



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN DR CONGO: LEGAL FOUNDATIONS, STATE, CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract:

The inclusive education is viewed as educational processes that includes all learners and meet the need of their involvement through a growing participation in learning, cultural and community life. It also has the goal of reducing the number of those excluded from ordinary schools or education system. It involves changing and adapting content, approaches, structures and strategies to educate all children in the same schools and classroom. Indeed, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (RD Congo) does not have the explicit legal foundation and financial, material, technological and human resources for an “*inclusive education*”, the Handicap International (HI) has come to the rescue. In 2009, the first experience of the pilot project was aimed at enrolling massively children living with disabilities in ordinary schools. In addition, Handicap International participates in the Working group set up by the government to renovate the country's education system towards an inclusive system. For the 2010-2011 school year, 1069 children living with disabilities were enrolled in the 14 schools targeted by this project, an increase of almost 30% compared to 2009. This exploratory study makes the state of inclusive education in the DRC by highlighting the challenges and perspectives.

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1. Introduction

The inclusive education is an educational process that aims at increasing the participation and reducing the exclusion in ordinary school or classical education by effectively responding to the different needs of all learners. It takes into account the individual needs for teaching and learning of all children and young people in situations of marginalization and vulnerability: street children, girls, groups of children belonging to ethnic minorities, children from financially unfavored families, children from nomadic, refugee and displaced families, children living with HIV/AIDS, exceptional learners and children with disabilities (DRC-UNESCO, 2008). The inclusive education aims at ensuring that these children have equal rights and educational opportunities. It is an approach that considers diversity as an essential component of the teaching-learning process, and that promises human development.

In fact, most of developed countries have legal foundation and material, financial and human resources for the effective functioning of their education systems in order to promote inclusive education through the organization of Inclusive schools and classes. Some developing countries are in lack of resources and the exclusion of vulnerable children or children with disabilities is notorious.

In African countries such as in DR Congo, the number of training structures that enrolls the children and adolescents living with disabilities is insignificant and low. Existing schools are struggling to function better as a result of the country's instability in recent years. Handicap International began its actions by supporting two institutions that practice inclusive education in Kinshasa, the "Bon Départ" and "Kikesa" centers in 2007. In 2009, the pilot project of these two inclusive schools was extended to 12 other ordinary primary schools in Kinshasa. In addition, Handicap International participates in the Working group set up by the government to renovate the country's education system towards an inclusive system. For the school year 2010-2011, 1069 children living with disabilities were enrolled in the 14 schools targeted by this project, an increase of almost 30% compared to 2009.

This study answers questions that: Despite the controversy between education specialists, what can be learned from the definition and the well-founded of inclusive education? Does the DRC have a legal foundation for inclusive education? In the historical perspective, what is the current state of inclusive education in DR Congo? What are the challenges and perspectives of an inclusive Congolese education?

At this questioning, we are pursuing three specific objectives. By specifying the definition of inclusive education and its well-founded with an effort to situate the Congolese education system among the typology of systems, the study retraces up the history of inclusive education and its actions in DR Congo and emphasizes some

challenges facing the practices of inclusive education in order to identify the perspectives.

2. An Overview of Inclusive Education

In this section, the study defines the inclusive education, provides the justifications for the inclusion of exceptional learners in ordinary schools and makes the differences between specialized, integrated and inclusive educational systems.

2.1 Meaning of Inclusive Education

Considering the problem of access to education for children living with disabilities and to integrate them into all other forms of school exclusion, an international movement of inclusive education has gradually developed since 1990. To date, inclusive education is a central focus of educational reforms in many countries (Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton, 2000; Miles and Ahuja, 2007; Miles and Singal, 2010).

Historically, children with disabilities were only educated through specialized educational institutions that targeted a specific disability. This method has been progressively challenged for several reasons: (i) the significant cost of this form of education; (ii) rural areas were largely forgotten and (iii) the isolation of children with disabilities from their families and communities. The inclusion of children living with disabilities in ordinary schools is more widely regarded as desirable from the point of view of equality and human rights (OMS, 2011; Rieser 2012).

The concept of inclusive education varied considerably over time and originally referred to the schooling of children with “*special or particular needs*” in ordinary schools. Actually, there is still no truly universally accepted definition for the concept of inclusive education. Following the World Forum on Education held in Dakar (2000), it was reaffirmed that education for all should take into account the needs of all children. The concept of inclusive education has thus been extended to promote access and retention in the formal or classical education system of all children with special needs, whether for health (physical and mental) reasons, but also for socio-economic, geographical, cultural or for learning difficulties (UNESCO, 2009). The main idea is that all children, including those living with disabilities, are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and must have common rules and procedures. Inclusion is then considered as a process of taking into account the diversity of educational needs of all children in the local schools. The objective is that the classical or ordinary education system does not exclude any children. This principle involves identifying and eliminating barriers by providing reasonable adaptations to allow all children to be integrated into the ordinary school environment and to have the same chance as others to succeed in schools and life. In this sense, the concept of quality of the educational offer is thus strongly promoted since the principle is to value the strengths and the intellectual, social, emotional and physical potentials of each child.

The inclusive education ultimately means a positive response to the diversity of students' needs and considers the difference as an opportunity to enrich learning processes. In developed countries, the general trend is a strong progression of the principles of inclusive education. The number of children living with disabilities who benefit from inclusive education varies from one country to another. But there is no fully inclusive system. The World Report on disability shows that in Europe, 2.3% of school-age students are in specialized schools or in a separate classroom within an ordinary school (World Vision, 2007; Giffard-Lindsay, 2007). This is a form of partial inclusion: an inclusive school with exclusive or non-inclusive classes. This form shows the importance to have a flexible approach. In developing countries, initiatives for inclusive education are only at the beginning. These relate mostly to the school access of disadvantaged children such as girls, children from poor households, ethnic minorities or landlocked areas, as well as children with disabilities. This latter category has, however, often been less highlighted than others in the inclusive education policies put in place. In fact, the passage from this right to inclusive education by the effective implementation of inclusive education policies is very complex in African contexts such as DR Congo. It is often difficult to ensure the integration of all children living with disabilities or exceptional learners in the ordinary schools of their communities. Flexibility and pragmatism in the face of different situations seem to be important to keep in relation to a dogmatic approach. Important work remains to be done to develop policies and practices adapted to the context of developing countries (Miles and Singal, 2008).

