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# 1. Introduction

This document aims to be a series of proposals and guidelines to orient and guide educational action in order to fully cater for the training needs of society and its people. It begins with a vision of society - its culture, values and principles, and a call for its transformation. It also sets forth a vision of human beings and their inclusion as full citizens.

It conveys FEAPS approaches to education, the education we want. Education that, as a right, is for everyone and for a lifetime, and education that is not merely focussed on the progression of traditionally academic fields, but essentially centred around areas developing unique projects for each learner's life within an unprejudiced social context. It is an education system rooted in a determined social model; an educational model must inherently transform a social one, and both must be consistent with one another to form an equal balance of principles and values.

This document paints a dream-like, idealistic picture, nowadays even utopian, which should be any person's education in society, while at the same time paying particular attention to the characteristics, principles and values of this society for an education system.

Following on from a brief description about FEAPS and what it has developed in the field of education, the present document, in line with what is mentioned above, primarily conveys a reference framework. If we continue with the idea of the picture, it would be the background of the image and would include the main legal developments on a state level as well as some of the predominant international guidelines on education.

Secondly, it reflects the framework of the ideological principles behind the proposal, which contain a fixed notion of the human being contextualised with other human beings in terms of social dialogue rather than focussing on intelligence. It also deals with the relevance of the current concept of Intellectual Disability in education (Luckasson and cols. 2002), which is focussed on support and the understanding that disability is reflected in the interaction of a person - with determined needs resulting from limitations in their development - and within the context of how that person lives and develops. It also deals with the relevance of the quality of life model in education (Schalock and Verdugo, 2003) adopted by FEAPS and strongly linked to the ethical framework (FEAPS, 2004). With these approaches FEAPS declares, in no uncertain terms, in this section that the proposals' mission should be to educate, and must be coherent with the principles and values that FEAPS upholds.

As education is not necessarily reduced to a determined stage in a person's life, but oriented throughout and at all levels, it is important to stress that over the course of this document, both in its approach and development, this perspective is based on education in infancy and adolescence.

Thirdly, the model's essential keys are reflected in accordance with the ideological approaches put forward. They are most of the major keys to be considered and approached, with the collaboration and commitment of everyone, to enable this idealistic picture to be reflected in the actions and strategies aimed at transforming society and education.

The proposal is dynamic, complex and global in its conception without retracting from the necessity that it develops unique, individual and distinctive proposals that accommodate each person. In line with this model, both on a macro-system level (education policies) and meso-system level (the school and education practices), FEAPS must develop strategies and action plans to transform the present and move closer to this desired future. The final section refers to the initial strategic proposals debated within the framework of the FEAPS Education Congress held in Córdoba in February 2009 under the slogan “Education + Inclusion = Coexistence”.

## 2. What is FEAPS?

FEAPS is a family based associative movement with a mission to improve the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. As an associative and social movement it aims to defend rights, develop and maintain services and be an agent of social change.

FEAPS developed an ethical code (FEAPS, 2004) that supports the idea that a person with a disability is above all else a person, with full dignity and humanity.

It recognises that from these approaches education is absolutely essential in the improvement of living conditions for persons with intellectual disabilities, both in their standard of living and the attitudes and behaviour in their environment.

FEAPS is present all over Spain, in all the autonomous communities, through autonomous federations (apart from the autonomous cities, Ceuta and Melilla) which form part of over eight hundred and fifty bodies managing close to three thousand centres and services and give support to nearly one hundred thousand persons with intellectual disabilities and their families.

# 3. Development

## 3. Development Frameworks and Feaps education proposals

The FEAPS mission is to improve the quality of life of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families. Therefore, FEAPS is committed to promoting change in the field of education.

Our children and young people all have a right to education – education in capital letters – because we believe in opportunities for our students regardless of the support they need.

If you look back you find that very often the solution given to students with specific educational support needs comes from specific services and is rarely resolved in a mainstream education environment. Even today, for a collective of students requiring significant curriculum adaptations the educational solution still exists in specific special education centres. In this context, the result has been the coexistence of two parallel education systems, mainstream and special.

Fortunately, the current legal framework favours a much more inclusive model, which stems from special education centres no longer being the only answer for children and young people with intellectual disabilities as the mainstream centres are increasingly having to deal with a greater diversity of students.

Future perspectives (the movement of one school for all, AAIDD's concept of intellectual disability and the guidelines of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education) lead us towards proposing changes in both educational approaches and in the model of the services and their organisation.

It is within the context of this new perspective that FEAPS has devised its approaches in an attempt to focus its vision on improving educational practices and overcoming barriers in learning and participation as well as developing schools' ability to meet the needs of all learners. When we say 'all' learners that also includes those with intellectual disabilities. The current FEAPS approaches have been developing over time. The Manual de Buena Práctica de Educación (Manual of Good Educational Practice) (FEAPS, 2000) indicated that education should prepare people for life in order to gain independence and also pointed out that schooling must always follow the principles of integration, normalisation and individualisation. The manual mentions the different educational possibilities and indicates that integration in the mainstream

classroom, the mainstream school, is the preferred model for all learners. When the Manual refers to special needs education it stresses that “it must be fully integrated and and share activities and resources with mainstream centres and participatory community programmes that are fully open to the outside world and foster a culture of flexibility and continual creativity”. Similarly, it also notes that “it is necessary to bear in mind that a special needs centre is not a place or collection of 'specialists' that look after a person in determined areas, but involves the organisation and coordination of personal resources, materials, etc. Furthermore, this model designs and demonstrates normalising activities in favour of integration and is in accordance with the age of the learners”.

The FEAPS state UDS (Sector Development Unit) on education, together with the autonomous UDSs, have been developing essential labour to promote and transform the FEAPS education proposals set out in the associative movement. In January 2001 a document reflected this issue in Spain and distinctions were drawn in each Autonomous Community.

In 2002 the UDS published a FEAPS information booklet entitled “Indicadores de Calidad para la Integración Escolar” (Quality Indicators for Integration in Schools) (FEAPS, 2002). The indicators were oriented towards the school environment, management organisations, professionals, outside support teams, students, families, Authorities, Associations and others.

In 2004 FEAPS announced the principles for undertaking the challenge of inclusion in schools and became committed to developing actions which would make this a reality. A template carried out by the UDS pointed to an *“understanding that each person is unique, and solutions must be diverse regardless of different education models... the goal of FEAPS is to ensure that all the actions carried out lead us towards inclusion in all stages of education and, based on this premise, special needs centres are progressively transformed into resource managers to support this model. The request of the Education UDS is that all the necessary strategies (reflection, sensitisation and assessment) are created so that FEAPS becomes a leading benchmark in this process”*.

FEAPS most recent educational development, obviously besides the Education Congress 'Education + Inclusion = Coexistence', was the edition of the REINE (Ethical Reflection on Inclusion in Schools) Guide, also carried out by the UDS. It was published in collaboration with Obra Social Caja Madrid and is among the FEAPS' Collection of Good Practice Booklets. The Guide is a tool which is available to educational communities for the ethical consideration of inclusive education and advocates that the proposals for improvements regarding inclusion stem from this shared consideration.

Indirectly, in the last few years FEAPS has also had the opportunity to demonstrate its approaches through reference points such as CERMI (The Spanish Committee of Disabled Representatives). In 2008 the state-owned CERMI developed the Seminar “Education and people with disability: present and future”. The seminar gave rise to and devised the document “Proposals for the recovery plan for inclusive education”. Among the proposals aimed at the Authorities, there was the creation of an Industry Conference for Inclusive Education in which a Recovery Plan for Inclusive Education took centre stage. *Considerations for contributions from the third sector and families in the plan's design and the coordination of education and social policies were also championed in order to meet the requirements of persons with special needs. The “transformation of Special Needs Centres into Assessment Centres, with specialised support and resources oriented towards adequate educational assistance for an a wide range of students with a specific need for educational support” was also put forward.*

The future of the education system is not simple, so from FEAPS point of view the reliance on experience built up over more than thirty years of work in special education schools is crucial. Special schools and teams are an important asset and a crucial factor for all support considerations in inclusive education.

The aim is to provide quality education to all learners in a homogenous education system, an education system interested in the progress of all.

In short, over the past few years there has been a worldwide trend of orienting educational considerations towards more inclusive approaches. The debate over the best way to organise the resources and services required by learners with disabilities has lead us towards more inclusive approaches and closer collaborations with mainstream centres and professionals (Echeita, 2006).

Inclusion does not mean sidestepping the needs of children and young people with disabilities; inclusion is not denying the singularity of needs, but responding to them in a way that does not completely set them apart. The key lies in providing the most suitable solution for their singularity from a more inclusive educational context, which poses a significant challenge.

Male and female students with disabilities have the right to participate in mainstream environments, but it is our responsibility to guarantee that they obtain significant and worthwhile results. They have the right to progress in their studies and gain positive experiences that contribute both to them becoming better people and provide them with a sense of well-being and happiness that allows them, now and in the future, to have access to the most normalised and integrated situations possible.

