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# Evaluation of School Inclusion

## Mission (Im)possible

WAXMANN



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Waxmann 2018  
Münster • New York

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>

Print-ISBN 978-3-8309-3771-5

Ebook-ISBN 978-3-8309-8771-0

© Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2018  
Münster, Germany

[www.waxmann.com](http://www.waxmann.com)  
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Cover Design: Anne Breitenbach, Münster  
Cover Picture: © sajola/[www.photocase.de](http://www.photocase.de)  
Typesetting: MTS. Satz & Layout, Münster  
Print: CPI Books GmbH, Leck

Printed on age-resistant paper,  
acid-free according to ISO 9706



Printed in Germany

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## INTRODUCTION –

### **Who is this Book for and why do we need it?**

Our aim is to offer an approach which promotes inclusion as an inseparable part of any present-day first-rate school. We are convinced that without an inclusive approach it may not be possible to provide our children with the high-quality preparation needed for a diverse and successful life in the 21st century.

In this book, you will not find the argument of whether we should adopt inclusion or not as we consider this debate unquestionable in a democratic and free world much like the debate as to whether human rights have their place and merit in our society. We do offer, however, a comment on “how”. How can we identify the elements which create an inclusive environment on school premises? How is inclusion to be understood at school? How can we recognize inclusion at school? What may be improved at school so that the inclusion principle could be effectively, not artificially, introduced into school life?

This book is concerned with foundations (see Chap. 1) which explains why we no longer consider an “if” but rather a “how”. We put forward various perspectives which support the legitimacy of the requirement for an inclusive approach in schools. We will define (see Chap. 2) what inclusion actually is and the difference between inclusion and integration. Why this explanation? Both laymen and experts alike confuse these two terms, and fail to understand the concept of inclusion while claiming that inclusion is suitable only for some children and not others. For this and other reasons, it might be helpful to clarify how these terms may be understood and briefly characterize them. Chapter 3 is concerned with the description of specific indicators and elements of school inclusion. General definitions and characteristics, then, will help us identify specific forms in which inclusion manifests at schools. All elements, which have been divided into 4 groups, create a foundation for school inclusion. A description has been added to these elements in order for the reader to better understand how to recognize an element at schools, how it manifests and how a perfect form of a school inclusion element may be identified. The final chapter of this book deals with the options of evaluating inclusion at schools (see Chap. 5) and inclusive education in the Czech Republic: A literature review and analysis (see Chap. 4). A tool for evaluation is offered which can be applied, not only for evaluation of inclusion at schools, but also for feedback for schools to create strategic planning and to improve inclusive development of elementary schools in the Czech Republic. In our literature review, we focus on research examining inclusive education, published between 2007 and 2015 in the Czech Republic. This literature review aims to find out (1) how many of the studies, which claimed to examine inclusive education, actually did look at this area. We were then interested in

(2) the objectives of these original research studies, (3) the research methodologies that were used most frequently and (4) who were the most frequent subjects of the research. This literature review is an interesting insight into the research environment that focuses on inclusive education in the Czech Republic.

This book is the culmination of long-term work done at dozens of elementary schools which are or have been involved in the Fair School Project (managed by The League of Human Rights – [www.llp.cz](http://www.llp.cz)). The foundations and the set of school inclusion indicators have been put together and tested not only at schools but also in theory and in several research projects.

The objective of this book is to offer the findings of our work, research assumptions and field work to those who are interested in this issue or those, who this work may enrich their own activities. If you are working on related issues and your objectives are similar to ours we would be most pleased if you share your findings or decide to collaborate with us.

# 1. FOUNDATIONS – Why do we need Inclusion?

## 1.1 Philosophical and Ethical Perspectives

“Unless a democratic and free society is founded on a just system of education, it can never be sustainable and cohesive. A just education system must be founded on the inclusion principle.”