2.2 Rationale for the inclusion of exceptional learners in ordinary schools

The access of children living with disabilities to normal education is a real development issue and a number of justifications underlie this approach to inclusive education:

1. *In terms of human rights*, the access of exceptional learners to education is first and foremost a question of human right. This right is guaranteed by international conventions signed by most nations. It seems normal to invest from the children with disabilities. This investment can help them to enjoy the same rights to education as other children. Indeed, in the school context, if they are strongly affected by inequalities, their dignity is not always respected and their possibilities of autonomy life could be denied. This is what happened in most of cases (UNICEF, 2015).
2. *At the economic level*, the access to education for exceptional learners is strongly linked to the multiple dimensions of poverty. In fact, without education, an individual living with handicap situation can increase the risk of poverty, whereas poverty can increase the risk of disability in the reverse. Children living with disabilities benefiting from quality education are likely to become healthy, productive adults and therefore actively participate in the development of their society (Booth, 2003; OMS, 2011; Rieser 2012). In DRC, some persons with disabilities who are better training in some occupation worked better than the

valid persons. Some of them are opened their personal enterprises or business (in Shoemaking and Sewing and fashion). The access to basic education for children living with disabilities can also significantly reduce the subsequent costs of education, medical care and other social expenses. The inclusive education also appears rational in terms of educational cost to the state and households, as it is less costly to create and manage schools that educate all children together than to develop a complex system of different types of special schools for different groups of children. A study in Canada shows that the loss of production (in the event of exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market) is 7.7% of GDP (55.8 billion \$USA). In addition, UNESCO (2009) demonstrates how the Exclusion of people living with disabilities has an impact on GDP. It estimates that *“the average regional proportion estimated in relation to the total value of the loss of GDP due to disability, i.e. 35.8% of the overall loss of GDP due to disability in Europe and Central Asia, followed by 29.1% in North America, then 15.6% in East and Pacific Asia. The other four regions account for less than 10% of the world total, respectively”* (UNESCO, 2009, p. 13).

3. *At the social level*, the violence, abuse and prejudice against children living with disabilities is likely to be reduced by a better consideration of disability in the school environment. In terms of the well-being of children with disabilities and their families, the access to education for these children is quite decisive. The inclusive education in its founding principle of educating all children together can also be able to change attitudes and promote a more just society and reduce school and social discrimination.
4. *From an educational point of view*, this principle of educating all children together implies the building of a teaching adapted to the differences of each child. An inclusive education system can only exist if ordinary schools adopt a more inclusive approach, i.e. if they succeed in educating all the children in their communities together. In this perspective, the education systems must be reformed in depth in order to deal with individual differences. These reforms are for the benefit of all children. The overall goal of inclusive education is ultimately to strengthen the capacity of educational systems to reach all learners education need and in this sense is a central strategy for achieving *“Education for All or EFA”*.

2.3 Difference between Specialized, Inclusive and Integrated Education System

Zay (2012, p. 45) believes that an inclusive school is a set of *“educational policies that promote inclusion and try to keep all students in school, whatever their particularities. It is the school offer that is adapted to meet both differences the nature and the built socio-culturally of its public”*. A difference deserves to be made between the specialized, integrated and inclusive school.

1. *A Specialized Education System*. Exceptional learners receive education in a separate learning environment, such as in a specialized school or training

centers, often isolated from the community, other children, or ordinary schools (Corps et al, 2012). In many countries, this type of special education system has no connection with the Ministry of Education and depends, for example, on the Ministry of Social Affairs.

2. *An Inclusive Education System.* The educational system in its missions provides adequate education to all children collectively (Rieser, 2008; Boisseau, 2011). The links are created with the specialized and regular support services. The inclusive education system follows a systemic approach to change rather than a school-by-school approach.
3. *An Integrated Education System.* Children with disabilities are enrolled in regular schools, but in their own class including other learners with disabilities under supervise and guide of a special teacher. This practice is not always inclusive. It is a form of integration. These children often have very little or no contact with other peers students without disabilities. It may also be that a child with disabilities attending an ordinary school and integrated into a regular classroom, through the minimal efforts of the school to meet the specific school or social needs of that child has adapted. The exceptional learners are educated in regular classes for while school day, or at least for more than half of school day. Whenever possible, exceptional learners receive additional teaching assistance or special instruction in the regular classroom and receive the same treatment as other learners in the ordinary classroom. However, most specialty services are offered outside of a regular classroom, especially if these services require special equipment or may disturb the rest of the students in class (such as speech therapy), and students are removed from the regular class for these services. In some cases, the exceptional learner occasionally leaves the regular classroom to attend specialized teaching sessions or more suited to his or her physical or mental conditions in a resource room. These are the sessions of related services, such as speech and language therapy, professional and/or physical therapy, psychological services and social work

In view of this description, we believe that the education system of DR Congo lies between the specialized, integrated and inclusive education system. In DR Congo, three forms of inclusion can be highlighted. The first form is justified by the organization and functioning of the few integrated schools where exceptional learners or children living with motor or mental disabilities attend ordinary schools but are placed in the special and exclusive classes across the country. This form is seen from the evidence of the cases of the Province of Kivu and the Kasai (Figure 1).

