

# Annual Plans for Inclusion: an explorative analysis in Emilia Romagna

## I Piani Annuali per l'Inclusività: un'analisi esplorativa in Emilia Romagna

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The Ministerial Circular (CM) of 6 March 2013, no. 8 prot. 561, provided operational instructions for implementation of the new proposals given in the Ministerial Directive of 27 December 2012 – Intervention tools for pupils with special educational needs and local organisation for school inclusion – calling on schools to draft Annual Inclusion Plans (*Piano Annuale per l'Inclusività* - PAI). Teachers are required, in an aware and collegial manner, to constantly document and analyse the needs of students in difficulty, in order to appropriately manage teaching actions in class through appropriate organisational choices and the management of the professional and other resources available in the school.

This contribution presents the data that emerged from a research project on the PAI drafted by schools in Emilia-Romagna at the end of the school year 2013/2014. The first data described herein concerns 187 documents and investigated the following aspects: the establishment of Inclusion Working Groups (*Gruppi di Lavoro per l'Inclusione* – GLI) appointed to draft the PAI, the information on students in difficulty, the instructions for drafting Personalised Teaching Plans (*Piani Didattici Personalizzati* – PDP), the comparison between the level of school inclusion reported by teaching in the year in which the PAI were drafted and the proposals for improvement suggested for the subsequent school year.

**Key-words:** annual plan for inclusion, inclusion, inclusive education, teacher, special educational needs

abstract

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III. Esiti di ricerca 93

Ministerial Directive of 27 December 2012 – Intervention tools for pupils with special educational needs and local organisation for school inclusion – has rapidly entered the sphere of actions implemented by schools to promote inclusion paths for students, aiming to provide new indications for ensuring the right to education for all pupils and students in situations of difficulty. The Directive underlines the concept of *Special Educational Needs* (SEN) and covers three separate conditions: disability, specific developmental disorders (specific learning disorders, verbal, non-verbal and motor coordination deficits, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) including borderline intellectual functioning – considered the boundary between disability and specific disorders – as well as socio-economic, linguistic and cultural disadvantage<sup>1</sup>.

The SEN area defined in the Directive proposes in epistemological terms a pedagogical meaning which offers clear doubts in interpretation; in fact the document refers to a Non-area of “school disadvantage” which does not refer exclusively to those conditions in which deficits are present but all three of the aforementioned groups, placing them all under the umbrella of *Special Educational Needs*.

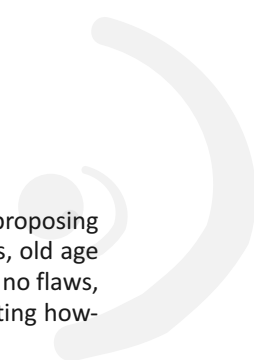
We think that the macro-category of “school disadvantage” cannot be converted within the area of SEN, as we have previously stated, indeed:

While *disadvantage* determines the differences, *educational needs* refer to each pupil, and for this reason the correspondence between the school difficulties of some – the area of *school disadvantage* – and the area of *educational needs* which cannot be connoted as special because they are not extraordinary – loses all meaning. Each pupil has his own distinctive educational needs (the need to learn, the need to express himself, the need to change, the need to socialise, etc.) that the school experience moulds to, and these needs must always and in any case be considered, filling any situations of school disadvantage (Dainese, 2015, p. 74).

There is a risk of a new category entering schools, a category which while without any specific character or clinical recognition, could be viewed in a therapeutic perspective rather than an educational one; we need to prevent the risk of placing all school difficulties in a medical framework where the only interpretations of the pupil and his difficulties are referred to performance parameters which match or are removed from indices deemed to be “within the norm”, without considering the need to have to understand the contexts in order to identify any possible causes in the limits of performance or, to the contrary, the appropriate opportunities for overcoming such limits.

Today everything seems to have stubbornly fit into the parameters focusing on the search for some fragile perfection in all fields of the human existence,

1 The term “pupils with special educational needs” is not new, as it was used in 1978 in the Warnock Report in the UK. This document suggested the need to integrate pupils in difficulty into British schools by adopting an inclusive approach. Subsequently, with the 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, the need to prevent all forms of discrimination of pupils with Special Educational Needs and promote their full participation in school life through the involvement of families was confirmed.



from the physical sphere to appearance to health; the world insists on proposing models of beauty and success in which there is no room for weakness, old age and illness. The myth of perfection, which is so invasive today, permits no flaws, and the consumer society is unwilling to understand “defects”, forgetting however that these are an intrinsic part of the human existence.