Since the beginning of civilization, justice has always been central to the whole of humanity as well as every individual person. The understanding of justice varies in time, location, human activities and from person to person.

In our present Euro-Atlantic society, every person should have the inalienable rights and freedoms, which are based on justice. These rights cannot be deemed void by affluence, laziness or ignorance of society. It is unacceptable that the loss of freedom of some people may be compensated by the greater good. It is equally impermissible to sacrifice a few for the benefit of many. I believe that these characteristics rightfully pertain to justice. However, despite this foundation and belief, the application of this principle in practice proves to be significantly problematic.

Justice is sometimes mistaken for equality. “Equality must not mean the quantitative equality [...] but that income is not differentiated to a point that creates different experiences of life for different groups” (Fromm, 2001, p. 104). Justice may be understood as equality in inequality and this may be transferred to any human activity, education included. The ratio and volume of income is not important whereas intent, form, objective and the subsequent application of the income is. Equality among people exists merely as a qualitative one, not as numeric equality (Günther, in Velek, 1997, p. 22).

Current economist and philosopher Sen (2001, p. 27) claimed that there may not necessarily be a conflict between one’s own interest and a general interest in everything and everybody. A traditional dichotomy between egoism and utilitarianism might actually be misleading on a number of aspects. It may not be necessary to maximize the utility of all group members in order to aid the development of a society or the whole generation. Therefore, if the objectives of a particular group are met, despite that some individuals were not able to fulfill their objectives completely, their objectives are not in conflict. Let us picture an elementary class of children with diverse backgrounds. If one of the essential objectives of schooling is to prepare students for their future lives, cooperation and successful socialization in a 21st century society, the aspects of a heterogeneous collective may legitimately outweigh the relative comfort of a homogeneous group. However, this requires a change of thinking and a realization that through the modification of our utility we may reach the overall utility and, ultimately, fulfill our own utility, albeit via a

different route. Therefore, the dichotomy of egoism and utilitarianism should not be perceived as a distinct conflict but rather, a possible symbiosis.

Of the many theories of justice, let us consider the concept of justice postulated by Rawls, who used the following principles (1995, p. 48): *1. each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others; 2. social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that (a) they are to be of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society, and (b) offices and positions must be open to everyone.* We understand that the first principle precedes the other. Therefore, a violation of the same rights by institutions according to the first principle may not be justified or compensated by greater social and economic benefit. All social values – freedom and opportunities, income, property and social foundations of self-respect – should be distributed evenly unless an uneven distribution of one or all of the values benefits everyone. This uneven distribution is manifested at schools by e.g. support for those students who need it in their educational process. While some may need significant support, others very little. If we are to prepare all individuals for a successful and full life in the 21st century (i.e. we consider this the objective of education at elementary schools), it will benefit everyone to distribute the support unevenly, in this context, as is just. Rawls (1995, p. 153) argues that every person has the right to the most extensive system of the same basic freedoms which is compatible with a similar system of freedoms for everybody. Unless all goods are open to everyone, people who are denied this access may feel an injustice, even though they benefit from the greater effort of everyone who is allowed access to the goods (Rawls, 1995, p. 61). We might find similar features in the current system of elementary education in the Czech Republic. Those individuals who currently attend traditional elementary schools are perceived as having better prospects and making greater effort which allows them access to goods. This, however, fails to address the fact that the individuals who are denied this access, rightly regard this as an injustice.

Váně (2007, pp. 144, 146) explains that various theories of justice are usually founded on one of the following principles: a) principle of merit, b) principle of equality in reward, c) principle of equal opportunities, d) principle of necessity, e) principle of solidarity, f) principle help to the needy and g) principle of responsibility. These principles suggest that justice tends to be related to issues which might be intuitively called social. The subject matter of social justice concerns the division and foundation of basic social structures related to the ideas of a socially just society. However, despite all proclamations that attempt to keep a more complex view of the issue, social justice is currently being reduced to the criteria and possibilities of distribution. The concept of social justice is frequently being identified with a certain type of distributive justice whose main objective is to take into consideration social balancing when distributing social resources and burdens. One of the

resources distributed in a society is education, which is currently provided by institutions of the education system.

