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ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND MEDIATED LEARNING IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN EUROPE

In collaboration with ASuMIE Project Team



VITA E PENSIERO

RICERCHE

PEDAGOGIA E SCIENZE DELL'EDUCAZIONE



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The present research was realised within the ASuMIE-project funded by Erasmus + KA2. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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ISBN 978-88-343-5441-4

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2.7. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL

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Legislation: The Portuguese Constitution and the right to school/inclusive education

In Portugal the education is organized according to the democratic principles established by the Constitution of the Republic (1976), in particular the freedom to teach and learn (Art. no. 43). The Basic Law of Education (1986) was derived from these principles in order to define educational objectives, structures and models.

The governmental agency responsible for defining, coordinating, implementing and evaluating national policies related to the education system is the Ministry of Education (*Ministério da Educação* - ME). It is responsible for pre-school, basic, secondary and out-of-school education and is also responsible for the articulation of educational policies with

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According to studies carried out, in the 2017/2018 academic year, only 1% of students with special educational needs in Portugal attended special education institutions (DGEEC, 2018), which proves the strong implementation of the inclusive model. On the other hand, it is also essential that students participate in the educational process and, above all, that they progress in learning and in their own life paths. Inclusive education goes beyond accepting the person with a physical or cognitive limitation. Talking about inclusive education means talking about equity, about social justice. Experiencing inclusion at school, respecting personal, cultural, linguistic and religious diversities, empowers children and young people to build a just and balanced society.

Much more than an inclusive school, we want an inclusive society. The inclusive principles that guide education do not end when the student completes compulsory education. We want this conception to go beyond the walls of schools. Equity and equality of opportunity can no longer be a utopia. They must be a guide for policies and practices in which everyone is called to contribute actively to the fight against exclusion.

But the two biggest challenges to inclusion policies in Portugal are probably: 1) to understand thoroughly the concept of inclusion. In Portugal, inclusion targets 'children with SEN', but there are other groups of people who need to be included, namely members of minority cultural groups, members of non-normative sexual groups, psychiatric patients and people with substance dependence: The concept of inclusion adopted by the community through the UN does not only cover people with special educational needs, but all groups marginalized for religious, racial or economic reasons, as well as sick people or members of minority groups of any kind. And 2) to extend the concept of inclusion beyond the school: young adults need support to live in society, i.e., clear support policies for housing, professional training, working, loving and living are urgently needed. Finally, people with disabilities will need support in the elderly years. Policies in this field are to this day still lacking.

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9788834354414