

Special needs education in the Netherlands

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Education in the Netherlands, some facts:

- Total population: 16.7 million
- Elementary education (4-12) incl. pupils with SEN: 1.5 million
- Secondary education (12+): .95 million
- Pupils with SEN (4-12): 81000
- Pupils with SEN (12+): 53000

- Urban / rural spread: 13.7 vs 3million
- GPD per capita: 42,333

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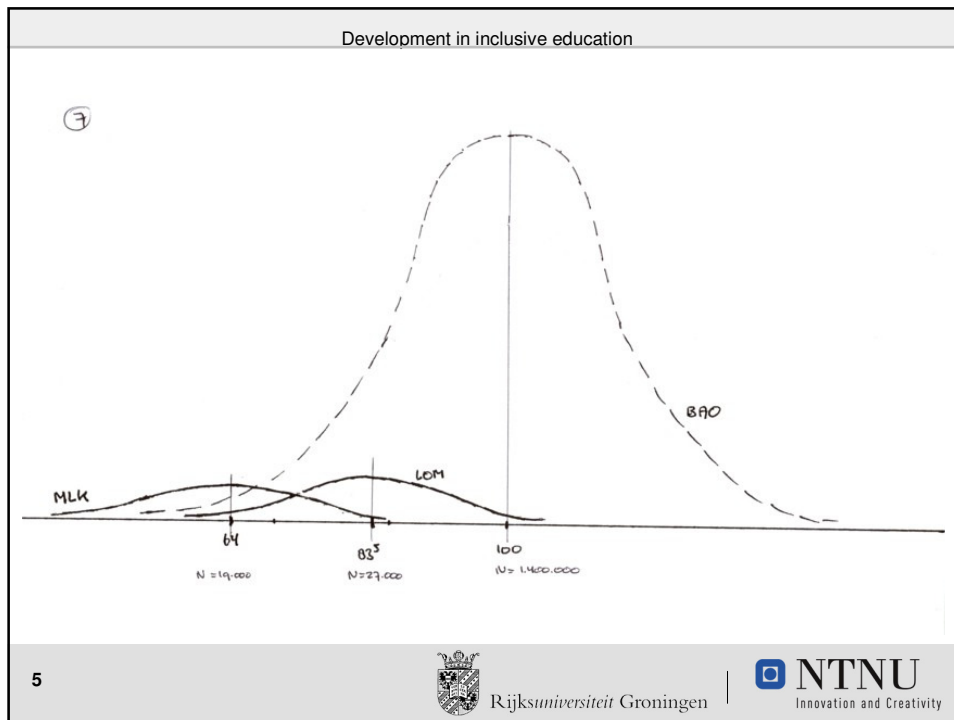


Regular and Special schools

- Separate laws and regulations for regular and special schools
- Special schools as a highly specialized system
- Negative effects of special school placement limited
- Growing attendance in Special Education

Criticising special schools

- Growing international pressure
- Growing expenditure
- Concerns about segregation
- Parents pushing for inclusion
- Pressure valve for regular education?
Or: who is protected?



Development in inclusive education

New laws:

- Law on primary education (1995) introduced the 'Together to school again' policy
- Law on the Expertise Centres (2002) introduced the 'Back-pack' policy

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NTNU
Innovation and Creativity

Together to school again

- About 25 regular schools, 1 LD school and 1 MMR school in a regional cluster
- Half of the funding for the two special schools to the cluster
- Funding based on population data
- Each school appointed an internal support teacher
- Each cluster has an assessment team