The school system, being the provider of institutional education, presents not only one of the many areas of distributive and social justice, it is deemed essential as school, contrary to many other social institutions, is (and has been) attended by all individuals in a society. Moreover, modern societies consider education a legitimate justification of social inequality among people – e.g. differences in income, unemployment, etc. Furthermore, school has a significant influence on the socialization of children. The experience of pupils with the school being a “just society” thus influences and forms their overall understanding of justice; the school is therefore rightfully considered a natural center for the education towards justice (Greger, 2006, pp. 47–49).

As the issue of justice in education is very broad, it is understood differently in various countries, regions by both expert and lay circles. The issue is reduced into several streams which emphasize various aspects. The most common phenomenon is the connection of justice in education with a particular target group which is selected in educational systems; these groups are usually national or ethnic minorities. Another point of view ties the issue to the socio-economic status of the population and its success in education. The third and fourth criteria of justice emphasize the selection of people based on disability and gender.

Since the 1990s an integration policy has been gaining in strength. The requirement of intercultural openness in all aspects of society has become an important political movement. This relatively new focus may be better understood through the following concepts: openness, diversity management and anti-discrimination. *In addition, institutional discrimination, which includes education, proves difficult to identify as decisions affected by prejudice cannot be immediately discerned in “the others”.* From the majority society point of view, educational elements – including curricula, materials, educational concepts, didactic methods, organizational structure, etc. – should be, in light of diversity, re-evaluated and modified (Gomolla, 2010, p. 2). Although the Czech Republic may not be a multicultural superpower, you can find, much like in any democratic country, representatives of various minorities. Some of these groups face obstacles due to foreign language and cultural differences, in particular. And while there is no relevant reason, such children tend to be selected for other (i.e. not common) types of elementary schools.

*The countries which have a more homogeneous income structure and higher level of re-distribution of goods are also countries which are successful in passing on needed competencies to pupils which leads to a satisfactory participation in a global society (Teltemann & Windzio, 2011, p. 357).* The phenomenon which hinders the effort to introduce a more just redistribution in the Czech Republic includes practical, special needs schools and grammar schools which represent external differentiation at

the level of compulsory education. *Those schools enjoy enormous popularity from teachers and parents despite or rather due to being typical examples of selection based on family status* (Straková, Matějů & Veselý, 2010, p. 427).

Jarkovská states that the issue of justice in education also concerns differences between men and women, traditionally related to the labor market (2005, p. 3). The elimination of gender inequalities deals particularly with the efforts to decrease the pay gap between men and women and with the desegregation of the labor market where men usually achieve higher earnings. Gender disparities start to develop in the early stages of education systems – i.e. at kindergartens and elementary schools. *Research indicates that educational institutions adopt a different approach to boys and girls.* Therefore, an emphasis should be placed on uncovering and supporting individual abilities of a child regardless of whether such abilities are characteristic of boys or girls.

One of the most often selected groups in the Czech Republic is children with disabilities and within this group, children with a mental health disability are the most prominent. These learners are, based on their disability, placed into special needs or practical elementary schools and the possibility that they may be successful in mainstream elementary schools is often ignored. These children include those with even minor disabilities or are borderline cases even though the current legislation prohibits this. Therefore, there is no equal access to education nor does it maximize the potential of an individual.