As Josep Font indicates *“Inclusive education is a process whereby schools work towards overcoming learning and participation barriers for all pupils. An inclusive school is one which is concerned with learning and teaching, its own achievements and the attitudes and welfare of each and every one of its pupils”*.

# 4. Reference Framework

As indicated above, this section includes comments regarding the primary legal developments, on a state level, of some of the most relevant international guidelines on education and, finally, regarding developments carried out by FEAPS in the field of education.

Before commencing, we must clearly state and emphasise that nowadays inclusive education is not an issue up for debate, it is about the right of each individual. As indicated below, this is how it was stipulated in the UN Convention on the rights for persons with disabilities, which has been ratified by Spain (BOE – The Official State Gazette - 21 April 2008) and in the declaration approved by the FEAPS Board of Directors in 2004.

## Legislative Framework

### 1. WHAT THE CONSTITUTION SAYS

The Spanish Constitution, approved in 1978, proclaims as a fundamental regulation its wish to “protect all Spanish people in the exercise of human rights, their cultures and traditions, languages and institutions. To promote the progress of culture and the economy to ensure a dignified quality of life for all” (preamble).

It also clearly states that it is the individuals, society and the governments that are involved in education.

*In the second chapter (rights and liberties) it states that “Spaniards are equal before the law, and may not in any way be discriminated against on account of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance” (Section 14).*

*Additionally, in Article 27, which contains specific references to education, it states that “everyone has a right to education. The freedom of teaching is recognised. Education shall aim at the full development of the human personality with due respect for the democratic principles of coexistence and for basic rights and freedoms...”*

*It also indicates that “elementary education is compulsory and free. The public authorities guarantee the right of all to education, through a general education programming, with the effective participation of all sectors concerned and the setting-up of educational centres...”*

In more detail, Article 49 states that “the public authorities shall carry out a policy of preventive care, treatment, rehabilitation and integration for the physically, sensorial or mentally handicapped by giving them specialised care they require, and affording them special protection to for the enjoyment of enjoyment of the rights granted by this Part to all citizens”.

## **2. WHAT DOES THE LOE (Organic Law of Education, May 2006) SAY?**

As the Constitution indicates, it is the responsibility of the State to control basic regulations for the development of Article 27 (education) in order to guarantee the fulfilment of the obligations by the public authorities regarding this matter.

In 2006 the last education law was passed, which states three fundamental principles in its preamble.

*The first entails the demand for providing all citizens, of both sexes, with quality education at all levels of the education system. As stipulated by the law in this section “Since all citizens should achieve the maximum development of all their intellectual, cultural, emotional and social capacities, they need to receive quality education adapted to their needs. At the same time, effective equal opportunities must be guaranteed by providing the necessary support to both pupils and educational institutions. Therefore, the aim is to improve the educational standards of all pupils by finding the balance between the quality of education and its distribution”.*

*The second principle entails the need to get all sectors of the education community to collaborate in order to achieve this objective “The responsibility of school success does not only fall on the individual pupil, but also on families, teachers, schools, education authorities and society as a whole, which is ultimately responsible for the quality of the education system”. It also states that “it is necessary to recognise the diversity of the pupils and equitably deal with the new challenges and difficulties brought about by this diversity. Ultimately, it is about all the centres, both public-owned and private state-subsidized, undertaking the social commitment towards education without exclusions, thus stressing the complementary nature of both educational networks without losing singularity”.*

*The third entails a commitment towards educational goals set out by the European Union for the next few years. They emphasise the importance of flexibility in the education system “The demand for the consideration of providing quality education to all pupils while at the same time taking into account their diverse interests, characteristics and social backgrounds forces us to recognise decision making skills that affect both the organisation and the way it is operated. Although the authorities must establish the general framework to progress with educational activities, the centres must also possess an adequate margin of autonomy that*

*allows them to adapt their activities to specific circumstances and the characteristics of the pupils so that all students involved obtain a successful education". "The activity of the educational centres ultimately lies in the teaching staff ensuring that all young people develop to the maximum of their abilities within a framework of quality and equity, and ensuring that general objectives turn into specific achievements as well as adapting the curriculum and educational activities to specific circumstances developed in the centres. Ensuring that parents are involved in the education of their children is also impossible without teaching staff who are dedicated to their work. In some ways, the changes that the education system and the operation of the educational centres have produced have forced us to evaluate the initial training model for teaching staff and adapt it to a European environment".*

*In the development of the law in the chapter referring to the principles and objectives of education, we wish to draw attention to the following principles: "quality education for all learners regardless of their situation and background. Equity guaranteeing equal opportunities, inclusive education, non-discrimination and acting to compensate for personal, cultural, economic and social inequalities, specifically focussing on those resulting from disability... flexibility to adapt a range of the learners' aptitudes, interests, expectations and needs to education..."*

*In 'título II' on Equity in education it discusses learners with a specific need for educational support and outlines that "Authorities shall have the necessary means available to help every student obtain maximum personal, intellectual, social and emotional development as well as general objectives established in the present law".*

"Comprehensive assistance for students with a special need will start the moment this need is identified and will be governed by the principals of normalisation and inclusion".

### **3. THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>) was ratified by Spain in April 2008 (BOE 21 April) and was obliged to fulfil the rights outlined in the Convention (which differs from other international approaches that are non-prescriptive recommendations for the States undertaking them).

Below is an extract of the principles outlined by the Convention:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons.

- Non-discrimination.
- Full and effective participation in society.
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity.
- Equality of opportunity.
- Accessibility.
- Equality between men and women.
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Article 24 recognises the right to inclusive education at all levels as well as life long learning. This is fully stated below.

*“1. States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life long learning directed to:*

- a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and strengthening respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity.*
- b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential.*
- c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.*

*2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:*

- a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability.*
- b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live.*
- c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided.*
- d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education.*
- e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.*

3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:

- a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring.
- b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community.
- c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

4. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.?

5. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities”.

## **Declaration and guidelines Framework**

Education is a permanent consideration for all Governments from different International Organisations, and without question the importance of education for persons with disabilities deserves a special mention. The right to education is a recognised right for all (“Everyone has the right to education”), as stipulated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and, as laid out above, in the United Nations Convention on the rights for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, education is an indispensable tool for protecting other human rights, laying down the necessary foundations for good health, freedom, social participation...

“Where the right to education is guaranteed, people's access to and enjoyment of other rights is enhanced” (EFA – Education for All – Global Monitoring Report. UNESCO, 2002).

There are various International Organisations, Forums and Declarations that recognise the importance of education. The information in the paragraphs below are taken from the following:

1. The Sundberg Declaration 1981
2. The Jomtein Declaration 1990
3. The Salamanca Statement 1994
4. The World Education Forum 2000
5. The Lisbon Declaration 2007
6. The International Education Conference 2008
7. Inclusive education. Moving from words to deeds (European Disability Forum, 2009)

### **1. SUNDBERG DECLARATION. TORREMOLINOS 1981**

In 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons, the framework for the “World Conference of Actions and Strategies for Education, Prevention and Integration” was approved. It was organised by the Spanish Government in Collaboration with UNESCO and was held in Torremolinos from 2 to 7 November 1981. The declaration affirms that “Public authorities, competent organisations and society as a whole should take into account, when preparing any medium or long-term strategy concerning disabled persons, the fundamental principles of participation, integration, personalization, decentralization (sectorization) and inter-professional coordination”. Clearly principles that continue to be in force under other names.

Furthermore, Article 6 of this declaration (the regulatory document of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) affirms that *“Education, training, culture and information programmes must be aimed at integrating disabled persons into the ordinary working and living environment. Such integration must begin as early as possible in the person’s life. In order to bring this about, disabled persons must receive appropriate education and training, whatever their personal situation (in institutions, at home, in schools, etc.), for as long as necessary”*.

Moreover, Article 7 states that *“...governments have the responsibility, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, for ensuring early detection and appropriate treatment. Educational programmes, in which information and guidance for parents plays a very important role, must be organized from early infancy”*. Article 8 also stipulates that *“Family participation in the education, training, rehabilitation and development of all disabled persons must be increased. Appropriate assistance must be provided to help the families to fulfil their role in this area”*.

It is also worth referring to Article 9, which states that “Educators and other professionals responsible for educational, cultural and information programmes must also be qualified to deal with the specific situations and needs of disabled persons. Their training must, consequently, take account of this requirement and be regularly brought up to date”.

## **2. JOMTIEN DECLARATION. THAILAND 1990.**

The Global Declaration of Education For All. Meeting Basic Learning Needs. Article I, section 3 of this Declaration on “*Meeting basic learning needs*” affirms that “*Basic education is more than an end in itself. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may build, systematically, further levels and types of education and training*”.

In section 1 of Article III on “*Universalizing access and promoting equality*” it states that “*Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults. To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparities*”, and in section 5 it indicates that “*The basic learning needs of disabled persons demand special attention. Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system*”.

