

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION IN TURKEY IN REFERENCE TO UNESCO EXPERTS REPORT\***

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A report has been prepared on special education at the international experts meeting held in UNESCO's General Headquarters in Paris, in 1979. In the second section of the report there are some recommendations for the member states.

The intention of this paper is to explain the situation in Turkey in terms of these recommendations. Each of the recommendations at the second section of the report titled «Orientations and Suggestions» is being taken into consideration successively.

Related section of the report is given at the beginning of the paper in its original form. Necessary explanations concerning the situation in Turkey has been made subsequently.

It's taught that it might be helpful to give a brief information on Turkish educational system as a terms of reference in making necessary comparisons.

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## TURKISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Turkey is a country 776.723 square kilometers and has 55 millions population. It is a democratic state and governed by republican system. Ankara is the capital. All country is consisted of 67 local administrative units and each of them is called «Vilayet».

Turkish educational system is characterized by highly centerelized structure. Educational responsibility is undertaken by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports. Central organization of the Ministry is consisted of main service offices, ancillary service offices and consultation units. One of the 13 main service offices is responsible for special education. This unit is called as «Özel Eğitim ve Rehberlik Dairesi» Department of Special Education and Guidance.

In provinces (Vilayet) educational services are being carried out by superiendentes of schools called «Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Müdürlüğü» Directorate of Educational Youth and Sports. At this level Guidance and Research Centers are responsible for special education.

### UNESCO'S SUGGESTIONS AND SITUATION IN TURKEY ORIENTATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This report is aimed at advising Unesco on its immediate and future mediumterm programme in special education.

A number of substantial suggestions have emanated from the discussions. Specific suggestions directly related to Unesco action have been formulated. Some more general orientations, however, made in the context of present thinking and current trends, have also been put forward. The meeting considered that the orientations for general consideration, while setting forth the conceptual framework for Unesco's programme in special education, also provide suggestions and useful pointers to Member States which are in the process of planning or modifying the policies and educational structures to meet the needs of handicapped persons. It is for this reason that the meeting's suggestions are grouped in this way.

## 1. ORIENTATIONS FOR GENERAL CONSIDERATION

### 1.1. POLICY, PLANNING AND STRUCTURES

The meeting urged that Unesco should reflect the following orientation in assisting and advising Member States:

1. All Member States should adopt as a matter of law or policy a recognition of the rights of disabled persons to an education and to full participation in society. This policy will lead to specific action in education, employment, access to buildings, and so on.

### 1. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

In general, there are related legislative provisions and policies considering the educational and social participation rights of disabled persons in Turkey.

Constitutional Law of Turkish Republic has accepted every rights of exceptional persons including education, and adopted the policies required for implementation.

Besides the Constitutional Law there are other laws related with special education such as:

- National Education Foundation Act No: 1739,
- Primary Education and Training Act, No: 222,
- Exceptional Children Act No: 2416,
- Social Services and Child Care Institution Act No: 2828,
- Turkish Civil Code,
- Income Revenue Act,
- Labor Law,
- Social Security Act,
- General Health Care Act,
- Municipalities Act,
- State Personnel Act,

— The Act related with purchasing of custom free and tax free instruments and aids for handicapped persons such as blind, dumb, deaf and physical handicaps.

This and other similar legislative provisions are protecting the rights of disabled persons and children are taking into consideration of their special situations. Beside these special acts there are also some rules, regulations and by laws clarifying the situations of these people within the society.

In Turkey in the case of the handicapped it might be right to say that the problem is not the lack of laws and by laws but the abundance in kinds and variation. The situation makes it difficult for the handicapped in getting benefit from the existing provisions. It creates a kind of red tape that makes it difficult even for the specialist to follow the changes taken place in terms of rules and regulations in the field.

2. Member States should adopt policies placing responsibility for education of disabled children in the education ministries and that compulsory education laws be adopted by all States. When a new mandatory law is introduced on compulsory education, this should include children with all ranges of disabilities, including the most severely handicapped. Where compulsory laws exist, the Ministry of education should not disclaim the responsibility for certain categories of handicapped children. Experience has demonstrated that special education programmes enrich the education offering for all children.

## 2. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

The first level of primary education, namely elementary education, is compulsory in Turkey. Although it is stated so in the related law realization of this provision it is around 90 %. Majority of those who have not received compulsory education are exceptional children. At present there are schools for visually handicapped, for hearing impaired, for orthopedically handicapped, for maladjusted and for mentally retarded children.