The program for the development of education in the Czech Republic (referred to as the White Book) contains several fundamental principles of democratic education policy which should govern the development of education in the whole country. Everything which is subject to this policy should be based on it or should not be in violation of it. The very first principle which the White Book is founded on states that *a truly just approach to educational opportunities must be ensured so that all educational needs of a society are met and all members have the possibility to find their own education way as well as, later in the course of life, change it. ... It is necessary to overcome the disadvantages caused by a different socio-cultural level and to enforce suitable compensation mechanisms to prevent education system from producing further inequalities.* Other principles of the White Book include the following: the development of each individual's potential, transformation of traditional schools, new formation of educational systems, increase in the status and professionalism of teachers and the improvement of educational processes based on scientific research (Národní program rozvoje vzdělávání v České republice: Bílá kniha, 2001, pp. 17–18).

The concept of justice in education in recent years has been particularly focused on the concept of equal opportunities and chances which may be understood as equality in access and conditions or a possible equality in results. The PISA re-

sults of several countries demonstrate that high performance average and equity are not mutually exclusive. Also the TIMSS results (particularly from 1995) prove possibilities of providing high quality of education while having a just system (Vanderberghe, 2001). These findings suggest that justice is a necessary prerequisite for a high-quality education meaning that there can be no efficiency without justice.

Therefore, an education system must be founded on equity in educational opportunities to be just. We would like to translate this requirement into access to an ordinary elementary school for all children. Any child should, at this level of education, attain the same or similar results which may be described as a set of abilities and competencies which are instrumental in achieving success, both in a society and in the labor market. The same results also characterize and define key competencies which should be achieved, in current primary education, by any pupil and which are also interpreted as the results of primary education. Every individual has various talents but also weaknesses at his or her disposal. Suitable conditions and support measures must be prepared for any individual if he or she is to manage key competencies. Let us return to Günther (in Velek, 1997, p. 22) who understands equity as being qualitative, not numerical. It is, therefore, just to set everyone's conditions so that they may achieve the required key competencies. However, the conditions must also be distributed in such a way which benefits everyone. If some learners have more of them, the conditions cannot be removed from the area of other learners who may not need all of them. It is not within the scope of justice that one's personal conditions should not interfere with the conditions of another.

Kalhous and Obst (2002, pp. 79–80) point out that the countries which are current leaders in education tend to integrate rather than segregate. The effort to delay external differentiation as much as possible is quite apparent. This is related to a concern that a homogeneous group may create a sample of *an abnormal society, which may suffer the loss of the ability to communicate, tolerate and understand others who think and behave differently*. Education surveys illustrate that the systems which do separate children at an early age according to their talents show greater differences in the performance of pupils and schools than those systems which educate all children together for the whole duration of school attendance. The countries which separate pupils at an early age into selective and non-selective schools achieve lower average performance. Additionally, it is apparent from research that the separation of learners according to their talents, particularly at an early age, cannot be performed properly as test results in small children tend to be unreliable. Furthermore, well-educated parents may prepare their children for the placement tests while children with lower socio-economic status may not show their full potential (Straková, 2010, pp. 92–94).

High selectivity rate of the Czech education system has been repeatedly outlined by the OECD rating of education systems (ISEI – index of occupational sta-

tus). This index has been constructed for the level of education corresponding to 15-year-old students based on the information about the number of various educational programs, age of students at the first selection, failure rate and the extent of performance and social differences in the characteristics of students in different schools. It has been proven that in the countries with lower number of educational programs (particularly at lower stages of education) socio-economic status of students exerts a stronger influence on students' performance and there are fewer possibilities to achieve equal opportunities (Procházková, 2006, p. 101).

Walterova (2004, pp. 365–367) argues that in democratic countries there are two requirements of education systems: provision of high-quality education and a just distribution of education to all according to their possibilities and abilities. OECD has termed it an increase in learning outcomes of all students. A purposeful *formation of groups of students within a class (i.e. internal differentiation)* is considered an effective way of teaching which allows the teacher to react to needs of individual students and contributes to the development of every individual. However, a permanent segregation of students (i.e. external differentiation) according to their abilities is a contested issue, which has its proponents, but recently the criticism of this issue has become increasingly vocal. *The opinion shared by the general public on external differentiation of education allows the maximum development of all students – both the gifted ones who do not have to wait for their slower classmates and the weaker ones who may get the additional support needed to manage the basics – are proving to be wrong in light of research.*

