seems to us to point to another perspective in the traditional way of considering disability, which cannot be limited to categorization or to an objectivable clinical reality. This definition of the disabled person marks the transition between the traditional conception of disability and its new meaning. This classic concept of disability invites us to revise our way of seeing things and people, we are also invited to separate in our attitudes towards people with disabilities what is in the field of pathology and which is a measurable reality and objectivable, and what is a social consequence of this pathology. WHO research from 1985 onwards will isolate three distinct concepts: disability, disability and disability (WTO Reports, 1990).

1. The deficit: reference to any loss or abnormality concerning an organ or a psychological, physiological or anatomical function.

2. Incapacity: is the absence or the quantitative or qualitative reduction of the capacity to act, this reduction can be partial or total of the capacity to carry out an activity in a way judged as normal. Inability is the functional aspect of disability.
3. Disability: Refers to the sum of the lasting frustrations that result for a person from a disability or disability resulting in the total or partial impossibility of fulfilling a very normal role. According to this new definition of disability, the old conception of the concept is less accurate than today's, because disability is defined as the discrepancy between the performance or status of a person and the expectations and perspectives of that person or group to which they belong.

The disadvantage corresponds to the situational aspect of the handicap and this is where the radical distinction between the old conceptions that made the handicap: physical, sensory and mental, a class of nosography, and that of today which relativizes this notion at the level of a situation. Because we are now talking essentially of situation handicap: situation of physical dependence, situation of economic dependence, situation of non-social integration.⁶ This idea can be illustrated by the following example: "Two people lose both the ring finger and the little finger of the left hand in an accident. One is a roadmender in one commune, the other is a cellist. The deficit and the disability are the same. On the other hand, the professional situation in which each person finds himself is compromised for the Cellist who risks losing his job and more lightly for the roadmender who retains it and can continue to enjoy his social integration". So we realize that disability is not an absolute data but can be reduced depending on the nature of the environment. But be careful there are some exceptions, because there can be disabilities without disability, disabilities without disability, or disabilities without deficit. The use of the trilogy is not necessarily necessary to show that a well compensated deficit causes only a minimum of handicap. The example of hearing loss is a good example of this, because hearing impairment leading to an inability to listen can be corrected by an apparatus that limits disability. Therefore, the new concept of disability first requires us to change our view of the disabled person and then our action. In the foreground, it seems important to think that the situation of the disabled person is assessed not only according to its organic or functional aspects, but also in relation to his family environment, in relation to his social role, by contribution to what she is capable of realizing according to whether she is in this or that milieu.⁷ In the second place, and once the analysis of its reports is done, the action that seems to us to be able to contribute to obtaining the best results is that which combines the benefits resulting from both the reduction of the deficiency, disability and disability. It is therefore at this level of action on disability that the possibilities of integration are situated, it makes it possible to solve the problem of segregation, then the search for the best advantages, whether one is in a milieu or in another, does not have the effect of removing all the disadvantages. Any human solution is usually a combination of advantages and disadvantages. The way to treat them so that they do not outweigh those, is to engage in a project approach.

Inclusive education of a handicapped child

The concept of "inclusive education" refers to an education system that takes into account the individual learning and teaching needs of all children in vulnerable situations; disabled children, street children, children belonging to ethnic minorities, children from nomadic / refugee families ... etc. Inclusive education does not pose the problem

of which children with which types of disabilities can be integrated into mainstream classrooms? But how to adapt aspects of school life so that inclusion is possible. Two approaches can be distinguished:

- I. Focused on the specific needs of the child
- II. This approach is centered on the needs of the child, so that it is not up to the student to adapt to the ordinary school environment, but to the school to adapt to the student, in order to offer him the best learning conditions: the child is the core of the process of inclusion surrounded by support services not necessarily at school. Several elements (health, recreation, transportation ... etc) contribute to the success of inclusive education.
- III. Approach centered on the surrounding factors of the child
- IV. This approach is focused on the surrounding factors of the child so that inclusion requires interaction between different services of the inclusive community: Ordinary services such as: education, health, leisure, is related to the basic needs of the child. They must be perfectly accessible. Services specific to the image of early intervention and specialized education aim to meet the sometimes complex needs of children with severe disabilities. Support services such as AVS (Auxiliaires de Vie Scolaire): facilitate the child's participation in daily activities. The AVS is a person trained to provide human assistance, responding to the specific needs of children with disabilities in order to integrate them into school.

- a) Accompanying function: which allows the child to have an autonomy of communication, displacement and expression.
- b) Pedagogical function: which allows the student to perform an exercise when he encounters difficulties related to his disability.
- c) Communication function: which promotes the interaction of the child with other actors (teachers-professionals ... etc.).

