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Abstract
This thesis is a part of the first level of master degree in Special Education at the University of Malmö. It is a qualitative study with an ethnomethodical approach. The results are presented in a narrative form how Tunisia has organised and accomplished education for children with special educational needs. A hermeneutic methodology is used for the analysis. The conclusion is that there are good opportunities for all children to be educated in spite of handicaps or impairments in specialized schools in Tunisia. Tunisia is developing integrated schools but it is still in small volumes and not attainable for all children who are needy. Some thoughts and examples, of how the education system is trying to create schools where children can be supported in their conditions for learning, are presented in the thesis. The thesis treats how inclusion is present within the education in Tunisia. Also the view of the capability approach, where diversity, equality, capability, well-being and freedom are important assumptions.

Keywords; capability approach, inclusion, Salamanca declaration, special education

Résumé
Cette thèse est une partie du premier niveau de degré de mastère dans l'Éducation Spéciale à l'Université de Malmö. C'est une étude de qualité avec le caractère d'histoire de comment les pays la Tunisie a organisé et accompli l'éducation pour les enfants dans les besoins éducatifs spéciaux. Le contenu est qu'il y a de bonnes opportunités pour tous les enfants pour être instruit malgré handicaps ou affaiblissemens dans les écoles spécialisées. La Tunisie développe des écoles intégrées mais c'est toujours dans de petits volumes et non réalisable pour tous les enfants qui souffrent des telles besoins. Quelques pensées et exemples, de comment le système d'éducation essaie de créer des écoles où les enfants peuvent être soutenus par leurs conditions pour l'apprentissage, sont présents dans la thèse. La thèse traite comment l'inclusion réalisé dans l'éducation en Tunisie, mais aussi par le point de vue de l'approche des capabilité, où la diversité, l'égalité, la capacité, le bien-être et la liberté sont des aspects importants.

Mots-clé : l'approche des capacités, l'inclusion, la Déclaration de Salamanque, de l'éducation spécialisée
Sammanfattning på svenska

Problemområde: Denna studie behandlar hur utbildning för elever i behov av särskilt stöd är organiserad och utformad i Tunisien. Tunisien är ett utvecklingsland där hela utbildningssystemet har vuxit fram under de senaste decennierna i samarbete med Unicef. Studien lyfter fram hur och i vilken utsträckning elever i behov av särskilt stöd får ta del av utbildning.

Syfte: Syftet är att undersöka hur utbildningen för elever i behov av särskilt stöd är organiserad i Tunisien och på vilket sätt den är inkluderande utifrån det som Salamancadeklarationen förespråkar. Som teoretisk ram används capability approach, vilken betonar utvecklingsländerns förutsättningar för att utjämma individers olikheter, i detta fall elevers möjligheter till utbildning.

Metod: Fältstudien är genomförd i Tunisien där framförallt yrkespersoner från olika nivåer inom utbildningssystemet har ingått som informanter. Studien är etnografisk och vid datainsamlingen har metoder som överensstämmer med fallstudie använts, där flera olika metoder såsom intervju, observation och dokument har använts för ändamålet. Vid sammanställning och analys av innehållet har hermeneutisk tolkning använts för att skapa förståelse för hur specialpedagogik är utformad i landet samt vilka förutsättningar som finns för inkluderande undervisning och utbildning.

Resultat: Resultaten visar att det i Tunisien finns former för att möta elevers olikheter inom utbildningen. Det finns handikappcenter där elever med funktionsnedsättning får möjlighet till utbildning. Det finns skolor för blinda och skolor som håller på att utveckla integrerade former för att undervisa elever som är i behov av särskilt stöd i undervisningen. I analysen framgår att den specialpedagogiska verksamheten i flera avseenden är inkluderande, såsom att elever i behov av särskilt stöd får undervisning utifrån sina behov, framförallt då flera yrkesprofessioner samverkar kring eleven. Blinda elever får möjlighet till kompenserande datorprogram, blinda elever ges goda förebilder då de undervisas av blinda lärare. På några skolor går eleverna kvar i sin ordinarie klass och lärarna ges kompetensutveckling. Studien visar också att utbildningen till viss del inte är inkluderande, t ex måste flertalet av eleverna
lämna sin lokala skola för att få en anpassad undervisning och undervisningen bedrivs i särskilda grupper eller skolor som är skild från de övriga eleverna. Dessutom har inte alla elever som är i behov av särskilt stöd tillgång till de specialpedagogiska verksamheter som finns i landet.

Det finns flera exempel på att eleverna är socialt accepterade av lärare och elever på skolorna, vilket anses inkluderande. Begränsningen för att skapa en inkluderande skola uppstår i klasrummen då elevernas förutsättningar utgör behov av alternativ undervisning för att eleven ska utvecklas, vilket inte alltid kan tillgodoses.

Sett ur ett perspektiv utifrån capability approach visar utbildningen i Tunisien många exempel på att det finns en strävan att utveckla en verksamhet för att utjämma elevers skillnader och att skapa ett utrymme där alla kan utvecklas och bli välmående individer.

Nyckelord: capability approach, inkludering, Salamancadeklarationen, specialpedagogik
**Foreword**

I have conducted a field study in a foreign country, with another culture which has enriched my own experience. In doing this I have acquired knowledge about how Tunisia has developed, also their intention to create a school for children in special educational needs. All this has been possible thanks to the Embassy of Tunisia in Stockholm who has helped me to contact the Ministry of Education in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. The Ministry of Education welcomed me, programmed for my visits in several schools and arranged for my lodging. All the personnel I met at the Ministry and at the schools made me feel very welcome. I thank them for their hospitality, I am appreciating a lot my time in your country. I would like to thank Mehdi Kayess and his family who made me feels like a member of the family. Thanks to them I learned a lot about everyday life in Tunisia. You all are a part of my heart.

The voyage and the study are financed by a scholarship MFS- Minor Field Study, which is a part of SIDA. I have been supervised by Dr Lisbeth Ohlsson at the University of Malmö who gave me precious advices and help in writing this thesis. I also appreciate her encouragement while writing in English, it has not been easy. I would also thank Debbie Svantesson and Christina Ruscon-Dahlheim in proofreading the text.

I am pleased to present my experience and new knowledge for the reader of this thesis.