But these schools are inadequate in terms of size and number. There are large numbers of blind, deaf and orthopedically

handicapped children who applied for entrance but not been accepted because of limited quota. In addition, in order to be eligible for registration a child must be under eleven. Those who get over eleven during waiting their turn for registration are losing the right of registration. In other words they are losing the chance of this educational opportunity. Under this circumstances compulsory education has not been implemented and even the demands of those who are willing to study have not been met.

There are not any educational services for those who are emotionally disturbed, and who have learning difficulties and chronically health problems.

Although the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is responsible for education the children who need special education some other ministries and institutions are also carrying out similar educational services. For example educational responsibility of orphanaged children is undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and education of delinquent youth are being carried out by the Ministry of Justice.

In summary, primary education is compulsory for all in Turkey. But it is not implemented entirely for all children needing special education. Educational responsibility of disabled persons is undertaken by various ministries and institutions.

3. Member States should be advised on the development of legislation to ensure that the needs of disabled persons are met. These actions should include the participation of legislators and appropriate governmental policy-makers as well as disabled persons and their representatives, parents and specialists.

Legislation should be specific and precise to enable the access of disabled children to ordinary schools and should ensure the necessary resources, personnel, support services and organization.

### 3. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

As it is mentioned above in relation to first recommendation there are some legislation concerning the education of disabled persons in Turkey. In the preparation of these legislations opinions

of specialits and disabled persons are being taken into considare- tion at least for some of them.

Those articles creating obstacles and limitations for disabled children in entering to ordinary schools in related legislation have been taken out. Measures for creating necessary resources, for obtaining supportive services, and for establishing related organiza- tions in order to support these children have also been taken. However, the measures taken in terms of legislation are not being implemented effectively.

4. Member States should be advised on the need for increased flexibility in the application of regulations concerning admission age and promotion of children from class to class, as well as in taking of examinations with respect to handicapped students.

#### 4. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

At present, disabled children are being trained at seperate schools according to specially chosen teaching methods. However, in terms of registration and acceptance of disabled children necessary changes have been made in laws and by laws of primary schools. Also in the entrance examination of and the placement to higher educational institutions, disabilities of the children who need spe- cial education has been taken into consideration.

5. Member States should ensure that all aids which can help to overcome or to lower the consequences of handicap be exempted from customs duties and taxes. As far as possible indivudial technical aids should be made available free of charge to those individuals who need them.

#### 5. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

For today, aids which are being purchased from abroad for individual use by blinds and deafs for their schools have been exempted from custom duities and taxes. However, this provision does not cover other disabled groups.

Individual technical aids have not been made available free of charge for those who need them. However, some aids such as;

wheel chair, white cane, Braille watch and tablets have been given by voluntary organizations. Among these Red Crescent and Foundation for the Blinds are worth for mention.

There is need for setting up rules and regulations to determine by whom and how to distribute such technical aids and what the State responsibility be on the matter.

## 1.2. EARLY DETECTION, ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Early detection, assessment and intervention are indispensable prerequisites for successful integration of many handicapped children into regular schools, and can also enhance the developmental potential of many severely handicapped children, helping to prevent unwanted secondary problems.

1. The meeting strongly recommends that the necessary measures required be developed by close co-operation between experts from different specialities, such as medical, education, and must include parents; The best results will ensue if early education is mediated by parents in the child's home. In appropriate cases it should also be part of the daily programme in day care and residential facilities.

### 1. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

It is difficult to state that there is enough cooperation between experts from different specialities such as medicine, education and other speciality areas including parents for early detection and for developing assessment criteria. However, in collaboration with Munich and Anadolu Universities there is a project to implement early detection and care model called «Kinder Zentrum» developed and implemented by Munich University in several countries.

Early training covers all handicapped groups and all individual handicaps with in these groups. Presently, educational opportunities at kindergarten level are limited for deafs. Universities are pioniring in this area. For example, an educational model is being developed by Anadolu University. The educational center in this university is also educating the parents. In parents education the Center is using face-to-face teaching methods as well es longdistance education methods.

2. Screening procedures through specific screening measures should be developed and carried out wherever possible for different impairments (such as at risk registers, screening for hearing, vision and psycho-motor development) and by different kinds of personnel.