## **3. WORLD CONFERENCE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS: ACCESS AND QUALITY. SALAMANCA 1994**

Undoubtedly representing a turning point for special needs education, the Conference approved the Salamanca Statement on the principles, policies and practices for special educational needs and an Action Framework. It centres around the principle of integration, the need to act with a view to securing schools for everyone, and contributes towards achieving education for everyone and providing schools with more educational efficiency. Nowadays it is a key reference for developing inclusive education policies.

In Article 2 it states: “We believe and proclaim that:

- *Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.*
- *Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.*
- *Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.*
- *Those with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.*

■ *Mainstream schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system”.*

Furthermore, Article 3 emphasises “We call upon governments and urge them to:

- *Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties.*
- *Adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in mainstream schools, unless they are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.*
- *Develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries that have experience with inclusive schools.*
- *Establish decentralized and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special education needs.*
- *Encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organization of persons with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes concerning provision for special educational needs.*
- *Invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education.*
- *Ensure that, in the context of systematic change, teacher education programmes, both pre-service and inservice, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools”.*

This message has unquestionably had a global impact and has become a reference for numerous countries and organisations.

Ten years after this Statement, in 2004, various authors that promoted it at the time put forward their assessments and perspectives. Some of these opinions and interesting ideas have been brought together, such as “...the educational reality is much less permeable to the changes that most of us desire; therefore, it must be the main area that wholeheartedly continues to strengthen, along with social processes and policies that allow us to mobilise determination and willpower to ensure that the relevant authorities, education centres and teaching staff incorporate inclusive educational approaches and practices in the classroom. This will ensure that we are on track to enhance equal opportunities, reduce the discrimination of marginalised social groups and achieve the greater welfare and quality of life for the learners” (Echeita and Verduño, 2004). Also, other opinions such as that of Lena Saleh (2004) “... when it comes to advancing the principle of inclusion in educations reforms, the concerns and a certain level of resistance would be welcome”.

*Ten years on Climent Giné (2004) mentioned how “...in some ways the advances are undeniable, but this risk of stagnancy worries me. Society must be convinced that the important thing is changing attitudes, which is a long road and will only be achieved by increasing space and the opportunity to coexist at school and in the community”. Finally, in Rafael Mendía’s opinion (2004) “The Salamanca Statement is a permanent reference and still in force in many fundamental issues... after a period of rest, or the sedimentation of the pedagogical discourse, it could represent an action programme in society - an action framework for the twenty first century. Big changes require big cycles...”*

#### **4. THE DAKAR WORLD EDUCATION FORUM. 2000.**

This constitutes collective commitment. It undertook international commitments from governments to regulate opportune laws guaranteeing education for all and distinguished between the international of debate on “integration” and the approach to “inclusion”. UNESCO reiterated its involvement and commitment to the task of continuing the Salamanca message, indicating that *“The key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of 'Education for All' as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All must take into account the needs of the poor and disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people affected by conflicts HIV/AIDS, or any other health problem, and those with special learning needs...”*.

*“The inclusion of children and young people with special needs... and others excluded from the education system, must be an integral part of the strategies to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015...”*.

*“In order to attract and retain children and young people from marginalized groups, education systems should respond flexibly. Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and need of all learners”....*

A series of goals were established for 2015, which, judging by the way they are reflected in the different Education for All assessment reports, will certainly be difficult to achieve.

Without question, currently an **inclusive education** model is advocated, which according to Cynthia Duk, means that “to significantly change both mainstream and special education levels it is necessary for them to progressively combine to create conditions that enable the required transformations to be introduced and to analyse each context and the resources available” (the focus of inclusive education).

It is important to view special needs education as a collection of support services and resources oriented towards mainstream education that benefit all students and contribute towards developing higher quality education for all.

UNESCO defines inclusive education as something that “*seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion*”. Moreover, they indicate that it involves identifying and overcoming barriers to learning and participation in the education process and also stress that educational inclusion is identified as fostering a mainstream and accommodating education that is part of Education for All (Ainscow, Booth y Dyson, 2006).

Inclusion is undoubtedly a challenge to education systems and all professionals working for quality education. An inclusive model resembling what was put forward by the different authors could advocate greater social cohesion and encourage the acceptance of differences. It is important to remember that, as Ainscow and Booth point out, inclusion is not a fixed state, but a continual process that should lead to centres questioning their educational culture, policies and practices in order to detect which barriers are limiting the learning and participation of the pupils.

There is a tool that provides a series of indicators which enable educational centres to assess themselves and advance towards inclusive cultures, action plans and practices. It is an 'Index for Inclusion' (a Guide to the assessment and improvement of inclusive education).

*“The notion of inclusion does not only belong to the education system, it should be in accordance with the notion of an inclusive society that recognises this value and in which there is a place for each member. The social costs of exclusion, stigmatization, segregation and alienation go further than just the responsibility of the education system, these are found in the ethics of society as a whole. Inclusion is driven and fostered by values; our values and beliefs are what shape the politics and culture we possess and desire” (UNESCO).*

## **5. LISBON DECLARATION. 2007.**

On 17 September 2007, within the framework of the Portuguese presidency of the European Union, the Portuguese Ministry of Education and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education organised the Hearing entitled “Young Voices: Meeting Diversity in Education”.

The “Lisbon Declaration – Young People's views on Inclusive Education” is the result of a consensus between young people from 29 countries with special educational needs in secondary, vocational and higher education.

The Declaration contains material covered by the delegates from the participating countries in the plenary session held in the 'Assembleia da Republica' on the rights, needs, challenges and recommendations needed to achieve successful inclusive education.

This declaration is in line with other European and International documents regarding special educational needs, such as the "Resolution of the Council concerning the integration of children and young people with disabilities into ordinary systems of education (CE, 1990)", the "Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO 1994), the "Charter of Luxembourg (Helios Programme, 1996), the "Council Resolution on equal opportunities for pupils and students with disabilities in education and training (EC, 2003) and the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (United Nations 2006). Part of the reference texts with the proposals and views of the participating young persons with disabilities are included below.

“1. The Young people agreed on their RIGHTS:

- *We have the right to be respected and not to be discriminated against. We do not want sympathy; we want to be respected as future adults who will have to live and work in a normal environment.*
- *We have the right to the same opportunities as everyone else, but with the necessary support to meet our needs. No one's needs should be ignored.*
- *We have the right to make our own decisions and choices. Our voice needs to be heard.*
- *We have the right to live independently. We also want to have a family and we want to have a house adapted to our needs. Many of us want to have the possibility to study at a university. We also want to work and we do not want to be separated from other people without disabilities.*
- *Everyone in society needs to be aware of, understand and respect our rights.*

2. The Young people expressed clear views on the main IMPROVEMENTS they have experienced:

- *Generally we have received satisfactory support in our education, but more progress needs to be made.*
- *The accessibility of building is improving. Mobility issues and the accessibility of the built environment are more and more a topic of discussion and debate.*
- *Disability is becoming more visible in society.*
- *ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) are improving and the digital books are of a higher quality.*

3. The young people highlighted the CHALLENGES and NEEDS for the future:

- *Accessibility needs are different for different people. There are different accessibility barriers in education and in society for people with special needs, for example:*

- *During lessons and exams some of us need more time.*
- *Sometimes we need personal assistance in our classes.*
- *We need to have access to adapted material at the same time as our classmates.*
- *Free choice of study topics is sometimes limited by accessibility of buildings, insufficient technology and accessibility of materials (equipment, books).*
- *We need subjects and skills that are meaningful for us and in our future life.*
- *We need good counselling throughout our school education regarding what is possible for us to do in the future based on our individual needs.*
- *There is still a lack of knowledge about disability. Teachers, other pupils and some parents sometimes have a negative attitude towards us. Non-disabled people should know that they can ask a disabled person her/himself whether help is needed or not.*

#### 4. The Young People expressed their views on INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

- *It is very important to give everyone the freedom to choose where they want to be educated.*
- *Inclusive education is best if the conditions are right for us. This means the necessary support, resources and trained teachers should be available. Teachers need to be motivated, to be well informed about and understand our needs. They need to be well trained, ask us what we need and be well co-ordinated among themselves during all the school years.*
- *We see a lot of benefits in inclusive education: we acquire more skills; we live wider experiences; we learn about how to manage in the real world; we need to have and interact with friends with and without special needs.*
- *Inclusive education with individualised, specialised support is the best preparation for higher education. Specialised centres would be of help to support us and to inform universities properly about the help we require.*
- *Inclusive education is mutually beneficial to us and to everyone.*

#### 5. The Young People CONCLUDED:

We are the ones to build our future. We need to remove barriers inside ourselves and inside other people without disabilities. We have to grow beyond our disability – then the world will accept us in a better way”.