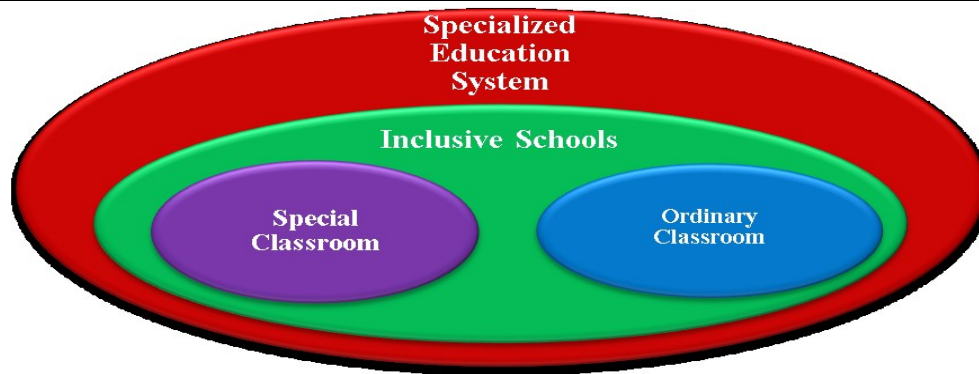


Figure 1: Specialized Education System

The second is based on the legal foundation from DRC constitution which against the discrimination in education right of people and on the actions of the International Handicap for inclusive education. Frank (2005) calls this system “*full inclusion*”. It is the complete inclusion that is the integration of all learners including those who have special learning needs or have important needs of educational and behavioural supports. It is a system of eliminating special, specialized and separate education in the different types of schools and classes. In these cases, learners with special needs are always educated together with learners without special needs while maintaining the appropriate supports and services. However, this approach to total inclusion is somewhat controversial, and it is not widely understood or applied actually (Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Frank, 2005; Robert, 2008). In the DRC, it is rigorously applied only in 14 schools in Kinshasa (figure 2). In some public schools, exceptional learners are also enrolled but only those with mild physical and behavioral problems. Generally, learners with severe mental and physical disabilities are not sent to schools.



Figure 2: Inclusive Education System

Indeed, some authors differentiate between two types of inclusion of an educational system. There are irregular or partial inclusive and full inclusion (Kavale, 2002; Praisner, 2003; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Frank, 2005; Robert, 2008). To these two types, a third type must be added. It is the intermediate or mixed inclusion type. This third form is supported by the regulations, in particular by the framework Law no 14/004 of 11 February 2014 of national education. This legal foundation advocates two forms of

education. This is the education provided in the specialized institutions and the classical education transmitted in ordinary schools (Figure 3). This situation creates a continuum of assessment of the level of inclusion of an education system.



Figure 3: Integrated Educational System

3. Historical Overview and Legal Foundation of Inclusive Education in DR Congo

3.1 Historical Overview of Inclusive Education in DR Congo

In Dr Congo, the special or integrated education is a practice that dates to 23 years. It was initiated by the regulations of the Framework Law no 086-005 of 22 September 1986 of the national education. This type of education was practiced in specialized institutions and did not have a significant impact because of a small number of these specialized schools in the extended Republic. These special education institutions were the work of national NGOs, religious and philanthropic organizations or private individuals.

The DR Congo is one of the countries signatories to the World Declaration of Education for All (EFA) of 1999 and renewed this commitment by acceding to the Dakar Framework for action adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000. In fact, it was 10 years after the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and vocational education developed a strategy for reconstruction and development adopted by the Government in March 2010. This strategy was also aimed at *“building an inclusive and quality education system for the development of the country and Congolese local communities”*. The inclusive and equitable education implies the obligation of the State to put in place the mechanisms enabling all categories of Congolese children to have access to education in the same conditions. It turns out, however, that this is not yet the case actually, because several categories of children in the country do not enjoy quality education, particularly children with disabilities (ESH). In fact, many exceptional children or persons with disabilities are not only deprived of the right to education, but also to learn together with other normal children despite the diversity of their conditions.

Handicap International, strong from this observation and although a private partner of DRC, has initiated actions, through a few projects on inclusive education. These projects aimed at supporting the country in the construction of a really inclusive education system. Under the initiative of Handicap International (HI), a project called *“EDI”* in collaboration with the Association of Centers for People with Disabilities of Central Africa (ACHAC) was set up to respond to the observation that *“children with*

physical disabilities had reduced access to normal education". The situation was unfortunately even worse for children with other types of disabilities. Thus, to contribute to education for all through an inclusive schools and classes, HI initiated a pilot project in 2007, in collaboration with two private training centers, the Kikesa and Bon Depart centers, which are dedicated to special education. These two schools have received the support of HI and made their first experience of inclusive education. This project funded by the European Union, ended in March 2010. The activities focused on community awareness, the enhancement of teacher skills, improved physical accessibility of infrastructure and advocacy for the education of children with disabilities.

In addition to this project funded by the European Union (UP) in April 2009, HI received a second funding from the English through the "*Big Lottery Fund*" in order to continue its desire to improve access to education of the children with disabilities. This new project opened to 12 new primary public schools and prioritized the capacity building of teachers and school development in terms of accessibility. The recent HI project that ended in December 2012 is a continuum of the other two projects mentioned earlier, it has come to strengthen the work done with the 12 schools by working closely with the Ministry of Education through its training service (SERNAFOR). For the 2012-2013 school years, inclusive education reached 14 schools that directly participate in the project.

Therefore, the study retains that the effort to institute inclusive education in DR Congo is the work of ratification of DR Congo on international legal treaties, the political ambitions of the country's authorities but also the intervention of the pilot project of the International Handicap (from 2007 up to now).

3.2 Legal Foundations of Inclusive Education in DR Congo

The legal and technical instrument of national education in DR Congo remains the framework Law No. 14/004 of 11 February 2014 which has just replaced the Framework Law No. 086-005 of 22 September 1986. This first law was operated for 23 years. It became, after many years of use, not only inadequate to the national constitution and social evolution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo but also unsuitable to the realities of educational system, socio-cultural situations and the basic needs of national development.

The Framework Law no 14/004 of 11 February 2014 takes account, on the one hand, of the international legal instruments duly ratified by the Democratic Republic of the Congo such as : (i) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (ii) the Declaration of Human Rights And peoples; (iii) the Constitution of UNESC; (iv) the Convention on the Rights of the Child, (v) the World Declaration on Education for All; (vi) the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; (vii) the Africa Youth Charter, (viii) the Florence Agreement and the Nairobi protocol of 1963 relating to the free movement of scientific, cultural and educational properties and on the other hand, (ix) the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its articles 12, 14, 37, 43, 44, 45, 46, 123, 202, 203,

and 204 and (x) the Child Protection Act and (xi) the recommendations of the general education States held in Kinshasa in February 1996.

This actual framework law also takes into account the evolution of higher education and university systems, as expressed in the Bologna process of June 1999. The various international legal instruments, the Constitution, the laws and regulations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are consisted of the basic guidelines for national education.