Mead, a representative of cultural determinism, explains that decades of research have shown that the social structure of a society and the ways of teaching and passing on knowledge are much more important than the actual content of learning and determines how an individual learns to think, as well as, the inventory of knowledge and abilities is shared and utilized (Mead, 1964). Therefore, the form and environment in which education occurs are more significant than the actual content of what we want to pass on. This argument only gained strength once school lost its status as an exclusive keeper of information and knowledge.

Factors which might help us increase equity in education are known. They are closely related to the overall concept of a unified and non-selective (particularly in basic schools) education. Unified education has been, in recent years, deemed desirable and, moreover, has been identified as being essential for social cohesion. Besides social cohesion, it also fulfills the function of a supporter who increases academic standards and their compatibility with social equality, evidenced by educational approaches and results of Scandinavian countries. In former Czechoslovakia, due to ideological influences, a non-differentiated unified school system inspired by the Soviet model was introduced, which also meant that any public discussion of this topic was discontinued. The segregation of institutions which educate chil-

dren of the same age occurred without regard for the tendencies in the education systems in the developing countries and the issue of equal opportunities, without discussion (Kasíková, 2011, pp. 26–28).

The current crisis in education is mainly the crisis of inherited institutions and philosophies. As these institutions reflect a different reality, it is getting increasingly difficult for them to adopt and adapt to the current changes. The creation of the theory of this formative process is possibly the greatest challenge that modern educational philosophers and their colleagues had to face in the modern history (Bauman, 2004, pp. 152, 165). Therefore, an effective introduction of principles of justice into the education system brings significant complications. It is difficult to overcome these ingrained truths which we carry from history or believe to be true as are claimed by alleged authorities in society. In addition, the thought patterns of our majority society and a paternalistic approach permeating elementary institutions of our lives prevent us from applying more just principles which seem to be more effective for the education of further generations in the current world.

The current education system in the Czech Republic is characterized as being segregationist or selective meaning the exclusion of some individuals and thus treating them unfairly as it denies their fundamental human right to education. For these and other reasons, some international organizations, particularly the European Commission, appeal to the Czech Republic to transform its education system into a pro-inclusive direction which is, due to what has been argued above, fundamentally more just than its current one.

## 1.2 Historical and Pedagogical Perspectives

“Another step in the development of our society is inclusion... In the past, for instance, it was unthinkable and far from beneficial to educate boys and girls together...”

The basic idea of Jan Amos Komenský to “educate everyone in everything” was essential for further development of pedagogical thinking, which led, not only in the Czech Republic, to the democratization of education. Komenský not only led this turn to justice in education but he also formulated principles, which are still valid today. The process of democratization of education in the school system concerns all age groups of children and considers sex, social status, race, cognitive abilities, etc.

It seems that it is only today that we have conditions to truly educate everyone in everything. The current situation is a result of both international and national histories, which have been collecting and connecting long isolated elements of democratization and justice. A logical result and the next step should be the principle of inclusion as an essential part of school, and other, systems.

There have been milestones in history, which have significantly influenced the democratization process of education and school systems. This was more of an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, development in the thinking of philosophers and educators (Jůzl, 2010). Let us examine briefly some of these milestones.

In his writings on education, Plato demands public education for all children from pre-school age at state schools, although this concerned only the families of free citizens. However, girls were allowed only an elementary education (Jůva & Veselá, 1988, p. 19). Also Aristotle, probably the most universal thinker of the antiquity, failed to progress beyond the limitations of his time and excluded girls from most educational achievements. However, his opinions on education came closer to real life, which is why he supported a universally-developed personality compared to a one-sided education practiced in Sparta (Jůva & Jůva, 1997, p. 9). In Ancient Greece, women, especially those who practiced art, did have some possibilities for self-actualization. These were cultured women living on the island of Lesbos. Finally, the Codex Justinianus, already in Ancient Rome, established some legal protection for visually impaired people.