(<http://www.european-agency.org/publications/flyers/lisbon-declaration-young-people2019s-views-on-inclusive-education>)

## **6. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION (ICE). GENEVA 2008.**

The forty-eighth International Conference on Education took place on 8 November 2008, where Ministers of Education, Heads of Delegation and Delegates from 153 Member States (including Spain) together with representatives from 20 intergovernmental organisations, 25 NGOs, foundations and other civil institutions discussed the slogan “Inclusive education: the Way of the Future”.

*Among numerous other areas, the final declaration (UNESCO, 2008a) “...calls upon Member States to adopt an inclusive education approach in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of educational policies as a way to further accelerate the attainment of Education for All (EFA) goals as well as to contribute to building more inclusive societies. To this end, a broadened concept of inclusive education is viewed as a general guiding principle to strengthen education for sustainable development, lifelong learning for all and equal access of all levels of society to learning opportunities so as to implement the principles of inclusive education”.*

*The designated reference for the Conference (UNESCO, 2008b), which was handed out prior to the event to all participants for deliberation, initially states that: “Inclusive education is a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centres of learning so as to cater for all children – including boys and girls... Education takes place in many contexts, both formal and non-formal, and within families and the wider community. Consequently, inclusive education is not a marginal issue, but is central to the achievement of high-quality education for all learners and the development of more inclusive societies”.*

In terms of the concept of inclusion, it goes on to say that “the debate on inclusive education and integration is not about the dichotomy between integration and inclusion policies and models – as if we could integrate without including, or include without integrating – but rather about identifying to what extent there is progress in the understanding that each school has the moral responsibility to include everyone.

Over approximately the last fifteen years, the concept of inclusive education has evolved towards the idea that all children and young people, despite different cultural, social and learning backgrounds, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all kinds of schools. The focus is on generating inclusive settings, basically implying: (a) respecting, understanding and taking care of cultural, social and individual diversity (education systems, schools and teachers' response to the expectations and needs of students); (b) the provision of equal access to quality education; and close co-ordination with other social policies. This should involve the expectations and demands of stakeholders and social actors” (UNESCO, 2008b).

## **7. EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM (EDF): INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. MOVING FROM WORDS TO DEEDS (FEBRUARY, 2009)**

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is a European umbrella organisation representing the interests of 50 million disabled citizens and their families in Europe. It is a diverse group made up of people with disabilities ranging from physical, sensory and intellectual to those with mental health problems and multiple and complex disabilities.

EDF actively participated in the negotiations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including article 24. This article is believed to be at the core of the Convention and illustrates the paradigm shift of persons with disabilities to rights holders empowered to fully participate in all aspects of life.

EDF declares that “Education must be recognised as a fundamental right, implying that persons with disabilities have the right to the same quality of education as everyone else in an environment that caters for their needs. In order to achieve this goal, policies and legislation must address access, not only in schools and universities, but also in all other educational opportunities within a lifelong learning perspective”.

The document “Inclusive Education. Moving from words to deeds (European Disability Forum, 2009) outlines, among other things, the following issues:

*“Good practices and competences regarding special education must be adapted to work in the mainstream education systems and should inspire new pedagogic tools”.*

It goes on to clarify the difference between integration and inclusion:

*“Even in mainstream schools, integration and inclusion is confused. Integration is a matter of location - placing students with disabilities in mainstream schools where they have to adapt to the existing teaching, learning and organisation of the school. Inclusion, on the other hand, requires adapting the system to meet the needs of the learner with disabilities. The environment, and the teaching, learning and organisation of the school and education system must be systematically changed - removing barriers for learners with disabilities so they can maximise their academic and social achievements”.*

*“Inclusion is broader and implies a progressive change and adaptation of the education system in such a way that everyone can have their needs catered for and prosper”.*

“... to change the system and guarantee the inclusion of all students with disabilities in schools, there must be a radical change in people's mentalities. This includes families and organisations of persons with disabilities as well as public authorities, head teachers, staff and trade unions”.

“... from a human rights perspective, inclusive education must not only be considered as compulsory, but also as an opportunity to educate all children on human rights and respect for everyone”.

They believe the “Salamanca Declaration” should also be used as a reference, as well as the subsequent UNESCO guidelines, when Member States develop new action plans or legislation regarding education.

“The States must ensure the transition to an inclusive education system is through action plans with specific goals”.

The Forum cited specific measures in favour of processes of inclusive education (flexible financing, co-ordination between ministries, projects to exchange Good Practices, prioritising aspects favouring inclusion in teacher training, international co-operation, individualised programmes, flexible study plans, resources and support when applying ITCs...)

# 5. Ideological principles

The text “Modelo Educativo: Una aproximación axiológica de transdisciplina y pensamiento complejo” (Education Model: An axiological approach to transdisciplinarity and complex thought), fostered by the French philosopher Edgar Morin – a reference in the complexity paradigm – defines the educational model as the following: *“An education model is the collective grouping of assumptions related to an organizing principle which defines the structure of the model in question. This organizing principle is defined by the ends the educational act follows, or the type of human being it is trying to shape. The basic assumptions are formed by the concept of human nature and knowledge as well as by the strategies used to educate that the model confers”*.

From this perspective, the FEAPS approach (a model in constant development, which must express the deliberations of the associative model, deliberations committed to values) outlines the mission of education. It is the result of an awareness of what makes us human and is rooted in the paradigms undertaken by FEAPS: the concept of intellectual disability, the quality of life model, values... all of which are focussed on the person and the promotion of their life plans in a fair and supportive living environment of co-existence where they play a part in its development.

Education is reflected in the complex relationship between people with greater or lesser abilities that interact and learn within a determined socio-cultural context and have the guidance, planned and considered from the foundations of didactic and methodological values and knowledge, of specifically trained people supporting the education process.

In this complex system there is the interconnection of different scenarios and people demonstrating ways of saying and expressing things, beliefs and attitudes un intentionally, in a real and determined narrative. Learners perceive and think about this in a specific way.

This is also reflected in certain students with disabilities, both in childhood and adult life, who adhere to determined concepts as people develop an awareness of what happens to anyone with an intellectual disability. It is also reflected in the society that a person, with or without a disability, lives in and forms, or should form, part of.

Therefore, following what is drawn upon at the beginning of this epigraph, in order to analyse the education mission the following sections shall primarily look at the concepts of: the human being, who is educated throughout his or her life, the relationship with disability, which can be demonstrated at any time or in any way, and the society this human lives and evolves in.

## **THE CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN BEING**

What makes us human beings? Intelligence?

Regarding this issue, Chapter 1 of the FEAPS Código Ético (Ethical Code) (FEAPS, 2004) states that:

*“The essence of being human lies in the idea that each person is in possession of their own self-worth, with the power of lifelong development and growth, to whatever degree, and in the idea that human beings are in unison with one another. Both elements are interwoven around complexity – individuality and belonging to the human collective – which shapes all our lives.*

A person is, nothing more or nothing less, at all times. They never stop being so, not partially for having greater or lesser abilities of any kind, or greater or lesser power in any category. They are permanently and unconditionally a person, at any time or in any place; there are no degrees of status in a person, no one is more or less of a person than anyone else; being a person does not allow differing degrees and does not depend on the context in which one expresses oneself.

A person also unquestionably comes from and forms part of the human collective; the human individual is not possible without humanity, the human collective. The recognition of persons with intellectual disabilities as equals is a key issue for making dignity a reality. A human being does not only deploy his or her skills from a pre-determined biological command, but also from the command to interact with peers in specific cultural environments. A human being reflects complexity, not only in his or her power to develop and express, but also in the power to build relationships” (pge.. 9)

In contrast to the idea that intelligence is the quintessential differentiating factor of the human being, which is rooted in Western society and partly as a result of Aristotelian thinking, there are other philosophical and psychological theories that view human interaction as a fundamental facet of human existence. For instance:

**M. Buber** (1970)

“The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the individual as such nor the aggregate as such. Each, considered by itself, is a mighty abstraction. The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into a living relation with other individuals. The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man”. (Page. 146).

**J. Habermas** (2002)

“Since man, biologically speaking, is born “unfinished” and subject to lifelong dependency on the help, care and respect of his individual environment, individuation DNA sequences are revealed as incomplete as soon as the individuation process sets in. Individuation is through socialization. For the organism to become, with birth, a person in the full sense of the term, an act of social individuation is required, that is, integration in the public context of interaction of an intersubjectively shared life world”. (Page 52, the italics are from the original)

In addition to the above, José Antonio Marina put forward the following in a statement on ethical intelligence, *“Not long ago I read a book called 'The Most Intelligent Man in the World', which referred to Kasparov, the chess champion. It was a ludicrous statement. Had it referred to Einstein being the most intelligent man in the world, as is repeated over and over, it still would have been. Why not Nelson Mandela, who after 20 years in prison still knew how to forget his grievances in order reconcile his country? Why not Thomas Paine or Martin Luther King or anyone else that has fought for human dignity? Imagine instead that for centuries we had maintained the objective of intelligence as truth, we would say that this was justice. Our whole education system, our whole prestigious system, would have been oriented towards its promotion. It would have been a wise decision. But no, we chose the cognitive route, we place knowledge above kindness, contemplation above action, and now we realise we made a mistake. Our culture unceasingly increases its scientific, technical and economic levels while our ability to resolve affective, personal, domestic and political problems diminishes. Things have to change, we need to invent, educate and transmit intelligence for personal and political happiness”.*

There is no room in this thinking for undervaluing a person because of a lower IQ, for instance, or limitations when they are going about their daily lives. A person is, nothing more nothing less, and unconditionally, whatever happens we are human because we are among others. This also, alongside other things, has implications for learning – we learn from and with others, as opposed to some ideas of learning which are nearly completely limited to a solo activity, or at least more in a private rather than public environment.