The Algerian experience in the care of children with disabilities

As for the Algerian experience in care, we can say; although there are a large number of legal provisions ensuring the right to schooling of all children without discrimination, but we have a huge delay in the care of handicapped children, especially in schools. As a result, civil society is not sufficiently equipped and structured to respond to the challenges of inclusive education. According to the figures of the Algerian Ministry of National Solidarity published in 2014, we note that: 630,000 children with disabilities, of which only 125,000 (20%) are supported by the following organizations: 104,000 by the National Education - 14532 by the specialized public centers - 5000 by the associative network and 1452 by private integrated classes. Despite these reception centers, many parents find difficulties, they find themselves faced with an indifference sometimes displayed by the institutions that are supposed to provide support, they are delivered to themselves, every school year, the same pain, the same feeling for the parents, they commit themselves to provide the care and specialized support of their children with their own means. Others knock on several doors before being able to find a place for their children, moreover more than 9000 handicapped children waiting for a care according to the same source. 9. Is it possible to integrate the disabled child into school?

Integration is not a simple insertion into the school environment, it presupposes the accompaniments without which the pupil with a

disability will not have access to school life nor to the knowledge normally provided, these accompaniments more often than not national education and involve the use of a partnership with social and health services. Integration is also diverse: far from being unique, it represents a range of situations, particularly depending on the nature and severity of the disability, since the very partial integration (from, a specialized institution), until the full individual integration in an ordinary class, passing very often by necessary provisional groupings as the classes of school integration.⁸

Integration is ultimately, whatever the situations, always individual, because it is the measure of both the capabilities and potential of each child at a given time. Is school integration for children and adolescents with disabilities a current fashion? Some argue, especially among those who consider it an illusion to welcome these young people into ordinary classes, arguing that there are still many specialized institutions created specifically to welcome them.⁹

Others believe that integration, which is the goal of any specialized education, can also be a way to prepare them as well as possible.¹⁰ Indeed, as in the field of integration of persons of foreign origin, the integration of people with disabilities is most of the time a movement of opinion, in their favor, since everyone is for integration, both to participate in the dominant and fundamental values of our society. The issue of school integration for children with disabilities is the cause of the collaboration of many actors who can play several very important roles for the success of the integration, because it passes by that of the specialized supports which they are necessary. This does not necessarily mean that these supports are physically and functionally integrated into the school - no doubt an ideal solution - but that the function of coordination and synthesis that integrates therapeutic, educational and pedagogical in the project must necessarily be assumed somewhere by a body.¹¹

In short, if the child is integrated into the mainstream school, the concern that must be of permanent concern to the project partners is not limited to preserving all the benefits he would receive if he were placed in a specialized institution, but must make it possible to ensure that the action on the child is not shared, or that it is exercised, and that the function of synthesis continues to operate. In this sense there is integration into a coherent whole of the different actions. To do this, we must distinguish between two types or two ways of integration: integration with integrated support at school and integration with outside support at school. 10. The role of parents in the inclusive education project. Parents can play a very important role in the inclusion of their children with disabilities in school, some judge the role of parents as a duty, an essential initiative for the success of the inclusion project, because the responsibility can be shared by several partners.¹² When the family of a disabled child chooses to go to school in an ordinary environment, the reasons that lead them to express this request can cover several meanings:

It may be a situation of flight from disability, so parents sometimes do not take their responsibilities. To integrate this is not to standardize, it is precisely to recognize the difference. However, when the request for integration is presented with the current formulation: "I want it to be treated in exactly the same way as other children", this does not mean a negation of disability, but a recognition of the service of the child school. In fact, most parents before achieving the inclusion of their children are unaware that the school can offer them a project approach. They are often surprised when we teach them, they who

thought that inclusion required little new energy, let alone that they would be asked to take an active part in its realization.¹³

In some cases, parents do not claim the absolute right to inclusion, they are aware that there are conditions that revolve around the abilities of the child and the aptitudes of the school environment. Very often they are determined to take steps with several schools, looking for one where the school is the richest and least reluctant.¹⁴ It must be said that we meet more and more parents who are ready to get involved in transportation, in various tasks, because they were well accompanied in their first steps by an association of parents. The request may come from parents who have no marked preferences for inclusion, of which they are not a priori unconditional. They heard about their rights and the existence of the dual care network. Quite often, the demand for care is not achievable other than through inclusive education. Whatever the significance of these initial requests, there are two attitudes to be discouraged by the educational teams of the school or is asked for inclusion. It is that of pure and simple refusal which can only reinforce in the minds of parents the idea of exclusion that they live painfully. It is on another level, that which consists in welcoming, perhaps more to tolerate the child in an undifferentiated way not to say indifferent. In this case, there is no need to talk about an evaluation project. It is therefore important for someone to explain to the applicant parents that the choice of inclusive education is in no way the panacea that can solve everything. It can solve the problem of disability and disability, it is something else and, in this respect, the school has no capacity, especially if the parents turn their backs on the specialized school and frustrate the school, child care and specialized aids to which he is entitled. If the family declares itself ready to advance on the difficult path of mainstream education, we must give them every opportunity to participate fully in the project. How? By invitation first to the meetings of the educational team.¹⁵ Experience has largely shown that when parents are involved in the project process, the latter is all the more likely to succeed. Too often when parents receive the follow-up document with the "seen and read" formula under which they must sign, which means that they only become aware of it at that time, they have impression that they are held out of concertation.¹⁶ When the misunderstanding of the reality of disability by some parents is duplicated by the services concerned that cannot offer anything other than two half days a week, what perspective, what project remains for the child held hostage to the incomprehension of adults? So the question often arises as to whether parents should attend integration of integration team meetings? Parents in special schools do not have to be surprised if they are not invited to all the synthesis meetings. If the institution associates them with the individual project the texts request, inviting them to the meetings of synthesis, it is very good damage. The same is true for school integration. The day everyone understands that parent involvement is not a hindrance to completing an inclusion project or specialized orientation, but an additional asset to the success of this project, a big step has been taken fact. For the moment, only those who knew how to put their philosophy in harmony with their actions.¹⁷

