

# Working as a psychologist with visually impaired children and youth in inclusive settings

New challenges or just a different word for the same procedure

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# Overview

- What does inclusion mean?
- The LFS – resource and outreach centre
- Psychological work in inclusive settings
- Inclusion and Solution and Resource Focused Counseling
- Case story about a young man with visual impairment
- Conclusion, perspectives



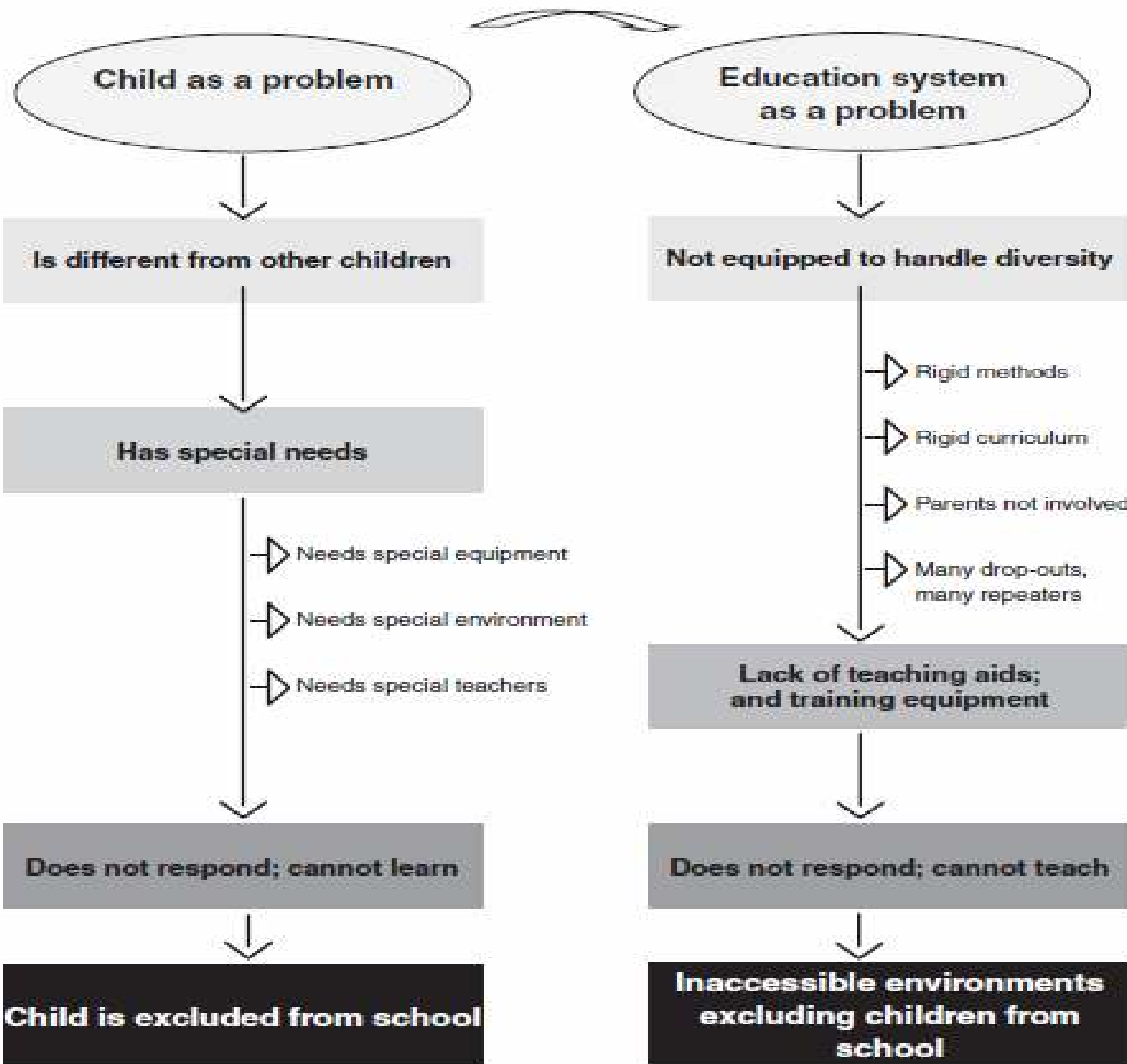
# UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006

