

Special Education and Social Services as Modern Tools of Inclusive Thinking in Spain

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Abstract

The expert article describes the mindset and changes that have taken place and are taking place in Spain. The focus of the text is primarily on two areas, namely special education and social services. These areas are characterized not only as helping professions, but in the last few years it is necessary to point out the essence of not only integrative or inclusive changes in society, but also the essence of interdisciplinary cooperation, which helps to fulfill professional and social thinking about people with disabilities, their rights, possibilities and also obligations. Although many people are currently at risk of social exclusion due to disability, ethnicity, religion, etc., society is trying to prevent this or reduce the number of cases to a certain extent. Therefore, it is necessary for all those who have the possibility to change this situation to be aware of all the measures that exist in Spain to help people with this risk, so that together we can eradicate social exclusion. Moreover, from the school's point of view, teachers must educate students in an atmosphere of inclusion, in which everyone knows how to accept and respect the differences of others. In this way, we will be able to form good people, and that diversity will cease to be a problem, because people will see that this is what enriches interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: development, inclusion, social services, special education, Spain.

I. Introduction

In Spain, as in any other country, there are social differences among its citizens. Social inequality is the unequal treatment that indicates difference or discrimination from one individual to another due to their social position, economic status, sex, race, skin color, among others. Social minorities suffer most from unequal treatment. Large entities or groups use discrimination to maintain control of small groups. Social inequality implies an inequitable distribution of opportunities, respect, and access to goods and services, based on a variety of cultural or social reasons (Vtyurina, 2020). Spain tries to put an end to these inequalities and fights to become a better country, where social equality reigns. This concept pursues social justice which holds that all people should have the same political and civil rights and access to social welfare (education, health, and work).

In the legislative sphere, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations was proclaimed in 1948. Also, there are social services, which are a set of services and actions aimed at improving the social welfare of citizens through the provision of information, care, and support to vulnerable people and groups. The different services are an accompaniment to personal, family or social situations that require support, through an assessment of the situation and the definition of a work plan, and also serve as guidance on the resources, benefits, and services most appropriate to the specific needs. The other two pillars are health services, education services, and pensions or economic benefits to guarantee income for subsistence. In the field of education, we find special education, whose aim is to provide the necessary educational tools for those who have different needs than the average. Special education provides technical and human means that compensate for the decreases suffered by some people. In this way, they can complete the learning process in an environment according to their abilities.

Spain underwent a period of major reconstruction following the death of General Franco in the late 1970s. Among other important political and social changes introduced at the beginning of the 1980s, the educational policies of the day aimed to transform an educational system – until then selective and dual with its corresponding general and special institutions, curricula and legislation – into an integrative, comprehensive educational system (Ferrera, 2005).

Two key regulations served as guidelines for moves towards Integration: the 1982 Ley de Integración Social del Minusválido and the 1985 Real Decreto de Ordenación de la Educación Especial. Both laws were fundamental

landmarks in the search for educational solutions for students labelled at the time as ‘special education’ pupils. The so-called process of school integration in Spain had its origin in these measures as well as in the educational decentralisation under way at the time (Cardona, 2009).

II. The public social services system in Spain

The implementation of the regulatory and legislative system referred to as social services in Spain has its starting point following the adoption of the Constitution of 1978, resulting in a broad and deliberate action of reforming social services public management. Due to the changes envisaged in this transitional stage, it was thought that the Constitution would give rise to a System of Social Services at the beginning. However, after its publication surprisingly, in its content, the obligation or indication of creating social services never appears. Although they do not explicitly speak of a Public Social Services System, it appears between the lines and implicitly obliges the administration to create this system.

The constitutional gaps in this matter could have been resolved with the approval of a General Law of Social Services throughout the state, as was done with other protection systems (Health and Education). Yet since this was never carried out, between 1982 and 1993 all regional governments developed (through legislation) their respective social service systems. From our point of view this is the main weakness is the Public Social Services System in Spain since although on paper there are many similarities between them, the practices are very different, which results in the current Social Services System being composed of 17 subsystems based on political will, funding opportunities, and the responsibilities of the regional administration. Thus, depending on where you live, different types of service or equipment will be available. We believe that the lack of a common legislative framework for the entire national territory is the main cause of weakness, fragility, and lack of consolidation of this pillar of Welfare, which is very distant from the consolidation of the other pillars of the aforementioned Welfare (Education and Health). It was only with the approval of Law 39/2006 of 14 December on the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Care for dependent people that an important step in this line was taken, but with the arrival of the socioeconomic crisis, the implementation of this law was greatly reduced and in many cases completely paralyzed.