The leading ideology of the Middle Ages in Europe – Christianity – played a seminal role in all educational systems. Besides providing education, the Church also engaged in charity including help to the poor, sick, disabled, captives, widows, orphans and others in need. It was not until the Late Middle Ages that secular schools were established to serve the needs of the newly emancipated townspeople, and these schools were in striking contrast to traditional church schools. This may be understood as a step towards democratic approaches in education, closer to humanism and the Renaissance. The Late medieval period also brings a significant change in education the foundation and early development of modern universities, which enjoyed unprecedented academic freedom.

European society between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries is characterized by a dramatic cultural and economic growth, accompanied, in many countries, by socially religious and political movements. A universal development of the Renaissance was manifested in the further democratization of schooling, science and education. In the Pre-Hussite period, during the reign of Charles IV, universities started awarding scholarships to poor students and also supported foreign students. The fifteenth century was affected by a religious and social movement called The Hussites (Košina, 1927), which brought many democratic aspects to the education process. A higher literacy rate in Czech (Hussite) women characterized The Hussite movement although these women were ridiculed and accused of sexual indulgence (Mukařovský & Hrabák, 1959, p. 201). Master John Huss (1371–1415) supported the efforts for educating women with his treatise of a kind educator called Dcerka (“Daughter”). All over Europe, the Renaissance returned to the classics, which was manifested particularly in culture and education, and its further democratization

meant a focus on the student, not the teacher, as well as on new subjects including natural sciences, classical philology and mother tongue. Another manifestation of democratization approaches was a bold and free interpretation of the New Testament by Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (1467–1536) (Jůva & Veselá, 1988, p. 30). Democratization processes in education were also supported by French philosophers, who promoted a return to nature, liberty and the nature of an individual. These thoughts, promoted by Francois Rabelais (1495–1553), Pierre de la Ramée (1515–1572), and particularly Michele de Montaigne (1533–1592), include the elements of free school, which were later developed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

The invention of printing press by Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz led to the mass production of books and the possibility of disseminating information to working classes of population which contributed to higher literacy rate in Europe (Charvát, 1967).

The Renaissance Utopists of the 16th and 17th centuries also worked in the spirit of Ancient Greek *paidia-pantes, panta, pantos* (i.e. everything to everyone). Among those, English philosopher Thomas More (1478–1535) was especially prominent as he depicted an ideal state in which both boys and girls are entitled to education in their mother tongue. Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) promoted similar ideas in his most famous work, *The City of the Sun*, in which he advocated a harmonic development of a personality and student activities (Jůva & Veselá, 1988, p. 32). Much of the same opinions were expressed by Bohemian philosopher, theologian, enlightened scholar and humanist, Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848) in his utopian and social work, *On the Best State*. Utopian socialism is the label used to define the first currents of modern socialist thought as exemplified by the work of Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), Etien Cabet (1788–1856) and Robert Owen (1771–1858). All these thinkers were influenced by opinions on education of the French materialism of the 18th century and particularly by the French Revolution (1789–1794). They all believed in a unified, compulsory education for everybody without regard to class and sex.

However, it was John Amos Comenius (1592–1678), who was instrumental in the demand for universal democratization of schooling and education. Without a doubt, John Amos Comenius deserves the title, Galileo of education. Using the current language one might say that Comenius started the engine of modern pedagogy. He refocused the attention at the pupil and insisted on the pupil's unique status with a sole purpose: to provide education to everyone (girls, boys, the rich and the poor) and to do everything to preserve their individual and collective freedom (Bédard, 2005, pp. 5–6).

A seminal role was played by the French Encyclopedists prior to the French Revolution (1789). One of the most important thinkers of education in the 18th century was Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) who advocated liberty and equal-