

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

National Report on the Development of Special Education

November 2008

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1. Introduction

The Suriname Government represented by the Ministry of Education has not yet developed a clear policy for Special and Inclusive education. Based on the Vision for Inclusive Education (World Conference on Special Education): Acces and Quality Salamanca Spain 1994), the Ministry has the intention to develop a sustainable policy on this aspect of education. This implies promotion for integration and participation and fights against exclusion of students in need of special education. At the moment, no integrated inclusive school exists in Suriname. In the current situation students for special education schools, regular schools and private schools are strictly separated. There are private and regular schools where parents pay extra money for special care.

The above mentioned schools have to provide evidence that students cannot participate in mainstream education. To make a clear selection in the choice of school for students the Ministry has to improve its current Health Care Network for Special Education. Chapter one of this rapport is a description of barriers and bottlenecks we have to overcome before the formulation of a Vision for Special Education. Chapter two is a short description concerning the target group for special education. Chapter three shows a summary of stakeholders for Special Education. Chapter four shows the actions the Ministry has planned and taken for improvement. The Ministry is aware of the difficulties involved in the current organization for Special Education. During the next two years the Ministry will develop quality and educational reform in the Health Care Network for Special Education, in collaboration with the stakeholders.

1.1 Vision Policy

This chapter will show why the Ministry has not yet developed a Vision Policy. It is a description from barriers and bottlenecks we have to overcome before the formulation of a Vision Policy. A Vision Policy for special education is unavoidable and has to be connected with the current situation.

Starting points for the formulation of a vision policy for Special Education.

- An official instruction from the Ministry for Internal Affairs for developing Special-and Inclusive Education.
- An official recognition by the Ministry of an office for Special Education.
- Acknowledgement by the entire Surinamese society for the target groups of Special Education.
- An official instruction with markings from the Ministry intended for the stakeholders, for collaboration in formulating a Vision Policy.
- A program of meetings where stakeholders will develop the Vision Policy .
- Enquiry in the current situation from the target groups, education institutes and Network.
- Formulating a smart objective for Special and Inclusive Education in Suriname.

*the ministry = the Ministry of Education

Vision with no action is hallucination.

1.2 Barriers to overcome

In 1946 the inspector from overseas (gave the following advice to the Suriname Government. Provisionally, Special education is outside the care of the Government because it will demand heavy financial costs. It requires experts and in the future it will demand full attention from the Government. In 1962 the report from Professor Hart de Ruyter was published. The essence of his story was that a group of 1500 children between 6 and 15 year are not served in the ordinary primary schools and it was estimated that this number would increase. It is hopeful that from 1946 until today there are 24 schools for children who have learning problems, very difficult learning problems, children with learning and upbringing problems, visually handicapped, hearing handicapped and motorially handicapped. The founders of these schools were mainly parents from children in private foundations. It is a good start that in 1986 the then minister of Education Li Fo Sjoe set up the office for Special Education. An office for supporting the special education schools. Today this office has the name office for Special Education, but this is not yet official.

The fact that an office for Special Education is not yet official, is the first barrier for the ministry in trying to formulate its Vision Policy. Bottlenecks are:

- An official appointment of the office is directly connected whit the appointment of the person who will be in control. An appointment has to rest on expertise and knowledge of a person and not his political affiliation.
- The confusion about the name of the office. There are two names; office for extraordinary Education and Office for Special Education.
- The office is not recognized by all stakeholders.
- The Ministry has not recognized office to direct its policy.
- The Government has limited financial means reserved for Special Education.
- The ministry has less financial policy for special education.
- The salary for the teachers in the special education schools from the foundations is paid by the Ministry, but the foundation have its own financial and vision policy.
- There is less counseling between the ministry and the foundations concerning Special Education.

A second barrier is the recognition by the ministry for colleague organization who serve the same target groups. Bottlenecks are:

- Fellow-workers in different service offices from the ministry have difficulties with appreciating their position.
- For a long time there is less recognition between Fellow-workers for each others position.
- Stake holders compete with each other and there is less common interest.

- For target groups and the network from special education the services lack clarity.

A third barrier is the fact that the Surinamese society is not well informed and is not pleased with the target groups from special education. Bottlenecks are:

- The infrastructure for the special education schools is less connected with the needs from the students.
- There are not enough learning possibilities for teachers in special education.
- The payment for special education teachers is low
- There is less communication between the ministry and the Surinamese society concerning special education.
- There are few experts for serving the target groups.
- There is less employment for students from the special education schools.
- Students from special education schools are being used as cheap employees.