It can be said that the set of regional legislation on social services until now, largely promotes, the principle of subsidiarity, placing the management of social services at the local level, given their greater ability to adjust the response of public powers to the social needs of the population. Nevertheless, this principle that inspired all this regional legislation is now in question and weak due to the adoption of the Law 27/2013, of 27 December, for the Rationalization and Sustainability of the Local Administration . According to some authors it profoundly modifies the social services system that had been developed over the last thirty years in Spain. The system had managed to consolidate itself after thirty years of slow development, where its fundamental value is its proximity to citizens, guaranteed by the management and delivery of the councils of the General Social Services. But this new legislation, specifically Article 7, amending Article 26 of Law 7/1985 of 2 April, regulating the bases of local government on powers of municipalities and specifically social services, generates uncertainty and concern when it says that the only proper authority of the municipalities will be the assessment and reporting of situations of need and immediate care for people at risk or risk of social exclusion.

Although the reason for which social services were created in Spain was universalist, practice has shown that in its further development, the Public Social Services System has been designed for people in situations of vulnerability and social exclusion, thus creating a certain “stigma” on users using it and therefore some resistance and prejudice.

Social Services is a system that includes a series of programs and resources that address specific social problems; a set of social action services and benefits that comprehensively address social needs. Its objectives are to favor the promotion and integration of people and groups in society, as well as to value and solve their possible social difficulties, providing resources that improve the quality of life and prevent and avoid the causes that lead to social exclusion (Las Heras, 2019).

As specific sectors of attention, the following are contemplated:

- Family;
- Children and Youth;
- Elderly;
- Woman;
- People with disabilities;
- Dependent persons;
- Inmates and ex-prisoners;
- Drug addicts;
- Ethnic minorities;
- Homeless;
- Refugee and stateless immigrants;

- Others, in a situation of need or marginalization.

Social services were created by the State, they are public and must be so by definition if the democratic and social State is to be believed in. In other words, historically, social services have been created by social initiative, by the so-called third sector, voluntary or non-profit sector. Public systems of social services are increasingly important, so the public authorities guarantee the right of citizens to social services. Even so, there are also social service providers operating in the free market.

Functions of social services in Spain:

- Information, assessment, guidance, and advice to the population on benefits and services of the Public System of Social Services and other possible resources of other Systems of Protection Social in Andalusia.
 - The implementation of preventive actions aimed at promoting the development and implementation of the social integration of the population and the reduction of social risk situations.
 - The design and development of interventions for the promotion of autonomy, quality of life and the social welfare of the reference population in its area of competence.
 - The identification of situations of social exclusion or risk of social exclusion.
 - Analysis and assessment of demands, care needs, and social problems.
 - Attention to situations of urgency or social emergency.
 - The elaboration of the social intervention project.
 - Follow-up and evaluation of results concerning the objectives proposed in the project social intervention.
 - The derivation, according to the project of social intervention, to the most suitable resource or service.
 - Awareness and promotion of participation.
 - Promotion of community animation, social participation and solidarity, and social volunteering.
 - Coordination with different services to respond to the needs of the population.
 - The study of the evolution and development of the local social reality for the identification of needs existing or emerging that require social intervention.
 - The analysis of information on the needs and demand for social services of the population of reference for the planning of required benefits and resources.
 - The evaluation of the results of the actions, interventions and technologies applied to the field of the Community Social Services.
 - Initiate the procedure for the recognition of the situation of dependency.
- (Fernández, 2014).