3.1.1 International Sources: Some international treaties supporting inclusive education

UNESCO (2009, p. 9) considers that the legal frameworks for the inclusive education from 1948 to 2007 include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007); the Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005); the Convention on the prohibition of the worst forms of child Labour and the immediate Action for their elimination (1999); the international Convention on the protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990); the Convention on the rights of the Child (1989); the Convention on indigenous and tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989); the Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979; the international Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); the Convention on combating discrimination in the field of Education (1960) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). These acts subordinate those of the national sources.

3.1.2 National Sources: DRC Legal Framework organizing the Inclusive Education

The DRC legal foundations organizing education consists of:

A. Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its articles 12, 14, 37, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 123, 202, 203 and 204.

Article 40 clearly states that “(...) *the care and education to be given to children is a natural right and a duty for parents to exercise under the supervision and with the help of the public authorities. Children have a duty to assist their parents (...). The public authorities have an obligation to protect young people against any damage to their health, education and full development*”, as specified in article 42. And in same context of right to education, equal opportunity for school and condemnation of all forms of discrimination, the article 43 states that “*everyone has the right to education. This is provided by national education. National education comprises public schools and accredited private schools. The law lays down the conditions for the creation and operation of these schools. Parents have the right to choose the mode of education to give their children. Primary education is compulsory and free in public schools*”.

Indeed, the Constitution guarantees freedom of education under the supervision of the state or government. The inclusive education is recognized by the international engagement made by the DRC State in the underwriting of international treaties and

agreements between States, or Regional, continental or world levels. Article 45 of the Constitution also states that: *“teaching or education is free. It is however subject to the supervision of the public authorities, under the conditions laid down by the law. Every person has the right of access to national educational institutions, without discrimination of origin, race, religion, sex, political or philosophical opinions, and his physical, mental or sensory state, according to his abilities. National educational institutions may, in collaboration with the religious authorities, ensure that their adolescent’ pupils whose parents demand the educational offer, are educated in accordance with their religious beliefs”*. The same article 45 adds that *“the public authorities have a duty to promote and ensure, through teaching, the education and dissemination, respect for the human rights, fundamental freedoms and duties of the citizen set up in this actual Constitution. The Government has a duty to ensure the dissemination and teaching of the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, as well as all the regional and international conventions on human rights and international humanitarian right duly ratified. The State has an obligation to integrate human rights into all training curricula [...]. The law shall determine the conditions for the application of this article”*.

B. Framework Law No. 14/004 of 11 February 2014 of national education in its articles 63 to 111

In DR Congo, school legislation provides two forms of education: formal and non-formal. In the formal sector, there is also the existence of two types of education (Article 68). It means that the formal education is consisted of classical education and special education. This provides the education to the exceptional learners. It provided in the form of activities carried out in special schools and in the training centers.

On this, some provisions of the DRC Framework Law of national education provides that in addition to the organization and creation of special education or specialized education institutions, an integrated school form and inclusive classes. However, an ambiguity remains with regard to the precision on special education or inclusive school. Article 107 and 108 stipulate that *“special education is organized for the benefit of vulnerable groups and specific socio categories, depending on their particular needs”*. Article 108 continues that *“special education is provided either in specialized establishments or in special classes incorporated in schools, or by the integration of learners with disabilities in the existing classes of Mainstream schools at all levels of education”*. This form of education prepares the learners for life, develops their physical, intellectual, moral and professional aptitudes. It promotes their social inclusion and their integration or reintegration into the working life. Articles 109 and 110 believe that *“the structures of special education are designed to provide learners with knowledge and skills, to maintain and develop them. The state is committed to creating conditions conducive to the development of gifted children through the elaboration of a special programme of studies at the different levels of national education”*. Finally, it must be clarified that inclusive education in DR Congo targets the following categories: *“Girls and women; Orphans; the displaced; the pygmies;*

children whose age is higher than the norm set by the school regulations; the indigent; persons of all ages living with disabilities” (Framework Law, 2014, Article 33).

C. Towards a legal framework strengthening the inclusive school in DR Congo

In accordance with the principle of DRC Constitution in its article 45 and in the alternative to the principle of subordination of national laws to international legal agreements and treaties:

Legal and regulatory frameworks can be taken to ensure inclusive education in all national public and private schools. Clear legal measures for the protection and establishment of permanent inclusive education in national educational institutions or ordinary schools must be taken into account in the framework law of national education and follow-up of its implementation. Some amendments of articles 63 to 111 of the Framework Act No. 14/004 of 11 February 2014 concerning the forms or structures of national education by incorporating the provisions of article 33 of the same law should be considered.

Indeed, an amendment to the Framework Law no 14/004 of 11 February 2014 must be done to define inclusive education and the modalities of its implementations in national schools, especially in public schools. This amended framework law should define the sources of several types of school resources: material (school infrastructure), human (qualified and competent teachers), technological (learning equipment, materials and teaching materials and machines), Financial (budget and management of education), information (curriculum and manuals) and time (timetable and school calendar). On this, the article 111 of the actual law provides that *“the development of infrastructure, special facilities and Special classes shall take into account the specific physical condition of students and/or students living with disabilities or having special educational needs. The State is committed to providing assistance to persons living with disabilities”*. It would be a positive sanction and an approach motivation that a privilege and encouragement should be put on the profile of any legal or physical person willing to create an inclusive education institution within the scope of the Republic.

4. Overall Evaluation of the Experiences of the Integrated, Specialized and Inclusive Schools in DR Congo

Here, the study analyzed the experiences of the integrated and specialized schools and the actions of the pilot project of the Handicap International in Kinshasa.

4.1 Experiences of Integrated and Specialized Schools

4.1.1 Networks of Special Education Institutions for the Schooling of Deaf Children

The schooling of deaf children at the Association of Centers for the Handicapped in Central Africa “ACHAC” is done through the vision and objectives of this association. The ACHAC was founded in 1974 in Goma, DR Congo. It was in standby during the years of political and army crises in Central Africa (1995-2005). It restarted its activities

in August 2005 by a General Assembly in Kinshasa and renewed by the choice of a new Secretary-General in November 2006 at an extraordinary meeting held in Bujumbura in the Republic of Burundi. 150 special education centers are affiliated with ACHAC, including 115 in DR Congo and 35 centers in Burundi. The purpose of this association is to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities through other members. However, its vision in relation to people living with handicap (HPV) is the dream of a world where people living with disabilities are taken care by themselves, became sufficiently self-sufficient and considered as full-fledged persons and carry out lucrative activities and occupations and contribute to the development of the country.