The essence of being human, fully human; a full human being, is essentially gestated from three interaction components: Power, affection, and value and respect.

**Power:**

A human being is because they have the power to affect their environment, to modify their living and sociocultural context. Communication is one of the human being's main expressions of power – a one-month old baby is evidence of this power when, according to research, by moving their tiny legs to block a photoelectric cell they are capable of setting off a mobile in front of them. They become aware of a loss of power, by showing disgruntlement, after they have deactivated the cell and are no longer able to move a mobile that is further away. Teaching, the advocacy of individual self-determination and empowerment are all key to shaping the human being, thus education must consider what role it must play to encourage this power.

**Affection:**

No human being should grow up without being in a positive, affectionate environment. In classic experiments on affection, it has been clearly observed that, like chimpanzees, when babies are separated from their mothers and put with wool or wire 'mothers' they grab onto the wool ones when they sense a dangerous situation as it gives them a greater feeling of warmth, even when the wire 'mother' has their feeding bottle.

**Value and respect:**

As outlined above, we are immersed in a culture that has designated intelligence as the supreme human value for centuries, so much so that those persons with limited functioning were 'undervalued'. However, any human being is more than their limitations and abilities and needs to be valued equally and respected as a complete human being by others. We all need to feel this 'I and Though' proposed by Martin Buber (1998), a symmetrical and reciprocal relationship of mutual trust.

## **THE CONCEPT OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

With the aid of the current concept of intellectual disability from AAIDD (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities - Luckasson, 2002) disability is addressed in a different manner, contributing innovative aspects to the perception of learner difficulties and the best solution for them.

In this respect, intellectual disability goes further than just individual deficits and is understood on the basis of the relationship of a person in their physical, social and cultural environment. It also recognises that a person does not only have limitations, but also strengths.

The emphasis is on support, which is essential for the mediation between a person and their environment and brings about determiners to improve their functioning. In fact, one axiom of this idea of intellectual disability is that every person, regardless of their limitations, can progress if the right support is available. This forces the issue of the need for responsibility in community education, whereby if the student with needs (this applies to everybody under any circumstances) does not progress, it can never be blamed on disability.

Therefore, the education of a student with special support needs deriving from intellectual disability does not merely lie in the limitations of the person, but in the person as a whole, their strengths and needs in the environment they develop in. From this perspective education must be oriented towards natural contexts as opposed to only developing within the four walls of the classroom.

## **SOCIETY AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATION**

The educational model cannot be seen as breaking away from a social model or from a way of understanding society. In this sense, FEAPS advocates an educational model focussed on the person and their meaningful and worthwhile interaction in their social environment, which is just and in line with Paul Ricoeur's definition of ethics as "aiming at the good life, with and for others, in just institutions".

Inclusion is not neutral. For instance, it is not the same being included in a society dominated by tyranny, where the rulings are for 'racial purity', individualism, and competitiveness over the person, as it is to be included in a society driven by pure democracy, social justice, moral excellence, solidarity and equality. In this sense education cannot be neutral. Education must be about building and developing a just society of solidarity and democracy driven by social cohesion, positive sentiments, human understanding and human development in a social, physical and cultural environment that must care and respect. Today this is still far from reality in everyday educational practices.

In the eyes of certain authors we are currently, in determined contexts, immersed in an implicit mission (not publicly expressed) of education being expressed as: finding people to work in production and the economy (Foster, 2004). This is very different from an education focussed on ensuring personal growth and oriented towards building life plans within a framework of social contribution and moral excellence. As Foster (2004, 186) points out *“School as an organisation has become almost completely instrumental – as a tool to achieve those social goals which are deemed important in a particular time-period, but always focussed on the development of a productive citizen that is always available for employment. Therefore, this instrumental vision often reduces schools to being economic tools, and although education itself will always be universally valued as integral, the school as an organisation will be seen, to a large extent, by what it can achieve in terms of the economy”*. A few paragraphs previously, the same author writes *“The achievement of excellence in schools, for instance, does not depend on adding value to or changing cultures, but on the development of the practices of a community of professionals that encourages virtuous acts from each one of them. However, the modernist agenda tends to counteract community efforts in achieving practices of excellence because of an emphasis on individual achievement driven by economic forces”*.

As you can see, cultural importance is obviously highly relevant to society and the present social model in determining educational models and policies. And although it is true that certain cases have an education background inherently based on the economy, ethical educational policies have also opened up (Furman, 2003).

## **FULL CITIZENSHIP**

Only a few months ago some young Australian people with cerebral palsy were asked what they thought about citizenship and where they saw themselves in this concept. They all expressed that as citizens they aspired to contribute to society, to play an active role and be accepted by others, living with dignity and respect, as well as pursuing their dreams and passions. They also rightly expressed that their recognition of their own role in society did not mean that much, and that society should willingly build relationships with them. Maybe this, as some pointed out, is the true requirement of citizenship - to maintain meaningful relationships with others (Yeung and cols., 2008).

Full citizenship, however, is also reflected in a combination of participation, belonging, and rights and duties, which are strongly related to aspects of Schalock and Verdugo's quality of life model (2003): Self determination, Inclusion and Rights.

**Participation:**

This area encompasses a similar concept to what is held in the exercise of Self-determination – what happens around us, being an actor in our own lives, possessing social and individual power to transform the world, being an agent. The power of communication and understanding the world is a basic power and the path to full participation.

**Belonging:**

This refers to inclusion. Inclusion in people's minds, not only in physical places. True belonging, inclusion, is found when there are social networks, in differing degrees of intimacy, in which relationships are formed on an equal, reciprocal level and with trust and respect.

**The rights and duties of citizens:**

Full citizenship is not only built from social policies or actions from organisations, but also from active teaching on citizenship to everyone, regardless of their abilities. The area of rights and duties still has a long way to go regarding persons with intellectual disabilities, not so much in laws and regulations, which as indicated above already exist, but more in the daily exercise of basic rights in equity with persons with intellectual disabilities.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**

Education must be a key part of people's happiness. Encouraging full humanity together with full citizenship gives a person more opportunities and skills to develop a personal happiness plan, their life plan. Education must play an active part in this process. Therefore, education most advocate the necessary skills to be able to pursue higher standards of living. Educating for a quality life involves improving specific personal areas such as self-determination and adaptive behaviour, as well as adapting the context and defining access mechanisms in society which allow a person with intellectual disabilities a higher level of participation. FEAPS has undertaken Schalock and Verdugo's quality of life model (2003) from which educational practices can be suitably guided to ensure that skills related to a good adult life - a full and happy one, in the ethical sense - are catered for.

Happiness can be understood as feeling good, enjoying achievements, what has already been accomplished “I'm happy with my new house”, “I love my job”, “I really enjoyed that film”, “I've won the lottery!!”... This is what is called a hedonistic theory.

Happiness goes further than just merely smiling or laughing, and there can be more than one route (see, for instance, Seligman, 2005). One road to happiness is to have a '**Pleasant life**', which is happiness based on positive emotions about the past (satisfaction), the present (pleasures such as eating an ice-cream, or feeling a sea breeze) and about the future (hope, optimism).

Another route to happiness is '**being absorbed**', being engrossed in a pleasurable activity where you lose all sense of time with a feeling of achievement and control. These are times when you are engrossed in something that poses a challenge, that you are passionate about, in ecstasy. We are not aware of ourselves in this state, but afterwards it produces a very pleasant feeling.

One more route to happiness is **being engrossed** as much as possible in your personal talents and strengths at work, in your free time and playing, and in your relationships with others. This is often referred to as a 'Good life', using your own strengths so often and so fruitfully (beneficially) and as much as possible at work, in relationships and in leisure.

The concept of a '**Meaningful life**' adds another component – using your own strengths for the benefit of something more than just yourself and finding a meaning and purpose to life.

As regards the hedonistic side of happiness, 'eudaimonia' is often also referred to, which implies that happiness also lies in having a reason to live, wanting to live your dreams, even if sometimes they can't be achieved. According to Ryan, Huta and Deci (2008) "The concept of eudaimonia is generally defined as living a full human life, or carrying out potential human values" (139-140). The same authors also believe that eudaimonia refers to "a way of life, not a psychological state or a result. It is more specifically a way of life that focusses on what is intrinsically worthwhile for a human being" (147).

