Co-Education and Establishment of New School Units for Special Education and Training

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Abstract
Legislation in Greece follows European guidelines for special education and training. Based on these guidelines and with a focus on inclusion, Greece is now developing legislation that focuses mainly on the inclusion of children with disabilities and the provision of the necessary skills. Significant problems are still to be solved, but the developments that are taking place reflect a positive direction.
Key words: *special education, training, co-education.*

I.   Introduction

Educational systems around the world face the challenge of providing effective education for all children and young people. Education allows people to live with dignity, to fully develop their abilities, to participate and to improve their quality of life (UNESCO, 1990). It is estimated that in economically poorer countries, a significant number of children do not attend school. On the other hand, in richer countries many young people drop out of school because they do not have the required skills, others are placed in special structures, supported by the welfare system and not by the teacher, as a result of which they are deprived of general educational experiences and some choose to leave their lessons, as they feel that they are not important for their lives (Ainscow & Miles , 2009).

In recent years, at the international level, there has been an increased interest in the idea of inclusive education as a reform that supports and applauds diversity among learners. The term "co-education" refers to the education of all children together, in the same school environment, regardless of race, gender, religion or physical and mental condition, and is more common in special education and training.

The transition to "One School for All" is not just a technical or organizational change. It is a movement with a clear philosophical direction (UNESCO, 2001). The field remains confused as to what exactly "co-education" means. Thus, the literature mentions terms such as "integration", "integration", "inclusion", "inclusive education", "participatory education", "unified education". The confusion that exists internationally stems from the fact that the idea of co-education can be defined in several ways (Ainscow & Miles , 2009). Historically, a progressive use of terms has been found, beginning with mainstreaming , then integration , and finally inclusion (Bricker , 1995). When we refer to education, the most tried and tested term is co-education, which gives the term " inclusive education ".

The first definitions of co-education focused on assessing and accepting the difference and the rights of students with special educational needs (SEN) or disability to attend public school in their neighborhood as equal members of the school community, in appropriate age classes and with the provision supplementary assistance and support services (Mitchell , 2010, 2015). Putting a child with a disability in a class where the majority of children do not have a disability is not co-education or even integration (Brodin & Lindstrand , 2007). According to Miles (2002), it is understood that in some languages is not always possible to distinguish between the words integration (mainstreaming), integration (integration) and inclusion (inclusion). However, the definition of co-education, which can only be a "matter of interpretation" and term translation, often reflects the general culture (Mrunalini & Vijayan , 2014). However, English distinction is useful, as it significantly serves to promote coherent practices. In practice, the terms integration (integration) and inclusion (inclusive education) follow different educational approaches, as the "inclusion" supports the development of a school just about everyone, while "integration" refers to the use of separate classes in mainstream school. For "integration" education, the child is considered the problem, while in "co-education" what is expected to change is the system and not the child. The Zoniou -iron (2000) states that the term "integration" is not a goal but a means to changing social circumstances and concerns and broader social structures. In this light, Kourkoutas (2008) identified with Zoniou-Sideris that "co-education" is quite restrictive, does not express

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the dynamics of the term / concept "inclusion" and focuses only on school reality. The use of the term in English is indicative of substantial and full participation - and not just access / right - in joint education, as well as in all educational and school processes involving students with formal development, without the simultaneous recourse to special services. treatment / support. The Kofidis and Mantzikos (2016) reported that the main difference between "integration" and "inclusion" (inclusion) is that the "integration" as applied practice in the absence of a theoretical and ideological framework and it failed. Finally, for Smelter , Rasch, and Yudewitz (1994), co-education brings students with disabilities to the general school classrooms by providing them with support services, rather than bringing students to support services, as is the case in integration.

II.   Aim and methodology

The purpose of this article is to examine the legal framework of Greece in terms of special education and training in the context of co-education. The methodology used is that of bibliographic review using secondary sources such as legislation, international reports and studies.

III.   Legal framework

The idea of inclusion / inclusive education first appeared as a concept in the early 1970s and was strengthened internationally and by legislative regulations and decisions, such as the United States Law 94-142 / 1975. of the WARNOCK Commission (1978), the 1983 Educational Act in Britain and the decision of the Council of Ministers of Education of the Member States of Europe (4-6-1984). The idea matured through ongoing international discussions of United Nations organizations on "Education for All» (Education for All) which resulted in the UNESCO Declaration (1990) and the Action Framework adopted by the World Conference on "Education for All ». The goal is a school for all, without discrimination and access for all children with or without disabilities in the same school class, enhancing equality.

