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# Contents

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Clarification of Concepts</b>   | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Method</b>                      | <b>5</b> |
| <b>Differentiation of Teaching</b> | <b>6</b> |

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## **The Monitoring School** **8**

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|   |    |
|---|----|
| Description of the School   | 9  |
| The School Environment  | 9  |
| The School Politic concerning "Equal Access to Learning" and Discrimination | 10 |
| Concentration of Efforts: Bullying  | 10 |
| Concentration of Efforts: Uneasiness in the Classroom/Uneasy Children       | 11 |
| Monitoring through Questionnaires   | 12 |
| Monitoring through Observation  | 14 |

## **The school and the Intercultural Pedagogy** **17**

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|   |    |
|---|----|
| Description of the School   | 18 |
| The School Environment  | 19 |
| The School Politic concerning "Equal Access to Learning" and Discrimination | 19 |
| Intercultural Pedagogy  | 19 |
| Adaptation to practice  | 21 |
| How Far will the Project Succeed  | 23 |
| Central versus Local  | 23 |
| The Fairy Tale Presentation   | 26 |
| The Pupils' Presentation of Fairy Tales                                     | 27 |
| Intercultural Pedagogy. An Expansion of Differentiation of Teaching?        | 29 |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>The Value School</b>   | <b>30</b> |
| Description of the School   | 30        |
| Open Design School  | 31        |
| The School Politic concerning "Equal Access to Learning" and Discrimination | 31        |
| Determination of Values   | 31        |
| The Culture Analysis by the Management                                      | 32        |
| Implication of the Parents in the Determination of Values                   | 33        |
| Implicating the Pupils  | 35        |
| The Values  | 36        |
| Values in Practice  | 36        |
| Community of Values and Room for Differences                                | 38        |
| <b>Summation and Conclusion</b>   | <b>40</b> |
| <b>Literature</b>   | <b>42</b> |

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# Introduction

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## Clarification of Concepts

The two central concepts *discrimination* and *equal access to learning* used in the report are contrary to each other. Discrimination can be a hurdle to equal access to learning if e.g. a teacher is more attentive to certain children than to others in the situation of teaching. Discrimination occurs not only on account of ethnic differences, but also on account of other differences, like physical and mental disabilities. This is an important point because ethnic differences do not cause considerable problems in two of the three schools selected as cases. But they have a great interest in securing equal access to learning. The concepts are defined and delimited in the following section.

To discriminate means to treat differently or to separate (Danish dictionary). Discrimination occurs:

*“when a person on account of race or ethnic origin, religion or faith, disability, age or sexuality is treated less good than another person is or will be treated,”*

*(The Danish Institute for Human Rights, DK).*

The concept of ‘equal access to learning’ means that everybody, regardless of race or ethnic origin, religion or faith, age, disability or sexuality, has equal access to learning. Equal access in other words is equality of access to everybody.

Learning can be understood as the acquirement of knowledge on different levels. It could be in-service training in adulthood. Or it could be the acquirement of competences – of meaning or of relations – that are not necessarily related to professional knowledge. It could be learning at school. Learning is not only concerned with the knowledge acquired by the studying of various literature, but is also concerned with the kind of knowledge acquired through experience.

In the following analysis learning means the kind of knowledge children acquire at school. ‘Equal access’ means aiming at equal opportunity of learning for everybody. It does not mean that everybody has the same subjective opportunities or prerequisites for learning. Prerequisites that depend on linguistic, mathematical and spatial intelligence. Equal access to learning is closely connected to a concept of current interest in the primary and lower secondary school: differentiation of teaching. This concept will be further clarified in the following section.

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## Method

The schools have been selected among 75 schools in the county of Aarhus answering a questionnaire on equal access to learning and discrimination. The selection of the schools is based on a subjective interest in finding and describing projects promoting equal access to learning and counteracting discrimination. There has also been an interest in describing different ways of dealing with the problems. The preference of different contexts, a good practice and a certain geographical spread and representation has been among the factors deciding which schools should be selected. Interviews have been made on the selected schools in order to clarify the problems related to “equal access to learning” and discrimination. The duration of the interviews has been 1 to 2 hours. All of them have been recorded on Minidisc and transcribed afterwards. The character of the interviews has been semi structured: they have been inaugurated by the moderator and lead on by the interviewee(s), discussing subjects that could enhance the understanding of the problem. The interviewees were promised anonymity though none of them found it necessary. References to the schools and the interviewees are therefore kept in anonymous form in the report.

Three interviews have been conducted on every school. The first interviewee was the head teacher. Secondly four teachers were gathered and interviewed as a group. The next step was the assessment of the process, the conclusion of which was that it was essential to learn the pupils’ insight into the situation. Afterwards interviews were conducted in groups that were especially selected based on their relation to the activities. Finally the interviews have been analysed in terms of the problem of equal access to learning and discrimination. The analysis is qualitative, based on theoretical studies and analysis of conducted interviews. Furthermore there has been extensive studies of relevant literature, analyses of documents and enquiries into law texts.

It should be pointed out that these individual enquiries and studies do not warrant for generalisations to other schools. These studies are to be taken as examples of what some schools in Denmark carry out in order to promote equal access to learning and to counteract discrimination and as an account of the particular problems of these three schools.

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## Differentiation of Teaching

An appropriate general description of the ambition behind differentiation of teaching could be: From classroom education to pupil education. The Danish primary and lower secondary school has gone through a thoroughgoing process of renewal during the last ten years. As a proof of the continuation of the process of renewal, new initiatives and approaches of implementing new elements in the Law on the primary and lower secondary school appear from time to time, locally as well as in central quarters. The ongoing process testifies to a dynamic development, something believed to be a necessity in the knowledge society in which the schools work, and of which the pupils are prepared to become citizens. The fact that Denmark has undergone a development from an industrial society to a knowledge society has been a big impact in the primary and lower secondary school. The primary and lower secondary school has met with challenges that could not be ignored, based on the internationalisation of economics, culture, communication and technological development. Renewal has been prompted by the demand of the knowledge society that every individual must manage countless information and meet different demands, and by the politicians' accentuation of the significance of tailoring the education to the different ways of learning of different pupils. Differentiation of teaching has been the means of meeting this need The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School .

The adjustment of The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School are characterised by the emphasis on education of the individual pupil in stead of traditional classroom education. Politicians generally agree that the strengthening of strong points of the individual pupil is best achieved through differentiation of teaching. Despite the fact that classroom education is still the fundamental organizational starting point, The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School demands that the education takes the preconditions and needs of the individual child as its point of departure, be it in content or in method (Cf. The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School, §18). "Broadness" is a central concept in this context. The primary and lower secondary school must have room for the pupils that receive the best learning from a different kind of education than the normal education. The concept of differentiation of teaching includes the possibility of dividing the class into groups within the class or across the class, the purpose of which is the consideration of the individual pupil. The reasons may be educational or practical (Cf. The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School, §25).

But the question is whether differentiation of teaching is equalising? Does the education according to principles of differentiation of teaching ensure that the pupils of the primary and lower secondary school have equal access to learning? Critics will object that the ideal of every pupil leaving the school having the same level of knowledge has been abandoned, and that equality is damaged accordingly. Advocates will emphasise that *equal access to learning* is exactly the result of differentiation of teaching, because the aim is to meet the best starting-point for the possibilities of learning of the individual pupil or group of pupils. In this way the average level of learning is raised though not everybody reaches the same level. It is an essential argument that more pupils are met on their individual level of learning in stead of losing large groups of both resourceful and non-resourceful pupils in the attempt to affect more broadly. One thing is certain: Differentiation of teaching, including the concept of “broadness”, is a concept that is discussed and is essential to the work done at the schools of this inquiry.