The writings of the Austrian sociologist and philosopher Ivan Illich are still very current today in many senses; in the late Nineties, he spoke of the danger underlying the mirage of “perfect health”, originated from man’s distancing himself from his intrinsic, composite logics which deviate him towards paths of doubtful authenticity and probable distortion. In those years, Illich proposes the cultural reformulation of the meaning of the human existence which should have moved beyond the parameters of completeness within which he included also “perfect health” leading to an increase in care which ultimately leads to a generation of increasingly new illnesses.

Also today the health system seems to continue to create new therapeutic needs and, consequently, more and new needs, and therefore new illnesses, are reported by the population, fuelling the morbid desire to maintain life eternally, firm and fixed in a state of unchangeability, rejecting old age, pain and death. The consequence is a solid demand for increasingly new medical solutions – we may think only of plastic surgery – to tackle this unhealthy escape from our inevitable fate; people want to forget that getting old, suffering and dying are part of the experience of life and that suffering and death and a constituent part of the human condition.

All this progressively limits personal freedom, because it blocks the autonomous search for an authentic sense to give to our own being, because it prevents us from feeling and overcoming our own fears: “Intensive education turns autodidacts into unemployables, intensive agriculture destroys the subsistence farmer, and the deployment of police undermines the community’s self-control. The malignant spread of medicine has comparable results: it turns mutual care and self-medication into misdemeanours or felonies” (Illich, 1977, p. 50).

When we assign medicine the task of solving all, we risk transforming every need into an illness, and as Franca Ongaro Basaglia writes, “[...] this translates problems that should be tackled with social measures into medical terms; exploitation to fight dependency on medical help; the use of knowledge in terms of power over the sick” (Ongaro Basaglia, 1982, p. 158).

The mirage of perfection, in the health field or in any other aspect of all our lives, generates disjunctive logics based on principles of conformity that create categories and ignore the natural differentiation of people; the “other” suffers the interpretations of all those who see him only through his “dysfunctions”, and to which a name is given: now is the time of SEN.

The charm of unreachable, inhuman perfection, that of a mind and body without dysfunction, which do not age or die, alters our representations of the other. The thrill of scientific progress pushes us explicitly towards the need to appear, the need for success and ideals portrayed by the social imagination [...] (Gardou, 2015, p. 32).

Here we do not wish to carelessly deny the usefulness and importance of clinical diagnoses or the need to understand the descriptive framework of a person in view of his functions in different life contexts; when pupils manifest clear difficulties in their school paths, in-depth diagnosis is indispensable for identifying the presence of deficits or learning disorders, but also in these cases, it is indispensable to neither underestimate nor overestimate them. We must understand those clinical assumptions in order to suggest and design interventions to overcome them, in order to start achievable projects.

While the acronym “SEN” does not correspond to any clinical “label”; in the perception of teachers it may however take on the physiognomy of a *clinical anomaly*, “pathologising” all difficulties and *confining* “pupils with SEN” within a standardised action that differentiates them from all the others and leads to the promotion of an educational task conceived as a procedure to be adopted according to the functional adaptation of the pupil.

The logic of borders has its use, but also many risks, such as that of closing oneself within a forced, protective identity, considering the others as a threat, a burden, cannon fodder or a sub-species [...] a view which closes the other within the boundaries of excessive care, justifying every intrusion, every protection, every substituted initiative (Canevaro, 2006, p. 12).

Lorella Terzi (2005) proposes to overcome the “dilemma of difference” by avoiding stigma and labelling, without however denying specialist intervention; differences must be identified without incentivising social branding.

## 1. The Instruments: PDP and PAI

The Ministerial Note of 27 June 2013, prot. 1551 – referring to the Ministerial Directive of 27 December 2012 and Ministerial Circular no. 8 of 6 March 2013, prot. 561 – Intervention tools for pupils with special educational needs and local organisation for school inclusion. Operational instructions – indicates two instruments: the Personalised Teaching Plans (*Piani Didattici Personalizzati* – PDP), which must support and steer teachers’ educational actions towards pupils with difficulties, and the Annual Inclusion Plans (*Piano Annuale per l’Inclusività* – PAI).