Regarding the organization of social services, currently, Social Services in Spain are organized in Community and Specialized. The Community are the basic structure of the public social services system (first level of attention closest to the user), its purpose being to achieve better living conditions through integrated and versatile care. The Community are developed in the Social Work Zones, understood as demarcations for their effective provision (they are structured in territorial districts, so that there is full coverage of the territory). They are in the Social Services Centers, where information, assessment, guidance and advice will be offered to the citizen; social cooperation, promotion of associationism, promotion of community life; home help; coexistence and social reintegration. On the other hand, Specialized Social Services are those that are directed towards certain sectors of the population that, due to their conditions or circumstances, need specific attention (secondary level, more technically specialized). These have two areas of action: By population groups (childhood, youth, elderly and women) and by specific situations or needs (disabilities, drug addictions, ethnic minorities, homeless people, migrations, detainees and former inmates). of these services there are different specialized centres, such as day centres, shelters, residences, nurseries ... (Alemán, 1993).

III. Special Education in Spain

Troughout the long, dark centuries before about 1700 individual deviation, whether social, political religious, intellectual or physical was rarely tolerated (Winzer, 1998). People, students with disabilities were misunderstood, isolated, not treated as human beings. Enlighten intellectual movement, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was the crucial point for enhance the first attempt of integration of people with disabilities. The initial efforts to deliver special education and to develop specially designed instruction were focused on individuals with sensory disabilities (Best, 1930; Winzer, 1998). After this, the expansion of special education began to include those individuals with cognitive disabilities, as well as the rise of institutions and specialized schools in the mid-nineteenth century. These special institutions played different roles in education and treatment of individuals with disabilities: some institutions viewed their purpose as providing educational and vocational programs and fostering moral and religious development (Giordano, 2007), but many of them saw their role as delivering medical, vocational, and custodial care and serving as a vehicle to separate, mend and

control disabled and “defective” individuals who were perceived as deviant and threatening (Armstrong, 2002; Humphries & Gordon, 1992; Winzer 1998).

The mandates and movements to educate students with exceptionalities contributed to a concomitant increase in the numbers of students identified, and changes in the types of students with exceptionalities served by special education (Salend & Garrick, 2011). The work of advocacy groups, the passage of special education-related legislation, and the movement toward inclusion also served as a framework for an increased global commitment to disability rights, and the education of students with exceptionalities and inclusive education (Giordano, 2007). Over time, a remarkable educational evolution have occurred in Spanish educational model, draw from a system which distinct between ‘normal’ and ‘anormal’ students to another that seek laboral, social and educational inclusion for all individuals. Moreover, equality in education has been legislate by government, declaring same rights and freedom for all citizens. Furthermore, nowadays international presence of Special Education and changes in legislation terminology are more obvious than ever. Emphasis is laid in share the need of attention to this type of people, promoting coexistence and being given institutional support to public and private initiatives. Although it is necessary to take into consideration that law have not been in all cases followed by the necessary sources for guarantee success. The Public Law 2/2006, Organic Law of Education (LOE, 2006) stipulates the identification and evaluation of students with special educational needs will be carried out by multi-professional (multidisciplinary) teams. Another factor to consider is that Spanish educational system also supports a multi-track structure which ensures almost full inclusion into all school activities and curriculum, special education classrooms for students for giving special support that are combined with mainstream classed and the presence of special public and private schools. In addition to this, researchers review that Spanish teachers are increasingly using cooperative learning, computer-assisted instruction, mastery learning and co-teaching, making able the adaptation for exceptional children.

Finally, educational goals in the case of students with disabilities makes emphasis in readiness skills at younger ages and vocational training and functional academics at older ages. As a result, this training is focused in the following areas: basic training, training and career guidance, vocational training, complementary activities and educational guidance.

Provisions for learners with special educational needs are governed by principles of normalisation and inclusion and ensure non-discrimination and real equality in access to the education system and continued attendance, allowing flexibility in the different stages of their education when necessary. The schooling of these learners in special schools or units, which may be extended to the age of 21, will only take place when their needs cannot be met by the special needs’ provisions available in mainstream schools.

Assessment within inclusive education system in Spain: From primary school onwards, children experiencing learning difficulties may be able to get special assistance, either from specialist teachers in the school or specialists outside of the school, though not all schools are adapted to help children who need assistance. The Spanish government requires Spanish schools to attempt to educate special-needs children within mainstream schools if the facilities exist and schools are awarded grants if they have integration teachers (PT), speech therapists and other specialists on the staff. English-language assistance is very uncommon and can be very difficult to find.