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## The Monitoring School

In the following sections the results of the case studies of the three schools are presented: “The Monitoring School”, “The School and the Intercultural Pedagogy” and finally “The Value School”. Here first the Monitoring School. Different plans and projects are initiated all over the country in order to improve the primary and lower secondary school and to work with the problems relating to the learning of the individual pupil and the possible disturbing elements. These plans and projects work on different levels: on a national level, in the county, on the municipal level or locally on the particular school. They focus on the education environment. The laws on education environment of pupils and students involve more than just the physical environment; the mental education environment is also involved: “The education environment on schools and education institutions (education places) must encourage the development and learning of the participant, accordingly it involves also the mental and aesthetic environment of the education place”. (Cf. §1. Law on Education Environment). As is obvious from this, the demands on the mental education environment are clear.

The Danish Centre of Education Environment (DCUM) counselling pupils and education places regarding the education environment is established in consequence of the law on education environment, which came into effect August 1<sup>st</sup> 2001. Among other things DCUM has prepared a guide on the elaboration of assessment of education environment that include the mental education environment. Factors for instance that are significant of the psychic-social well being of the pupils/students. “... Accordingly the mental education environment consists of both social and individual factors like: fellowship, friendship, co-operation, social rules, social competences, bullying and harassment, isolation, conflicts, manners, empathy, social support, participation in decision making, guidance, stress and stress handling, pressures of time and work, solitary work, lack of challenges and professional stimulation, involvement and motivation plus the possibility of successful experiences.” (Cf. [www.dcum.dk](http://www.dcum.dk))

The focus of the first school has been to assess and monitor the education environment. The National Council for Children, a State agency, published I 1999 an inquiry indicating that in Denmark one in every four children was being bullied during a school year. Compared to e.g. Sweden this was disturbing news, and bullying was henceforth put on the

agenda of The National Council for Children (Cf. [www.boerneraadet.dk](http://www.boerneraadet.dk), the Council's report on bullying). The particular projects initiated by The National Council for Children caused the first school to consider the issue and then to begin measuring bullying and uneasiness among the pupils. Measurements that seem to have had a certain effect:

*"The very monitoring causes the bullying to leave off".*  
(Principal)

This remark of the principal is very interesting, and it is relevant to follow up upon it in relation to the problem of "equal access to learning" and discrimination.

### **Description of the School**

The school analysed in terms of their monitoring the bullying and uneasiness in the classroom is a municipal primary and lower secondary school situated in a provincial town of approximately 20,000 inhabitants. The school district is situated in an area surrounded by old detached houses primarily.

Approximately 500 pupils are registered at the school, divided up into 25 classes from 0<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> class, corresponding to 6 to 15 years of age. There are three classes of almost every year group. The quotient of the classes is approximately 20 pupils. Every class of the school is a normal class, i.e. none of the classes is a special class.

There are almost no pupils among the 500 registered of a non-Danish ethnic origin (questionnaire). 45 teachers make up the staff, not counting the principal and vice-principal. Approximately 150 children in 0<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> class are in the day care centre of the school.

### **The School Environment**

It appears from the interviews and smaller observations on the school that the school environment is relaxed and friendly. The school is divided up into the traditional class divisions, but is about to be rebuilt and transformed into an "open-design" school. The "open design" school is a way of meeting new educational requirements architectonically. The "open design" school is distinguished by its flexibility, which makes it easier to carry out of differentiation of teaching. It is possible to make smaller or larger divisions in an "open design" school, and so to teach both smaller and larger groups across classes and possibly even years at the same time.

## **The School Politic concerning “Equal Access to Learning” and Discrimination**

The school does not have an explicit policy on equal access to learning or discrimination. Neither in connection with the question of how the pupils are treated by the school/teachers, nor in connection with the relations among pupils. The school does not have an explicit policy on discrimination by the staff or among the staff either. The formulated schemes however express their policy on the issues, since the problems concerning “equal access to learning” and “discrimination” are implied in them in many ways. It should be mentioned that the school is under obligation to observe the Law on the primary and lower secondary school, the Law of prohibition against discrimination based on race, etc., the Danish Constitution and international conventions ratified by Denmark.

### **Concentration of Efforts: Bullying**

The Ministry of Education began to highlight the environment of education, including bullying, in the year 2000. This caused the school in question to realise that this was a problem that they had to deal with. They also had some internal problems in a specific 9<sup>th</sup> class, which contributed to the school’s realising the necessity of an effort in this field.

So a scheme was formulated to carry out different projects under this concentration of efforts. The scheme was implemented in April 2001 when the school appointed a committee of teachers to comb the field and plan future events, etc. In August and September 2001 the school arranged different events for the parents. This is an important issue for the school: to involve the parents, including the expectations of the schools to the role of the parents.

A note was sent to the parents issuing the idea that the parents and teachers together should try to halve the bullying within the first year. Previously to this the school had a long history of asking parents to “council” future parents. A lot of good advice from parents to parents on how to keep and support a good environment in the class jointly and individually. (“A good class – this way”.)

In October a “day of bullying” involving all the pupils of the school and a large investigation into the amount of bullying at the school were carried out. Projects that all involved the pupil council. The pupil council elaborated definitions of bullying and guidelines for the reaction of a person that is being bullied. This material was based on the work on definitions of bullying made by different classes. They also used some of the work of the National Council for Children. Furthermore they used detailed questionnaires, tailored to one

or two classes, in the endeavour to survey the “bullying environment”. In these questionnaires the pupils were asked to state if they were being bullied, and also if they themselves bullied other pupils. The teachers helped to answer the questionnaires, depending on the class in question. (The school’s letter: “Concentration of efforts – bullying.”)

When the bullying project was concluded the school decided that it was profitable to measure, i.e. to monitor, the bullying once a year. Partly because they did not want the days of the project to become isolated: Both teachers and the school management wished to follow up on the environment of education. Partly because the act of asking about bullying cleared things up considerably: According to the principal, pupils who were bullying others suddenly realised that this was what they did – that they were not simply teasing:

*“I believe that I or the teachers experienced how the children bullying others suddenly realised that they were bullying. They thought they were just teasing. And that is an important difference. This alone caused something to disappear. New manners and social conventions were being made.”*

*(Principal).*

This kind of attention towards the problem gave rise to a certain reflection on the issue. To monitor the bullying is believed to be effective in itself (cf. quote). Consequently the bullying is being monitored every year. Every child is asked in an anonymous questionnaire whether he/she is being bullied and whether he/she is bullying other children. Now only 4 to 5 pupils answer affirmatively that they have been bullied during the period in question.

### **Concentration of Efforts: Uneasiness in the Classroom/Uneasy Children**

The school decided in the autumn of 2001 to initiate projects concerning uneasiness in order to reduce the uneasiness that disturbs the teaching in the individual classes. The project on “uneasy children” began with the teachers responding to questionnaires regarding uneasy pupils. This project was meant to help establish the amount of uneasiness through registration. Then an educational evening event was arranged focussing on the issue at hand. An expert on “peace” in the classroom was invited to give a lecture. The next step was to involve the pupils in defining the rules of the game. During the spring of 2002 the projects were evaluated and parents’ evenings were arranged informing the par-

ents of the projects and discussing the future process. Uneasiness has – like bullying – been monitored since then.

The school's concentration of efforts on "bullying" and "uneasiness in the classroom" reflects two different aspects of the school's work on environment of education. A third aspect is the school's "open school start" project. This is a project more than 8 years old that focuses on a gradual absorption of new pupils into their first year of school (0<sup>th</sup> class). The pupils are divided into colour groups when they start, and these groups meet each other in different ways during the following two months. They have different activities at these meetings; and sometimes the activities vary according to gender. The activities are observed by teachers and day care teachers (90 % of the children are in day care after school). They look for good groupings and try to create a class composition that favours a good environment of education.

The efforts concerning bullying, uneasiness and open school start are characterised in different ways by observation. Observation is central to the work at this school.