However, the vision that education should be a right for all and not just a privilege for a few first appeared half a century before the UNESCO Declaration of 1990. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states: that education is a fundamental human right - a right enshrined in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989. UNESCO, 2001).

Great impetus for the co-education approach was given by the World Conference on Special Education, in 1994 in Salamanca, Spain, when it was found that Education for All is far from reality and where children with SEN were one of the many groups they faced obstacles to their education. The final report of the Conference describes the principles, policy and practice in education of people with disabilities (UNESCO, 1994) and provides a framework for policy and practice. This Declaration and the accompanying Action Plan are undoubtedly the most important international document ever published in special education. He argues that *: The value of these schools is not just that they are able to provide quality education to all children their operation is a crucial step in combating discrimination, building infrastructure and developing a society without exclusions.*

The vision of co-education was recently signed by the ducation 2030, Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all " Declaration, which emerged from the World Education Forum in 2015. This Declaration is a pioneering document that is committed to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization. Given this new international policy, Ainscow (2016) proposes a general agenda for change, focusing on national policies on justice and the development of good school practices for co-education.

In this direction, most states have instituted co-education. Despite significant progress in the last two decades to expand access to basic education, further efforts are needed to minimize barriers to learning and ensure that all students in schools and other learning structures experience a real environment without exclusions (UNESCO, 2017). For the realization of the vision of co-education, several questions arise:
▪ Can co-education really be implemented?
; Can we talk about full co-education?
▪ Is it possible for education not to be divided into general and special?
▪ What factors facilitate its implementation?
What are the possible obstacles?
In conclusion and through contradictions, research and laws tend to agree that:
▪ Public education without exclusions offers significant benefits to all students,
Co-education is a right, not a privilege for selected students and
 Successful education in separate special structures does not preclude the successful operation of co-education classes (Cole , 2006).

IV. The course of co-education in Greece

In Greece, over the past 30 years, co-education has become a dominant topic of discussion in the field of Special Education, with obvious progress in political efforts to implement it. However, this move has been largely curtailed politically by enacting relevant legislation that has not yet been fully implemented. A number of legislative regulations, which are in line with global trends and the European perspective on joint education, are contributing to special and general education.

The first legislative regulation on Special Education is Law 14143/1981, which was passed and published long before the UNESCO Declarations. The content of special education has been delimited in a restrictive context, as it is called upon to accept the rules of medical science (Dteropoulou-Derou , 2012). Despite the fact that the spirit of the Law relies heavily on the traditional medical model that defines disability based on the individual's weaknesses (Panteliadou, 2007), nevertheless for the first time parallel special classes for full-time study were established in regular schools, as well as support classes. teaching. For Tzouriadou (1995), this Law is governed by the principles of recognizing equal opportunities for all citizens, school and social integration and vocational and social rehabilitation. Law 14143/1981 appears to be the most "wronged" Law and although it has received the harshest criticism from Zoniou- Sideris (2012) it is used as a constant source of drawing principles, content and values from the following Laws, which proclaimed the intention. to change the educational approach of people with disabilities.

This was followed by two other laws with a clear, now oriented policy orientation: Law 1566/1985: "Structure and operation of primary and secondary education and other provisions" and Law 2817/2000: "Education of people with special educational needs. and other provisions. " These Laws make it clear that education policy without exclusions cannot be considered separate from the wider social forces that require social and educational integration and therefore co-education is not a technical issue, but a political one (Zoniou-Sideri et al ., 2005). As a result of these regulations, Greece has adopted the principles of joint education, sometimes with the term integration and sometimes with the term integration, but conditions that, as already mentioned, reflect different practices. Continuing its critique of Law 2817/2000, Dteropoulou-Derou (2012) considers inclusion, which is proposed in the form of integration and parallel support departments as a means of defending the smooth operation of general education by constructed outsiders (students with disabilities) and internal "enemies" (students with learning disabilities), who threaten the stability of the system. The current Law 3699/2008, despite its continuous amendments, still provides for two forms of "integration" in the Greek Educational System, such as the previous Law 2817/2000: (1) parallel support in the school classroom of the general school, where a special education teacher is also present. In addition to the class teacher, the student with SEN attends the general school curriculum and (2) integration department, a structure of Special Education in general schools as a separate section, which accepts students with SEN from all grades and has aimed at educational intervention with individualized programs.