As with the Organic Act on Education (LOE), the Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education (LOMCE, 2013) focuses attention on learners with specific educational support needs. This concept covers learners who require additional educational support because of special educational needs, specific learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, high intellectual capacity, late entry to the education system or due to personal circumstances or past school records.

If a pupil has been assessed and been found to be in need of assistance, the child and parent may be sent to a Centre for Special Needs. At the centre, the child undergoes a variety of tests with a doctor and a social worker to determine the child's level of need. Once the tests are complete, the professionals evaluate the child and discuss results with the parent. If a child is determined to have learning deficiencies of 33% or more, then they are classified disabled. A grant will be given for treatment (including speech therapy, physiotherapy and other specialist assistance), help in school or placement in a specialneeds school if the child's mainstream school is unable to provide the education required. Re-assessments are made every few years to determine if the child is in need of additional (or less) assistance.

The LOMCE (2013) regulates and governs special education within general education and asserts the incorporation of special education into the mainstream system. It also highlights the concept of special educational needs (SEN). Pupils with SEN can attend mainstream or special schools. This Act also establishes that pupils with SEN should attend mainstream schools and programmes, by adapting such programmes to each pupil's individual capacities. Their schooling in special education units or establishments, or combined schooling, will only take place when pupils' needs cannot be met in mainstream schools. This situation will be periodically revised in order to promote, if possible, increased inclusion. According to the LOMCE (2013), special education is understood as a combination of material and human resources available to the education

system to meet the needs (whether temporary or permanent) that pupils may have. In this sense, the education system must have the necessary resources so that pupils with special educational needs may achieve the general goals set for all pupils.

The LOMCE stipulates that, in the case of pupils with special educational needs, the identification and evaluation of their needs will be carried out, as early as possible, by teams of professionals with different qualifications, and in the way education administrative authorities determine. These professionals will establish performance plans with regard to each pupil's educational needs. At the end of each year, the evaluation team will assess the extent to which the objectives set out in the plan have been achieved. This will facilitate the introduction of the necessary adaptations and changes in the intervention plans, including the most suitable type of schooling according to learners' educational needs, so as to facilitate, whenever possible, their access to a better inclusive system. The education administrative authorities are responsible for the early childhood schooling of children with SEN and the development of programmes to facilitate schooling in primary and compulsory secondary education mainstream schools. The education administrative authorities are also responsible for the schooling of learners with SEN after compulsory education, and for making the necessary adaptations of the exams, as stated by law, when required. For the care of pupils with special educational needs, the education system offers teachers help through specialists in special education, speech therapy and qualified professionals.

The Spanish Government is responsible for providing special education to its citizens. Public schools are financed by State taxes and are obliged to include an aid programme for children requiring special education, therefore the families of these children receive support from schools free of charge. It must be clear that the education system must be inclusive and must guarantee equality or equity in its access and maintenance; therefore, it must be organized to identify the specific needs for educational support and to give adequate attention or response to each pupil according to their needs.

We identify four different stages:

- Prevention: Aimed at all students. Implementation of stimulation and development programs by educational stages.
- Detection: Definition of the signs of special education needs. Protocols of Detection, derivation, and intervention.
- Identification: Presentation of indicators and evaluation instruments for identification in the different stages. Here the psycho-pedagogical evaluation is carried out and the type of need is identified to know the type of response required by the pupil.
- Opinion: Here you can request the intervention of Specialized Educational Orientation Team. The schooling modality and care proposal are established.
- Organization of the response: Curricular adaptations and specific programs. We differentiate between ordinary educational care and different educational care.

Therefore, the educational system has the obligation to respond to personal differences, whether they come from different possibilities, capacities or interests, or from different individual and social situations, in order to achieve quality education. Therefore, different inclusive education plans have been created, with the aim of maximizing the abilities of all students.