Early education is contingent on early identification. The meeting recommends, however, that deliberate efforts to detect problems should not be made unless intervention can follow. Right from the time of diagnosis, the family should be given support and guidance. In this respect, other parents can be of greatest assistance.

Children identified as having special problems need to be assessed as to cause, type and severity of impairment.

This assessment should be followed by a programme of intervention which may be educational or therapeutic according to the problem. Since levels of development in countries vary considerably from one region to another, the degree of specialization of this assessment will vary also.

## 2. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

In general there is not any screening program through out the country.

Centers for guidance and research in provinces are making screening for hearing and vision. Besides this, other screening activities for specific research purposes are also being made.

Children identified as having special problems by screening other than specific research purposes have not been assessed as to cause, type and severity of impairment.

At the end of screening activities unfortunately it is not common to prepare neither an educational intervention program nor a therapeutic one.

3. Intervention should be developmental and educational in nature and should be carried out by a team approach of the most qualified available workers and the family members.

### 3. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

Intervention for blind, deaf, physically handicapped and disabled persons are educational in nature. However, these programs are not being carried out by team approach. These services mainly being carried out by educators.

4. Very young children with handicaps should not be isolated from normal children. In a situation where day care is needed and available, children with handicaps should be included in such normal programmes. Normal peer contact on informal basis should be encouraged as much as possible.

### 4. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

There are educational opportunities for those children needing special education at pre-school age particularly of those who have hearing impairment and who are in need of social protection. Children needing social care and protection are being trained by special care centers and by institutions. Some of those having hearing impairment are studying at separate kindergarten programmes, others are attending integrated programmes.

5. Training courses providing the necessary knowledge and skills should be developed as a matter of priority. Such courses should be developed in regional resource centers. Detection of deviations from normal development requires that all persons, especially parents, connected with the upbringing and care of babies and young children are familiar with the normal pattern of development, the signs of deviation from normal and what to do and where to go if these are observed.

### 5. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

There is not training courses related with special education for parents and for pre-school educators. In the programs preparing pre-school personnel there is not enough provision and emphasis for special education. Only a course titled «Introduction to Special Education» is being taught as a compulsory subject in the programs preparing school teachers.

6. All approaches for the dissemination of such information should be utilized including the mass media, dissemination of printed material and training of health and other personnel dealing with young children. In a similar fashion, school curricula should also include material on child development and childrearing techniques.

## 6. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

Lately, mass media especially radio programs have been used frequently in this area. However, it is difficult to say that they are «systematic programs». They are the result of personal initiatives based on programmer's own efforts, individual relations and cooperations. Also there is not any systematic approach to subject in the area of printed mass media. There are efforts of including to school programs such as health, family planning and family education.

### 1.3. TRAINING OF PERSONNEL:

Personnel here refers not only to teachers, but to all those who are working with handicapped persons of all ages. This category also includes administrators and policy-makers. It is important to underline that the following recommendations are concerned not only with personnel who are working with pupils of school age but also with all those are involved in the delivery of all other services for handicapped persons, including pre-school, further education, vocational education and training, and employment preparation.

1. A «special education element» should be included or further developed in the general curriculum of teacher preparation for regular schools.

## 1. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

Since 1982 teacher training for every levels of education has been undertaken by universities in Turkey. Training of teachers for special education started for the first time in the Faculty of Education of Anadolu University in 1983. This pioniring attempt has been followed by other universities by offering similar programs.

Faculty of Educational Sciences of Ankara University is running a program of training specialists in special education since 1965. However, the number of graduates completing this program and the number of students studying in the program is not enough to meet the need in the area.

2. All students including those intending to work with pre-school and post-school pupils should be given sufficient information to enable them to recognize children with delays and disorders of development to have at least some direct exposure to current teaching methods used in special education.

## 2. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

At the beginning of 1987-1988 academic year a compulsory course titled «Introduction to Special Education» included in all teacher training programs. But later it was decided to limit it with associate degree programs training elementary school teachers. This course has been taught at 1987-1988 academic year. In the content of «Introduction to Special Education» course handicapped children's developments, health and educational characteristics are being described, teaching methods and approaches in special education are being studied and services of support and assistance have been discussed.

3. A similar special education element should be made available to all regular serving teachers as part of any in-service training arrangements made available locally.