The ministry and the stakeholders accept the fact that these barriers and bottlenecks exist and take counsel together. It is not the first time but in November 2008 the stakeholders will represent a plan of action to the Permanent-Secretary of education, hopefully with more success than before.

2. The Target Groups

The target groups for special education are students from 6 to 23 years old. According to the last counting there are 831 boys and 343 girls. These students visit the primary and secondary school for special education. The schools are not equally divided into the constituencies in Suriname. Nickerie (2), Paramaribo(18), Wanica(2) and Para(2). In the constituencies Coronie, Saramaca, Commewijne, Marowijne, Brokopondo and Sipaliwini there are no special education schools.

3. Stakeholders

This chapter follows a summary of stakeholders. These are government services, foundations and private experts. A short explanation is given for each stakeholder.

3.1 Bureau Special Education

Objective

Within one year became an official service office from the Ministry with a multi functional team of workers. In collaboration with teachers and partners this team offers its services

Vision

Supporting of education through our services helps students to build up a live of full value in society.

Mission

The office for special education wants every child in Suriname to have fully valued and connected education.

Core business

- Supervision for teachers in the secondary special schools.
- Examination, support and referral from students aged 14 to 23.
- Supporting parents, supporters, students and teachers.
- Mutations for teachers from the primary and secondary special education school.
- Administration activities for teachers from primary and secondary special education school.
- Coordination for finances, buildings, employees materials and the network for primary and secondary special education schools.

3.2 Medical paedagogical office

Objective

Monitoring in mental and physical healthcare for the threatened human being in development from 0 until 23 years old. With special attention for the youngest from 0 until 6 years old.

Vision

For an optimum, harmonious physical and mental social emotional development children are in need of affectionate attention, care and respect. They have to grow up in a safe, stimulating, child friendly environment, free from poverty, violence and discrimination.

Core business

- Developing and monitoring programs for early recognition of development problems.
- Early child development.
- Education support.
- Signalize and support for children and youngsters with special needs such as :
 - developing arrears like a mental , physical, sight or plural handicap
 - learning - behavior –or emotional problems
 - with experience of mental, physical and sexual violence
 - with epileptics
 - children who wet their bed
 - with a specific affection like ADHD, Autism, Downs Syndrome

3.3 Paedological Institute

Objective

Supporting students in school and home situation in a psychological, pedagogical and social point of view.

Core business

- supporting primary schools
- examination before entrance in secondary school
- examination of students in primary schools
- supporting children in their home situation
- giving information about schools
- making testing and development material

3.4 Inspectorate

Objective

To exercise careful supervision the Ministry has inspectors who check if the rules and conditions in the special education schools are being followed. The inspectors help to supervise the teachers and headmasters in the education process. The inspectors give advice in school matters.

3.5 Private Experts

Objective

Supervision and supporting for students and their parents or other supporters, students and teachers in the private sector. On request private experts support the ministry.

Vision

When the ministry has shortage in expertise the private experts is a alternative.

Business

- speech therapy
- psychologist
- orthopedagogue
- remedial teacher

a. **National Board for the Handicapped**

Objective

Stimulate people without a handicap to take responsibility for people with a handicap.

Vision

People with a handicap are in this situation in spite of their own circumstance. They have the right for fair chances and a worthy of a human being existence. Members from this organization are appointed by the president of education. They are members from government organization and members of target groups.

Core business

- A board for supervision
- Reporting about the care for handicapped people
- Negotiate for financial contribution for handicapped people in Suriname
- Negotiate for employment for handicapped people

b. **Public Schools for Special Education.**

These are the special education schools directed by the Ministry. There are primary and secondary schools.

Objective

Optimum development and power to stimulate optimum functionality in the live-and employment community. A minimum dependency and a maximum well-being in the community. Names of these schools are: Emma school, Flora, Jankielaan, Lelydorp, Livorno, Ma Retraite, W.H.C Monkauschool, Mattonshoop, Fajalobi.

c. **Foundations**

There are 13 foundations who established a special education school.

The Mytyl, the Hubert, the Ruimte, the L. J. Gruntjes, foundation

Objective

Supervising and reception centre for students in the age of 6 until 15 years old with a multiple handicap. The names of the schools are the Mytyl school, Hubstina, Yenny Muller, Lion Gruntjes.