The role of associations in the process of inclusive education

The work that deserves to be mentioned is that of associations, which began a decade ago, a long-term fight and founding a remarkable work in the field. We can give the example of 03 associations carrying projects of inclusive education:

The Association for mentally unsound children “the challenge” of Bejaia

This association in collaboration with the Embassy of France in Algeria set up in 2017 a support system and support for children with disabilities in schools, whose goal is to go to a school more inclusive and more adapted to the specific needs of the child. This project is supervised by a multidisciplinary team composed of: clinical psychologists-school psychologists-speech therapists-specialized educators. They intervene by raising awareness among directors, teachers and parents. Its balance sheet is remarkable: 351 children with disabilities attending school in 42 institutions, three listening and support units were created in three municipalities in the region, of which there are more people with disabilities.¹⁸

Association of parents of children BMI (cerebral palsy) of Setif

As part of the project “Education for all: towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in the Algerian education system”, implemented by Handicap International in partnership with the association conducted a territorial survey to identify obstacles of the education of children with disabilities in schools. Thanks to the support of the Directorate of Education of the wilaya, a support service to the schooling of these children was created for the training of auxiliary school life. This allowed the association to train SIAs to work with mainstream schools as psychologists and speech therapists in pre-employment. The aim of the project was also to get these SIAs accepted in schools after being almost an impossible procedure and even a taboo in some localities. In the end, 45 children with disabilities were accompanied and integrated into the school.¹⁹

Association of disabled people and their friends (AHLA) -Tizi-Ouzou

In order to meet the specific needs of schoolchildren with disabilities, this association with the support of the European Union has put in place an itinerant support system for schooling composed of a multidisciplinary team, working daily on the different aspects of medico-educational care. The objective of this project is to offer a global support of the child at the school level. The interventions of the team differ according to their specialties and according to the needs of the child. This device, judged positive by the association, allows: an improvement of the quality of access to learning for 80% of children with disabilities, and the creation of a psychopedagogical center for children with intellectual disabilities with a psychological care of parents having children with disabilities.²⁰

Conclusion

Even if equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities reinforce actions in favor of the schooling of students with disabilities, it must be said that the situation is not often comfortable for this category of people. The law states that every child, every teenager, with a disability or a disabling disorder of health, is registered in the school closest to his home which constitutes his reference establishment. But, the least we can say is that our school is more demanding, has little tendency to look at the difficulties it creates for children. That is why we also need to know, if necessary, to protect children with disabilities from school. The task of the school can not therefore be reduced to welcoming children with disabilities.²¹ It is equally important to give them the means to take into account

their special educational needs. It must, if not to protect them, but at least not to make their lives too difficult. Moreover, we are convinced that access to schooling for children with special needs must be strengthened and defended and that the process of inclusive education is possible, only it requires courage, willingness, and professionalism, all the world is involved: The school must solicit the liberal partners and specialized institutions to provide real support to the policy of care.²² The associations on their side must continue their fight to change mentalities, to ensure that the school adapts to the child and that this fight is that of the whole society, because even if means are lacking, but you have to know how to say nothing is impossible.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to address the report of children with disabilities in school, a subject that has in recent years taken a particular dimension in the concerns of educationalists, which has also given rise to international debate on the policy of care for this category of children. Such a problematic today invites us to question the schooling of children with special needs in Algeria and the mechanisms of their inclusive education. Many questions raised by the objective of this study, here are some: Children with disabilities, do they have access to schooling in our country? How can we accompany these children to school? Their inclusion, is it achievable after raising real hopes with parents? And what is the role of associations in this process? To answer this series of questions, which refract the current Algerian news regarding the inclusion, we will proceed to a sociological rereading of the statistics advanced by the Ministry of National Solidarity through its different structures compared to the schooling of children with disabilities. . The aim will also be to show the state of the art of care through the actions of several associations.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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