Therefore, an essential part of education is supporting happiness plans to generate purposes for a good life. From an ethics perspective, education involves providing skills, with the necessary support, to make a life that is longed for a reality with and for everyone in just institutions (as Paul Ricoeur defines ethics). This approach is similar to ideas of person-centred planning (PCP).

## **THE EDUCATION MISSION**

According to Aristotle "education consists of directing feelings of pleasure and pain towards an ethical order".

Edgar Morin was commissioned by UNESCO to give his ideas on education and how to approach it in the future. Within this framework Morin (1999) proposed that *“Teaching the basics of mathematics or some other discipline is one thing, educating for human understanding is another. There we touch on the truly spiritual mission of education: teaching understanding between people as a condition and protection of humanity’s moral and intellectual solidarity”*.

When we talk about educational models, we are talking about the importance of education, particularly solutions for school education. This is a consideration about education for who, and where. Education is undoubtedly for life, participating in one’s own life and is about understanding the world and living in society where each person can be “in charge of their own life”. Consequently, it is important to educate in a social context - social participation. Educational activities aimed at maximising the development of each person’s abilities must be carried out through social participation and people’s interaction in their environment with similar age groups. Educational activities must take place in a context of adequate ethics, beliefs and attitudes towards person with disabilities – to respect, treat with dignity and value a person. They must allow appropriate life skills to be acquired, and activities that show the whole society the importance and value of persons with intellectual disabilities and their development - respectful educational activities. Rita Jordan (2008, page 11), an expert on autistic spectrum disorders and education, puts forward her idea of education “Education is more than just another 'treatment', it is the way in which citizens are taught values, understanding, knowledge and skills which enable them to fully participate in the community; it is the path to social inclusion”.

Education must serve to reveal what is human and advocate the necessary skills to play a part in building a life plan that produces the maximum level of happiness. Regarding this Arba and Tamarit (2003) indicate *“The meaning of education depends on the type of subconscious approach we take. One perspective is to consider that the goal of education is to focus on the present and on the resources available at the time that correspond to specific levels of knowledge Another is considering it as a goal which is projected into the future of the child’s life, where the mere 'injection' of knowledge obscures its meaning if it does not strive to have a certain impact on the development of a better life. In this case educational action strives towards serving, and being useful, to achieve a fully satisfactory and dignified life that actively searches for a just environment to coexist in. We believe and uphold that education reaches its true and ultimate meaning in this vision of the future”*.

From these perspectives FEAPS believes that the education mission consists of:

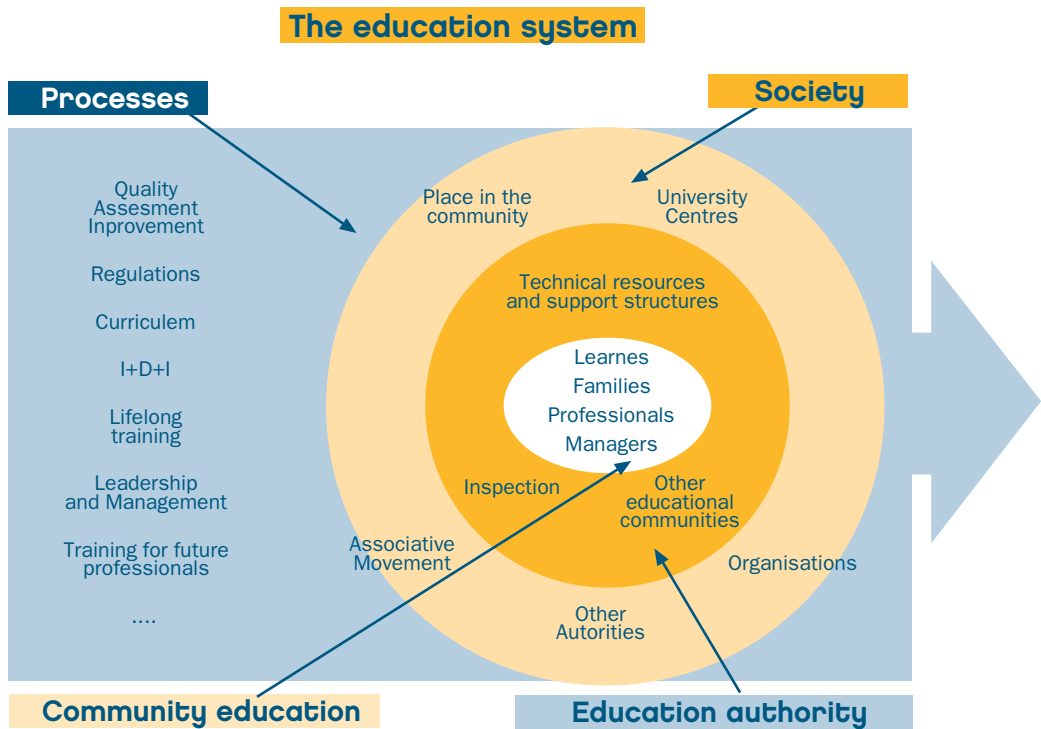
- **Ensuring that people, with the necessary support, have the power to build, develop and uphold their life plans within the context of a just co-existence, contributing to human fulfilment and a transformation towards a morally excellent society.**

It must be clear that education and schooling are not the same. Education is a process spanning a lifetime, a process of socialization involving cultural and behavioural awareness. Our lives are constant learning processes. The school system offers education in an important part of a person's life, a key stage that without doubt forms their future and the social future. It intends to transmit ideas, values, concepts, skills and information using methodologies that help to understand the world, doing so in a systematic and regulated manner. The school system is undoubtedly the way a society transmits and preserves its collective existence.

# 6. Keys

As indicated in the introduction, this chapter will demonstrate the most important keys to the ideological approach put forward in the previous one. These are the major keys that must be considered and tackled in order to support “The Education we Want” with strategies and actions aimed at transforming society and education in general.

A well-known African proverb says that to educate a child you need the whole tribe. In our case we can say that to educate a child the whole society has to be committed. The education system is a complex one, with the central nucleus being the learners, their families and education professionals. This nucleus is placed in a social environment that responds to a determined social model which is coherent with an educational one. This educational model emanates from the existing recommendations and laws and from educational research and the principles and values undertaken by FEAPS



Within its field, this system includes all the relationship and interaction networks between Community Education (learners, families, teaching staff, and/or professionals, management teams and other agents), the Education Authority (which, on one side, takes into account the **regulatory framework** that will determine the education system's structure and the curriculum's subject matter and, on the other, the importance of the **processes** in: training, assessment, research, leadership and management and the coordination between authorities. It also includes society in general (locations in the community offering services to all citizens, university centres, and other Authorities and organisations such as those dealing with health systems, social services and the social and associative movements).

The proposed components in this diagram intend to represent the most important elements, in a non-exhaustive and non-linear fashion, for the success of “The Education we Want”, as supported and championed by FEAPS.

## **6.1. COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

### **6.1.1. Agents:**

Learners, families, management teams and professionals are the main agents of change making up community education, and without which change would not occur. Each of them has their particular and legitimate needs, expectations and interests that the system must guarantee. Besides these agents, community education must also consider other aspects of the centres' own organisation and characteristics.

#### **■ THE LEARNERS**

It is always necessary to consider each learner as an individual and be clear that education is about being able to maximise personal and social development and being able to enjoy a quality of life. Throughout the school years, learners must be prepared for adult life in the most independent and autonomous way possible and in such a way that they possess the skills and abilities to continue learning right through their whole life, advance in the search for a 'good life'; yet their education must be in their environment and adapted to their needs.

As the learners are the most important part of education, any type of solution must involve giving them support; therefore, education cannot set out with dilemmas such as those found in mainstream or special centres, but must be considered in terms of the support a person needs in each stage of their life for their full development. The centres, professionals, resources... must be transformed into support for people's development. We believe in an educational model incorporating developmental educational action that goes beyond the centres and classrooms, that participates in community environments and features in the educational itinerary of each person. A school is not just about four walls, we don't necessarily need desks

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and walls for education and learning. It is important to consider learners, with or without disabilities, as natural support groups.

The learners themselves are the system users and, consequently, it is from them that results must be analysed. Significant and assessed personal results imply growth as people, as citizens, and improve quality of life and happiness. Nevertheless, learners must have the right to participate in the organisation, management and assessment of the system, we have to fully listen to their hopes and expectations to be aware of the life they wish for and subsequently help them become competent in order to move towards it, become full citizens, and to feel included in a society where they are also critics and agents of transformation.

The principle of individualisation is an important key as it is learner-centred. From this perspective, educational action is not centred around disability or deficit, but around specialised action. It involves creating systems and classrooms that accommodate children, respecting all their differences, and systems that help discover the richness of human diversity by recognising and respecting it and encouraging cooperation and support. This is possible if all agents are committed and believe in a model supporting inclusion instead of exclusion and segregation.

