

How to include young deaf students in secondary education ?



Location: Achada Santo António, Praia City, Santiago Island

Stakeholders involved: Support Association, Development and Integration of Child with Disabilities (AADICD) and Ministry of Education and Sports (MES).

A sign language interpreter supporting learning in the classroom at Pedro Gomes Secondary School, in Praia, Capital of Cape Verde

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Pedro Gomes Secondary School (ESPG) has been a public establishment since 1988. It is situated in one of the most populous neighbourhoods of the city of Praia, with a total of approximately 1700 students, eighty-four teachers and twenty-two classrooms. Located in the heart of this neighbourhood, ESPG is considered a model school for the development of social and educational projects that involve the family, the educational community and students. The ESPG is one of the UNESCO associated schools with a social and political commitment to promote peace and social justice through inclusive practices.

Through a partnership between the Ministry of Education and Sports and the AADICD, signed in 2007, the ESPG inaugurated the first inclusive class of the country in 2009. This benefit about twenty youth, among them ten deaf students, giving them then access to secondary education. Through this partnership nine teachers were trained in sign language and developed specific teaching techniques to support inclusive learning in the classroom.



In addition to attending their morning or afternoon timetabled classes, the deaf students attend tutorials in their non-timetabled periods facilitated by teachers. This is a strategic time to consolidate learning.

To help with communication and access to learning content, teachers of different subjects are assigned a teacher from the ministry, with a short period training in sign language in Portugal and Senegal who provides the link between students, teachers and the learning.

This example of good practices also highlights the high level of involvement of deaf students in extracurricular activities such as dance, sport, music and drama with the educational community of the school.

FACTORS THAT MADE THIS EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE POSSIBLE

- The partnership between the Ministry of Education and the AADICD is certainly one of the most significant factors of this pilot project in Cape Verde. As a result of this partnership, we have the new figure of 'Teacher who performs a role of Interpreter in sign language' and teachers' training

in sign language which allowed an embedding of this practice in the classroom and in the lives of deaf students;

- The open and participative management of ESPG who embraced this challenge involving the whole school community, with a strong focus on respecting individual's rights and on supporting students to reach their potential;
- The advocacy and inclusive vision of AADICD in promoting and respecting the rights of people with disabilities.

MAIN DIFFICULTIES AND HOW THEY WERE OVERCOME

- The main difficulty is the lack of an official Cape Verdean sign language which would allow greater and better interactivity in relationship to language comprehension. This however, did not stop to get on with the initiative, based, to this level an adaptation of Portuguese sign language and, as important as this to the creativity of its users;
- Resolved this problem, the challenge was the level of the relationship between the interpreter teacher and other teachers of the nine subjects taught in classes that integrated students with disabilities. Facing the reality of having a teacher who performs the role of interpret of nine disciplines the teaching staff responsible for the class meets weekly with the interpreter and together they outline the strategies and share the material to be taught in the lessons. They work in the same way in relationship to oral and written assessment;
- In the beginning a certain tension was visible in the interaction of deaf students with other hearing students, but it was done a big investment in social activities and interaction, creating extracurricular activities which promote collaboration and respect for individual differences.

EFFECTS OF THIS EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICES

- This practice came to demonstrate that inclusion is possible in the current Cape Verdean educational context. In the past, children with disabilities, deaf children in particular, had no access to Secondary education, restricting

and hindering the possibility of an active and independent life. This experience has had a direct impact on reducing prejudice, demonstrating that difference is the wealth of society and education a right for all;

- The partnership between the state and NGOs has been demonstrated to be strategic for social change in Cape Verde. This partnership has strengthened the idea that the fight for the inclusion of people with disabilities is not an apology but a political act of citizenship and social justice. Regarding learning, it was an opportunity for the teaching staff to reflect and recognise that there are several ways of teaching and learning.

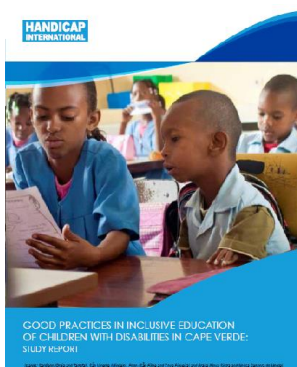
“I'm fulfilling a dream of attending high school” Janete a student of 7th year of ESPG

HOW CAN THIS PRACTICE BE IMPROVED?

- Strengthened partnerships with parents and careers, so that they have a more active role in this initiative;
- Increased focus on brief courses to train teachers in Sign Language;
- Creating assessment tools appropriate for deaf students in the disciplines in which speaking skills are valued;
- Increased coordination between the School and the Vocational Training Centres providing early intervention with technical and professional training.

For more information:

Full project report: [Report on good practices in inclusive education of children with disabilities in Cape Verde](#)



Criteria for the good practices: see page 6.

Recommendations from the good practices: see page 33-34.

Contact: Maria José Barbosa, School Director
pedro.gomes@cvtelecom.cv Tel: 261 24 35