Thus, despite the progress, one can identify a number of theoretical and practical difficulties and contradictions related to the implementation of education without exclusions. Remarkable is the research of Zoniou-Sideri and her colleagues (2005) on the operation of "co-education classes" in pre-school and primary education and whether their role facilitates or hinders integration. In the 1980s, the first "special classes" were introduced in general schools with the aim of improving the quality of education provided to this group of children. These "special classes" were automatically renamed "integration classes" with Law 2817/2000. Although, for the first time, a "integration language" has been adopted by Law (Dteropoulou-Derou , 2012), the simple renaming of classes raises a number of questions about policy-making (Zoniou et al., 2005). Ultimately, reality proves that inclusive education remains on paper, while at the same time re-creating "a climate of confusion as to the principles, purposes and practices of co-education" (Dteropoulou-Derou , 2012, p. 139).

Since 2005, Zoniou-Sideri and colleagues have highlighted the simple process of "renaming" special classes into integration or co-education classes as a typical example of how integration education policy is implemented in Greece. In fact, they concluded that the implementation of the co-education model based on the principles of a democratic school requires a different type of education, both for general and special education teachers and for a major restructuring of the education system.

Current situation of accession policy in Greece

Despite efforts to effectively integrate children with SEN into the general school, the climate of confusion continues with evidence of recent ministerial decisions and circulars. In a statement, the Ministry of Education considers that HA 100575 / Δ3 is an important step in improving the education of students with disabilities and / or SEN and is committed to continuing the effort to modernize the legal framework and the content of studies in special education, on the one hand strengthening the basic guiding principle of its pedagogical integration and on the other hand upgrading the special schools, with the aim of meeting the educational needs of each child in the most appropriate educational environment. In the same announcement it is

reminded that in the school year 2016-17, after 8 whole years, 531 Integration Departments, 3 Special Kindergartens, 9 Primary Schools, 5 EEEEK and 9 Special Vocational High Schools and within the next few days it is announced the establishment of 1 Special Kindergarten, 1 Special Primary School, 2 EEEEK and 9 Special Vocational High Schools and Lyceums which will operate from the new school year (MD 100574 / D3).

Subsequently, Circular 109631 / Δ3 / 29-6-2017 was issued, where reference is made to Co-Education Programs, in accordance with §3a of article 82 of L.4368 / 2016, which was added as §6 to article 6 of L.3699 / 2008. In the School Units of Special Education and Training of primary and secondary education, co-education programs can be implemented with co-located or non-co-educational units of general education. The objectives of the co-education programs are, in particular, the promotion of inclusion and equal opportunities in education, the development of students' cognitive, learning, emotional and social skills with students with disabilities and / or disability, and the sensitization of general education students to human rights issues, respect for diversity and ensuring human dignity.

On 02-07-16, the Ministry announced the establishment of hundreds of new Special Education and Training structures, emphasizing the basic priority for meeting the educational needs of each student, in the most appropriate educational environment, and therefore proceeded with the process of establishing Special Education and Training structures. including the Integration Departments. In conditions of crisis and budgetary pressures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs increases by 20% the Integration Departments and by 8% the Special Schools.

At the same time, the Directorates of Secondary Education (DDE) of the Regional Units issued Press Releases informing the citizens about the Establishment of a Unified Special Vocational Gymnasium-Lyceum (Government Gazette 2155/2017), which is upgrading students to key education is the most appropriate educational outlet for them, while also offering them guaranteed professional rights. Among other things, the composition of the school's staff is as follows: a) special education teachers, who implement differentiated teaching programs, so that students with learning difficulties can easily assimilate formal curriculum b) psychologists specializing in school psychology or special education, which provide systematic psychological support to each student individually, in the context of school hours and c) social workers, who actively support students' families and make the necessary connections with social services and institutions to facilitate social student integration. On 8/25/2017, a DDE posted on its website a letter to parents and guardians in view of the operation of the Unified Special Vocational High School-Lyceum informing them and inviting them to support the New Unified Special Vocational High School which operates, from September, in order to inform their children about the possibilities offered to them through the operation of this school, so that it can be staffed with students.