### **Monitoring through Questionnaires**

The first questionnaire about bullying included comprehensive questions. The point of the questions was not only to reflect the bullying at the school, but also to help prepare the pupils for the future investigations into the amount of bullying, to a certain extent. It should be noted that they used different questionnaires to different year groups. The aim of the entire questionnaire was to expose the amount of the bullying, the character of it and the handling of it. In the following analysis references will be made to the questionnaire distributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes.

The main structure of the questionnaire was a two-part division, the first of these included questions on whether the pupil had been bullied herself/himself by others. The second part included questions on whether the pupil had been bullying other pupils. The questions of the first and second part were:

- The kind of bullying: Whether it was theft, violence or coercion or something other.
- The whereabouts of the bullying: Did it take place in the playground or in the classroom.
- The handling of the bullying: Did the pupil talk about the bullying with an adult or did he/she contact others if she/he was a witness to others being bullied.

De last questions of the questionnaire were questions that aimed at discovering the pupil's relation to the role of the adult. Questions on what the form master had done to counteract the bullying e.g., and on whether the pupil had been addressed by an adult concerning a conversation about bullying.

The aim of these comprehensive questionnaires (a total of 39 questions) was, as already mentioned, to depict the bullying at the school. At the same time the questions also prepared the pupils for the annual questionnaires on bullying. The aim of these investigations is to continue persecuting and monitoring the problem. The annual questionnaires are less comprehensive and the questions are less complicated. The questionnaires do not vary according to year groups and this is not experienced as a hurdle.

In this annual investigation the pupils are asked whether they have been bullied, whether they have been bullying others and how they have reacted to the bullying of them selves and others respectively. The results are added together so that a picture of the amount of pupils that feel bullied appears from a very concise investigation. Even though the individual pupil is anonymous the class is not. This means that two teachers experienced in the handling of dysfunctional classes may be asked to help if necessary.

In the comprehensive questionnaire the pupils had to take a stand in a quite sophisticated way. Together with the fact that they worked with definitions of bullying in the classes, this must have increased their awareness of what is bullying and what is teasing. This means that when the annual questionnaire is distributed as a matter of routine, it measures bullying and not insignificant teasing. One of the teachers emphasises this:

*"It has been very important to define the bullying. In this way the children know the difference between bullying and teasing, but they also become aware of it trough this process."*

*(Teacher)*

The answers point to the pupils knowing the difference. From the last investigation, which is the object of this analysis, it appeared that only 6 out of 500 pupils at the school felt they had been bullied, while 27 felt they had been teased.

Both the teachers and the management agree about the significant consequence of the annual monitoring.

*“As soon as something is in focus, everybody becomes more attentive. And this attention may be sufficient in itself to change something.”*

*(Teacher)*

*“We monitor how the atmosphere of the class is. What disturbance is, and the like. We have done this for the past three years. And this of course makes us attentive.”*

*(Principal)*

It has been very important to the teachers to be more open about the possible problems. Especially the monitoring of uneasiness in the classroom (which is also done annually) when the teachers are to describe the uneasiness. The teachers do not experience any embarrassment about the uneasiness, as it appears from this quote:

*“We are more open about the solution of problems. Having a problem has become “legal”. You are not a bad teacher if your class is uneasy.”*

*(Teacher)*

But the efficiency is not just about the measurement of the bullying and uneasiness. The work done and the tools that the teachers have acquired through their concentration of efforts also reflect this efficiency.

*“The project has given us this knowledge, and through this knowledge we acquire tools for the handling of it.”*

*(Teacher)*

*“Now you react instantly if you notice someone being bullied.”*

*(Teacher)*

## **Monitoring through Observation**

The monitoring through questionnaires is a method that is quite significant at the school in its different forms. Another kind of monitoring is the open observation in terms of physical presence. This kind of monitoring is characteristic of the “open school start” project. This project is connected to the efforts against bullying and uneasiness, but the idea be-

hind its introduction was to create classes or groups of pupils that would co-operate to the highest degree.

“Open school start” is based on the principal idea and on the approach of putting together the classes no sooner than the spring following the autumn of the pupils’ school start. The reason for this is the wish that the groups will favour a co-operation, and will minimise the risk of bullying and of uneasiness among other things, something that disturbs the education. The groups are put together based on a long-term observation of the pupils.

The principal and the teachers told in the interviews that “open school start” is contributing to their experiencing less problems.

*“We are beginning to enjoy the fruits of this. We feel that it has meant a great deal in our putting together of the classes, in how it is structured. That nothing is negatively increased by our making a bad structure”*

*(Principal)*

*“The classes have become more balanced through “open school start”. There not as much bullying.”*

*(Teacher)*

Observation is thus a fundamental part of the work with the pupils at this school, and it could be claimed that the different kinds of monitoring are interdependent and appear to be able to support each other positively. Though “open school start” is a project that has been initiated in order to put together the best classes and groups, the pupils and parents have been introduced to the idea that different kinds of monitoring are an educational method that is being used. This means that the pupils become aware of the systematic estimation and evaluation of their behaviour towards each other and not just of their technical competences. It is safe to assume that the introduction of the method and the preference of the method are significant for the teachers’ general work and for their approach to making plans, etc.

To monitor seems to have a number of different functional levels:

1. ***The function of gathering knowledge and documenting.*** This could be called the classic function of monitoring. An investigation is carried out in order to expose a problem. In this case monitoring gathers knowledge that can be used as a point of departure in the adjustment and rearrangement of an educational practice. A barometer of how everyday life looks and possibly a more detailed insight into the source of special problems that are to be dealt with. The gathering of knowledge serves the putting together of classes, groups, etc. on a better foundation, as it is already described.
2. ***The reflective function or the function of deciding the agenda.*** To monitor serves to create an attention to a problem. As was established, the pupils became more aware of the difference between bullying and teasing. Further, the pupil council and meetings put the problem on the agenda. Finally the “Uneasiness in the classroom” project was an opportunity for the teachers to talk more openly about uneasiness in the classroom. The act of monitoring established that the uneasiness in the classroom was not an isolated phenomenon and the taboos were dissolved. This meant a new possibility for the sharing of knowledge and new ways of discussing the problems.
3. ***The function of changing behaviour.*** The monitoring in itself was able to change behaviour. The fact that the pupils felt supervised and controlled regarding the amount of problems seems to have the effect of changing behaviour in itself. By this individual and group processes are triggered that can be recognised from classical studies of the significance of surveillance. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Surveillance and Punishment*.

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## The school and the Intercultural Pedagogy

The Municipal Education Authority of Aarhus initiated a large project on “intercultural pedagogy” because of the growing internationalisation and multiplicity in pupil composition together with the ideal of a larger cultural broadness. In the beginning the municipal education authority focused on the development of a general “intercultural pedagogy”, but they soon opted for an even broader aim. They regarded it necessary that specific schools, in co-operation with a central project management, developed an intercultural foundation of the school’s establishment. (Cf. description of the project: Skolen og det interkulturelle [“The Intercultural School”], p. 9.)

In short this project implies that the 14 pilot schools in the municipality of Aarhus selected as the first participants in the project each must develop an intercultural educational policy, taking the different linguistic, cultural and epistemic backgrounds of the pupils as their point of departure.

The second of the three schools of our analysis is one of the 14 selected pilot schools participating in the project “intercultural pedagogy”. The school has chosen to imply teachers and pupils from three different years in the project to begin with. Eventually they will imply the rest of the school in the project, the methods and the reflections.

The basis of intercultural pedagogy is the cultural background and preconditions of the individual pupil or group of pupils. The main idea is that the pupils will strengthen their platforms and bases of acquiring knowledge and abilities in varying communities through their understanding of their own background. The project originates in the wish to find methods of meeting the challenges related to the ethnic – and so cultural – differences of the pupils. It is pointed out in the description of the project that the intercultural approach concerns not only different national cultures, but also preconditions and different kinds of cultures that are challenged and transformed internally *in* Denmark.