Personalised Teaching Plans describe an individual, personalized path drafted by teachers in order to define, monitor and document the most effective intervention strategies and the learning assessment criteria; this document is drafted by the whole group of teachers in a co-responsible, participatory manner.

Some recent research<sup>2</sup> has underlined the difficulty teachers have in agreeing on the drafting of personalised projects which are in line with that of the class, both for pupils with disabilities (IEP) and those with specific learning disorders (PDP).

2 Canevaro A., d’Alonzo L., Ianes D. (2009). *L’integrazione scolastica di alunni con disabilità dal 1977 al 2007. Risultati di una ricerca attraverso lo sguardo delle persone con disabilità e delle loro famiglie*. Bolzano: Bozen-Bolzano University Press; Caldin R., Canevaro A., d’Alonzo L., Ianes D. (2011), *L’integrazione scolastica nella percezione degli insegnanti*, Erickson, Trento; Caldin R. (2012). *Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti*. Naples: Liguori.

The data shows that, when the school is committed to targeted actions focusing on the pupils' difficulties, there is often ineffective collaboration among the teachers and, consequently, there is a fragile link between the planning action for/with the pupil in difficulty and the educational action of all the teachers for/with this pupil and his classmates.

Weak operational knowledge on the part of school professionals is underlined to such an extent that while the personalised plan does not seem to be conceived as a simple bureaucratic deed, it does not promote nor address effective changes in the educational practices of teachers and the effect on day-to-day teaching appears too ineffective. In the *Indagine esplorativa sull'utilizzo dei Piani Didattici Personalizzati per gli alunni e gli studenti con disturbi specifici di apprendimento* (Dainese, Emili, Friso) 49% of teachers stated in an on-line questionnaire that they didn't consider the PDP a bureaucratic requirement, and around 47% consider it to be a useful tool (Dainese, 2015, p.77).

When schools are committed to actions addressing the difficulties of pupils, there must be greater cooperation among all the teachers and with the parents.

There is an urgent need to raise awareness and responsibility among teachers producing personalised work plans, based on the links between what the teachers themselves deem necessary for the class and what they consider fundamental for the pupils with special needs.

The work plans for each subject drafted by each teacher should originate from a preparatory, collegial dimension: staff boards and teaching teams in primary schools should together identify the criteria and guidelines that are transversal to all subjects, then used to produce uniform personalized actions.

Teachers have to act in an aware and responsible manner in taking on board the actions performed in class with individual students: every teacher should assess the performance of each pupil based on the decisions and choices made jointly in the teams and staff meetings.

As stated above, the Ministerial Note of 27 June 2013<sup>3</sup>, refers to a second instrument, the *Annual Plan for Inclusion* and provides instructions on this specific annual tool supporting inclusion, clarifying its purpose as described below:

The P.A.I. must not be considered a further bureaucratic requirement, but rather as an instrument that can contribute to *raising the awareness of the entire educational community on the centrality and transversality of inclusion processes in relation to the quality of educational "results"*, to create an educational context which concretely achieves school "for all and for each".

The P.A.I. is an internal act of independent school, aimed at self-knowledge and planning, aiming to develop a responsible and active process of growth and participation.

In its Note prot. 6721/2013 – "Special Educational Needs. Details concerning

3 The MIUR clarified that the purpose of the Annual Plan for Inclusion is to provide food for thought in drafting the POF (Educational Policy Plan), of which the document is an integral part, contributing to raising the awareness of the whole educational community on the centrality and transversality of inclusion processes in relation to the quality of "educational results".

the drafting of the annual plan for inclusion with a view to personalising learning. Materials for teacher training A.Y. 2013-2014 – the Emilia-Romagna Schools Department provided help to teachers in the form of guidelines for drafting PAIs, underlining the following purposes:

- To guarantee uniformity of the school's educational and teaching approach;
- To guarantee the continuity of the educational and teaching action;
- To ensure common thought on the educational and teaching methods adopted in the school;
- To identify the most effective methods of personalisation;
- To document the interventions<sup>4</sup>;
- To place each educational and teaching path within a common and structured methodological framework involving all teachers and educators;
- To avoid short-sighted, undocumented and non-scientifically supported methodological choices of individual teachers;
- To share the criteria for personalised actions and interventions with the families.