The Louis Braille,

Objective

Supervising and reception for students from 6 until 15 years old with sight problems.

The name of the school is : Louis Braille

Kennedy,

Objective

Supervising for students with hearing problems between 6 and 23 years old. The management from this school is the Roman Catholic extraordinary education foundation. They are very prominent in Suriname. The name of the school ; The Kennedy school (the first primary special education school)

The Moravian Brethren.

Objective

Schools for children for students with behavior problems from 6 until 15 years old. The Evangelische Broedergemeente his objective is personal development, preparation for the community and employment. The names of the schools are Marcel Ria and L.O.M. Samuel

Foundation for Recreation for handicapped Children, S.O.G.K,

Objective

Reception for mental and physical handicapped students aged 15 to 23.

Foundation for Training Projects for the Youthfully Handicapped, TJG,

Objective

Promotion in employment for handicapped youth from 15 until 23 years old in Surinam.

Foundation for Special Education

Objective

Supervising for students with behavior problems from 6 until 15 years. The names of the schools are: Lion school, Grietje Bie, Jules Fernandes school.

Foundation for Parents

Objective

Parents protect the rights for their handicapped child. Parents negotiate with the Government for financial support for their handicapped child. The first secondary special education school was set up by this foundation. The name of the school: Thompson

Foundation Soroptimists

Objective

A special education school for girls from 15 until 23 years old. The school is activity centre where the girls learn to look after themselves. The name of the school: Ilse Labadie
Counsel between the ministry and the foundations is necessary to protect the teachers against obscurities and contradictions from both stake holders. In the past school year Appointments are made with the president of education to start a program in the year 2008/2009 for regular meetings.

4.0 Action for Improvement

Fellow-workers from the office for Special Education, Pedological Institute have regular meetings since July 2008. They have planned to ask other stake holders to join. The subjects for these meetings are corporation in tasks, serving the same target groups, the differences and the agreements in their service. For these meetings they have planned to ask more stake holders to join them. Fellow-workers from these organizations already have corporation activities since July 2008. These meetings led them to a new Vision for the office for special education. A plan for fusion will be represented to the president of Education in November 2008.

New Vision

The different offices from the Ministry will join and become one organization located in one building and with one name. Corporation will be more direct and clear for fellow-workers and for the target groups. The objective is a secure organized Educational Care Network work for special education. Some points for the presentation are

- The organization for a clear and effective Education Care Network.
- A clear description from position for fellow-workers.
- Knowledge and expertise in the organization
- An efficient system for referring target groups
- A education for teachers with a program for special education
- A curriculum for special education
- Human resource management for teachers
- Communication with society
- Decentralize from services
- Infrastructure from buildings(schools)

- Parent participation

4.4 Educational Care Network

It is inevitable that the offices for special education from the ministry become one organization in a fusion. The organization has to reformulate their objective and vision. In this situation Expertise and knowledge from the fellow-workers can be used efficient and effective. Services for the costumers will be clearer. The Communication between fellow-workers will be more regular.

Supervision and support for teachers will be more connected to their needs. The teachers find it necessary to develop a curriculum for special education students. With music, craft, sport and computer lessons in the program. Because the student often have talent for these skills. Fellow-workers from the office for special education represented a plan for a curriculum to the ministry. They hope to get a positive reaction.

4.5 Successes

In the past school year the Ministry of Education supported the office for special education with financial and human support. This made it possible to carry out very interesting and valuable programs. The learning circle project (ICT) www.learningcircles.nl the special Olympics (sport), the end of the year sports day. For this program the office received financial support from Surinamese entrepreneurs. The exhibition from several special education schools with beautiful art craft. This year a new school will be opened. For more information about these projects, please contact Weekers_cat7@hotmail.com

5. Conclusion

The Ministry of Education from Suriname wanted to than the pioneers who established the first Special education schools for their devotion and perseverance. We are appealing to the parents, the students, teachers and the stakeholders to support the ministry to attain its goal, and to see to it that Special Education is given its rightful place in mainstream education, so that no more special schools have to be built because students participate in regular schools We hope that in the near future the Educational Care Network for parents will be formalized. Finally, we would like to ask de National Board for the handicapped to support us constantly, so that we may keep ourselves posted on the development of Special Education in the world.