According to the description of the project: “The Intercultural School” an example of intercultural pedagogy could be the division and instruction of pupils according to and emphasising their ethnic or cultural background. The groups give presentations to each other on their work. Further descriptions of the educational practice will appear in later sections

of this report. This section continues with the considerations of the school springing from the decision of participating in the project.

Intercultural pedagogy is an educational method that focuses on differences, and has differences as its point of departure. The pupils' consciousness about and manifestation of differences and qualities is thought to be a method of strengthening the pupils' platforms at the schools. This particular situation has been discussed and worked out – especially by the management – being the opposite of the existing educational policy up to now:

*“The best way for me to put it is that we describe our experiences and policies in terms of equality and inequality. We have a saying that: at this school we are more interested in equalities than in inequalities.”*

*(Principal)*

According to the principal, the ambition behind this proposition is the wish to focus on the uniting values. What people do together, what they agree about, etc. This internal conflict if you will: that the school introduced a project that conflicted with essential existing educational policies only added to the attraction of observing the project. Exactly this conflict can be identified in a larger, national as well as international, perspective as well. That is in the discussion of and conflict between a community culture assimilating newcomers in a continued process – usually to the existing dominating culture versus a multicultural community maintaining differences. By introducing the project of “Intercultural pedagogy” the school placed itself, the pupils and the parents especially in the middle of this discussion.

## **Description of the School**

The School is a municipal primary and lower secondary school situated in a suburb near Aarhus. There are various kinds of buildings in the school district. Terrace houses, detached houses, complexes of owner-occupied flats and social house building. The population is rather heterogeneous, socio-economically, ethnically and culturally. Approximately 630 pupils are registered at the school, divided up into 31 classes from 0<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> class, corresponding to 6 to 16 years of age. There are three classes of almost every year group (except from 10<sup>th</sup> class). The quotient of the classes is approximately 20 pupils. Every class of the school is a normal class, i.e. none of the classes is a special class.

Almost 50 % of the 630 pupils are of a non-Danish ethnic origin. Most of these are Arabic, Turkish, Somali or Vietnamese of origin. 64 teachers make up the staff, not counting the principal and vice-principal. Moreover, native language teachers are connected with the school, teaching Arabic Turkish, Somali and Vietnamese. Approximately 160 children in 0<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> class are in the day care centre of the school, looked after by 14 teachers

## **The School Environment**

It appears from the interviews and smaller observations on the school that the school environment is balanced and versatile. The school has a three-form entry and its own gymnasium and swimming bath. There is a day care centre at the school, and an after-school recreation centre on the school's premises. ("Who we are") The oldest building of the school is dated from 1917, the next in line is dated from 1939, and since 1950 expansions have been made gradually, in correspondence to the growing house building. The school has traditional classrooms.

The environment is characterised as dynamic and by a lot of activity. Many teachers and pupils are seen in the corridors and in the playground during the breaks. The division of pupils does not appear to be dominated by ethnic origin or the like. This impression is confirmed through the interviews with both teachers and pupils.

## **The School Politic concerning "Equal Access to Learning" and Discrimination**

The school is – like all other schools – under obligation to observe the Law on the primary and lower secondary school, the Law of prohibition against discrimination based on race, etc., the Danish Constitution and international conventions ratified by Denmark. The school does not have an explicit policy on equal access to learning or discrimination. Neither in connection with the question of how the pupils are treated by the school/teachers, nor in connection with the relations among pupils. The school does not have an explicit policy on discrimination by the staff or among the staff either. However, an intense discussion of the issue – oral as well as written – is reflected in this project, the conversations about it and in the other activities, plans and projects of the school.

## **Intercultural Pedagogy**

The project: Intercultural Pedagogy was initiated in co-operation with The Danish University of Education as part of the immigration politics 2000-2002 of the Municipality of Aarhus. The idea behind the project was the wish to encourage the development of the com-

petences of the pupils in regard to their participation in a more complex society. This complexity is expressed in various ways: culturally, linguistically and in the question of values. It was a political decision to connect the ambition of a more successful integration of immigrants with the strengthening of the intercultural competences of children and young people. The idea is that the better tools of navigation (focussed on intercultural competences in this case) one has in an international society, the better are the possibilities of integration of immigrants in a multicultural society. The target group of the project is not just pupils, but teachers and school management as well. As already mentioned, 14 schools are involved in the project to this day, and the aim is to involve all the schools in the Municipality of Aarhus in time.

The development of and implementation of the “intercultural pedagogy” varies from school to school. However some main aspects of the process have been formulated, applying to all the schools:

- The first main aspect is the development of attention towards pedagogy in the team of teachers. Attention towards aspects of the teaching like quality and preparation.
- The second aspect of the process is the development of the organising level. The aim of this development is that the project: Intercultural Pedagogy does not appear isolated, but as a natural part of everyday life at the school, and as something that is developed in accordance with the school’s own development.
- The last main aspect has to do with the development of specific interculturally based courses. A number of introductory information courses, counselling, material, supervision and other kinds of external support is made available to schools by the central project management in order to support the schools’ development of an intercultural pedagogy. Network meetings and opportunities to share experience are arranged between the participating schools. Furthermore the schools are supported in their development of specific methods and tools for establishing an intercultural basis.

It should be mentioned in continuation of this (or as an argument for why the school chose to participate in the project) that the school will start carrying out their plans of becoming a so-called magnet school in the municipality in 2006 or 2007. Eight schools with a large proportion of bilingual pupils are selected to become magnet schools. They are allocated extra economic resources, and the idea is that the schools concentrate their efforts on developing and introducing especially attractive options for the pupils in different fields. The consequence of this is supposedly that the pupils get more out of their schooling. More importantly, the schools will attract the more resourceful pupils of their district to a

higher extent than now, and among these pupils of a Danish origin. A magnet school is consequently characterised by being based on an intercultural foundation (The Municipal Education Authority of Aarhus: [www.aaks.dk](http://www.aaks.dk))

### **Adaptation to practice**

The school's participation in the project: "Intercultural Pedagogy" is a natural consequence of the problems this specific school has faced for a long time.

*"We know all the different aspects, the different opinions and all the different misunderstandings that come with the gathering of a lot of bilingual children. And we have worked with this and developed our own approach. Then two years ago the Education Authority got down to it and said: this is something we would like to do something about. The hurt does not stop here, so we have to make a scheme. And that is a very sensible thing to do. Of course we will attend such a meeting."*

*(Principal)*

As already mentioned, the third year group is selected as the starting point of the "experiment", but all the rest of the school is to participate along the way. The principal has chosen to imply the intercultural aspect in different ways: Common events have been arranged, inviting all of the staff in order to propagate and discuss the wish to better involvement of the different pupils' various cultural backgrounds in the education. Furthermore intercultural pedagogy is an obligatory item on the agenda when there are staff meetings at the school.

The concrete work at the school has been with the third year group – across classes – and has involved the pupils in different tasks that turn on the project: "Intercultural Pedagogy" specifically. According to the interviews the selection of third year group as the one to be involved in the concrete educational developmental work in relation to the project was a natural choice.

*"We have co-operated across the year group all along. And we have made different groups across the classes in different ways. So there is nothing new in their division into different groups now that we should divide them according to their ethnic origin. This will not puzzle them. They are used to being divided according to something they have chosen because they want to work together. Sometimes they have selected a topic, and sometimes it is their different standards in the subject. Here we have told them... So it is something we have done since 1<sup>st</sup> class in this way. It*

*is not very difficult to involve them in new initiatives if we were to have some good ideas along the way.”*

*(Teacher)*

“The Fairy Tale Project” is one of the educational initiatives carried out in third year group bearing on the intercultural pedagogy. The pupils were divided into five groups with the help of the four native language teachers working at the school in the following languages: Arabic, Turkish, Somali and Vietnamese. The pupils were gathered according to their native language. The four dominating languages at this school, not counting Danish, and a last group that collected the Danish pupils and the rest of the pupils that did not fit in with the native language groups. The native language teachers were in charge of their “native language pupils”, while the other teachers associated with the third year group were in charge of the Danish group of pupils and of the pupils that did not fit in with the native language groups. The groups worked on fairy tales in their native languages and terminated the process in an event where all the groups presented their work.