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**Avant-propos**

J'ai fait des études sur le terrain dans un pays étranger, dans une autre culture qui a enrichi ma propre expérience et j'ai acquis la connaissance comment la Tunisie s'est développée et leur intention de créer une école pour les enfants dans les besoins éducatifs spéciaux. Tout cela a été possible grâce à l'Ambassade de la Tunisie à Stockholm en aidant à contacter le Ministère de l'Education dans la capitale de la Tunisie. Le Ministère de l'Education m'a vraiment accueilli, a fait un programme pour mes visites dans plusieurs écoles et a aussi pris des dispositions pour mon logement. Tous les employés de bureau que j'ai rencontrés au Ministère et aux écoles m'ont vraiment fait avoir l'impression d'être un invité très bienvenu dans leur pays et leurs écoles. Je voudrais qu'ils sachent que j'apprécie beaucoup de mon temps dans votre pays, le merci tous tellement. Je dirais aussi Grâce à Mehdi Kayess et sa famille qui m'a fait avoir l'impression d'être le membre e de la famille où j'ai passé beaucoup de temps entre mes visites pour l'étude et m'ai donné une opportunité de rencontrer la vie quotidienne en Tunisie. Vous tous restez dans mon cœur.
Ce voyage et étude sont financés par une bourse des Études sur le terrain de Mineur de MFS-, qui sont une partie de SIDA. J'ai été supervisé par Dr Lisbeth Ohlsson à l'Université de Malmö et je dis merci beaucoup pour vos conseils, inquiétude et patient dans mon écriture de cela les thèses et pour m'encouragent dans mes luttes d'écriture dans la langue anglaise quand il a été tout à fait dur de faire par.

Je suis heureux de vous présenter mon expérience et mes connaissances pour le lecteur de cette thèse.
1. Introduction

I have written this thesis for the Master Program of Special Education at the University of Malmö. My study in the educational field concerns children with special educational needs in the country of Tunisia. The aim is to study how a developing country organizes education for children with special educational needs and how far the intentions of inclusion have been implemented as well interpreted.

I was in Tunisia in September and October 2011 to accomplish a field study for this thesis. The Ministry of Education in Tunisia made an individualized program for me to visit some specialized schools for children with special educational needs. Some of the schools have the intention of integrating the children into mainstream classes. I also took part in the collaboration of the three ministries which are responsible for physically handicapped children and children with special educational needs. These are the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Health.

The focus of special education is to balance inclusion with the pupils’ right to be supervised according to their needs (www.schome.ac.uk/wiki/Education_system_in_Tunisia). To educate these children is a challenging task for the Special Education field.

Integrated schools are mentioned at several places in this thesis. There are two reasons why I chose to use this term. One is that in Tunisia they are using the term integrated schools, for example the UNESI-schools, which means the organization of specialized and integrated schools. The second reason is based on the difference that Tetler (2005) describes between integrated and inclusive schools, as discussed in the theory section. The word handicap is also mentioned in this thesis when it is a central conception in Tunisia. I am using both the conceptions children with special needs and children in special needs depending on context. When it is about references from documents I am using the conception from the original texts. When I interpret and discuss the study I am using the conception children in special needs.

1.2 Background

Tunisia is a developing country according to the table of OECD, an Upper Middle Income Country (DAC-list_2011-2013). The educational ministries have legislated mandatory schooling for nine years for all children (Act of School, 2002).

Tunisia became independent in 1956 from the French colonial rule. Since then the organization UNICEF (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund) has been supporting the country to improve the children’s condition. Their mandate includes the education system. A major priority, in the short perspective, is their focus on children with
special educational needs. (www.schome.ac.uk/wiki/Education_system_in_Tunisia). Political upheaval in January 2011 resulted in a revolution in Tunisia and President Ben Ali left the regime after an extended period of a strong-man rule. The circumstances in the country changed after that. Programs and projects for example that were implemented before the revolution have not received the same political priorities. Some programs for special education and integration that began before the revolution are not receiving the budgetary financing that they need to be able to continue.

In Tunisia all children are obligated to go to school and almost every child does. Anecdotally, however, some teachers and citizens informed me that it is not unusual for children in rural areas to be unable to attend school because of lack of transportation. Recently, the school system has developed programs to support children with handicaps and disorders. I heard another anecdotal example of this from a girl whom I met on the train. During our conversation she told me that her sister, who is around 25 years and mentally retarded, has received no education during her childhood. This girl has been without any schooling whatsoever. Children with different handicaps are educated in handicap centres and some are educated in specialized schools. This essay describes how Tunisia educates the children with special educational needs in the present day.

1.2 Problem area and purpose
The purpose of this study is to acquire knowledge of how Tunisia has developed and organized the education to meet each pupil’s right to be taught according to his/her own needs and conditions, and to be included into the mainstream school system.

Research questions
- How are the school system and the teaching organized for pupils in special needs?
- In which ways is inclusion implemented?

1.3 International framework of statements agreements
The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child makes clear that all children have a right to free education. To realize the intention international initiatives have been made; Education for all and Inclusive Education (UNESCO.org, 2012). In the Declaration of Jomtien, in Thailand in 1990, agreements were passed to make education accessible for everyone, including handicaps (lower function), ethnic minorities and gender (UNESCO.org, 2012). Ten years later in 2000 at the Education Forum in Dakar this message, to make education possible for all, was reinforced. This was the beginning of The Inclusive Education
Initiative, which targeted the creation of an educational system that is non exclusive from basic education rights (Persson, 2007).

The WHO (World Health Organization) revised the definition of handicap or different kinds of limited functions with the International Classification of Function- ICF. The earlier descriptions defined obstacles from an individual perspective such as injury disability or impairment. Their new definition describes a scale of development which enables each person to progress to higher functions (http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/, 2012).

1.3.1. The Salamanca declaration
The Declaration of Salamanca, which took place in Spain, in 1994, emphasizes directions and practices in order to educate children with special educational needs. The objective was to form a prototype to move towards a “schools for all”- infrastructure. The conference was arranged by UNESCO (United Nations educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the Spanish government. Representatives from 92 governments and 25 international organizations participated including the UN, UNICEF and the WHO. The Salamanca Declaration concluded that all children regardless of difficulties or impairments would be given the opportunity to be educated together with other children as far as possible. Education shall provide children with different needs an adjustable curriculum that allows for individualized learning and progress. The options were dictated by suitable a curriculum, by organization, by pedagogical methodology, by globally available resources and by collaboration with the local community and environment. Children with special educational needs shall have their needs filled in the integrated schools and the importance of participation is emphasized (UNESCO, 1994).

The statement of this Declaration is in Article 2:

*We believe and proclaim that:*

- *every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,*

- *every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,*

- *education systems should be designed and educational programs implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,*

- *those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within childcentred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,*

- *regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an*
The fundamental aspect of inclusive schools is that children shall study together in their local school as far as possible. Children should only be educated in special groups or schools if the local schools cannot provide the level of specialization needed for a specific student. The Salamanca Declaration emphasizes the areas that are important to improve the development of inclusive schools (UNESCO 1994):

**Policy and organization.** It is necessary to collaborate in the field of health, social welfare, vocational training and employment. This should be done to make politicians to attain comprehensive educational legislation. Educational policies at all levels should stipulate that disabled children should attend the neighborhood school and also take individualized differences and situations into account.