Compared to the members of this training center, the ACHAC aims at becoming a sufficiently organized network by 2015, where members are strong, cohesive, autonomous and capable of influencing policies and effectively contributing to the improvement of the living conditions of people with disabilities. Officially, the main objectives of the ACHAC are:

- To enforce the communication and effective collaboration among all members' training centers through the exchange of experience and technicality in order to improve the delivery of local centers that provide a response to the needs of people living with disabilities;
- To be the effective interlocutor of the members' training centers with Governments, local authorities, national and international private institutions in the field of projects and defending the rights of persons living with disabilities;
- To encourage members' centers and other partners to work in an integrated approach to effective rehabilitation of the person living with disabilities;
- To assist the members' training centers in fully educating and training the people with disabilities through adequate education at all levels in view of their full participation, equal opportunities and autonomy within society.
- To encourage people with disabilities to live in dignity like all human-beings included in society and help them overcome social marginalization or families.

One of the training centers of ACHAC is also located in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC. This is the Libanga village, a special school where the children with mental and aural disabilities are trained. This village is in collaboration with the network of Bondeko villages, where deaf-mute students delight their trainers. The administrators and teachers of the Village Libanga express their spirit of duty towards the exceptional learners or students in situations of disabilities and their sense of satisfaction in the accomplishment of their task. The Libanga Village has two training sections: one for deaf or hearing impaired and the other for children with mental retarded or cerebral disabilities. The school organizes three training cycles for deaf-mute: preschool, primary and secondary educations. A preparatory year is planned for the transition from preschools to primary schools. The Center also organizes a professional education with five options including cutting and sewing, carpentry, bakery, hairdressing and agriculture. At the end of the primary cycle, their students participate in the National Primary School Graduation Test (TENAFEP), before moving on to the secondary cycle.

The training provided will allow them to cover their main vital needs including food, skillfully, habitat, appropriate medical care, training at all levels and work.

4.1.2 Schooling of children living with hearing disabilities in North Kivu

North Kivu is localized in the east of the RD Congo, completely torn by civil wars. Foreign countries are arguing for minerals and oil. They do not leave this part of country in peace. Many schools have become refugee camps either rebels or our own armed elements. Therefore, there is no stable and continuous schooling of the children of this zone of country.

Despite all these difficulties, some children living with disabilities are enrolled in the Ephaphata Training Center in Goma. In fact, this school trains 143 deaf children at the primary and secondary schools. It has a teaching staff comprised of 21 salaried teachers through the NGO E.P.E.P. In addition to general education, this school also provides vocational education and supports the foster families of materially deprived children.

In summary of these experiences of specialized and integrated education, the study emphasizes that in DR Congo the schooling of exceptional learners is ensured by specialized schools which are grouped within the Network or the ACHAC. This is the case for example of the Libanga Training Center and the Bondeko Training Center for people living with disabilities on the one hand. It can also be ensured by the schools interviewed where classes are organized for the exceptional learners or children of the deaf in the eastern Province, Kananga (Training Center Mpandilu) and elsewhere. In most of these specialized and integrated schools, the integration work is systematic in Kinshasa, Kananga and Goma, where children living with hearing disabilities receive general and vocational training for their self-care and social integration. Despite all public and private efforts, the National Education Development Report (2008) states that actually, there are in DRC 71 operating schools for the education of exceptional learners or children living with motor, mental and sensory disabilities.

4.2 Experiences of Inclusive Schools through the Actions of Handicap International

The pilot project of the International Handicap funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) has as an objective *“to increase the access of children with disabilities to a higher quality primary education in Kinshasa”*. It aimed at enforcing collaboration the national authorities in order to have an institutional impact by encouraging them to take more account of the people or children with disabilities not only in the building standards of the school infrastructures but also, more large scale, to integrate it into the national education strategy in DR Congo. It has also incorporated the capacity building of inspectors and engineers but has not done any infrastructure development work properly. This project focused its interventions on three main axes, namely:

- Community level: community awareness;
- School level: strengthening the skills of teachers and school managers;

- State and national level: the strengthening of the skills of school inspectors and school building engineers as well as advocacy.

After the phases of educating community and training for reinforcing capacity and skills in inclusive education, Handicap International initiated and implemented the final phase of the project. It worked in partnership with 12 schools scattered in 4 Municipalities of the Kinshasa. These are the schools: (i) Carmen Salles, EP3 Lemba Nord and EPA4 Livulu in the commune of Lemb; (ii) EP1 Kikinga, EP Saint Thomas and EP7 Kisenso in the commune of Kisenso; (iii) EP3 Ngaba, EP9 Ngaba and EP10 Ngaba in the commune of Ngaba and (iv) finally EPA1 Limee, EP1 Kingabwa and EP2 Saint Kizito in the municipality of Limete.

Thus, during the last phase of the project, a data collection was carried out on the different activities undertaken. Among the data collected at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, there are those for children with disabilities (ESH) identified in the 12 partner primary schools. This collaboration has stimulated the participation of children with disabilities (table 1).

Table1: Proportion of Children ESH in Relation to the Total Number by School

| Schools | Number of ESH per school | Total Number of Children 2012-2013 | ESH compared to total enrolment of children in school in 2012-2013 (%) |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| EP Carmen Salles | 27 | 408 | 6,6 |
| St Thomas | 18 | 687 | 2,6 |
| EP1 Kikinga | 20 | 441 | 4,5 |
| EP1 Kingabwa | 20 | 858 | 2,3 |
| EP10 Ngaba | 25 | 761 | 3,3 |
| EP2 St Kizito | 20 | 696 | 2,9 |
| EP3 Lemba nord | 23 | 941 | 2,4 |
| EP3 Ngaba | 44 | 523 | 8,4 |
| EP7 Kisenso | 35 | 692 | 5,1 |
| EP9 Ngaba | 32 | 300 | 10,7 |
| EPA1 Limete | 11 | 216 | 5,1 |
| EPA4 Livulu | 20 | 486 | 4,1 |
| Total | 295 | 7009 | 4,2 |

Source: DRC-International Handicap Pilot Project, 2014

Compared to the total number of children enrolled in the 12 schools in 2012-2013, which amount to 7009 children, ESH schooled in these 12 schools account for about 4.2%. This represents about 84% of achievement compared to the first target of indicator 1 that 5% of ESH children should be educated in all 12 schools. $ESH = 295 \times 100 / 7009 = 4.2\%$.