The teachers of third year group were supposed to push on activities with an intercultural pedagogy aspect, on their own and through conversations with external consultants. Now the idea is that the teachers involved present their experience to the rest of the teachers. This is how the project and the experience is meant to spread to the rest of the school:

*“But it might also be that when we are to make our presentations to the rest of the teachers, they will have ideas to give to us. Everybody has done something, be it minor or major. Every individual teacher is part of this. And it would be nice if we could concentrate all the good ideas and projects and evaluations from everywhere in one single place. Because there is done something in every class, for sure.”*

*(Teacher)*

According to the interviews experience and reflections are already set going. Furthermore the project management at The Danish University of Education has collected gatherings of and examples on education projects. But at this time, in the middle of the project, we left the teachers at the school. We had one last glimpse of the project when we witnessed the presentation of the fairy tale project by the pupils. An account of this is given in a later section.

## How Far will the Project Succeed

The success of the project: “Intercultural Pedagogy” depends on the extent to which the schools succeed in meeting the objective formulated at central quarters, and in implementing this specifically at the particular school. It is a challenge to the schools that the objective is so loosely formulated and that it invites to a good deal of independent work processes. The schools’ and teachers’ other versatile tasks make a keen competition to the challenges in this project.

It is safe to assume that the possibility of a good deal of independency in the task of formulating an intercultural pedagogy at the school has the advantage of giving the individual schools a greater sense of ownership and a greater concentration of its efforts. There is a certain risk on the other hand that the result will not meet the objective because it is so loosely formulated. This is one of the problems of the analysis: How the project is worked out at the particular school in relation to the formulation of the project at central quarters.

The other problem, closely connected to the one mentioned above turns on the educational challenge to use the project in everyday life at the school, not to mention the process of formulating an independent intercultural foundation. Whether intercultural pedagogy is to be just an appendix to the differentiation of teaching or if it receives an independent position and weight is an interesting question.

## Central versus Local

The first problem is the tension between what is decided at central quarters and what is possible to implement locally. As already mentioned the advantage of these broad limits is that the possibility of independency at the school is increased, and thus of a greater sense of ownership of the project. Partly because a local character is possible, and partly because there is more room for initiatives. On the other hand there is a risk that the formulated objective will be a failure because the limits are *too* broad and the schools will not be able to maintain their focus. The external consultant used not only as a support but also in a guiding function could be seen as the attempt by the central quarters to meet this problem. In the local perspective the problem was framed as follows:

*“And it was also natural to say that we would of course like to do something about this. Even if we were hesitant about some of the ways they qualified it. Maybe we still are. Our experience in some areas do not necessarily agree with the methods, aims and ways of solving the problems, methods, aims and ways that are somehow implicit in the project.”*

*(Principal)*

This statement by the principal indicates the dilemma of participating in a project that has been initiated in relatively central quarters. A project that involves the call on the schools to use teaching methods and educational policies that are not concordant to the existing local everyday practice.

However the dilemma or the clash between intercultural pedagogy and existing everyday practice of certain values and norms provoked a reflection and discussion among the staff of the school. This alone can be valuable. Even though the intercultural pedagogy was met with a certain hesitation, the discussion was very much wished for, and the school were both curious and open about it. Not only the school management shows this, but the teachers as well:

*“The thing is that when the bilingual pupils are taught in their native language – especially the bilingual children born in the country in question– they are moved all the better. Somehow we have to accept this. Inquiries show that we are not good at this in Denmark”.*

*(Teacher)*

*“It is of great consequence, but on the other hand from our studies we can see that this is what has to be done. So it is a bit of a schism”.*

*(Teacher)*

Thus both teachers and management tend to be inspired by the project: Intercultural Pedagogy. Even though there is certain scepticism. The principal even wanted the process to accelerate. He says:

*“... we have to get moving. We cannot wait for this to end in a couple of years without us doing something else.”*

*(Principal)*

## **The Spirit and the Educational Challenge**

To the principal the school's spirit is a big issue, whereas the fragmented courses and events are less important. A spirit that enables the teachers to include the different cultural backgrounds of the pupils in the education, better and automatically. The school's spirit and the attitude to all the different pupils, not just among the staff but among the parents as well are of great importance to the school, and receives a lot of attention.

In the introductory questionnaire the principal described the Danish parents' attitude to the bilingual pupils as one of the most serious challenges connected to equal access to learning. If the thoughts and emotions surrounding the groups of bilingual pupils are negative automatically, then a them-versus-us discourse will be dominating instantly, and so there will be no room for anything. The principal finds it very important that the Danish parents trust the school to have the necessary quality and not to have too many problems that are conditioned by ethnic issues.

*"The message about the multicultural schools worries me in relation to the intercultural pedagogy – that we are supposed to profile ourselves as a multicultural magnet school. In this way we risk scaring off some of the people that would believe me under other circumstances when I say that this is a good school for their children to go to. In that case we would have created something that was definitely not intended by the concept of the magnet schools."*

*(Principal)*

Even though the principal finds the intercultural learning a pleasant instrument that also strengthens the learning of the pupils, he is worried that too much concentration on and discussion of the implication of the non-Danish "foreign" cultures in the courses may give rise to negative consequences in the surrounding society, and especially among the Danish parents.

He is confronted with a pragmatic challenge of implementing more intercultural pedagogy and at the same time stick to the earlier principle and educational guideline of the school: concentration on equalities rather than inequalities. This principle is more attractive to the surrounding society, according to the principal, than the implication of cultural differences is.

Consequently the educational challenge does not just involve the work that is done together with the pupils but also with their parents. To avoid the "overtuned" schools (i.e. schools with more than 50% bilingual pupils) a certain strategic pragmatic piece of work must be done to keep the Danish pupils at the school, and to attract or keep the more resourceful pupils, Danish as well as pupils of a non-Danish ethnic origin. The concept of "magnet schools" does allow for this problem, but worries the principal because he sees a risk of the opposite consequence.

The spirit that the principal wants to encourage is a compromise between “the old and the new”: Equality should be the point of departure, but differences should be attended to. This does not contradict the intercultural pedagogy. The principal does his share towards making this a supplement to the projects already at work at the school.

## **The Fairy Tale Presentation**

As already mentioned the Intercultural Pedagogy project involves that the pupils of third year group are divided into native language groups and two groups of Danish children and children that do not fit in with the native language groups. Fairy tales on the relevant native language were the subject of the work of these groups. The process terminated in a presentation of the fairy tale work by the third year group. We were allowed to witness this presentation.

The fairy tale presentation of third year group was initiated according to the guidance of external consultants and it is an example of how intercultural pedagogy can be implemented in the education. But can we possibly conclude if it works, and if so *how*?

Before the presentation, in the group interview, the teachers affiliated to third year group expressed their wish to have methods of evaluating the effect of the intercultural educational method now used.

*“I am not sure that we ourselves believe it is a good idea to gather the children that are linguistically connected. Because we really do the opposite of this as this school. But they urged us to give it a try at least. This was at a meeting at the school. They push us in this direction. It is not the direction we look or want to go. This is what worries us. I do not believe there is a risk involved. What we try to do is for them to feel as part of the group of this school. No matter where they come from. Some strong positive results before this is something we would consider doing on our own.”*

*(Teacher)*

This statement reflects the scepticism earlier mentioned. But curiosity, and the urging of the external consultants have contributed to initiating the fairy tale project. In the interview the teachers stated how they would adjust the method to fit their idea of fellowship. In spite of the pupils being divided according to their native language and of their working with different fairy tales it is the similarities of the fairy tales that are the point of reference in the following process:

*“Because our goal is to investigate if fairy tales from all over the world or from our group here have similarities that could be the starting point of discussions”.*

*(Teacher)*

Thus even though the project overall focuses on differences the teachers can influence the educational projects with their own agenda.