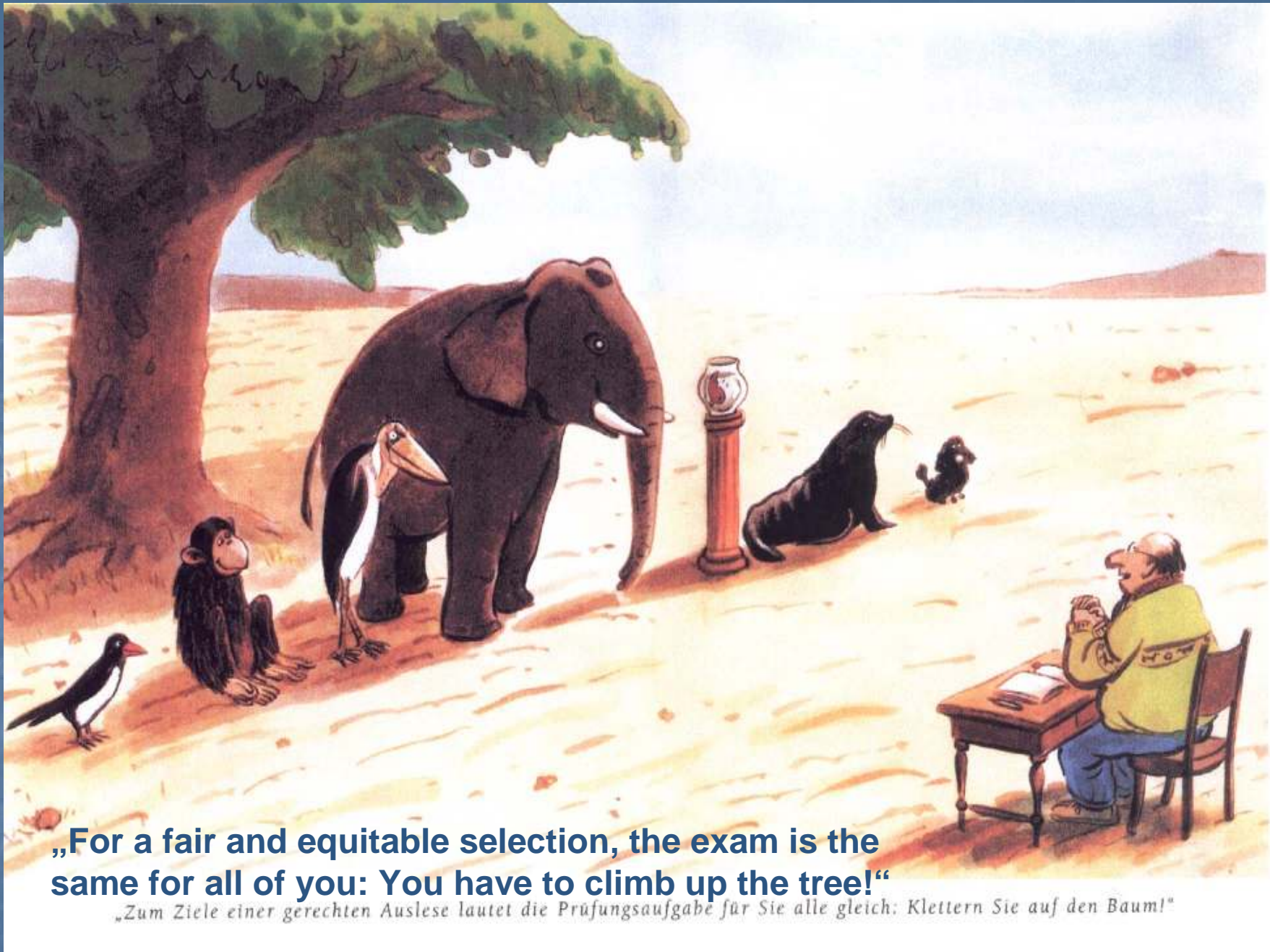
## Purpose of Convention (Article 1)

To promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity

Article 24 ensures an inclusive education system, not to be excluded from general education