On 10-10-2017, DDE invited an expression of interest to fill a vacancy for Director of the Unified Special Vocational High School-Lyceum with the decision 4409 / 24-07-2017 (APA: 6XOT4653PS-TH8) decision of PDE Western Macedonia.The invitation was addressed to candidate Principals who have not been placed in school units. On November 1, 2017, the position of Director was re- announced , so that he could be appointed to his position on Tuesday, November 21, 2017.

These recent events demonstrate the failure of the education system to involve virtually all students in the educational and social activities of school life and the perpetuation of marginalization (Zoniou- Sideri & Dropoulou-Derou , 2012). According toFlouris (Zoniou- Sideris & Dropoulou-Derou , 2012), the political and governmental vision for the planning, directions and goals of educational policy is at the level of intentions only. Redefining educational policy for integration, two main concerns arise: (a) whether inclusive education is included in this political vision and (b) what is the conceptual content attributed to inclusive education policy, nationally and globally.

To the question why, in the end, co-education is not applied and why new Special Education and Training School Units are established, the answers can be given by referring to the international literature. It is established that the existence of separate schools of general and special education with fragmentary efforts at the level of integration is not only a Greek phenomenon. Sweden has been the leading country in the field of social welfare and the goal of disability policy has been equality and participation, but Brodin and Lindstrand (2007) have concluded that Sweden has lost the lead in education. without exclusions and has taken a step backwards. This setback is not only the result of economic cuts, but also of a change in ideology. The Armstrong (Leddy , 2015) stated that with regard to the inclusion in the US, many schools claim that they promote an inclusive environment, but in reality this is far from the truth. Canada has come a long way and is probably the country with the least discrimination for people with disabilities today. Each state has its own policy depending on its structure and composition. In countries where decisions are not made by the central government, but operate at the regional level, such as Canada, we see greater flexibility. The case of the Alberta Region of Canada reflects the general culture of its citizens. Co-education is more than just a method or a strategy. It is a way of life that is directly linked to the value system that values diversity (Bunch , 2015).

But what makes a school open to everyone? What are considered good practices and what can be the obstacles to the implementation of co-education? Alberta's education system is unique, where the role of

teachers and their associations in policy-making and decision-making is very important. The dynamics of Alberta's teachers prove that the success of the project is largely based on the attitude of teachers (ATA, 2014, 2015).

V.   The role of teachers in a new educational policy

Despite the extensive references to co-education at the philosophical level, far fewer are focused on the difficulties of implementing it. Teachers, general and special education, are considered to be the main persons for the implementation of co-education (de Boer , 2012; de Boer et al ., 2011; Bouras et al., 2011; Schmidt & Vrhovnik , 2015). Co-education requires teachers to take responsibility for creating schools in which all children can learn and feel that they belong (Rouse , 2017). Some teachers feel uncomfortable when they have students with SEN in the classroom and many feel that they are insufficiently prepared to meet their needs (Slavin , 2007).

The attitude of teachers is emphasized as the decisive element in ensuring the success of the co-education of children with and without disabilities (de Boer , 2012; Avramidis et al ., 2000). Factors that lead teachers to accept or reject co-education are related to the supportive framework provided to them by specific information services and also the severity and type of disability (de Laat et al ., 2013). It is also noteworthy that teachers who actively participate in the teaching of students with SEN have more positive attitudes than teachers with little or no such experience (Avramidis & Kalyva , 2007). For a successful full integration model, continuous communication between general education teachers and special education teachers is needed (Anthony etal ., 2009). The Pavlovic and Aman (2009) emphasized that students who want to specialize in special education should understand that this includes train teachers of general education and administrators with whom they work. Teachers support the idea of co-education, but point out that in order to achieve it in practice, the conditions are their education and the presence of a teacher of parallel support in the classroom (Hatzizisis , 2011). They also note that inadequate support from the school and the local community, the limited time available to teachers to personalize teaching, the attitude of parents towards the school and the limited opportunities for cooperation between all stakeholders. are major obstacles to the implementation of co-education and are directly related to educational policy (Patsidou , 2010; Avramidis & Kalyva , 2007). A similar conclusion was reached by Shaddock's (2006) study in Australia. These barriers mainly concern targeting, methodology, educational material and content.