The relationship between the PAI and the Educational Policy Plan (*Piano dell'Offerta Formativa* - POF) is explained in the Ministerial Note of 27 June 2013, where it states that the PAI is not a document dissociated from the POF but is rather a part thereof. While the POF expresses the elements chosen by every school to build its cultural identity and programmes, describing the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, educational policies and organisation each school adopts autonomously, the PAI can thus contribute to effectively enhancing the same programmes with the choices made to support inclusion processes.

The P.A.I. is therefore not a “document” for those with special educational needs, but is rather an instrument for planning educational policies with a view to inclusion, it is the background and the foundations on which to develop teaching methods that pay attention to the needs of all pupils in achieving common objectives, the guidelines for a concrete, planned commitment to inclusion, based on the careful *reading of the school's level of inclusion and its objectives for improvement, to be pursued in terms of transversal inclusion practices within all curricular teaching, in class management, in the organization of school schedules and spaces, in the relations between teachers, pupils and families.*

It is clear that it requires the teaching staff to plan transversal inclusion practices within all curricular teaching, in class management, in the organization of school schedules and spaces, in the relations between teachers, pupils and families, establish criteria and procedures for the functional use of the existing professional resources and indicate the educational actions adopted, indicating those agreed at territorial level and those appointed to Territorial Support Centres (*Centri Territoriali di Supporto* – CTS).

4 The ministerial note requests that teachers gather the Individual Education Plans (PEI) and the PDP in a single digital container, preserving records over time as an essential contribution to documenting school activities.

The purpose of the PAI is therefore to initiate improvement objectives for the actions run by schools designed on the basis of inclusion but to proceed towards this goal it is first of all indispensable to measure, monitor and assess the schools' level of inclusion. The constant reference to the document produced could raise awareness among teachers of the promoted inclusion processes, driving them to introduce appropriate adjustments<sup>5</sup>.

The Ministerial Circular no. 8 of 2013 also states that the PAI must be drafted in Working Groups for Inclusion (*Gruppi di lavoro per l'inclusione* – GLI).

The GLI are assigned the following functions:

- Identification of the SEN pupils in the school;
- Survey and documentation of the educational actions run also according to the learning actions organised in a network between schools and/or according to the strategic actions of the Administration;
- Focus/discussion of cases, advice and support to colleagues on the strategies/methods for managing the classes;
- Measuring, monitoring and assessment of the school's level of inclusion;
- Gathering and coordination of proposals drafted by the single GLH according to their effective needs, pursuant to art. 1, para. 605, letter b, of Italian Law no. 296/2006, translated during the definition of the PEI as laid down in art. 10 para. 5 of Italian Law no. 122 of 30 July 2010;
- Drafting of a proposed Annual Plan for Inclusion for all SEN pupils, drawn up at the end of each school year (by the end of June).

Art. 15 para. 2 of Law 104/92 established the School Working and Study Group (*Gruppo di lavoro e di studio d'Istituto* - GLHI) in each school, comprising teachers, social services, families and students, with the task of collaborating on the educational and inclusion initiatives indicated in the school's educational policy plan; now the 2013 Circular extends the tasks of the GLHI to the problems relating to all SEN cases, adding new members to the group: instrumental functions, support teachers, AEC<sup>6</sup>, communication assistants, "subject" teachers with experience and/or specific training or with class coordination roles, parents and institutional or external experts working by agreement with the school. The GLI therefore do not replace the GLHI but should co-exist, complying with the functions and prerogatives indicated in Law 104/92<sup>7</sup>.

5 For this purpose, it is also suggested to use structured tools such as the *Index per l'inclusione* or the "Quadis" project (<http://www.quadis.it/jm/>) or other locally agreed tools using an approach based on the WHO IFS model and relative concepts of barriers and facilitators.

6 The AEC, cultural education assistant is a figure working in schools, employed by the municipality or by social cooperatives with the task of providing support and assistance to pupils with disabilities.

7 The General Management of the Regional Schools Office for Apulia and Basilicata sent the school management Circular letter prot. No. 4134 dated 18.06.2013 – Intervention instruments for pupils with Special Educational Needs and proposal for implementation at individual school level of the MIUR Directive of 27.12.2012 and the MIUR – D.G. Student Circular prot. no. 561 of 6.03.2013 – offering the following explanations

"The Working Group for Inclusion (GLI), replacing and expanding on the School Working Group

As stated in CM no. 8, the PAI must be drafted at the end of each school year, precisely by the end of June, while the GLHI must then be resolved by the Teaching Body.