**School factors.** Children with special needs should receive additional instructional support within the regular curriculum. These children should be supported according to their conditions. Minimal help in the regular classrooms would provide the support needed. When necessary, additional learning would be provided by assistance from specialized teachers and support from external staff. The needs of students are provided by active and creative involvement of teachers and staff in developing effective co-operation and teamwork. Each school should be a community that is held collectively accountable for the success or failure of every student. The educational team is responsible for the education of children with special needs and not the individual teacher.

**Information and research.** Examples of successful practice and relevant research conclusions should be highlighted throughout the global educational network.

**Recruitment and training of educational personnel.** “Appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive schools. Furthermore, the importance of recruiting teachers with disabilities who can serve as role models for children with disabilities is increasingly recognized” (UNESCO, 1994, p 27).

**External support services.** Various agencies, departments and institutions, and advisory teachers, educational psychologists, speech and occupational therapists, etc., should be co-coordinated at the local level.

**Targeted priorities.** To have a more effective and successful integration of children and young people with special educational needs focus should be on educational development plans. This should be within following target areas: “early childhood education to enhance the
educability of all children; girls’ education; and the transition from education to adult working life” (UNESCO, 1994, p. 37). To achieve a successful education for children with special educational needs, it is important to develop and maintain co-operation between families, a mobilized community, volunteer organizations, moral and practical support of the public, as well as a political will to provide budgetary resources for developing and maintaining both primary and ancillary infrastructures (UNESCO, 1994).
2. Theoretical framework
I have searched for literature and facts about special education in Tunisia but unfortunately I have been unable to find any. When I was in Tunisia, I understood that the field has not been researched. Furthermore it is not a separate academic discipline in their universities, which might contribute to why I did not find any literature from Tunisia on the topic of special educational needs. In this chapter I present theories of the Anglo-Saxon science in the field of special education and inclusion.

2.1 Special Education
Special education is a complex subject without any special theory of its own. Special education is often regarded as a science with impressions of sociology, pedagogy, medicine, psychology, society, policy and economy (Rosenqvist, 2007). Special education is regarded in both a relational and a categorical perspective. The relational viewpoint examines the effects of the environment, the skill of the child, with a special focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the child’s family and the school’s organization and staffing. The categorical perspective has much in common with the fields of medicine and psychology (Rosenqvist, 2007). This view of the western world has dominated since about 1950 and is adapted from the scientific and medical perspective in special education. The child was removed and separated from the classroom to a get adapted treatment from a specialized teacher.

The relational perspective explains that environmental circumstances determines how well the child manages and integrates into the school situation. In the absolute form of the relational perspective the genetical aspect has no effect at all. Politicians, advocacy groups, school administrators at various political and hierarchical levels, and teachers are integrating the two perspectives, categorical and relational, into a comprehensive approach towards the inclusion of the subject of special needs children into the educational system (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 2005).

Ann Ahlberg (2007) emphasizes that the most important task of special education is to remove various obstacles from the children’s learning and knowledge development according to their different conditions. Normality and difference, participation and communions are different aspects of inclusive education. It is necessary to clarify what inclusive education is and when, where and how a person is included in a context.

Prevention and intervention are parts within the field of special education and there are two vital factors of Early Childhood Intervention that are important for the skills, learning and health of infants, toddlers and preschoolers (Björck-Åkesson, 2007). These factors are
important in avoiding marginalization and stigmatization of the students in later years. Persson (2007) asserts that the most important aspect that faces special needs advocates is a gap. This gap exists between the demands of the school upon the pupil on one side and the pupil’s ability to answer those demands on the other side. Björck-Åkesson (2007) states that children in special needs create the need of special education. If we instead benchmark education for all children in the planning and accomplishment of education, a special group of children in educational needs should not be defined as pupils in need of specialized support in special groups.

OECD has made a study of comparisons based on resources for special education support and point out three classifications of pupils:

- limited function
- complicated learning
- difficulties in socioeconomic, cultural and language

These groups make very special demands upon the interventions by support and pedagogical mechanisms (Björck-Åkesson, 2007).

### 2.2 Inclusion

The aim of inclusive education is to prevent social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender, physical ability and mental capability (Vitello & Mithaug, 1998; Ainscow, 2006). Education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more fair society (Ainscow, 2006).

A problem reported by a number of countries is that despite national policies emphasizing integration, there is evidence of a significant increase in the proportion of pupils being identified as having special needs. They are classified as such in order that their schools can earn additional financial resources. Even the medical model of assessment, within which educational difficulties are explained, is one of the reasons why schools fail to teach so many children successfully (Ainscow, 2006).

Ainscow (2006) has determined five categories of inclusion:

1. **Inclusion as concerned with disability and special educational needs.** These children are identified and appear as physically disabled or impaired which separates them into special settings within the schools. The children are denied participation in the local, mainstream educational system and are consequently marginalized.
2. **Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions.** Children with special educational needs are in many countries regarded as “bad behavior”.

3. **Inclusion as protection for groups considered vulnerable to exclusion.** It can be associated to social inclusion or social exclusion.

4. **Inclusion as the promotion of a school for all.** Inclusion relates to the development of the common school for all or comprehensive school, which is generally used in the context of secondary education.

5. **Inclusion as education for all.** This category promotes that everyone should have access to the education systems around the world. Some of the poorest regions of the world provide the best opportunities to creatively think about schools as one of the alternatives for developing education within their communities.

Consequently, as we consider the way forward for developing educational systems that encourage and support the development of schools that are effective in reaching all children in the community, it is necessary to recognize the field itself is riddled with uncertainties disputes and contradictions (Ainscow, 2006, pp 235).

This is encouraged by the Salamanca statement and there are some questions to reflect about which also are evidenced by researches.

- How can schools and classrooms be more inclusive?
- What forms of teacher education are needed to support such developments?
- What are the implications for specialist support staff?
- What forms of research are needed in respect to this agenda?
- What might be the contributions of psychology to developments in the field?

(Ainscow, 2006)

Nilholm (2006) proposes that inclusion describes something else than the concept integration. Inclusion means that the schools shall count on the plurality of the children and their different conditions in the planning of the schools. He refers to integration for children with special educational needs are placed into an organization where diversity is not the focus. Multiple variables from many sources should be considered: the discourse; past and present research in education; the domestic educational system; the municipal organization of the schools and teaching criteria; the management of the school; the benchmarks for teaching in the classroom; supplementary circumstances of the school environment and the experiences of the child (Nilholm, 2006).
Discourse is the most invisible aspect of expression and it is about the use of language. The language has a central role of understanding of the actions and the reason of the actions. In this way we can talk about the social life as equipment discursive praxis where the language and the actions are indistinctly united to each other. Even texts in documents are involved. An inclusive discourse remarks the diversity of children in the language and without denoting individuals who are outsiders. A dilemma for the education is the necessity of language tools to identify groups of children who need extra recourses.

