

Using courts and litigation for the right to Inclusive Education

Netherlands - In1School

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

'In1school is a project founded by the Dutch Foundation for Disabled Children that addresses the right to Inclusive Education, using a powerful mixture of international law, research, communication and politics to bring real life change for children both with and without disabilities. The main target is to work towards an education system that is fully inclusive by collecting evidence, cooperating with national and international lawyers, publishing reports, and initiating strategic litigation.

"For the right of all children to Inclusive Education – even when it takes a judge to open a school door!"

- Ms. Agnes van Wijnen, Project Manager, In1School

FACTS & FIGURES

- More than 60 families have been informed, encouraged and supported to help them enrol their children in regular schools or keep them there.
- Five reports have been published and have been broadly disseminated in the Netherlands.
- More than 50 personal stories of inaccessibility, discrimination, and exclusion in Dutch education have been collected, and more than 100 practices of Inclusive Education worldwide have been documented.
- The project has more than 2600 followers on Twitter in less than 9 months.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Even though there have been positive changes in the country's education laws, there is still a growing number of children in the Netherlands who do not have access to education at all and many children with disabilities still attend schools for special education. They are also hindered in their attempt to get proper support for higher education and, consequently, as adults they find themselves confronted with unemployment and a life near the poverty line.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

To address this situation, project members currently provide a variety of activities. First of all, they collect evidence in the form of cases and data of educational exclusion in order to develop an effective litigation strategy. They also team up with national and international lawyers who are experienced in the field of human rights. Staff members carry on research concerning Dutch law to highlight how the current legal system fails to guarantee the right of all children to an effective and Inclusive Education, and they communicate their findings via the web, social and traditional media, etc. By networking and sharing information, they provide support to parents and professionals in their efforts to change Dutch education laws and practices through litigation, where necessary. Staff members also support parents who are struggling to enrol or keep their children in regular education; and they empower them by providing information on what Inclusive Education should look like. In1School seeks to combine these various activities to maximize their effect, and works with key organizations, networks, and individuals who are able to enlarge the results.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The project team currently executes a co-financing strategy to support them throughout an active litigation process – for example, in the form of pro-bono legal support, interns to conduct field research and provide assistance, as well as support from other organizations. Going forward, the team wants to explore the possibility of crowd funding strategies as well. In future, further close relationships will be created with relevant partners to secure the legal right for all to an Inclusive Education.



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