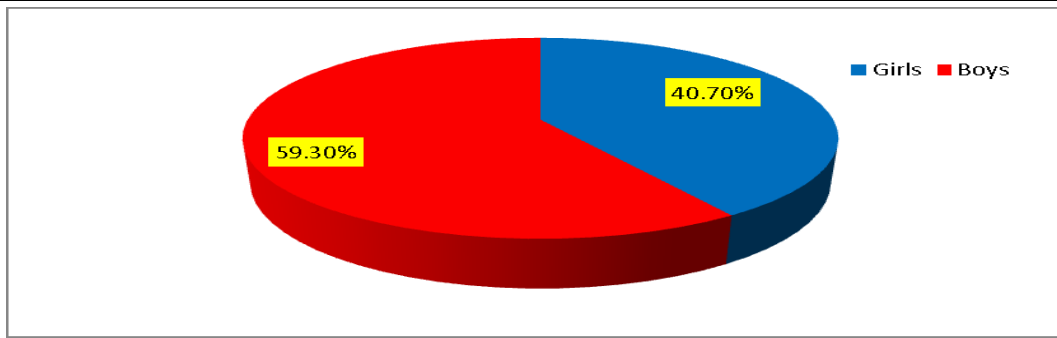


Figure 4: Repartition of Children with Disabilities by Gender

Considering the number of girls ESH (120) and the total number of ESH schooled in the 12 schools (295), there is an admission rate of girls ESH of 40.7% in 2012-2013. Thus, in relation to the second target of indicator 1 that aims at the end of the project an admission rate of 40% or more of the girls in the 12 schools was obtained. The study finds that the result 1 of the project is achieved. Admission rate of girls ESH = $120 \times 100 / 295 = 40.7\%$.

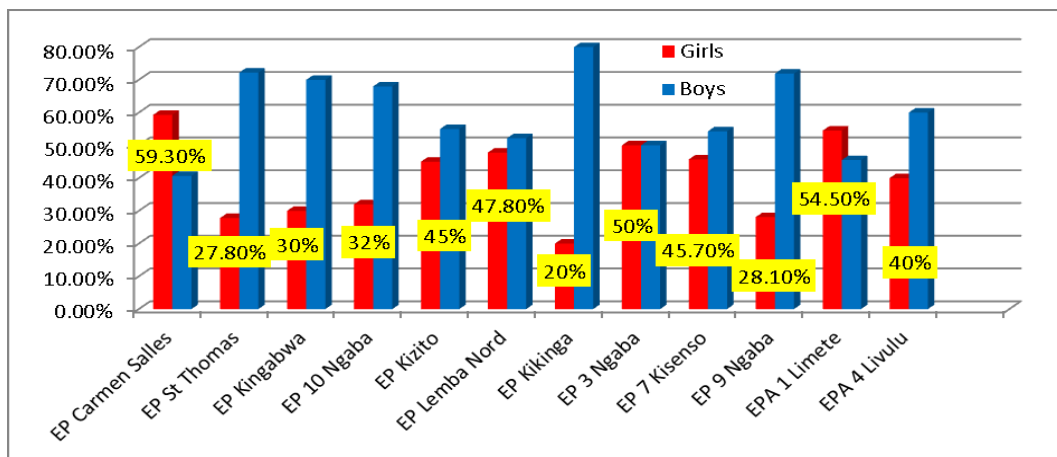


Figure 5: Repartition of Children with disabilities by Gender and School

In summary of this project, the study considers that the evaluation of this project has been made based on the statistics of children who benefited from inclusive education. The evaluations of the psycho-pedagogical and socio-cultural effects of this experience of inclusive schools must be made. In addition, despite some difficulties encountered in its implementation, Handicap International's interventions have paid off and the exchanges between Handicap International and the various departments and directorates of the Ministry of Primary, secondary and Professional Education in DRC have been fruitful. A framework document on inclusive education is being finalized and published. In addition, the study retains that project that remains the only effort of a dignified inclusive education in DR Congo has undergone a relatively normal course and achieved the expected results:

- *The community awareness phase*, it has been noticed that many new cases of children with disabilities registered in inclusive schools each year since the beginning of the interventions (156 new ESH).
- *Regarding the phase of reinforcing capacity and skills of teachers and inspectors*: the trainings sessions have taken place and post-training monitoring reports show that in most of the 12 schools, trained teachers have actually improved their ability to manage class and support ESH. The inspectors were not only trained but they also contributed to the development of training tools for trainers and teachers. In relation to accessibility standards, the training of the 20 engineers and the available technical data sheet are already used as a reference for the school infrastructure management but also for other educational partners.

5. Some Challenges of Inclusive Education in DR Congo

Some challenges prevent the success of inclusive education in DR Congo. These challenges are categorized into three types. The study emphasizes the political-legal, scientific and technological and social challenges. The categorization of challenges of inclusive education in DRC emerges is consisted of:

5.1 Legal and Social-Politic challenges

In order to make inclusive education one of the keys to the building of inclusive societies and the protection of its legal dispositions, all partners concerned must agree on a common vision, underpinned by various specific measures to be considered in practice of inclusive education. The evolution towards inclusion of education is gradual and should be based on clearly articulated principles aimed at system-level development and cross-sectoral approaches involving all levels of society. In order to reduce barriers to inclusion, there is a need for active collaboration between decision-makers, policymakers, educational employees and other stakeholders, including members of local communities, such as those responsible Political and religious, the local offices responsible for education and the media. These main measures are almost absent in DR Congo, it is a lack of spirit to analyze the local situation by examining. This is explained by : (i) the largest of the problem of inclusive and inadequate relation between legal foundation and its implementation, (ii) the school resources available and their use in the context of inclusive education; (iii) ignorance of opinion on the question of the universal right to education and building a consensus around the concepts of inclusive education and quality education; (iv) the weakness of the legislation for inclusive education in accordance with international conventions, declarations and recommendations; (v) lack of local capacity to promote inclusive education and devise ways to measure the impact of inclusive education and quality education; (vi) the absence of mechanisms at both the school level and the local community level to identify children who are not in school and to find solutions to help them enroll in school and to attend schools regularly; (vii) the lack knowledge of teachers in their role

who should play in inclusive education and their inability to take care of an exceptional learner and a limited vision of the diversity of a class group and (viii) problematic conception of this diversity instead of a beneficial conception and fortunate of diversity.