This limited investigation of the “Intercultural Pedagogy” cannot estimate the effects or results of the process in a satisfying way. We are left with the subjective estimation of satisfaction of management, teachers and pupils. But when the question *if* and *how* it works is asked the possible long-term effects have to be considered. Further the possible contribution of the method in the rest of the education cannot be underestimated. It cannot be ruled out that this is an education method that supports other methods and may turn out to be consequential at a later time. This is something the teachers expressed as well:

*“The thing about school is that maybe we will not know, or they will not know until they leave the school, what it is”.*

*(Teacher)*

It is difficult to estimate the effect of educational processes, in this case based on the Intercultural Pedagogy. Maybe it is even impossible to estimate at this time and on this basis. But the experience of the presentation and the whole event may give us some hints.

### **The Pupils’ Presentation of Fairy Tales**

All the pupils of third year group were gathered in one room; in here every group was to give their presentation either in Danish or in their native language. All the pupils, except two Somali boys, gave their presentation in Danish. It was a general problem that many presentations were taken over by the teacher because of the pupils’ great shyness. Especially the different ethnic native language groups seemed shy. This was explicit when the last group of Arabic pupils were to give their presentation accompanied by Arabic music. One of the pupils exclaimed:

*“I will not be doing it accompanied by this stupid music. It has to be turned off”*

*(Pupil)*

Something similar occurred when the native language teacher held most of the presentation of the Turkish group. Despite the shyness of the Danish groups, the problem was not as dominating with them. All of them succeeded in giving their presentation in spite of their nervousness. The shyness can be caused by various factors, e.g. their age. But it is very natural to speculate about the differences in their amount of shyness. One reason may be the cultural differences, e.g. maybe giving presentations is a greater tradition in Denmark.

The character of the material may be important as well. I.e. the Danish children may be on more safe grounds than the bilingual children. Another possible explanation could be the lack of membership of the native tongue and lack of linguistic abilities. In a subsequent interview with the pupils it was obvious that most of them did not wish to give their presentation in their native language simply because they did not speak their mother tongue very well, and because they are not normally taught in their native language.

The two scientists affiliated to the project called attention to another problem that may be of relevance as well: That the bilingual pupils “hide” their culture – that culture is not something they bring to school, but on the contrary something that stays at home. This is a problem the principal is aware of:

*“Well this has to do with a sense of self. They may come here with the impression that what happens at home is not something they can use at school. That it is something that is not allowed to come into the open, that they are not allowed to speak their mother tongue, that they should not refer to their way of life and their cultural traditions. That this is for shame, is different and out of it. The claim is that when we do not take a hold of this and imply it then we do not use the potential of the kids. This I can see. That we should be better at this.”*

*(Principal)*

The project: “Intercultural Pedagogy” is expected to take this problem into account. I.e. that differentiation of teaching is not enough, but that intercultural pedagogy has more to offer. The presentations and especially the fact that the foreign language pupils were considerably more shy or embarrassed may point to the need of more intercultural pedagogy work.

But what is the difference between intercultural pedagogy and differentiation of teaching, if any?

## **Intercultural Pedagogy. An Expansion of Differentiation of Teaching?**

Differentiation of teaching can be understood as an educational method attempting to give pupils with various preconditions the possibility of gaining access to the most efficient learning, i.e. relating to the individual pupil. Differentiation of teaching is possible without cultural aspects being an issue. The relevant aspects in differentiation of teaching are related to learning. It is reasonable to claim that "Intercultural Pedagogy" is a supplementary method to differentiation of teaching, focussing on cultures in general and ethnic cultures in particular.

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## The Value School

As mentioned in earlier sections of this analysis, the constantly growing numbers of demands to the individual pupil (not just in the primary and lower secondary school but in society in general) has caused different approaches to the meeting of these demands. Projects aiming at eliminating the disturbances to the individual pupil's learning have also been initiated. Yet another element is the work on values by the primary and lower secondary school. There is a foundation of values in The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School, describing the school period as a preparation and as an independent part of life. But the concept of value is a still more diffuse phenomenon. Values have been the subject of the "Vision 2010 - a developmental conversation with the school" project, carried out in the governmental board of the primary and lower secondary school. This plan of vision originated in the recommendations of the board of the primary and lower secondary school then in office (1996-1999) to the Minister about the development of the primary and lower secondary school in the coming millennium. The broad formulation of purpose in The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School means that it is up to the individual school to definitively determine which concrete values will meet this general purpose.

The school that is the focus of this particular section has worked on the determination of the general values of the school. The project of the Value School has involved the whole school. It has been a comprehensive project during three years involving all teachers, pupils, all of the management and a great part of the parents. The result of the project was used as material by the involved parties, but met a wish for wholeness, coherence and continuity at the school as well. Without damaging the educational independency of the individual department and team in their everyday work.

### Description of the School

The School is a municipal primary and lower secondary school situated in a suburb in Jutland of approximately 54.000 inhabitants. The school district is situated in an area surrounded by detached houses primarily. The population is rather homogenous, socio-economical as well as cultural. Approximately 710 are registered at the school, divided up into 33 classes from 0<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> class, corresponding to 6 to 16 years of age. There are three classes of almost every year group. The quotient of the classes varies from 21 to 24 pupils.

Every class of the school is a normal class, i.e. none of the classes is a special class. Yet, so-called reading classes have been set up. This is an offer to all the children of the municipality having difficulties reading. 62 teachers make up the staff, not counting the three managers.

Only a few pupils are of a non-Danish ethnic origin. There is a day care centre at the school, registering children from 0<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> class, approximately 23 teachers make up the staff.

### **Open Design School**

The atmosphere of the school appears extremely balanced based on interviews and lesser observations. This impression is confirmed through interviews with the principal, teachers and pupils. The school is an open design school. I.e. the classrooms are connected to each other through a “missing” wall in the direction of a common room. One of the classrooms in the house can be screened off using a sliding door. Together with the movable furniture and the screens this enables the adaptation of the physical environment to a number of different situations of teaching and of learning. The school is divided into small units, called houses. Every house holds one group or class from every year group plus a team of teachers, responsible for the education of the particular house.

### **The School Politic concerning “Equal Access to Learning” and Discrimination**

The school is – like all other schools – under obligation to observe the Law on the primary and lower secondary school, the Law of prohibition against discrimination based on race, etc., the Danish Constitution and international conventions ratified by Denmark. The school does not have an explicit policy on equal access to learning or discrimination. Neither in connection with the question of how the pupils are treated by the school/teachers, nor in connection with the relations among pupils. The school does not have an explicit policy on discrimination by the staff or among the staff either. However, an intense discussion of the issue – oral as well as written – is reflected in this project, the conversations about it and in the other activities, plans and projects of the school.

### **Determination of Values**

At the last school of this report, a comprehensive determination of values has taken place. This is a process that has been going for three years, counting everything, but it is also rooted in the school history. When the school was established in the 1970s a number of

values were formulated, these have been the point of departure in the current redetermination process. Management, teachers, pupils and parents have been involved in the work. A steering committee was responsible for managing the process. 4 teachers made up the steering committee and they were all exempted from a certain amount of teaching in order to manage this work. This determination of values process originated in the management (among other places), they were thus quite interested in guaranteeing that they had the necessary means to do the required work.