#### ■ FAMILIES

Families must also be fully heard; from a basis of trust and respect. Therefore, the kind of relationships established with teaching staff are key. A report on this issue in the field of education for learners with autism spectrum disorders indicates that: "Creating conditions for a home-school collaboration environment begins with the recognition that parent-professional cooperation is something that goes beyond legislation, with the interpersonal conditions having significant implications for families (...). The foundations of this relationship must be based on the professionals' will to listen, the recognition that trust is a basic element of cooperation and on the acceptance and recognition of a person's values" (Simpson and cols, 2003).

Families must also play a leading role, equally participating with the other aspects of community education and collaborating with the organisation, management and assessment of the system. Also as a client, as they are their underage children's tutor, with rights and powers, they can evaluate the system and its results in accordance with their own needs, interests and expectations. When it comes down to it, they have the constitutional right to choose what kind of education they want for their children and decide what school to take them to.

In relation to the role of families, at the International Geneva Conference held in 2008, the previous, aforementioned report indicated the following:

- *“Families and communities have rights to involvement and can make a range of contributions - In particular, they have knowledge of their children which professionals do not have.*

- *Building family and community involvement is a step-by-step process based on trust. Particular efforts are needed to promote the involvement of marginalized groups.*

- *Families and community groups can sometimes take a leading role as activists for inclusive education.*

- *Families' rights to involvement can be built into legislation or into the system of school governance.*

- *Communities can also be involved successfully in the governance of schools or the education system as a whole”.*

#### ■ **PROFESSIONALS**

Professionals (teachers or not) as leading agents in providing services are most directly responsible for the success of “The Education we Want”, which goes beyond the means and resources available (in schools with barely any walls and resources models work, and have worked, very well). They are the ones that must feel, and consequently act as, part of the support network to cater for each learner, the families and a social model.

Teachers and other education professionals must be committed to the learners so that they can focus their input more on the individual characteristics and needs of the people they are teaching and less on the programmes to be developed. They must recognise the differences and values of each learner, both male and female, as a person. Everyone can learn if we discover individual learning styles, skills and talents. It is important that the professionals involved on a daily basis have expectations of learners with intellectual disabilities, so that they trust and believe in the possibilities they have to learn, develop and coexist; professionals' attitudes, expectations, trust and level of training represent key factors in the development of inclusion policies.

They must undertake an inclusive social model that encompasses respect and differences, human rights and equal opportunities and understands the principles of a school for everyone. It is equally important to maintain a philosophy of education that is in accordance with an inclusive model.

Teaching staff that work as part of a team, alongside a team of professionals, and support between colleagues is necessary in an inclusive education model. It is also important that they continue to set up networks among other professionals to encourage professional development. The “horizontal circulation of knowledge and the close link between the participants' relationships that transcends their own centre” (López, 2008) is important. This way of working allows us to combat the isolation of teaching staff. In an inclusive school the cooperation between professionals and not an individualistic idea of teaching is necessary as well as the concept of teaching as a way of learning about others and oneself. An inclusive school demands professionals that are committed in their attitudes and to action towards change in addition to putting into practice a working method based on shared considerations and decision-making in order to improve.

The role of professionals in education must be revised – other roles that go beyond technicalities such as the role of managers, researchers of community education resources, collaborations in the planning of a learner's life plan, support coordination...

Training in line with this combination of roles, particularly attitude and ethical behaviour training and inclusive education training, is crucial. This leads us to call for reorientation in professionals' training schemes. Among other aspects, it must be aimed at skills and training in the “ability to understand the personal needs of others – confidence, self-assurance in one's attitude, a balanced and stable emotional state, the ability to adapt to different situations, flexibility, creativity and demonstrating and developing the ability to create and investigate (Hernández de la Torre, 2003).

#### ■ MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Leadership is key to the success of education. The managers of the centres and teams are those in charge of adequately leading and managing all the processes that guarantee the successful operation and improvement of the model in a specific centre with specific people, and, therefore, reflect the centre's educational project.

Regarding their role in fully ensuring an inclusive school, a recent study reported that “The factor that stands out the most was the manager's belief that children with autism could be included in mainstream classes. This positive belief particularly correlated with attitudes of those directors in favour of inclusion” (Horrocks and cols, 2008).

#### ■ OTHER AGENTS INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Conditions enabling the development of inclusive education must be established. The main protagonists of these processes working in the area of special needs in educational support must develop and distribute projects guaranteeing the exchange of good practices. The main agents of change that make up Community Education have already been mentioned: learners, families, management teams and professionals, but others are also involved:

- **External Support Teams** who work to guide direct attention professionals, are aware of the needs (professionals, learners and their families) of the educational centres, and encourage action to improve educational involvement.
- **Organisations** that work in favour of **persons with disabilities**; not only as relevant spokespersons for the Education Authority, but also as a resource and support for inclusion. Associations belonging to FEAPS have already started specific actions aimed at learners, families and professionals.
- **Local Authorities** must also play a part in the development and circulation of projects in favour of inclusion.

#### 6.1.2. School Organisation.

We support centres that guarantee equity and include all the agents involved (professionals, families and learners...) in real-life planning and decision-making as well as ensuring the structure and flexibility of the curriculum, considering and offering solutions to the educational needs of the learner, and methodologies geared towards the learners.

Educational centres must encompass the characteristics of all the learners, both male and female, when defining their education plans. Values, goals, priorities for action, tutorial action and curriculum plans must also be included and meet pedagogical and didactical criteria and methodological options in order to cater for the needs of all learners and obtain personal results and projects that uniformly ensure coherence and continuity. Professional involvement must also be based on beliefs, values and processes of involvement.

In short, we are referring to centres that intrinsically advocate a philosophy of inclusion from the principles to the practices. We must not overlook the fact that inclusive education should foster inclusive adult lives, otherwise it will be impossible to even consider personal plans or quality of life. We are referring to centres geared towards educating people to become future citizens, supporting an inclusive social model and offering equal opportunities and participation for all.

## 6.2. EDUCATION AUTHORITY

### 6.2.1 Regulatory framework

The education authority, as an essential agent in any educational change, must legislate in order to create a regulatory framework committed to the values of inclusion that enable: developmental measures in all areas of the education system, the planning of resources and the availability of financing that guarantees and backs the real development of inclusive education for all.

Education must be based on the vision of a comprehensive process of improvement for the person and be oriented towards extensive harmonious action which is at the core of personalised education.

The concept of education seems intangible for developing a reference model; therefore, it is necessary to search for more tangible aspects in the education process and thus, when defining the characteristics, structure and guidance to achieve, we are able, in some way, to visualise the educational model. Among the most salient tangible aspects we can draw upon: the structure of the education system, the educational centre (management, organisation, monitoring), the curriculum, guidance... and among the tangible processes: training, quality, pedagogical research and innovation.

#### ■ THE STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: CENTRES, OTHERS...

The centres as basic structures for promoting education shall outline their actions, according to the administrative regulations they are governed by, in the most fundamental aspects. They will and should also display a margin of independence in such a way that their set up will be a regulatory framework for the reference model and, furthermore, will adapt to the context (social, educational, family) and will influence determining aspects. These will be reflected in documents such as the Education Plan, School Policies, Regulations of Co-existence, Curriculum Projects, the different Planning Programmes, assessment, etc...

Therefore, they constitute fundamental instruments at the disposal of the Authority with which to effectively implement an educational model based on principles of inclusion.

#### ■ CURRICULUM FOCUS

The curriculum must be unique, open, flexible and comprehensive.

It is important to develop a curriculum focussed on Special Education Needs, and it must be stressed that the school is responsible for creating the necessary conditions that cater for all learners, according to their personal characteristics.

Within the curriculum perspective there must be interaction between the learner's conditions and the characteristics of the education context concerned. Each school must proffer a personalised educational solution and be committed to the results of all learners to continuously improve its teaching-learning processes.

New focusses and methods helping individual differences and needs to gain greater relevance and advancing ways of promoting significant life plan skills for each learner must be put forward.

There is a need for open and flexible curriculums that respond to diversity and allow decisions adapted to each background to be made, and that are oriented towards the development of a person's skills to achieve and maintain a full life as a citizen. Curriculums also need to be: based on achieving skills from the development of abilities, designed for accessible educational environments and planned for the appropriate support of each learner.

Curriculum developments are necessary for gaining knowledge on people's needs and strengths in order to be able to maximise the developments of their individual, social, emotional and intellectual abilities. It is about people gaining "PERSONAL RESULTS", growing as a person, through learning, and not just acquiring things we train them in – personal results in terms of quality of life.

We do not need a curriculum centred around "recovery and rehabilitation", but more around "preparing". Educating is not only about applying methods and techniques, it is also about putting yourself in the shoes of others and acting from ethical stances (taking into account universal ethics and people's rights, such as respect, dignity, privacy, the right to decide...).