The Science of Education can be inclusive or exclusive. From the point of view from research, perspectives where the questions of pedagogic not are including the questions of special education, it takes initial point from didactic questions of the normal children. The researchers can also take a point of view of content of excluding assumptions, where the special education has the role to create solutions for special groups of children.

The National System of Education concerning different agencies and solutions of organization, investigations, curricula and the teacher training programs can be more or less inclusive.

The local organization of education is about how the economic recourses are distributed and also about the organization of special schools for children in special educational needs.

The school sets and implements policies about children with special educational needs, arranges teaching protocols for those children and decides the criteria for placement in a standard classroom or separation into special groups.

The classroom can make the inclusion possible depending on how the teaching is disposed, how the work is led by the teacher and choice of methods and materials, the social participation and relations, the child’s influence.

Supplementary situations at school include the provision and involvement at playtime, meetings for parents, and additional resources to meet the child’s skills.

Individual experiences in the participation with and acceptance by peers and staff is a critical objective, but this is not critical enough to make a persuasive argument for inclusive education (Nilholm, 2006).

Participation is a prerequisite for inclusion, whereas the opposite, exclusion means that the person is marginalized and stigmatized. Inclusion can also be regarded from the perspective of communication where language and interaction are important conditions. Different discourses are created by social and cultural experiences (Ahlberg, 2007).

There is a difference between the ideological and pragmatic interpretation. The ideological perspective assumes that inclusion necessarily connects to politics, philosophy and democratic
ideals (Nilholm, 2006). The value of inclusion is seen as the children’s right to participate. But who has the right to decide what inclusion is? If we have given the power to the citizens it is important to make all citizens able to express their view of the society. The question of inclusion and special education is closely associated to what kind of society we advocate (Nilholm, 2006).

The interpretation of “inclusion” should itself include all these parties to bring inclusion to reality. How various parts and persons within the organizations react to inclusion have a direct effect on accomplishing inclusion into practice.

### 2.3 Integration versus inclusion

Tetler (2000) clarifies the meaning of integration and inclusion. She emphasizes the equality between integration and physical placement in school. Inclusion is a matter of conditions or processes, about the character of social interaction. Inclusion is a question about the apprehension of differences and the importance to focus on changing strategies. Inclusion is physical and functional. It encompasses regional districts, the teaching communities and the media. It incorporates the medical profession and school leadership. It advocates social integration in which the child is a part of the larger community and functions in it as a participating member (Tetler, 2000).

Integration is a process where children with special educational needs, who have been segregated, are integrated into the local, conventional school with standardized teaching methodology. Children with special educational needs can be guests in the classrooms and not participants. Inclusive schools don’t focus on how to support a special category of children or to assimilate them into existing curricula. Instead, the focus is directed towards how the school can develop supportive environments that include and meet the childrens’ needs. Inclusion requires a flexible educational system which is optimal for all pupils (Tetler, 2000). By introducing the concept of inclusion, the focus is changing from integration (where specialized teaching to specially identified categories of children is the pattern), to inclusion. Inclusion cannot be regarded as a doctrine that is only actualized in the classroom. Instead it should be regarded as a philosophy that should permeate the entire educational dominion, in which the authorities have an important role (Tetler, 2000).

The comparative perspective of inclusion is necessary in order to organize a collaborative aspect. The teacher’s personality aspects manage the openness and flexibility that is a condition for pedagogic treatment within teams. One aspect is how to manage the heterogeneity and the diversity of pupils in the classroom are managed by all teachers who are
involved. One condition is that more people will be involved into the pedagogic work, primarily the didactic level of the children. Consensus is required to structure and organize according to the learning skills of the children (Tetler, 2000). The cooperation is necessary to manage the relational aspect of complexity and the multiple teachers required to portioning of groups according to their functionality. Each teacher must demonstrate the competence to teach groups in both leadership and supportive roles (Tetler, 2000).

The integrative praxis will be problematic when the integrated child

- is taught in parallel to the classmates
- is participating passively
- is only integrated with the supporting teacher
- is not in a context and not in collaboration
- is not accommodated according to its competences and potentials
- does not feel part of the group’s activities (Tetler, 2000).

2.4 Attitudes
Anastasia D Vlauchou (1997) presents a conclusion of how teachers’ attitudes to inclusion affect the possibilities for the children to be included.

The teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement… Teachers don’t merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define, it and interpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get. (Vlauchou, 1997, p 78)

Teachers’ attitudes are created from theoretical, moral and political principles, and these attitudes inform the practical activities in the classrooms. Pedagogy, humanitarian ideologies, theories of normalization, social, political and medical approaches to education is being used in conflicting ways, in the struggles to create integrated schools and inclusive education (Vlauchou, 1997).

One criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the integration process is the social acceptability of disabled children. Another factor is the teachers’ willingness and commitment to promote integrated practices. These two conditions are the major influences on the opportunities to make interactions and acceptance by their peers. Successful integration of disabled children depends on interactions and acceptance by their peers. It has been assumed that the way a child responds to the disability is shaped by the attitudes she encounters in school and at home (Vlauchou, 1997).
Inclusion is not about dumping children into already pressurized schools. In fact, inclusive policies and practice require that integration must be a policy, a program, oriented towards its own destruction (Vlauchou, 1997; p 172).

…inclusive education necessitates a reconsideration of the complex and a potent cocktail of pedagogy, curriculum, school organization and the ideologies that inform these components of schooling. (Vlauchou, 1997; p 172).

### 2.5 Capability approach

The capability approach is developed by Amartya Sen to contribute to the dilemma of “difference”. The capability approach makes it possible to overcome the tension at the core of this dilemma (Reindahl, 2010). The dilemma of difference is often discussed in the field of special educational needs and is polarized between the proponents of categorical and relational perspectives. This leads to dissatisfaction with conceptualizations of disability and special needs.

Reindahl (2010) finds it necessary to ask “What is the purpose of inclusion?” This question is especially relevant in developing countries where the issue of special educational needs is not identified and there is no education available for children with handicaps or impairments. In effect, these children are standing outside of the educational system.

“It is with this international context in mind that I find the theoretical framework of the capability approach a promising of answering this question “What is the purpose of inclusion?”” (Reindahl, 2010, p).

Terzi (2005) has interpreted the capability approach for the science of special education.

