

How to make reasonable accommodation for the integration of deaf children in primary school?



Location: Achada Santo António, Praia City, Santiago Island

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

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Eugénio Tavares Primary School (EBET), located in one of the most populous neighbourhoods of Cape Verde, has been involved in an Integrated Education project. Five years ago in partnership with the AADICD, a room was set up to accommodate thirty deaf students accompanied by two teachers who had received a short training and awareness-raising course for this purpose. Eugénio Tavares School has provided deaf students with quality education and real integration into society. The learning process was reinforced for the deaf students by participation in AADICD activities room during the classes' non-timetabled periods. The room is supplied with some adapted teaching materials to deaf children. With a strong involvement of parents and guardians, this initiative has given deaf students access to attendance at primary school and made entry into secondary education possible.



FACTORS THAT MADE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PRACTICE POSSIBLE

- This example of good practices highlights the partnership between the Ministry of Education through Eugénio Tavares School and the AADICD association, which together provided human resources and materials for implementation of the project;
- The teaching materials such as adapted books, CDs and reading tables, donated by AADICD were important teaching aids to support learning and access the syllabus;
- The commitment and motivation of the two teachers who had pedagogical training and the mothers of deaf children. The attitude of these teachers facilitated the collaboration of these mothers in integrating their children into a different environment from the family. They acted as catalysts requesting the admission of their children into school. They encouraged their own children to attend school. For them, disability is not an obstacle for their children to have access to education. Some mothers learned sign language in the interaction with their children;

- The participation of the teacher, Lena Tavares, who is a specialist in Portuguese sign language training, improved the quality of the teaching and learning process. The fact that the trainer is also hearing impaired allowed the development of a more efficient communication system. The sharing of sign language skills with other teachers was crucial to the learning process of these children;
- The openness and awareness of school management allowed involvement of the whole school community in the inclusion initiative.

MAIN DIFFICULTIES AND HOW THEY WERE OVERCOME

- Previous to this initiative, parents and guardians did not believe it would have been possible. Parents did not have faith in the system and the ability of their deaf children to learn. For this reason, a work was made, next to parents and the community, based on activities such as meetings, lectures, and group discussions, in order to raise awareness and provide information about deafness and the ability for deaf people to learn;
- One of the major difficulties encountered was the high number of students of different ages and different levels of knowledge of sign language. To address this issue they were divided into three groups taught by three teachers;
- The need to develop a communication system using Sign Language has been a challenge for this project, difficulty which has been overcome by the involvement of the sign language teacher, Lena Tavares, who as a 'trainer of trainers' has cascaded her training next to teachers and students.

EFFECTS OF THIS EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICES

- The deaf children who were at home before without the possibility of attending primary education now have the opportunity to enter the world of school and formal learning;
- Interaction of deaf children with hearing children and with the wider local community has decreased prejudice towards people with disabilities;
- The sharing of knowledge and expertise among teachers has contributed to a greater and better understanding of the learning process of deaf students.

“Today I feel that deaf children are really learning.” Mother and teacher of deaf children.

This example of good practices is due to the commitment and willingness of the MES to promote the rights of people with disabilities and the importance of NGOs and civil society in this process.

HOW CAN THIS PRACTICE BE IMPROVED?

- Advocating inclusive activities with hearing students;
- The room should be an integral part of the school. It should have better participation/interaction of teachers in pedagogical meetings at school and in extracurricular activities;
- Greater involvement of parents and carers in activities and teaching strategies undertaken in school.

For more information:

- **Full project report:** [Report on good practices in inclusive education of children with disabilities in Cape Verde](#)
- **Criteria for the good practices:** see page 6.
- **Recommendations from the good practices:** see page 33-34.
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