## 3. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

In-service teacher training programs are being organized and conducted by the Department of In-Service Education of Ministry of Education Youth and Sports. Unfortunately, there is not any provisions for special education subjects in the in-service programs organized for ordinary school teachers.

4. Institutions responsible for personnel training should be helped to develop courses for staff working primarily with handicapped persons of all ages. Such courses should stress

elements common to all handicaps, but should also allow for specializations concerned with specific handicaps and areas of need. Courses should range in duration from one or two weeks to more advanced courses leading to advanced diplomas and higher level qualifications.

#### 4. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

Institutions responsible for training of personnel in special education are doing this generally by mobilizing their own resources and by using their own initiation.

In accordance with the needs courses ranging from two to three weeks and those leading to teaching certificate in special education are being developed and implemented within the scheme of in-service training services. Generally these courses are organized and operated in cooperation with The Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, The Ministry of Social Welfare and Child Security, and The Universities.

5. Staff training should as far as possible take place in the setting in which they work - e.g. in schools, sheltered workshops, etc., but periods of study to attain high qualifications abroad should be encouraged wherever this would meet the needs both of the teacher and of the service.

#### 5. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

Generally short courses are being organized and implemented in schools and institutions at which the related personnel work for. If the courses are being offered at the time of ongoing academic activities then on-the job training scheme is implemented.

Generally, setting for courses leading to teaching certificate are being chosen among those that taught to be the most suitable.

6. The principle of modular training should be adapted to provide as complete a curriculum as possible in respect of both knowledge and skills. Such modular courses should allow a teacher to accumulate credits towards a recognized qualification in special education or rehabilitation and should be given full accreditation.

## 6. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

Programs leading to teaching certificate in special education offered by universities are based on unit-credit system. There is not as yet enough experience to develop standard programs leading to diploma. However, a joint study on the subject has been initiated in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Universities and State Planning Institution during 1987-1988 academic year.

7. Joint training of interdisciplinary groups, such as teachers, doctors, therapists, etc., is to be encouraged.

## 7. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

There is not any joint training activities involving the participation of interdisciplinary groups. There are seminars and symposium type of activities organized by universities on specific branches in which participation from various specialities takes place. However, teachers' participation is very limited.

8. As a matter of high priority, we recommend the establishment of regional resource centres concerned with the development of programmes for handicapped people. The functions of such a centre would include:
  - (i) Provision of specialized teachers to act as resource persons for regular and special programmes;
  - (ii) Provision of training, especially short term, on-the-job courses in core and specialized subjects for all types of rehabilitation and special education workers, parents and volunteers;
  - (iii) The development of materials and packages suitable for the area.

## 8. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

There is not any such centers mentioned in the recommendation. Special education services in Turkey are being carried out through the Guidance and Research Centers located in provinces. In a way, these centers are responsible of carrying out of those

services mentioned in UNESCO's recommendation. However, these centers are not as yet at the level to undertake this responsibility effectively.

To carry out these services at a level of excellence there is a concern of collaboration with these centers, universities and other institutions. For this purpose The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and Anadolu University are working jointly for developing a model.

9. All teachers should have access to local special education resource centres containing curriculum materials and methods which can be adapted to meet the needs of handicapped children.

## 9. SITUATION IN TURKEY:

This recommendation is a continuation of the eighth recommendation. All teachers have access to Guidance and Research Centers. However, services rendered by this centers have limitations in accordance with their resources.

## CONCLUSION

As it is understood from the explanations above those principles and concepts recommended by UNESCO have taken place in laws and by laws in Turkey. These concepts and principles as ideas and statements have also been seen in the written resources. However, as far as implementations are concerned, the situation is different.

One of the differences is that special education services have not covered all handicapped groups and all handicapped persons. The other one is that integrated type of education has not clearly understood.

Screening, early detection and early training, intervention and rehabilitation are not implemented as they should be.

Training of personnel in regards to both in quantity and quality is inadequate. Specially, interdisciplinary approach has not been utilized in the personnel training and special education practices.

There is a need for reorganization of Guidance and Research Centers in order to have them to render services as regional special education institutions.

Recommendations of UNESCO have implication for us as guiding principles. At the same time they are being considered as basic criteria. It is author's personal intention that five years later, when a similar study shall be made, situation in Turkey will be much more suitable to UNESCO's recommendations.

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