What counts as disability and special needs, and how this relates to learning difficulties, is not only still much debated in education but also the subject of contrasting and often opposed views. (Terzi, 2005, pp. 4)

The capability approach is a normative framework for assessing inequality. It claims that social arrangements should be evaluated in the space of capability, that is, in the space of real freedom people have to promote and achieve their own wellbeing. Considerations of human diversity in terms of the interrelation between individual, social and circumstantial factors are central in the evaluation of peoples’ capabilities and, therefore, ultimately, of their wellbeing. (Terzi, 2005, pp. 4)

The capability approach focuses on which elements the social institutions and their policies should aim to equalize. It can also be used in comparing people’s relative advantages and disadvantages. The fundamental part is what people are actually able to do. It also depends on the diversity of people and environmental factors (Terzi, 2005).

Human beings are diverse in three fundamental ways:

1. Personal characteristics, like gender, age, physical and mental abilities.
2. External circumstances such as environmental factors including climatic differences, and social and cultural arrangements.

3. Individual ability to convert resources into valued functioning (Terzi, 2005).

Disability is the product of personal conditions, like some kind of impairment, and the circumstances of social and environmental constructions. An understanding of disability relates to the centrality of human diversity in assessing equality in the arena of capability.

Since functioning’s are constitutive of a person’s being, and capability presents the various combinations and functioning’s that a person can achieve, hence her freedom to choose on type of life or another. (Terzi, 2005, p. 13)

The dilemma of difference, in education, consists of identifying and recognizing children’s diversity in relation to education and schooling systems while aiming at educating all children. It is about how the individual child interacts with the schooling environment and how they convert recourses into functioning whilst at the same time considering how the environment is designed. A child’s limitations of functioning in education results in a restriction of the child’s capabilities for the future. To give the child advantages for the future the school has to do the same thing in the teaching as for all children but in different way (Terzi, 2005). Therefore, it is important to identify differences both in the individual and systemic level. Sen allows, according to Reindahl, for a view on differences that is relational without denying or overemphasizing either individual or social environmental elements of diversity (Reindahl, 2010). The capability approach provides a new and important framework for reconceptualising impairment, disability and special needs. The capability approach is a framework of thought, not an educational theory. The achievement of wellbeing is central and it may re-examine special education and education more generally (Terzi, 2005).
3. Method and procedure
The field of special education is complex and makes research look for phenomena in several different perspectives (Björck-Åkesson, 2007). I have taken into consideration of method that this is suitable for doing a study in Special Education in an unknown country. At the time I started this study I had a little knowledge about development within the field of special education in Tunisia. Other facts and circumstances affected my choice that made possible for me to discover the field step by step, and therefore the research questions widened.

Characteristic of qualitative studies is flexibility and that the arrangement can be changed during the procedure. This is suitable when the experiences are discovered during the investigation or time of collecting data. Also changing research questions and the information collection and the order of it (Holme & Solvang, 1997). A qualitative study has both advantages and weaknesses. One advantage is that understanding is more fundamental and grows while the questions are treated. It leads to new and wider knowledge and understanding. The flexibility can be a weakness for the research when it makes it harder to compare the information from the different perspectives. An interview or observation in the early stage gives less information than it gives later in the investigation (Holme & Solvang, 1997).

3.1 Methodology
In the original plan I was thinking of using discourse analysis because this method emphasizes the social environment. More over it includes different types of actions of using language, both oral and written languages, which permeates the social practice. The researcher should be reflective and skeptical not only in the using of language but also to the way statements are interpreted and treated in reality (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

An ethnomethodological design studies the daily life. Our actions in the daily life appear as the result of the background interpretations and implicated roles, and it is the researchers’ task to lift them into light. In this method there is no official manual of the procedure of research and it is possible to use several methods for this aim (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). Inductive ethnography presents how to describe a group or a culture, the culture analysis is central. A central part is the researcher has been present on place. The culture or the conceptions as ideas, way of thinking, symbols and interpretations are important. There are two important facts, the field work and the creation of the text. It is important that the researcher has an open mind and can handle all types of information, and also be personally involved and coming close to the subject that is the target of the study (Alvesson &
Skölberg, 2008). It is important to find the balance between the structure and the openness (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). An ethnographer is interested in understanding of the social and culture of the field for the study. The ethnographer is a storyteller and scientist (Alvesson & Skölberg, 2008).

In a hermeneutic study there are several ways to understand the world or phenomena. It is impossible to be objective; we can never stand outside ourselves when we are studying the reality. In this method there are three keywords; experience, expression and understanding. The hermeneutic scientist is looking for possible meanings and is studying written texts and language and actions. Meanings and the context of meanings is mediating and understood through interpretation by language. Interpretation is the principal form of knowledge. The process of interpretation constitutes two parts into one union; to open up meaning- from now towards the past with the aim to understand, and to add meaning- from now towards the future to create possibilities. It is the experience that will be understood. The experience belongs to location of existence and how we apprehend ourselves. Understanding grows from knowledge, both the objective and the subjective. There is collaboration between the parts and the completeness. The hermeneutic can be skeptic to itself, it can create, dissolve and reconstruct knowledge (Ödman, 2007).

Even a case study is suitable in a qualitative study of descriptive character where interviews, observations and documents will be used in collecting data. A case study investigates phenomena in the real environment or context in which the limits of phenomena and the context are indistinct. It is also suitable when the aim is to study an individual, a group, an organization or phenomena in which the objects are complex (Backman, 2009). An advantage of a case study is that it can handle several different materials from the empirical data like documents, artifacts, interviews and observations. It is important to define a limitation of the subject and a specific topic (Merriam, 1994). A case study uses both categorizing and holistic strategies (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

### 3.2 The choice of method
I am using three different methods in this research, the case study mixed with ethnomethodology, especially inductive ethnomethodology, in collecting data and the interpreting and analyzing part is hermeneutic. I abandoned the discourse analyses because of difficulties of understanding and interpreting the language perspective since my French is not good enough to understand all the meanings and the nuances and since I just know a few words in Arabic. The presentation of the results is in a narrative form in which I present the
experiences with descriptions from my visits at schools and meetings with people. The analysis is holistic with categorical elements which are present in the theoretical framework in this thesis. In the analysis I am expressing my understanding of the empirical data that I met in the field. I am interpreting the circumstances of education in the country which depends on the historical conditions and future possibility development. When doing this kind of study it is impossible to be objective which agrees with the hermeneutic method (Ödman, 2007). In the chapter discussion my understanding of the results are presented, based on the purpose and the questions for the study. The study is colored by my personal perspective as a Special Educator from Sweden.