Every school is therefore invited to draft its own PAI, based on a model indicated by the MIUR as follows:

*Part I: analysis of strengths and criticalities:*

- Identification of Special Education Needs present;
- Specific professional resources;
- Involvement of curricular teachers;
- Involvement of non-teaching school staff;
- Involvement of families;
- Relations with local socio-health services and safety institutions. Relations with local inclusion and support services (CTI – CTS);
- Relations with private social organisations and voluntary associations;
- Teacher training.

Summary of strengths and criticalities identified (Adapted from the UNESCO indicators for assessing the degree of inclusion of school systems).

*Part II – Inclusion objectives proposed for the next year:*

- Organisational and managerial aspects involved in the inclusive change (who does what, levels of responsibility for intervention phases, etc.);
- Possibility to run specific teacher training and refresher courses;
- Adoption of evaluation strategies in line with inclusive practices;
- Organisation of various types of support in the school;
- Organisation of various types of support outside the school, in relation to the different services available
- Role of families and the community in providing support and participating in decisions concerning the organisation of educational activities;
- Development of a curriculum that is attentive to diversity and the promotion of inclusive learning paths
- Enhancement of existing resources;
- Acquisition and distribution of additional resources that can be used to implement inclusion projects;
- Attention devoted to the transition phases that mark entry into the school system, continuity from one grade of school to the next, and subsequent entry into the labour market.

for Handicap, sets out to promote and coordinate this action at system level, to the extent in which, offering a voice to all intra- and inter-institutional staff in charge of local educational needs for each individual school, becomes THE place for offering new impulse for self-diagnosis, gathering the proposed actions and blending them into methodological and instrumental kits able to act as a strategic guide to promote quality learning”.



## 2. The analysis of the PAI in Emilia-Romagna<sup>8</sup>

In Note 7913 of 23 June 2014 the General Management of the Emilia-Romagna Regional Schools Office asked schools to send the links where the Annual Plans for Inclusion were published in the school websites. As at 3 August 2014 a total of 225 links were counted, corresponding to 41.7% of the 539 schools in Emilia-Romagna; moreover, only 187 links actually referred to a link from which it was possible to download the PAI. It is deduced that around 60% of schools did not send the link, so may not have produced the PAI, and that the majority of links belong to local education authorities, teaching district and comprehensive institutes<sup>9</sup>.

Table 1 shows the data concerning the number of links that refer to a PAI, excluding those that are damaged or which refer to other documents.

SCHOOL TYPE	QUANTITY	GROUPING BY SCHOOL TYPE
Education Authorities	13	129
Teaching Districts	6	
Comprehensive Institutes	110	
1st grade Secondary Schools	11	58
Higher Education Institutes	47	
Total	187 (83% of the total 225)	

**Table 1: Number of links referring to a PAI**

It is therefore noted that 17% of the 225 documents uploaded were unusable: 12% of the files were damaged and 5% referred to other documents (for example, the Educational Policy Plan- POF), in any case relevant to the field of inclusion (for example, the protocol for integration of migrant pupils), but not to the PAI.

Table 2 below indicates which working group was appointed to draft the PAI and the data refer to only 129<sup>10</sup> documents drafted by local education authorities, teaching district and comprehensive institutes.

- 8 The PAI analysis was implemented in cooperation with Dr Graziella Roda of the Emilia-Romagna Regional Schools Office, III – Right to Education. Non-state Education – Manager: Ing. Stefano Versari. Appointed researchers: R. Dainese, V. Friso and with the contribution of G. Righini. Documents produced by the Emilia Romagna regional Education Office can be found at the following link <http://www.istruzioneer.it/bes/> (last access date 21/11/2015).
- 9 This differentiation was maintained as it was indicated by the schools. It should be noted that the PAI produced by the Comprehensive Institutes could also refer to 1st grade Secondary Schools, and for this reason the quantity of PAI that refer to this school type in the Table could be higher.
- 10 This paper presents data concerning only these 129 PAI while the data for secondary schools is currently being processed.

From the analysis of the declarations made in the PAI it emerges that 50% were drafted in compliance with the regulations, and are therefore the result of the work done in the GLI, often in cooperation with the GLHI, while the remaining 7% were drafted by other working groups.