The inclusion often requires a change in attitudes and values on the part of individuals. Such a change takes time and requires revising designs and behaviors of stakeholders. The awareness should help to better understand what inclusive education is and to make societies more tolerant and open to inclusion. DRC need to establish the national policies for social inclusion, inclusive education, local support systems and appropriate forms of curriculum and evaluation to create the conditions conducive to the development of full inclusive education. The educational institutions should not be the only experts in education. It is not necessary for each school to have expertise, provided that access to specific skills is ensured if necessary. For example, in some countries there is a tendency to gradually use specialized schools as resource training centers to provide know-how and support for the regular school system and to guide DRC families and local communities to support their children with disabilities.

The teachers, other educators, non-teaching support staff, parents, communities, school authorities, curriculum developers, education planners, private organizations and training institutions are all actors who can put useful resources into the service of inclusion or inclusive education. Among them, some teachers, parents and community members are more than a valuable asset for inclusive education. They play a key role in all aspects of the inclusive education processes. This implies a willingness to accept and promote diversity and to take an active interest in the well-being of students, both inside and outside the school.

5.2 Scientific and Technological Challenges

In DR Congo, there are some problems of training, professionalism, qualification and skills of classical-type teachers are at all levels of the education system. It is also certain that for the special education sector, the observation would be the same and in the same tuning of inclusive education. As the Handicap International (HI) pilot project data demonstrated as an one phase of implementation of this project was devoted to training activities, to strengthening the capacity and skills of inspectors, teachers and school managers and administrators. On this, the scientific and technological challenges of an inclusive Congolese school are consisted of:

The non-control of the psychological aspects of the inclusion by education professionals in the DRC, the differentiated pedagogy that is often applied in an inclusive classroom starts from the constant according to which in a class, a teacher must teach to learners with very different abilities and learning styles. It attempts to give a response to this heterogeneity of classes through practices that adapt to each learner curricula, education and the school environment (Carroll, 1963 and Legrand, 1973). Often, the teacher will no longer be the center of the class but will put the learner or activity as the central interest. Several psychological inputs are to be noted in the field of learning by DRC teachers of inclusive classroom: multiple intelligence theory, cognitive theories,

and the contributions of differential psychology, socio-constructivist theories and the proximal area of development, research on memory and learning and measurement of intelligence. This emphasizes the special training of teachers.

The enigmatic perception of pedagogy of inclusive classroom by professionals education in the DRC, many DRC teachers still do not know that in terms of school microsociology in differentiated pedagogy, a class is a reality indisputable daily, because there are no two students who are treated exactly the same way on the part of a teacher. If the problem is not to deny this fact but to control it, some Congolese teachers still denies it and ignores it more or less unconsciously requires initial and continuous training effective.

Socio-cultural aspects, at the macro-sociological level, OECD (1995, p. 162) stated that “*differentiated pedagogy starts from the need for general basic training of the same level for the whole nation and lays down the principle of the educability of all Students. It responds to this challenge in terms of managing differences between students. As a result, it raises the problem of the nature of the differences to be taken into account within the school population in order to build learning situations*”. Due to lack of adequate training, the Congolese teacher has shortcomings to hold an inclusive class. It is in inability to question the questions to which the differentiated pedagogy is concerned to provide answers. These are questions such as how to deal with the differences between pupils of a class? How teacher cannot transform the individual differences into inequalities of academic achievement that reproduce social inequalities?

The material, technological and financial challenges, it is enough to visit the inclusive schools to see the buildings and the school infrastructure inaccessible, lack of sanitary infrastructure accessible and suitable for the intimacy. Ficke (1992) considers this to be an essential cause of high dropout rates among adolescent girls. Because of the specific equipment needed to support boys and girls with disabilities are expensive. These school facilities are restricted to urban locations. In this, it can add the lack of adequate means of transport, lack of natural light in the classrooms and lack of computer tools and ICT in education. There is no mention of inclusion without talking about school costs or educational finance. DRC National budgets are often limited, official development assistance is lacking and parents do not always have the resources to finance the direct and indirect costs of education of their children. Many families are forced to make a choice. They send just only child (a boy) to school among their children. There is therefore “*a risk that the cost of inclusive education is judged too high by governments, agencies and even parents, even if, reported globally, the estimated amount for achieving EFA (US \$11 billion) is extremely low*» (Hals et Ficke, 1991, p.65).

To these challenges, the must also underline the *scarcity of studies and scientific research on inclusive education and other specialized forms of education in DR Congo*. Research has not yet sufficiently explored the issues of special education or inclusive education. Research must be carried out on the pedagogical, psychological and socio-cultural aspects of inclusive education in order to make assumptions about the quality and effectiveness of this mode of education.

5.3 Socio-Economic Challenges

Two major challenges are to be reported in DR Congo, the poverty of the population (more 70%) and the perception of the Congolese Society from children living with motor or physical, sensory (deaf or mute) and mental disabilities (light, medium or deep). Indeed, in the Congolese school community, many parents who enrolled their normal children in inclusive schools have fears. Most of them are afraid to see their children to be trained with children living with disabilities inclusively. They gave as main reason that the school professionals will not have the time to oversee all learners of their classes in time allowed from one lesson (30 to 45 minutes). They will have the choice between work to meet the needs of children with disabilities, to focus on the normal children or to neglect others.