3.3 Procedure
The Ministry of Education organized my visits in Tunisia. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the primary schools and schools for visually disabled children but not for the specialized schools or the handicap center. The limitation of the study is that it is only treating the empirical data that I took part of in the program that the Ministry of Education made for me. I visited nine schools, three ministries and one university of teachers’ training. The respondents in the study are clerks and teachers in different ministries and schools. In the collection of data I used interviews, observations and documents, individual and in groups. I informed my respondents by a document written in French about the aim and questions of the study (appendix 1). After the respondents had read the document they began to explain their work at the schools or organizations. In all my meetings with the respondents I had the topic in my mind: children in educational needs and inclusion (Merriam, 1994). It helped me to take impressions from the field and stay in focus to the purpose of the study. It made it possible for me to interpret what people were acting in reality and the meaning behind their actions. I am describing the culture, the symbols and their interpretations of special educations and inclusion which agrees with the ethnographic method (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

During my visits I wrote some notes. Directly back to my room I wrote all the impressions and facts from observations and interviews of the visits on my computer. These documents are my field notes which are the base for this thesis. In the field notes I wrote all impressions and all the facts I received from the visits.

I have been taking part of international statements and theoretical framework of the topic special education and inclusive education which are used for the analyses and interpretation based on the field notes.
The presentation of the empirical data is in a narrative form, followed by analyses and interpretation (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

3.4 Trustworthiness
The ultimate aim of a study should be usefulness. The validity is determined by making the study useful and the readers must trust in the integrity of the thesis and data. One way to promote the trustworthiness is to let the participants read of the field notes and make possible for them to make an adjustment (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Because of the geographical distance between Sweden and Tunisia and the language differences this has not been possible. Instead I have done my best to express the field notes with a thick description (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) and it is important to take into account that all the facts have been seen through me as a Swedish special educator in a foreign country and with other conditions. The interpretation starts at the same time I arrived in Tunisia followed by every new place and meetings for this study. It is necessary to keep in mind while reading the results and analysis that the empirical data appears from my view.

3.5 Ethical considerations
In a qualitative case study the questions of ethics are important at two critical times; in the collecting of data and in the publishing of the thesis (Merriam, 2006). In the collection of data I respected the people I met and it was important to let them tell me about their activities and to show me their reality. I asked the respondents if they agreed to participate in my study which everyone agreed to. I must say that everyone I met welcomed me with pleasure. I let my respondents tell about their work and profession and to show me their schools in the way the liked to. I took part of their schools and their way to educate the children without judgment or criticizing. I tried to be as neutral as possible and ask open questions in a way to avoid leading the respondents to give other answers than they had in mind. Sometimes it was difficult to stay neutral because they often asked me about special education in Sweden. On the discussions that followed, the Swedish perspective may have had an impact on the respondents thinking and answers. When publishing this thesis none of the respondents’ names are mentioned to ensure anonymity for the clerks, teachers and children. The schools are mentioned only by where they are situated in the country.
4. Results
I will describe the school system in Tunisia with focus on how the country gives education for children in special educational needs. This chapter is based on the field notes after the visits at agencies and schools.

4.1 National organization and collaboration
The Ministry of Education is responsible for the primary schools and is working especially for children in special needs in Tunisia. The ministry is planning programs of collaborations between other ministries in order to develop the education for children in special educational needs. In Tunisia there is collaboration between three ministries; the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Health. They have a common aim to identify children with any kind of disability or impairment and to give these children the best kind of education and if needed to offer them a special school if the child has special needs.

The Ministry of Health, *La Ministère de la Santé*, is responsible for the medical health of the students in primary, secondary and upper secondary schools. The Ministry of Health has a special program for medical investigation when the child is five years old, before they enter preschool. Children with some kind of lower function or handicap will be identified and adequate support or equipment can be offered. The most common handicaps or impairments which are identified are handicap of movement, visual and hearing impairment, intellectual disability or any language impairment. The Ministry also has a program to promote good health and to avoid handicap, a program of vaccination. The Ministry of Health has a special screening program for four different handicaps to follow the children’s skills and development. Those programs for the handicaps are visual and hearing impairments, handicapped of movement and intellectual disables.

In 2003 a program to make the primary schools more integrated for handicapped or disabled children started, *Le projet educatif individualisé*, the project of individualized education. The numbers of institutions are growing. To reach integration in this program there is a co-operation between different professions; the director of the school, a psychologist and a speech therapist. The aim is also that a medicinal doctor shall be involved in the project. Because of the revolution the project is lacking financial resources so the aim has not been reached so far.

The Ministry of Social Services, *Ministère des affaires Sociales*, is responsible of questions concerning social prevention in order to reach equality and the development of solidarity. There is a common strategy of the three ministries to reach an integrated school for
children with a handicap. The program is not only working with the child’s needs, but also with development of the environment surrounding the child. One part is about the transportation to school or to the handicap center where many handicapped children are educated. Another thing is to support parents and teachers and all the social environment around the child. For each child an individual program is established for the child’s needs and supports to ensure successful development. In the special center different professions cooperate in a common work effort around the children. One profession is special educator, who has a three years university education.

The clerk at the Ministry of Social Services informed me about a program which started in 1991 where different professions are working together with the school to discover children who are in special educational needs, social or medical, with the purpose to give the good support and to create conditions in school to reach further education.

4.2 Schools
I visited schools which are specialized in educating children with learning difficulties and with different impairments. I visited two schools for blind children. Three UNESI- schools- Union des écoles spécialisées et intégrées- Union of specialized and integrated schools- where children are integrated in a mainstream-school. I also visited two schools where UNICEF is supporting the integration of handicapped children in mainstream classes and one secondary school with a special program for children with learning difficulties, a school of vocational training.

4.2.1 Schools for the blind
The Ministry of Education is responsible for one kind of specialized schools, the schools of visually disabled and blind children. I visited one in the town Sousse, the third greatest city in Tunisia, and one school in Tunis, the capital. There is one more school for visually disabled in Tunisia. The schools are receiving students from all parts of the country and the children are staying at the schools during the weeks.

The school of Sousse started in 2007. It is new and the localities and equipment are modern. The school possesses a lot of computers with software with synthetic speech and texts enlarged. This makes it possible for children who are visually disabled but not blind to read. The teaching is given in small groups, about eight students in each group. In the education it is important that the teachers spend a lot of time with each of the children to help the child learning to read and write Braille. The teaching materials are the same as in the mainstream schools, but translated into Braille.
In both schools for visually disabled there are teachers who are blind themselves. It is a new experience for me to see a blind teacher in front of class with blind pupils. The teachers have good understanding of how to learn when being blind but they are also good role models for these children.