As society's attitudes, beliefs, and attitudes toward people with disabilities are shaped by cultural becoming (Deal , 2006) and stereotypes (Green et al ., 2005), teachers' attitudes are expected to vary from region to region as well as from the context in which they work. Research shows that the decisive factor in shaping teachers' attitudes and behaviors for education without exclusions is the attitude of principals (Koronakis, 2016). Thus: *ρό The role of the school principal is considered important in the development of inclusive and transformational education. The principal must commit to the principles and philosophy of inclusion, cultivate in the eyes of teachers a picture of what inclusion is, adopt appropriate practices, and develop positive attitudes and behaviors. With his leadership and personal example, he must support school teachers, identify children who are marginalized for some reason, introduce new meanings to diversity, and build bridges between community schools. Thus, it contributes to the improvement of the school and offers increased learning opportunities to students and opportunities for professional development to teachers.* (Koronakis, 2016) .

The Mayrowetz and Weinstein (1999), very early on concluded that no individual alone is not the key to a successful reform and a variety of people in multiple roles, including persons outside school-has a unique contribution to the creation of schools for all children.

Cassianos (2015) proposes: *... the creation of a single type of school, which will come from the entry of groups of students from special schools in some general education schools based on the spatial coverage of all areas of the educational region. In these schools will be provided the existence of a corresponding number of organic teacher positions with studies and experience in the education of students of the respective disability as well as the corresponding positions of Special Educational Staff (...) with a supportive and advisory role for all students, teachers and of the parents of the school unit. (...) The school will operate under a single address (Director and Teachers' Association), so that the existence of students with disabilities will not be a problem but a matter of organization and planning of the school program. Students with disabilities and / or SEN, if they will not be able to attend the general education program, will be taught in school halls with their teacher and will follow the individualized training programs as would be done in the special school and will also participate in programs. co-education, either as departments or as individuals, depending on their needs and interests, abilities and endurance. (...) We are talking about the entry and attendance of a number of 15 to 20 special school students in a large formal education school* (Cassianos, 2015).

VI. Conclusion

Education is not just about access to schools for those who already have access to them. It involves the participation of all and the identification of barriers and barriers faced by learners in their efforts to gain access to quality education opportunities, as well as the removal of these barriers and barriers that lead to exclusion (UNESCO, 2012). The barriers faced by students with disabilities arise from existing ways of thinking in the school community. Consequently, strategies for developing coherent practices must involve changes in their way of thinking, attitudes and perceptions (Ainscow , 2005). According to research by Strogilos and his colleagues (2017), even teachers working in co-taught classrooms , as parallel support, have a different view of what, ultimately, co-education is. In order to achieve co-education, the basic principles of Universal Design (Arabatzi et al., 2011; Kourbetis & Gelastopoulou , 2017) and Differentiated Teaching (Gelastopoulou , 2015; Panteliadou, 2008; Tomlinson et al .,Are adopted . 2003). Universal Design in Education is an approach to the design of curriculum, material and content in such a way as to benefit people with different learning styles, without adjustments and after modifications. Due to the diversity of the classroom, educating students with a unified teaching approach proves ineffective and teachers are called upon to differentiate their teaching. This approach emphasizes the role of teachers as guides, in the learning process and, above all, in participatory learning (Tzivinikou , 2015). Thus, teaching meets the needs of all students and functions as a means of social justice (Valianti , 2013). In one class, attended by students with different learning styles, interests, motivations and cultural origin, multisensoryapproach, supported by technology, seems to serve the principles of differentiated instruction (Kaimara et al, 2018). Many of the barriers to implementing diversified teaching can be overcome with the use of technology (Hobgood & Ormsby , 2011).

The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital educational material in the learning process is a central issue in the policy of co-education in Greece (Gelastopoulou & Kourbetis , 2017). The digital media in an environment of interactive learning incorporate words, images, animation, video and other innovative digital teaching aids in learning and teaching (Kaimara etc., 2018v) and so are ideal for inclusion. In this direction and having all the concerns about the safe use of technology in education, with our eyes always on the child and his educational needs, we aim to develop education-entertainment systems (Edutainment) that will facilitate experience and integration. in society.

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