However, a Swiss study, which wanted to respond to this issue, showed that these fears were unjustified. The Suisse researchers compared school results between one class of integration and another not practicing to integration system. They found no significant difference. The majority of unprepared valid children show fear behavior and first fears at the first contact that must be exceeded. On the other hand, some authors including Camberlein et al, (1982) show that *“some children with disabilities may not live in isolated integration. In these situations, the child with disabilities does not meet any child like him. Children with disabilities may have the desire to find each other together to share common experiences that they can experience”*.

For some children living with disabilities, collective integration may be more appropriate: *“the normal child will see children with disabilities. The child with disabilities will meet normal children, but also children with disabilities will see other children with other types of disabilities [...] As soon as a number of children with disabilities are accommodated within a group of normal children, the perspective is changed. The look on the different child is no longer the same. Moreover, the look of each other, children without disabilities and children marked by an anomaly is a source of exchanges and interactions that are rewarding for all”* (Herou & Korff-Sausse, 1999, p.13). This is the best way to implement the inclusive society. But it can be possible that some experiences can sometimes live with difficulty. The study believes that in order to avoid these difficulties experiences, a framework of listening and freedom of speech should be put in place, as well as follow-up during the experiment. By poverty of households or scarcity of resources, DRC parents would prefer to invest more in the education of children without disabilities and some parents out of social shame hide their children behind their home.

5.4 Towards an Inclusive Education System in DR Congo

Under the supervision of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO, the 48th International Conference of Education (CIE) on the theme *“Education for inclusion”* with its 13 regional preparatory workshops which gathered 914 participants of 128 Country. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss current conceptions of inclusive education and to identify best practices for its implementation. They have highlighted both imperceptible and more visible differences in how to conceive inclusive education

from one country and region to another, as well as key commonalities, particularly with regard to the need to offer all The same chances of accessing quality education. These international foundations provide guidelines to assist decision-makers in addressing key issues in the collaboration of an effective inclusive education policy. The DR Congo as the member of this international meeting, the study stated that taking into consideration to the recommendations of these foundations and the national effort in the implementation of these recommendations can lead to an effective inclusive education. Indeed, for an inclusive education system in DR Congo, it is necessary to proceed to the implementation of the following guidelines:

- The accuracy and adoption by educators, governmental and non-governmental organizations, policy-makers and social actors of the term “*inclusive education*” in national education legal foundations as full inclusion;
- Develop regional and national mobilization and exchange to address the lack of understanding, awareness and community support for inclusive education. Indeed, structured exchanges must be undertaken at the provincial and national level in order to create a climate of understanding, awareness and support for public opinion on policies;
- Long-term sustainable economic and social development policies must take into account inclusive education. The state must intervene through educational structures from the early childhood of exceptional learners or children with disabilities in order to guarantee the right of all children to education;
- Vertical, horizontal coordination and the harmonious transition of the curriculum between early childhood education, primary education and secondary education help to avoid dropouts from one level to another and to improve the school retention rate. Some changes in the theoretical curriculum to the practical curriculum are required to ensure the necessary flexibility in terms of learning and evaluation, including informal and non-formal education opportunities, should be provided for in the curriculum. The participation of multiple stakeholders in the design of the curriculum is to be encouraged;
- Financial, material, technological, human, information and time resources must be mobilized, allocated and rationally used for inclusive education. On this, the budget appropriations devoted to education for inclusion should be managed with adequately, rationally with transparency and efficiency;
- The initial and continuous training programs of DRC teachers, education professionals and school partners should be reoriented and harmonized with the approaches of inclusive education in order to equip teachers with pedagogical skills needed to manage diversity in their classrooms, in line with expectation of reforms of curricula;
- The introduction of incentives to improve the social status of teachers and their living conditions are indispensable prerequisites for professionalizing the role of teachers (e.g. increasing wages, providing better conditions of accommodation and transportation, increase the respect for their work, etc.);

- National legislation should be amended and revised to incorporate the concept of inclusive education. International conventions adopted, ratified and integrated into national laws must also be stimulated, enforced and strengthened by the practical results of follow-up actions and evaluations.

6. Conclusion

This study highlights the meaning of inclusive education and its implications, the identification of the DRC education system among the inclusive typology of educational systems; the history of inclusive education and its actions in DR Congo and emphasizes some challenges of its inclusive education and gave the perspectives of DRC inclusive education system.

Legally, in DR Congo, the inclusive education is seen as an educational process that aims to take into account and satisfy the diversity of the needs of all children at school age through the massive and active participation in learning, socio-cultural life through reducing the persons excluded from the education system. This consideration involves changing and adapting content, approaches, structures and strategies, school facilities on an overall vision of all DRC children.

Theoretical, three main reasons must motivate DR Congo to full inclusion. The educational reason is based on the need for inclusive schools to educate all children together and to find the ways of adapted teaching to the differences of each of them. The social reason believes that these schools can change attitudes towards difference by educating all children together and promote the inclusive education as a foundation form of a just, equity and equal society without discrimination. The economic reason is based on the lower cost in creating and managing these inclusive schools than creating a complex system of different types of specialized schools for different groups of children (United Nations Resolution, 2007). It should therefore be noted that the *“inclusive education system can only exist if ordinary schools adopt a more inclusive approach – in other words, if they succeed in educating all children in their communities. (...)”* (UNESCO, 2008).

Practically, the study estimates that also for the case of DR Congo, ordinary schools with integrated and inclusive orientations are the most effective way to fight against all discrimination. This can create the welcoming communities and build an integral society and achieving the goal of education for all. These schools provide effacement education for the majority of children and increase the efficiency and profitability of the educational system. The achievement of this objective is only possible by effective engagement of DRC government through the adoption and implementation of legal framework and allowance of financial, material, technological, human, information and time-consuming resources to education system for inclusion issues.

These resources allowed to the inclusive education should be managed effectively and rationally with transparency. Inclusive education has the socio-economic benefits not only for learners living with disabilities, but also for all teachers, normal learners,

educators, parents and members of national and local communities. The evidence of DRC experiences in 14 primary schools highlights these benefits, since when communities, schools and classes discover the importance of inclusion, their members become more adept at transforming a special education system into an inclusive service of education system delivery. Through these implications and participations, members of the community change their societies and perceptions of people living with disabilities. In this sense, the world will become the place of diversities in tolerance of inter and intra-individual differences.

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