The school director in Sousse told me that they strive in their school to integrate the children into classes in mainstream schools. They have integrated some children in mainstream classes after the child first spent time in the specialized school where the children learned how to read and write Braille. The Braille books were sent to the school which received the blind child. From the fourth grade the children are taught how to use the computers education for teachers who are teaching at schools for visually disabled children. They have an exam of teacher’s education and they learn the special competence of teaching the visual disabled children on the school for blinds. The directors are teaching the teacher within knowledge by supporting them in their work in the classroom.

In the school at Ben Auros, in the capital, there were several teachers who are blind. I was talking to a thirty year old male teacher about the possibilities to educate the blind pupils in integrated schools. The teacher’s opinion was that it should be impossible to teach the blind pupils in integrated school because the teachers must have the special knowledge of blindness. In the teaching of blind pupils they are using other kinds of artifacts to give the blind children experiences that the seeing children get by nature. I asked him if it was possible that the ordinary teacher and teacher from school for the blind could collaborate and teach together in one classroom. Then, both the seeing and the blind pupils could get the right support during the lessons. The blind teacher did not agree with me and he explained that the differences are too big to make it possible.

The second director of this school can see the advantages of integrating blind children in mainstream schools. He thinks that it should be an advantage for the whole society too when the typically developing children meet children with different handicaps at school. They will take that experience of knowing and understanding of conditions of disabled classmates through their lives. That will broaden the acceptance of handicapped citizens in the society. In order to make it possible to integrate the children he thinks it is necessary to work with teachers attitudes and give the right education about inclusive school in the teachers’ trainings programs.
4.2.2 Integrated schools UNESI

In Tunisia there is a special organization called UNESI- Union des écoles spécialisées et intégrées- Union of specialized and integrated schools. I visited three schools run by UNESI, one in Tunis, one in Nabeul and one in Monastir. The schools run by UNESI have special groups for children in special educational needs. For example problems in concentration ability, memory functions, speech and language, hearing, intellectual ability and communication. Those children are educated in special groups in a mainstream school. The children in UNESI schools have started their education in classes in the mainstream school. After failing they have been offered to continue in a special group in a UNESI school. They usually change school in the third grade. The teaching is given in small groups with about eight children in each group. The teaching is given on the right level for the children and is adjusted for the children’s ability and needs. The children’s self-confidence is often damaged due to the failure in their local schools. Therefore it is an important task for the teachers to make the children believe in their own ability. The schools collaborate with the children’s parents, to make them accept that they have a child who has special needs and encourage the parents to give the child a good support and to motivate them for studies.

The UNESI schools strive to integrate the children in the mainstream classes at the school when they are ready. In Tunis, which is the first UNESI-school, they have integrated some pupils. The other UNESI schools have started up recently; they have been active for two years and have not integrated any children completely yet. In Nabeul the children participate in school together with the children from the mainstream classes during play-time, sport lessons and at the common activities for all classes at school. The psychologists are giving support to the teachers in the mainstream classes in order to prepare them to receive a child from the special group. This kind of support is also given to the teacher when the child has started to participate in a mainstream class. The children are participating in those classes in some lessons when they are in the skill level to follow their classmates. The other lessons they are participating in the special group of teaching. There is an individual program for each child’s development.

In each UNESI- school there is always a psychologist, who is the responsible person in place for the children’s developing and follow- up. There are also orthophonists- speech therapists, educatrice- a kind of preschool- teacher or pedagogue. The teachers do not have any special education to educate children in special educational needs. They are learning practically from each other and they are taking part in a network one day a month for internal capacity building for teachers in the UNESI organization.
In Nabeul it was possible to make an observation during a lesson, it was a French lesson. The children were taught the names of the days in the week and the names of the months. There was an open atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher gave the instructions and corrections very calmly and kindly to the children. The children took part of the lesson with high level of attention, no one lost their focus thanks to the teacher is sensibility to keep the eight children in attention throughout the lesson. My impression of this observation was that the children liked to be taught in this group by the teacher and it seemed that they all were motivated to learn from the class.

4.2.3 Integrated schools supported by UNICEF
UNICEF supports the development of integrated schools. I had the opportunity to visit two of those schools, one in Siliana and one in El Alia. Here children with all kinds of handicap are integrated into a mainstream school. In El Alia there was one deaf child, one mute, one with a movement handicap and one with an intellectual handicap. The children are educated in the school during the lessons and after school they spend some time at the handicap center. I met a teacher who is teaching in the sixth grade. In his class there are three integrated children with different handicaps. One girl is deaf and she can neither speak nor read out loud, but she can read silently with comprehension and she can write. The girl communicates with her teachers and classmates with the help of a computer. She has friends at school and is playing with them during playtime. The teacher says that the girl is well integrated in the school.

In the class there also was a boy, with a mild intellectual disability and he has social problems as well. The boy is learning single parts of a subject well but it is hard for him to understand relations and he cannot generalize earlier experiences in a new situation of learning. The teacher is giving short and limited instructions in the classroom in order to make it easier for the boy to follow the instructions and to understand the tasks. The boy is accepted by his classmates and well integrated in the social community but he has a hard time learning.

The third child in the class is a girl with limited memory functions and social problems. She has a low level of comprehension and has difficulties with conceptions. The girl has problem with social relations with the other children and it is hard for her to put things in order and to stay at her place in the classroom. The teacher thinks that this child is most difficult to teach and to give good support.

The director and the teacher mean that it is easier to get the children socially integrated than to integrate them in their teaching and there are several reasons behind. One is the lack of
education for the teachers in how to meet and teach those children. The other is the limited economic resources which does not make it possible to buy the best adapted material and equipment. The support from the government started before the revolution and now the director is waiting to see how the new regime will prioritize and continue the supporting of the integrated classes.

The teachers at school are cooperating with the clerks at the handicap centers in order to give the children their support so that they can reach the best possible skills. In the centers there are a social worker, scholar of medicine, and a speech therapist working with these children.

For each child a special program has been constituted according to their individual circumstances and opportunities with the aim to make a good performance and develop. In the program there are some targets for the child to reach. They are concrete and in one case it was obvious that the child had formulated the goals herself. When the programs are constituted, the parents, the child and the clerks at the center are participating together with the schoolteacher. The programs are often followed up.

4.2.4 A Mainstream Primary school

One day I visited a mainstream school in the city of Mahdia. In that school there was a girl who cannot walk by herself. She has braces from her feet to her knees. She is cross-eyed and she has difficulties with fine motor skills which makes it difficult for her to write. The teacher told me that she was not able to do much work in the classroom but her classmates encourage her and help her to write. The teacher’s opinion is that the girl should have better skills if she went to a specialized school, but the mother does not accept to change school for the girl.