The principal and vice-principal (who co-operate to a large extent) attended a course in 1997 that inspired them to initiate a work process that was to conclude in a determination of and an account of the values of the school. The fact that a growing quantity of pupils preferred a continuation school when in their 9<sup>th</sup> and/or 10<sup>th</sup> class to the options at this school was a significant factor in the inauguration of the process. Another factor was the feeling that the independence of the particular teams of the individual houses complicated the identification of the school as a whole. The school consequently wanted to redetermine its values, but they also found it necessary.

### **The Culture Analysis by the Management**

The two managers carried out a culture analysis among the teachers. Its starting point was based on questionnaires that asked the teachers whether they agreed or disagreed in a number of claimed values. The purpose of the inquiry was to uncover how the teachers stood on the original 1970s value foundation of the school. The conclusion of the analysis was that they could not find any conflicts worth mentioning between the school's "heritance" or culture and the teachers' opinions, as these were reflected in the report. The management explained this as the visionary culture of the 1970s being ahead of its time, by the great participation of the staff and by the fact that the teachers applying for a job at the school over the years perhaps had also been interested in the values and the culture of the school – be it consciously or subconsciously. Further the management concluded in their culture analysis that even though they wished to support the independence of the individual teams, they found it necessary that the school had a certain uniformity in appearance (The Culture Analysis of the School Management).

In the time following the culture analysis, which contributed to the foundation of the process of mapping the values of the school, discussion was encouraged at a number of staff meetings. The purpose of this was to create as detailed a picture of the school's values as possible. During the spring and summer of 1999 a number of educational board meet-

ings was arranged and an external consultant from The Danish University of Education was affiliated as a process consultant. The process consultant was affiliated for half a year ending in an event called educational days on visions of the school of the future. Following this an educational committee – concentrating on values – was established. The committee was made up of teachers from every house or team. The idea behind this was to broaden the educational discussion as much as possible, and not to isolate it in a small and closed committee. From this educational committee lesser steering committees were established to gather the material of the work done by the management, the teachers, the parents and the pupils.

### **Implication of the Parents in the Determination of Values**

The parents were included in the process through conversations or interviews carried out by teachers of the steering committee during the spring of 2001. One parent from every class participated. A total of 33 parents participated in the interviews. The guide to the interviews was based on an earlier inquiry (in the form of questionnaires) among the parents. The most pronounced opinions and points of view were used together with the essential results of the discussion of values among the teachers to create a number of scenarios. The parents were asked to take a stand on these scenarios in the interviews. The subject of the scenarios was different situations of education and being a pupil at a school. Through this approach a more comprehensive picture of the ideas of the parents was achieved.

*“The process alone was significant because the parents were so fond of it. We almost felt like we could fly on this. Participation was attractive. So, the process was significant to a large group of parents.”*

*(Teacher)*

*“We also found the material gathered from these interviews to be important. It was important because we were able to see what the opinions of the parents were in comparison to the opinions we had gathered from the teachers and the inquiry already at hand. Here the parents had expressed something statistically, but there was no explanations.”*

*(Teacher)*

It is clear from this that the written results of the process may be the least significant. What seems to be most important is the process itself – the discussions of the values of the school with the parents. Listening to each other.

Through our interviews with the principal and the teachers it became obvious that the result of the process was not a thoroughgoing renewal of the values of the school, but was a clarification of the values of the educational methods of the school and of the fellowship.

*“One of the things I noticed when you returned was that there is much more consensus now. At that time we had teachers (who were also parents) in the school management, who actually challenged our “open design” in particular. At that time one could fear that: hey, how much of this do the parents agree about. I mean the values of this place. How is the support to this? And I think that what you brought back met a great support.”*

*(Teacher)*

*“I remember something else that we were in doubts about, regarding our way of teaching. Whether they agreed with our way of teaching that is or always has been dominated by differentiation of teaching. A lot of workshop assignments involving the children being out of the house and being autonomous. The thing about the room of education being a bit chaotic to the children. Perhaps we did not really know how the parents thought about that. And the answers to this were clear as a bell, I would almost say: the more the better. The parents thought it was a good way of teaching. The feeling of their supporting our ideals as a school was unmistakable.*

*(Teacher)*

Differentiation of teaching as a method of equal access to learning – or as the best possible learning for the individual pupil – had been criticized during some time, and some of the teachers were beginning to doubt whether the values that were basic to this method were supported. They found that values such as “peace”, “order,” and “discipline in the classroom” etc. were gaining and preferred to “chaos” and other values making room for individuality and to the opportunities behind these values. If it had been the case that the parents had valued “order”, “peace”, etc. significantly, and had been repelled by “chaos” as a value of learning, in the different scenarios, then it could have had a tremendous impact on the scheduling of the education in relation to the individual pupil’s preconditions and wishes. More traditional classroom education would probably have been the solution.

Through this process of determining the values of the school, it was confirmed to the teachers and the school that the parents supported their approach, and the school was thus able to concentrate on cultivating its assets instead of defending them.

## Implicating the Pupils

The educational committee, the steering committee and the management continued working till the autumn of 2001, when a feature week was arranged, dealing with “the good life” at the school. It was at this time the pupils were implicated. The work of all classes plus that of the pupil council was implied in the determination of values. The pupils discussed and agreed upon a pupils’ constitution in the feature week, guided and inspired by the ideas of the teachers. This pupils’ constitution stated what the pupils believed they were entitled to, but also what their duties were. They made three different versions of the pupils’ constitution. One for the youngest pupils (0<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year group), one for the middle stage (4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> year group) and one for the most advanced pupils (8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> year group). The contents did not vary significantly, but the language was adapted to the differences in age. The constitution was printed on posters that were put up in places where the pupils are. Below is the text of the constitution for the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> year group:

### Pupils' Constitution

You are supposed to feel good at the school  
Being at the school should be safe

#### You are entitled to...

To learn something  
To have good teachers  
To have friends at the school  
To state your opinion  
To be listened to  
To play - alone or together with others  
To be recognised as the person you are  
To participate in decision making

#### You must

Be a good pupil  
Keep your side of the bargain  
Be active  
Be a good and loyal friend  
Help and comfort  
Talk decently to others

#### You cannot

Hit or bully  
Talk ill of anybody

Yours is the next move

## The Values

The steering committee and the management worked together during the spring of 2002 to gather and write down the values they believed to be essential based on the comprehensive material produced over the years. This proved to be a difficult task, so another strategy was found:

"We were not able to deduce any values analytically. We had to bring in the values we could find and then compare them to the material we already had. And in this way we had to choose between them. It was not that we simply inherited the values of others. We worked on the values we found, and made them our own. But we had to move out and collect, compare and then work with the values, describing those we found and make them our own, the main point being that they should fit the material we had."

*(Teacher)*

Another educational day was arranged for the teachers, and the steering committee had written down a number of values on plates. Using a sticker of the school's logo one could declare for or against one or more values.

The values were selected on the basis of this, and the result was:

- A booklet on the values of the school to be used by the teachers in the education
- A pamphlet to the parents
- A cover that visualises the values of the school, using photographs and text
- The Pupils' Constitution

In the very last phase of the value process the result was submitted to the teachers, who could state possible corrections:

"We had a lot at that time. And the very last proofreading was made by teachers as well, and I believe there were 6 from different phases, who made the final version. So, it was circulated several times. When it was finally done, everybody had had the last chance to intervene."

*(Teacher)*

The comprehensive work was finally done in the autumn of 2002, and when we interviewed the management, the steering committee and the pupils the implementation was well under way.