## **6.2.2 Processes**

### **■ TRAINING**

Training, which is in line with this combination of roles, particularly training in attitudes and ethical behaviour, is crucial. Likewise, training in inclusive education is also significant. This leads us to call for reorientation in professionals' training schemes. Among other aspects, it must be aimed at skills and training in the "ability to understand the personal needs of others – confidence, self-assurance in one's attitude, a balanced and stable emotional state, the ability to adapt to different situations, flexibility, creativity and demonstrating and developing the ability to create and investigate (Hernández de la Torre, 2003).;

The training of professionals has become a key factor in the new challenges posed.

### Initial training

This is the collaboration with universities for the initial training of teachers and other professionals (in pedagogy, psychology, psychopedagogy...). It is focussed on inclusion and an awareness of diversity with the implementation of new strategies and/or methodologies supporting the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the classroom and mainstream environments (group mentoring, universal learning design, alternative systems and/or augmentative communication, teamwork, adaptation of curriculum access materials, ICTs – Information and communication technologies – collaborative problem solving, heterogeneous groups).

### Lifelong training for working professionals

To a large extent inclusion depends on the attitudes of the teaching staff towards learners with intellectual disabilities as well as their opinion of differences in the classroom... and their solution. Teaching staff play a key part in broadening meaningful social relationships between learners, which is crucial for those with special needs.

#### ■ ASSESSMENT

As a fundamental process of improvement, internal and external assessment oriented by, and in line with, the model is necessary. Besides other instruments in this process, there are inspections and technical support services provided by the authorities (local, regional, state), who are responsible for in-depth knowledge of the model in addition to its assessment and improvement. Its main function will be to support and guide as well as assessing and improving.

#### ■ QUALITY

To support the above there is a regulation that sets out and develops the model, which should be a tool (for quality) to help the whole system and, most importantly the centres, to know their position and which direction they should take in order to achieve the ideal model of an inclusive school. There is no reason why we shouldn't reward the best by circulating their practices – in other words, a quality education system. There are numerous awards such as Giner de los Ríos – the award for educational quality, awards for quality systems implemented in different communities, professional training and the IESs in Castilla La Mancha.

#### ■ RESEARCH

Research is considered as an essential instrument for guaranteeing innovation and permanent change towards education for all.

Consequently, among other actions, setting up groups to improve research and innovation in university training centres and keep the whole system updated and completely inclusive is important.

#### ■ **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

When implementing an education plan, special care must be taken in the leadership processes to ensure that they are divided among all the staff responsible for the education system, education inspection services, management teams, school boards, teaching teams, departments, etc.

Management is acknowledged as the use made of resources to carry out work. The most noteworthy are: human resources, material and functional resources and those from organisational components. These must take on board the values promulgated by our education approaches as processes of real change towards inclusive areas.

#### ■ **COORDINATION BETWEEN AUTHORITIES: INTRA-AUTHORITY RELATIONS AND INTER-AUTHORITY RELATIONS**

This requires coordination that must affect the structure of the education Authority and the interaction between the education policies and other authorities – health, social services, employment, etc.

#### **In agreement with the fundamental principles of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, we propose to the Authority:**

The broadening of the duties of specific centres, converting them into centres with support and resources for inclusive education. (The short and long-term planning of the processes and resources of involvement).

The support of inclusive experiences and the promotion of pilot plans.

The promotion of school networks.

The promotion of training schemes.

The promotion of the exchange of experiences and materials between schools.

That promotion of extracurricular activity plans and their coordination.

The financing of special education in accordance with its objectives.

The control and assessment of the results of learners with special needs.

The promotion of positive attitudes in education.

The maximization of the potential of ICTs to reduce inequality in education and support inclusion through meeting the specific needs of individual learners.

The support of the transition from school to employment through a clear legislation regarding the labour market.

The independence of centres in financing and development for their education project.

The consideration of the FEAPS Confederation and the Confederations of the Autonomous Communities as important organisations, reference points and spokespersons between the Public Administration.

The recognition of our model, acknowledgement of our contributions and encouragement to actively participate in planning education.

## 6.3. SOCIETY

### 6.3.1. Universities

Educational centres must collaborate with universities for the initial training of teachers and other professionals (in pedagogy, psychology, psychopedagogy...). The university will encompass the needs of the education professionals in order to offer solutions for diversity in the classroom and will design adapted training programmes that facilitate an improvement in professional development.

The need to support the role of universities in the postgraduate courses is vital. It would be advisable to broaden professionals' training in educational practices to make them the actual special education professionals, available as a reference and for support. The university education models must be centred around real life and broaden learners' training within inclusive education models. The training schemes must also update the awareness of intellectual disability and quality of life.

Similarly, working professionals need ongoing training, adapting their educational practices to models focussed on inclusion. It is paramount that this area works with inclusion, for if the professionals do not advocate it, the educational model supporting quality of life and the participation of persons with disabilities in society will never lift off the ground.

Setting up research and development groups related to practices that enable future courses of action to be established in schools, and that are fully inclusive and improve the system is important.

University teachers and future professionals dedicated to the world of disability must be aware of real-life disability areas. They must carry out work placements and visit centres, and it would also be advisable to contact Organisations, Associations, schools, etc. so persons with disabilities could go to the Universities and training centres to get an idea the reality they are faced with.

### **6.3.2. Authorities**

To a large degree inclusion depends on searching for the coordination of strategies between authorities and educational centres, thus advocating cross cutting studies.

The Authority must be committed to offering all the necessary support and resources to build an inclusive school where all children learn and participate.

These authorities must recognise and consider FEAPS (“the families' voice”) as a valid spokesperson when it comes to proposing and contributing to document drafts published by the Authority as they have an impact on our collective. FEAPS is an important resource for the Authority and, therefore, is the promoter of “educational support and resource centres” for all the educational centres.

There is a need for special intellectual disability teams to cater for the needs of the learners, both in programmes and specific involvement, and respond to the demands of learners and families, as in other specialised intellectual disability teams.

This last demand would entail expanding specialised staff in the different teams of professionals and in the education, social and health Authorities to assess different cases with greater objectivity

The Authority should encourage areas, or meeting points, of debate between the Associative Movement and the self-advocate groups when new support, resources, professional backgrounds and strategic methodologies are being designed. Only the actual persons with intellectual disabilities can tell us what they need to learn, participate and co-exist.

Likewise, a figure of the Authority could be created to defend persons with disabilities – to listen to complaints and work for conflict mediation in each inclusive environment of each Community.

### **6.3.3. Community locations**

The undertaking of this inclusive model must not only be limited to the classroom, it must also extensively reach an individual's whole education and work in real-life environments to create educational resources.

Therefore, agreements with local institutions to include learners with intellectual disabilities in the organisation of extracurricular activities could be encouraged.

The Associative Movement should be considered as a resource of, and support for, inclusion, not just as a relevant spokesperson for the Education Authority.

A society of knowledge involves diverse schools which are flexible and understanding and have a methodology which is receptive to the different rhythms of each individual and which stamps out the prevailing values in a neoliberal society (individualism, lack of solidarity, consumerism, competitiveness, narcissism) in order for democracy, respect, solidarity, co-existence, ethics, justice, dignity and love, etc to be present in the classroom.

Therefore, all classroom and extracurricular activities must prompt educational success, social inclusion and the involvement of everyone.

FEAPS must be represented in mainstream educational centres through official organisations such as the AMPAS (Parents' Associations), to reflect the world of disability.

There is a need to permanently pursue awareness-raising in each district, town and city that works with the collective of persons with disabilities, with greater employment of the local, regional and national media to promote inclusion programmes and incorporate experiences which are already established in other places.

#### **6.3.4. Associative Movement (Inside FEAPS)**

Associationalism has historically been a promoter and agent of social change. This strength is reflected in FEAPS Associative Movement, promoting change and favouring the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families. Because of this, the Associative Movement must make use of this fortitude to encourage the beginning of a more inclusive educational model.

As a result, it is necessary to bring about commitment between all the actors in the Associative Movement so it is accomplished. Equally, this commitment must lead the Movement towards a transformation which is in accordance with the Model's proposed principles.

Thus, it is important that the Associative Movement promotes greater participation, in the process achieving mutual support and gaining strength and influence in society.

# 7. What next?

FEAPS must develop, in accordance with this proposal and at both a macro-system level (education policies) and in schools, strategies and action plans, to transform the present and move closer to the desired future presented here.

We must consider how to achieve the consolidation of an open education model, a lifelong model for everyone which is focussed on the life plans of the students. It must be an education not defined by physical spaces, but strengthened through the exchange of experiences and the commitment to empower the learner to deal with life. This proposal is intended to kick start discussions and encourage the deliberation of the education model proposed – what is its reality and perspective? How can we frame the image that has been developed?

The considerations to begin this discussion are:

Changes in schools:

- What goal does education strive for, and what is its purpose? Where is education going?
- The transformation of Special Education Centres.
- Education framework for learners with special educational support needs that goes beyond schools.

Education policies:

- What are the regulations and institutional organisational requirements stipulated by this model to achieve self-regulation?
- How to consolidate inter-institutional networks.

Training of teaching staff:

- How to promote the necessary teaching skills for this model.

Community participation:

- What action strategies must direct the processes?

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