Back-pack policy

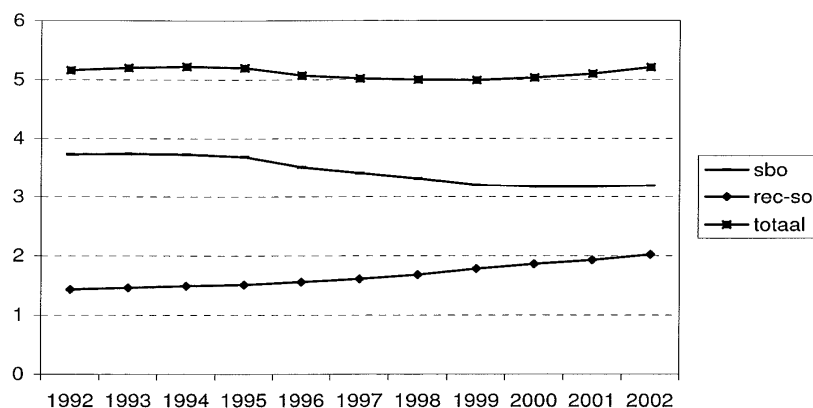
- 10 types of special schools reorganized in 4 types of Expertise Centres
- Regional assessment committees decide on granting back-packs
- National rules and criteria for assessment
- Funding follows pupil
- IEP is obliged
- Parents can choose (?)

Back-pack policy: Eligibility for funding:

- Apply for funding at the Regional assessment committee
- The committee uses national rules and criteria
- Criteria largely based on psycho-medical criteria e.g. > 80 dB hearing loss, IQ < 60 or DSM IV criteria.
- Argued deviation from the rules
- National committee evaluating the decisions of the regional committees

Effects

Figuur 3.1 – Percentage leerlingen in het sbo en in rec-so, 1992-2002



Effects 2

- Until 2002 the percentage of pupils with SEN in clusterschools went down
- Until 2002 the percentage in special schools went up.
- After the introduction of the back-pack policy the percentage in special schools and the percentage of pupils with SEN in regular education exploded (5 to 20 % per year).
- Huge financial problems! Drastic measures and budget cuts announced in 2011. Strikes and demonstrations.

New developments:

- Schools will have a duty to care
- Abolishing the special schools in clusters
- Stopping the growth of special education
- Reorganizing all schools into large regional clusters
- Throughput funding to the clusters

Obstacles in making education in the Netherlands more inclusive:

- Freedom of schooling
- No detailed national curriculum
- Standard assessment tests
- Both public and other school boards
- National Inspectorate has limited power
- Population density

Progress in:

- Education policy
- Legislation / regulations
- Funding
- Regional organization of education
- Teacher training
- Awareness in society
- Daily practice?

International trends and statistics

How inclusive is education?

Country:	% SEN	% SE
Austria	3.2	1.6
Belgium	4.5	4.7
Denmark	11.9	2.5
Finland	17.8	3.8
Italy	1.5	< 0.5
Germany	5.3	4.8
Greece	0.9	< 0.5
Netherlands	2.1	2.2
Norway	5.6	0.3
Sweden	2.0	1.6
UK	3.2	1.2

Source: European Agency, 2003 / Eurostat 2006

Has education become more inclusive?

Country:	96-98	99-01	02-04	05-06	07-08
Austria	2.0	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5
Belgium	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.8
Denmark	1.6	1.5	2.3	2.5	3.1
Finland	3.0	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.9
Italy	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5
Germany	4.4	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.8
Greece	0.8	0.3	0.6	0.3	<0.5
Netherlands	4.9	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.5
Norway	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3
Sweden	0.9	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.5
UK	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.4

Source: Eurostat, 2005; European agency data

Lies, damned lies and statistics

Under Dutch special education legislation:

3.1 % in schools for LD and EMR +
1.8 % in all other schools for special education =
4.9 % total in special schools

New Dutch legislation in regular education:

All schools for LD and EMR part of regular school
system

Result: only 1.8 % pupils in special schools! (now: ≥ 2.2)

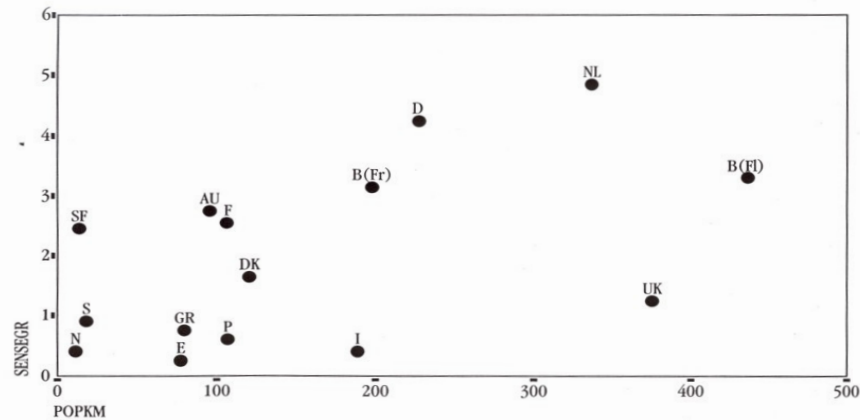
Some more tricks:

- Transfer responsibility for e.g. pupils with behaviour problems to another department
- Widen the age ranges
- Place pupils in special classes in regular schools
- Stop diagnosing and labelling pupils

What do these data tell us?

- The percentage of pupils in special schools is at least 0.3 per cent
- In most countries however it is >1 per cent
- In some it is close to or above 5 per cent
- Implementing inclusive education seems to halt

Figure 1: Position of countries on population density (POPKM) and segregation (SENSEGR); UK = England



Inclusion: Criteria for success?

- Percentage of pupils with special needs not in segregated settings
- Percentage of pupils with special needs socially included in their peer-group

Social participation of pupils with special needs in regular schools

- Being in a regular school is a huge advantage:
easier to have relations with peers
- However,
being in a regular school is not automatically:
being included

Being socially included is:

- Accepted by peers
- Having friends
- Belonging to an in-class network
- Pupil's own evaluation of being accepted and having friends

Data collection

Sample: pupils from 15 regular elementary and lower secondary schools in Trondheim

Grade	Age	N pupils with special educational needs (SEN)	N pupils without special educational needs (NSEN)
4	9-10	42 (8,6%)	449
7	12-13	37 (7,4%)	461
		79 (8,0%)	910

Social position – 2) reciprocal choices

The number of reciprocal choices

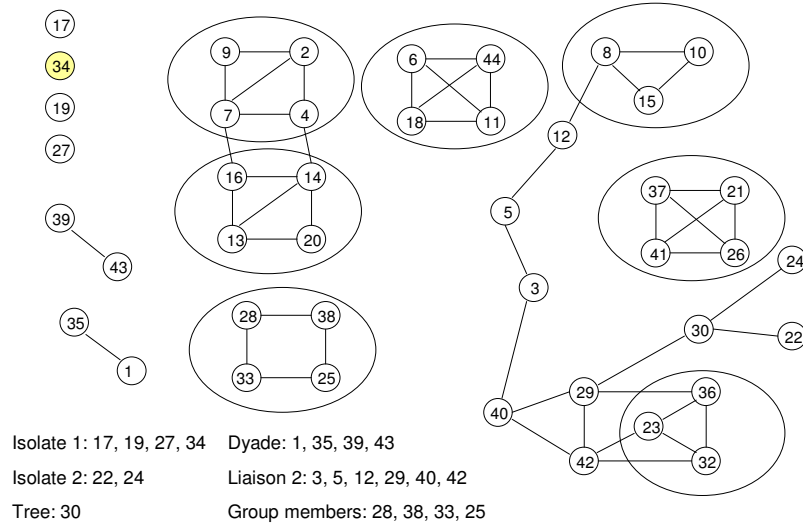
Social position – 2) reciprocal choices

Grade	Group	N	No friends at all (%)	≤ 1 friend (%)
4	Non SEN	449	4.9	17.6
	SEN	42	16.7	47.6
7	Non SEN	461	7.4	22.6
	SEN	37	24.3	43.2

Social position – 3) in-class network

- Memberships in cohesive subgroup
- A set of at least three individuals, who have more links with members of the group than with non-members

Social position – 3) in-class network



How many are socially excluded?

- Overrepresented by a factor of 2 to 3 in the at-risk categories
- Based on acceptance scores at least 15 – 25 % excluded (peer group 3-4 %)

Conclusion:

- Many pupils succeed in finding a position in the peer group
- For the others is physical integration only a very basic condition
- Becoming part of the group is not an automatism
- Some pupils need extra support