## Values in Practice

One of the results of the process was the material from the teachers, and this concluded in a booklet describing the ten selected values that were deduced from the work. The booklet was shaped as a "workbook". It is introduced by a description of the purpose of The Law on the Primary and Lower Secondary School and the general purpose of the school. Furthermore there is a detailed description of the definitions of the values, what they signify to the school in general and as a whole, and at the extreme left of the workbook space was

left to the individual team of teachers to write down what this the practical significance of this is, and how it is concretised at the particular school, at the little school in the individual houses, and to the individual pupils. The values were not listed in an order of priority or distinguished from each other based on their individual essentiality. Below is an example of the practical translation of a set of values: “the fellowship and the individual” (the individual team of teachers are to complete the last form):

| <b>Definition:</b><br><b>“How we understand the value”</b>  | <b>Pattern of Culture:</b><br><b>At the school this means...</b><br><b>The school in general</b>   | <b>In practice:</b><br><b>This is concretised in our house as...</b><br><b>The little school.</b> |
|---|--|---|
| <p>We are who we are, but we are not sufficient unto ourselves.</p> <p>Respect for the right of the individual to develop competences and possibilities.</p> <p>The duty to contribute the fellowship according to own competences.</p> <p>The right to receive from the fellowship.</p> <p>The duty to share the responsibility for the fellowship and conform to its rules.</p> <p>The balance between the rights of the individual and the respect for the fellowship.</p> | <p>Everybody has the right to be special in the fellowship.</p> <p>At this school everybody has the duty to contribute to the fellowship.</p> <p>The point of departure for the education is the possibilities of the fellowship of the class and the co-operation across classes.</p> <p>The school support projects involving the advanced pupils educating the younger pupils, and projects involving common assignments across the houses.</p> <p>The education is scheduled and carried out based on the preconditions, needs and possibilities of the individual pupil.</p> <p>The Pupils’ Constitution is put up in every house and describes guidelines for the individual and the fellowship.</p> | <p>(Possibility to write down own notes about the work on values in practice.)</p>                |

At the back of the booklet methods of scheduling education that implicate the work on values are described. The aim is for all the pupils to have gone carefully into every value during their school days. The work on the values will vary depending on what year group the teacher is affiliated with. One of the teachers told about the work in a 1<sup>st</sup> class, here the co-operation with the parents is essential:

*“Last year... Erik and I taught the 1<sup>st</sup> class last year and the 2<sup>nd</sup> class this year. We teach the three first classes in our house. We had a meeting about the school values. At that meeting we compiled suggestions to the practical carrying out of the values. What the homes can do, and what the school can do in order for us to come up to the values of the fellowship. And they have been printed in this (showing the pamphlet: “The Letter Box”). Furthermore we have always described “social and personal development” in our design for the year. Especially on what we will concentrate our efforts and work on during the years in question. We have brought this out because this was where the parents participated. It was a good process. It was all the parents of the first year group that made it.”*

*(Teacher)*

Another teacher describes the work including the eldest year group, 10<sup>th</sup> class. The work on the values had included the pupils in a more independent manner; they had to answer a questionnaire:

*“And we have 4 very simple, general purposes, based on the values, and they are here. And we are able to evaluate these. And below we have three very simple rules, also based on the values, of course: The respect for your own learning, values, sense of self and identity, openness and peace of mind. You can say this is very clear. We can talk about this with the pupils, and we can present it to them at parents’ evenings. We have started doing this exactly because of the focussing on the values, because they are written down. At one time I really needed to produce this. (Showing an evaluation form giving an example of an answer.) And it gives us a picture, because all the pupils answer this. First there is one of the purposes, based on the values: “development of the ability to co-operate, make a short comment”. “Peace of mind, openness” further below.”*

*(Teacher)*

## **Community of Values and Room for Differences**

The result of the process of determination of values is a fruitful gathering vision and a confirmation of the school in general. The formulation of the result as it appears makes room for broadness in practice. The freedom to choose how the values are to be translated

in everyday practice meets the different ages of the pupils, their different starting points of learning, and the different educational temperaments of the teachers.

The material reflects the great need for independence in the individual houses or teams, and the need to view the whole school as a general fellowship and co-operation. The autonomous teams of teachers share the responsibility of scheduling, carrying out and evaluating the education. The high extent of autonomy and decentralization is indicated by the fact that the individual teams of teachers handle part of the education budget.

The fellowship *and* the expression of the dissimilarity in the ideal of equal access was presented in this way:

*“It is the open design and the way we have been organizing from the beginning. I believe it optimised “equal access to learning” that we are 4–5 adults sharing the responsibility for the children, with whom we are concerned, in one year group. In this way we give assignments to each other as adults, according to what we believe we do best. Some will be better at taking care of some children than others.”*

*(Teacher)*

The pupils were implicated during a feature week and with the following formulation of the Pupils’ Constitution, as is already mentioned. The pupils were given the opportunity to reflect on how to behave and what to expect, as were the teachers and parents. It is safe to assume that the process of finding out what to expect from others and what they can expect from oneself had a great impact on how the pupils identified with the constitution:

*“A lot of these things are quite natural, and then again. In the advanced classes they know how to behave and the Pupils’ Constitution is used more indirectly. While in the younger classes they do not think so much about how to behave, so the Pupils’ Constitution is probably used more directly with them.”*

*(Pupil in 9<sup>th</sup> class)*

The pupils did not seem to be indifferent to the constitution, based on the interviews. The discussion of values reached every part of the school and had – according to our impression – a very positive effect on the responsibility for each other, for oneself, for the school and for the learning of everybody.

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## Summation and Conclusion

The purpose of the three case studies was the description of the different experiences of three selected schools with projects that all aimed at promoting equal access to learning and to counteract discrimination. In the beginning, the further purpose was to select and describe different ways of dealing with the problems.

The projects and the methods, or the ways things are put into practice, differ considerably in character, and have been selected exactly because of this difference. The account of and the description of the different approaches indicate that they are not contrary to each other in spite of their differences, and that they could be carried out at the same school in principal. Even at the same time, if they had the necessary means. The objection against this is that the projects have been dependent on the local temperament, tradition, culture and environment. Besides, all the schools have initiated their projects based on specific problems and needs that were caused by their specific situation and everyday life.

The great project of determination at **The Value School** was based on the traditions of determining values already present at the school. This was reflected in the close connection between the point of departure, the problem and the result of the process and on the other hand the tradition of teams, the organizational, structural and architectonic expression of the school. The conclusion of the process was not to change the school, but rather a confirmation to continue in the same direction and to make improvements along that way. Now on a more secure and common foundation of values.

At **The Monitoring School** the approach was more instrumental and aimed at the solution of two specific problems: bullying and uneasiness disturbing the learning and consequently complicated the equal access to learning. Monitoring the children through questionnaires and observation seemed to be efficient means, and in this context it had more than one function. The function of gathering knowledge and documenting it, the reflective function or the function of deciding the agenda plus the function of changing behaviour.

**The method: Intercultural Pedagogy** was introduced at a school, which had an educational tradition or point of departure that was not concordant with the demand to use the differences of the pupils as the starting point, cultural and ethnic differences. On the con-

trary this was believed to be the opposite of this school's ideal: to use similarities and fellowship as the point of departure. The project was imposed upon the school to a large extent compared to the situation at the other schools. Meanwhile the management and the teachers at the school were sufficiently strong and pragmatic to meet both challenges: Equality and diversity. This school concentrated a lot of its efforts on handling ethnic and cultural differences, in relation to pupils and in relation to the demands of the parents. Consequently they feared that the division of the intercultural pedagogy into ethnic or cultural defined groups would break up and scatter the pupils instead of bringing them together. On the other hand the school was determined to improve the basis of learning and was inspired by the idea of the method that the pupils might be strengthened in their everyday life at the school, and consequently in their learning, by the discovery of and presentation of their own background and distinctive character. The management was also attracted to experimenting with the method, because it promised to strengthen the confidence of the pupils and their sense of self by demonstrating their cultural identities actively. Based on our modest insight into their practice the balance and the pragmatic experiments seemed fruitful.

Despite the difficulties that must meet every project and every concentration of efforts due to other educational and practical demands of everyday life, all of the three schools seem to have stepped up the endeavours to guarantee a good schooling and learning for all pupils – in different ways using different methods.

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