**„For a fair and equitable selection, the exam is the same for all of you: You have to climb up the tree!“**

*„Zum Ziele einer gerechten Auslese lautet die Prüfungsaufgabe für Sie alle gleich: Klettern Sie auf den Baum!“*



# How can schools cope with the challenges of inclusive education?

- To become an inclusive school support is necessary to provide an adequate educational service for children with special educational needs (SEN)



- Special schools are necessary as „resource centers“ and as „schools without pupils“ to support inclusive education for children with SEN



# Consequences for schools?

- Responsibility for all children/pupils
- Adaptation of methods and media
- Cooperation with different kind of special schools and professionals
- Accessibility for all
- Participation of parents and pupils („Nothing about us, without us!“)



# Consequences for Special Schools?

- Subsidiary support for the local schools
- No pupils
- Change of methods
- Cooperation with different schools and professionals
- Participation of parents and pupils („Nothing about us, without us!”)



# LFS - Supporting Inclusive Education

- Founded in 1983
- Model of a resource centre to support visually impaired children and youths in all kind of schools in Schleswig-Holstein
- Subsidiary services for pupils



# Supporting and consulting services in local schools and in the community

- Early intervention
- Visually impaired pupils in regular schools
- Blind pupils in regular schools



- Pupils with additional needs in the area of learning difficulties
- Students in transition from school to working life



# Courses

- For students
- For parents
- For families



# Courses for teachers and other professionals

- Teachers in regular schools
- Educational and therapeutical professionals
- Professionals involved in the transition process of vocational preparation and training
- Partners in other institutes



# Special services

- Orientation and mobility
- Daily living and working skills
- Low vision assessment
- Assessment and advices for adequate computer equipment and use
- Psychological assessment and counseling
- Media center



# Multi-Professional Staff

- Special Education Teachers
- Pre-School Teachers
- Psychologist
- Social Workers
- Pedagogues
- Specialist in Physical Education
- Orientation and Mobility Teachers
- Media Assistants
- Rehabilitation/DLS Teachers
- Braille-Transcribers
- Orthoptists
- Administrative Staff
- Low Vision Teacher



# Consequences for a Psychologist working in a resource centre?

- Being part of a multi-disciplinary team
- Working in the environment of the child and parents
- Building networks and promoting cooperation with different professionals and institutes
- Participation and confidentiality
- Looking for resources and strengths



# Expertise of a Child Psychologist for the resource center

Expertise in

- Psychological assessment methods for blind and visually impaired children
- Child development concepts
- Visual perception processes
- Social and psychological consequences of visual impairment
- Counseling and therapeutic methods and tools
- Supervision and counseling concepts for colleagues



# Some work areas

- Visually impaired children with autism
- Family support, counseling
- Cooperation with different institutes e.g. child psychiatric clinic and school psychologists, etc.
- Assessment of visual perception problems (CVI)
- Courses: Communication skills, social competence, vocational orientation



# Solution Focused Approach

- Most compatible with inclusion philosophy
- Strength-based approach developed by Insoo Kim Berg, Steve deShazer & others at the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



# Basic Rules of SFT

- If it is not broken – don't fix it
- Once you know what works well, do more of it
- If it doesn't work, do something different



# SFT - Inclusion

- Focused on resource and strengths
- Participation
- Focused on goals and needs of the pupils and parents
- Pupils and parents as the experts of his goals and solutions



# A young man with V. I. in his local school supported by the LFS

- 11th grade school in the north
- School and family are supported by LFS
- 2005 psychological assessment with WISC III,
- 2007 psychological assessment on mathematics
- Mobility training



# Asperger Syndrom

- Counseling at home with the whole family
- Cooperation:
  - Diagnosis: psychiatrist
  - School support: BIS, LFS
  - Family therapy and communication training:  
Office of consulting for autism
  - Finances: Office of social affairs



# Courses

- Mobility training
- Vocational orientation
- Theatre



# Perspectives

- Goal: high school grade
- Alternatives: vocational training



# Conclusions

- Inclusion is a process
- There are strong tendencies in Germany against inclusion and for segregation
- Reflecting our professional activities on the principals of inclusion
- Focus on participation and on resources



All activities must include the participation of persons with disabilities and their family:

**'Nothing about us without us'**





[www.lfs-schleswig.de](http://www.lfs-schleswig.de)