It is essential to keep in mind that inclusive education is not the same as integral education, since this is an allusion that different people and minority groups have to adapt to a hegemonic culture (López, 2006) and On the other hand, inclusive education, according to UNESCO (2005) is a process aimed at responding to the diversity of students, increasing their participation and reducing exclusion in and from education. Among those plans and projects are:

- Learning Communities. These have been created in order to reach an information society for all people by accelerating learning. This means that students can achieve educational results equal or superior to those of those who enjoy situations of economic or social privilege. For this reason, the project is aimed especially at those centres with the most deficiencies, problems of inequality and poverty, in which external conditions seem to point more towards school failure and exclusion. (Flecha et al., 2003).
- "Atlántida" Project. It is a project that integrates a set of experiences in centres, municipalities and areas that revolve on the purpose of projecting democratic citizenship on the curriculum, the organization of the centres and their relations with the environment, families and other social agents. Its main objective is to strengthen the internal capacity of change, establishing links with the community, through links between the centres, with families and other institutions and organizations to jointly take responsibility for citizenship education (Luengo, 2006).
- "Roma" project. It is a project that is based on the learning of coexistence, with the purpose of focusing on the improvement of family, school and social contexts, from democratic coexistence, mutual respect and autonomy,

personal, social and moral (López, 2006). In addition, it is divided into four zones of development and learning, which resemble the parts of the brain: zone of thinking (cognitive processes), zone of communicating (language), zone of love (affectivity) and zone of action (autonomy). It is considered that it is very important to have a knowledge of students by teachers and that students know each other in order to develop cooperative projects based on freedom and equity (López, 2006).

- “INCLUD-ED” project. This was developed between 2006-2011 as the Framework Program of the European Commission. Its main objective was the elaboration of educational strategies in which the dialogue between researchers and participants was used, thus favouring compulsory education. In addition, this work sought to overcome inequalities, in order to achieve greater social cohesion. Through the exhaustive study of the techniques used and thanks to the educational evaluations, very positive results could be achieved. To carry it out, students would be divided into mixed, heterogeneous and inclusive groups. It is very important that these groups function as interactive groups, with dialogic gatherings and mentors that facilitate the learning of knowledge (Valls et al., 2014).

Over the past decades significant changes have occurred throughout all aspects of the field of Special Education in Spain. One of these changes is related to appropriate and effective instruction for students with disabilities and diverse educational needs in inclusive classroom placements. All of these change efforts have created the need to redefine the roles of regular and special teachers, as well as the services provided for students who may have special educational needs.

IV. Conclusion

The choice of this topic is due to the fact that there are currently many people and, in particular, children, who are at risk of social exclusion, whether by ethnicity, economic status, special educational needs ... Therefore, knowledge about laws and services which support such people is necessary, in order to avoid social exclusion.

Spain is fighting to become a more just country and put an end to social inequalities. For this, we have Social Services and Special Education. Both help social minorities, who are at a disadvantage, and improve their quality of life by offering them the same opportunities as the rest. The objectives of social services are to favour the promotion and integration of people and groups in society, as well as to assess and resolve their possible social difficulties, providing resources that improve the quality of life and prevent and avoid the causes that lead to social exclusion. They are public and have numerous functions which have been mentioned above. The socioeconomic crisis brings forth the need to readapt the Public Social Services System in Spain, a need whose root cause is not alone in the crisis (since many of the issues that needed to be dealt with existed before the crisis) but perhaps during these times, have become much more evident.

Special Education is a service provided to citizens so that they reach their maximum potential and, therefore, is the obligation of the system provide support and technical and human resources to compensate the deficits of students in access to basic learning essential to face adult life. The Spanish Government is responsible for providing special education to its citizens free of charge in public schools, which must carry out a protocol to detect and identify the special educational needs of each child. In my opinion, the two services do a very important and necessary job. I also believe that it is very important that these services are free of charge, otherwise, there would still be the problem of unequal opportunities, that is to say, if only the rich could take advantage of these services. To conclude, although much remains to be done to achieve full equality between the citizens of the country, I am proud that there are people who show solidarity with the most disadvantaged people and fight for them to have the opportunities they deserve and, ultimately, a better life.

Despite the fact that special education had numerous advances, much more remains to be done for achieve real equality in education. Without a doubt, a greater social inclusion, a major effort in investigation and the development of new educational methods would make a difference to achieve and ensure equal opportunity in every important aspect of life for these individuals, regardless of personal characteristics.

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