	QUANTITY	PERCENTAGE
GLI in cooperation with the GLHI	64	50%
Instrumental Functions (also in cooperation with the GLI)	4	3%
Other (POF working group, SEN working group/committee, SEN teacher/s and coordinators...)	5	4%
Not indicated	56	43%

**Tab. 2: Groups appointed to draft the PAI<sup>11</sup>**

The high percentage of schools not indicating the field of production of the PAI is significant; this could be an omission or, considering the high percentage, it could mean that the GLI have not yet been defined, which is foreseeable, given that these instructions are still very recent.

Note no. 2563 of 22 November 2013 – Intervention instruments for pupils with Special Educational Needs. A.Y. 2013/2014. Clarifications – asks schools to measure the types of SEN:

The purpose of the plan is to allow criticalities and strengths to emerge, measuring the types of different special educational needs and the resources that can be used, the set of difficulties and disorders reported, making the school community aware – through this summary tool – of how consistent and varied the spectrum of criticalities within the school is. This identification will be useful for guiding the action of the Administration towards schools with particularly complex and difficult situations.

The data shown in Table 3 below highlight that only 39% of schools indicated and described the type of SEN present in their school context; only 20% did so indicating fully and completely the peculiarities of the needs highlighted by the pupils in difficulty, 19% describe them in a more superficial manner, while the majority, 61%, did not provide any indication, providing only the quantitative data referring to the number of pupils with SEN.

11 Concerning the *Instrumental Functions* paragraph 83 of Law of 13 July 2015 states that the School Director “may” identify up to 10 percent of the school staff to support him/her in the organisational and teaching support activities of the school.

	PAI QUANTITY	PERCENTAGE	
The SEN are described in detail according to the categories indicated in the Directive	26	20%	51 (39%)
The SEN are described briefly according to the categories indicated in the Directive	25	19%	
No description of the SEN is given	78	61%	

**Tab. 3: Indication of the type of SEN**

As stated in the above paragraph, the 2012 Directive provides for the drafting by the class teacher group of a Personalised Educational Plan (*Piano Didattico Personalizzato* - PDP), whether individual or referred to all the SEN children in the class; this Plan should be well mapped out and contain the decisions taken concerning teaching choices, paths to follow and assessment methods, and should be used as a working tool to document the programmed intervention strategies for the families.

The PAI analysed refer greatly to the PDP which assume a huge weight in terms of the tasks assigned to the schools; 86% of the PAI examined, as shown in Table 4, carry the function of personalised paths and also propose example models to be used, and as guidelines for teaching/learning that is able to foster the understanding and enhancement of each student in difficulty.

	QUANTITY	PERCENTAGE
No reference to PDP	18	14%
Only references to PDP	64	50%
Summary description of the contents of the PDP	16	12%
Summary description of the contents of the PDP and proposed reference models annexed	25	19%
Detailed description of the contents of the PDP and proposed reference models annexed	6	5%

**Tab. 4: Description of the functions of the P.A.I. and P.D.P. and the presence of annexed example models**

As an example, an extract of one of the PAI analysed is given below, listing the points on which the drafting of the PDP is based:

The personalised remedial activities, personalised teaching methods and compensatory tools and dispensatory measures shall be described and formalised, in order to ensure that the instrument is useful for ensuring teaching continuity and that the initiatives undertaken can be shared with the families. In this regard the document produced must contain at least the following items, covering all the subjects affected by the disorder:

- Pupil's personal details;
- Type of disorder;
- Individualised and personalised teaching activities;
- Compensatory tools used and dispensatory measures adopted;
- Personalised forms of testing and assessment.

This document takes on the form of the Personalised Educational Plan and is produced by filling out the specific form drafted by the School.

According to the criticalities identified concerning the inclusion actions run by the school, the PAI has the task of proposing a global hypothesis for improvement for the next school year.

Tables 5 and 6 indicate the quantitative data referred to the schools that highlighted the analysis of criticalities and strengths in the text of the PAI, referred to the school year just concluded and the consequent proposals for improvement for the coming year<sup>12</sup>.

	QUANTITY	PERCENTAGE	
Criticalities and strengths not described	18	14%	
Criticalities and strengths discussed briefly	26	20%	86%
Criticalities and strengths discussed in detail	85	66%	

**Tab. 5: PAI and analysis of criticalities and strengths referred to the inclusion actions run in the school year just concluded**

From table 5 it can be seen that a large number of PAI, 111 in total (86%), identified the limits and potential of school contexts to run inclusion actions and Table 6 offers an overview of the aspects for improvement presented in the PAI for school year 2014/2015:

	QUANTITY	PERCENTAGE	
The PAI does not consider improvement aspects	10	8%	
The PAI considers improvement aspects superficially	43	33%	(119) 92%
The PAI considers improvement aspects in detail	76	59%	

**Tab. 6: PAI and improvement objectives for school year 2014/2015**

12 It should be noted that, concerning Table 6, this is not an analysis of the contents but simply measures if the schools included a list of proposals aiming to increase the level of inclusion in the PAI.

Only a minority of the 129 PAI surveyed do not consider these aspects of change, while the majority, if in a somewhat superficial and generic manner, produced an analysis of the closing school year, according to the prospects for improvement for the following year.

119 (92%) of the PAI set objectives aiming to enhance and increase the curriculum, stating the commitment of the whole school community to increasing the school's level of inclusion.

### 3. Conclusions

What stated highlights the need to strengthen teachers' awareness and responsibility concerning the production of Annual Plans for Inclusion.

The Plans should focus on the promotion of a collegial project and should concentrate more in detail on analysing needs, providing specific indications on the choices to be adopted a School level even though over 50% of the PAI surveyed demonstrate the efforts made by the schools in adopting collegial methods for drafting the document. Much attention should also be placed on drafting the Personalised Educational Plans: the PAI should contain precise instructions aiming to incentivise the drafting of personalised plans which are the result of a joint effort among all teachers and which are then able to stimulate effective results on teaching through the activation of practices and organisational choices which are able to foster participatory, shared and meaningful learning for everyone, in the class for all.

CM no. 8 prot. 561 of 6.3.2013 – Ministerial Directive of 27 December 2012 “Intervention tools for pupils with special educational needs and local organisation for school inclusion”. Operational indications – proposes an example model for drafting the PAI, but the first part of the proposed model appears to be too schematic and is structured in such a way that does not allow an analytical and in-depth description of the school context. Moreover only the numerical indication of the number of pupils who – according to the assumptions expressed in the Directive – present an SEN situation can be given, and not rather a more appropriate reflection which, without entering into detail about individual situations, can indicate in detail the criteria and strategies for measuring these conditions of need.

More attention should also be placed on the study of these situations which, in the PAI model annexed to the Directive, are incorporated in the group which refers to socio-economic, linguistic-cultural and behavioural/relational difficulties or any other type of disorder reported by the teachers and to which a clinical diagnosis has not been assigned, as in the case of disabilities or specific learning disorders.

In this case, the working groups should formulate precise and detailed criteria for the PAI which unequivocally refer to this area of difficulty in order to appropriately guide the staff teams appointed to the task of recognising these particular conditions, avoiding excessive disparities in evaluation between one staff group and another or excessively discretionary choices<sup>13</sup>.

13 It could be useful to use jointly agreed forms of adaptation, inspired by the ICF model (WHO, 2001).

All sections of the first part of the model proposed by the Ministerial Circular would need a less schematic form, more descriptive of the various aspects – we may think for example of the involvement of the family – which cannot be dismissed with a brief answer – Yes or No – to the items indicated (information /training on parenthood and developmental psychopedagogy; involvement in inclusion projects; involvement in promotion activities run by the educational community, other).

Moreover, again in the first part, there is a section entitled “*Summary of reported strengths and criticalities*” which reports an adaptation of the UNESCO indicator for assessing the level of inclusion of school systems<sup>14</sup>; we think that more significant help could also be offered by the *Index for Inclusion*<sup>15</sup> which is a useful tool for self-assessment and participatory and shared design of school inclusion programmes. The data presented show that the schools seem to recognise the criticalities and strengths of the inclusion aspects, and seem to be able to identify the aforementioned improvement objectives and tools that could further support the study and design processes.

To conclude, we feel that the PAI must above all explicitly describe all the elements which can foster a more aware, effective and responsible implementation of the actions to be undertaken at macro-level, those that are transversal to the activation of inclusion processes, and at individual class level, with/for individual students but also to ensure their effective participation in the class.

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## Legislation and Documents

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