I observed the girl in a French lesson. It was obvious that it was hard for the girl to focus on the teachers’ lesson and her concentration was low. It was necessary for the teacher to give individual instructions in all steps to make the girl follow the class. For example the teacher had to put her equipment on the desk, pencil, books and writing slate. During the lesson I noticed that the girl was able to follow some parts of the lesson in particular if it was auditive but it was impossible for her to change the activity from listening to writing. The teacher told me the she recently had begun to write in Arabic. The level of the teaching in this classroom was too advanced for this girl.

There was not anyone at the school to give proper teaching in relation to her special needs, and the teachers at the school were not educated for special teaching. The adjustment to her special needs was made by fewer pupils in the class, 25 instead of 35, and by one teacher who
was supporting the girl to move and to accomplish the school tasks. The children in the class were helping the girl and it was important for them to look after the girl, they accepted her as a member of the class even if she was not at the same level as they were. The teacher in this class was very kind and accepted the girl and giving her the same value as all the other pupils. There was an allowing climate in the class.

4.2.5 Vocational training in Secondary school
In the year 2006 a special program was started for students who were out of chance of receiving credits and diploma of secondary school. The pupils had failed in school and they were often absent from school. In this specially arranged school the students are educated a practical profession like pastry cook, jewelers or computer worker. Besides the education for those vocations they are taught the basic theory subject which is necessary in the daily life and to manage in the working life, like reading the watch, basic mathematic, how to organize the time for the planning work, and also the Arabic and French language.

After two to four years the students take their exam of their profession, the difference of time they spend at school depends on how much time each student needs to learn the profession. The student receives a diploma of the profession during a ceremony.

The director of the school is a psychologist and to his help to develop the students there are three teachers working with the vocational training and two teachers in theoretical subjects. There are 62 pupils in this program. Since the start in 2006 18 students have received a diploma and three of them have been employed. The director said that the students have a high motivation in learning the profession, but when it comes to the theoretical subjects it is lower. The director also told me that many of the students have regained their knowledge skills and that they are present at school.

This school is the only one of its kind in the whole capital there is only one more in the whole country. The director says that it makes problem for the students who apply to the vocational training program when the school is only available for a few numbers of students.

4.3 Teachers’ education
One of my last days in Tunisia I had the opportunity to visit Institute suprime de l’education, a university for the science of education. The university offers capacity building for teachers. There I met a doctor in didactics in the IMP-institute, Institute medico pedagogique.

The doctor explained that the education is on-going for three or four years for primary, secondary and upper secondary school teachers. Those who have four years of education have the title “maitrise”. In the program of “maitrise” there is one module which deals with
students who fail in the education, “èchec scolair”. It is a theoretical program and the subject is students’ failure. It contains investigations of the reasons of failing and how to give interventions to make the student regain and succeed in their studies. The teachers who are teaching children at the handicap centers are educated as special educators after three years of studying. They don’t have the education as mainstream school teachers, and are only teaching at the handicap center.

The university has planned to start a Master program containing how to deal with learning difficulties. The program should have been started but the start has been delayed because of revolution. The doctor is looking forward to start this Master program in 2012 at his University.

4.4 The curricula
In the Education Act (2002) there are some articles that are emphasizing pupils in special educational needs. Article 4 is about all children’s right to education:

“the state provides free education to all who are of school age, and gives all students an equal chance of enjoying this right”….“It is incumbent on the State to provide the conditions that will enable pupils with special needs to exercise their right to education.”

The article 9:

“In the pursuit of their teaching goals, school will endeavor to provide an excellent education for all learners. Instructions will include general knowledge as well as theoretical and practical learning. The aim of teaching is to develop pupils’ gifts and skills, increase their capacity for self-education and prepare them for access to an educated community.”

Article 11:

“In the course of their professional duties, the education staff will respect the principles of fairness and equal opportunity for all. They shall also build relationships with student based on equity, objectivity and regard for their rights and personalities.”

Article 30 is about Educational Institutions and one part tells:

"Special education institutions with special curricula and educational systems may also be created by decree."

And article 32:

“Schools shall take their social environment and the special needs of the students into account when designing their school project.”

4.5 Being different
When I moved around in the Tunisian community, I met many people with various disabilities. During the visits in some schools, we talked about why there are so many people
with disabilities. One director said that a lot of people do not get enough nutrition diet which affects the individuals’ development. Another reason is lack of vaccination, for example against rubella which can cause deafness for the child if the mother suffers from the disease when she is pregnant. A third reason why there are so many individuals with disabilities is that it is common for relatives, cousins, to marry each other and thereby increases the risk that the children will have some form of disability.

I believe that people are accepted as they are by people in their surroundings. I met many people who are caring and concerned about each other, both in the residential district, on public streets as well as in school. One person I got to know well outside my school visits told me: “We Tunisians have no complexes. I have a big head and a lot of people say that to me, and that’s ok, because that’s how it is. We can also say to a person that he/she is fat, without the person takes offense.” From my experience, it appears that many Tunisians feel that they have a value as a human being and feel accepted just as they are with any differences. I perceived that the diversity of children that I met at the schools was socially accepted. There was a problem at school when the children in special educational needs who are different, did not learn the in same way or at the same rate as most of the other children.

At one of my school visits it became clear that children with differences are socially accepted. When I visited the school in Mahdia, I was first invited to sit down at the principal's office. While I sat there a teacher came carrying an eight year old girl. The girl was placed on a chair in the room and the headmaster and the teacher told me that it was this girl that I was there to see. The girl smiled and seemed not at all embarrassed or uncomfortable to let me see how she had it in school, she seemed on the contrary proud. The girl was carried into the office because it was difficult for her to walk, she had splints on both legs. She was also cross-eyed. The school staff told me that she found it difficult to follow the teaching of other students.

4.6 Summary
In Tunisia the school system is organized for children in special educational needs by comprehensive schools. There are special schools for blind children, integrated schools where the children in special educational needs are educated in special groups and where there are different professionals to adapt the teaching. There are also vocational training program in secondary school where adapted teaching is given to students with special educational needs. In those schools the children are separated from their local schools. In the schools which are
supported by UNICEF the children are educated in their local schools, but professions with expertise are missing.

The engagement, from directors and teachers I met during my visits at schools, is strong to give the children in special educational needs a good education. They socially accept the differences and diversity of children. The obstacles in educating children in special educational needs in their local and mainstream schools are the number of pupils in the classes and the lack of support of expertise.
5. Analysis
The analysis of the education in Tunisia has been illuminated from different aspects of inclusion presented in the theory section, and based on the capability approach.

5.1 Education in the child’s local school
Many of the children in Tunisia in special educational needs are not educated in their local schools. In the Salamanca declaration it says that the education shall be given in the local school as far as possible (UNESCO, 1994). Ainscow (2006) clarifies that one way of thinking of inclusion is that children with special disabilities are given education in special settings of schools, but the children tend to be marginalized. But if inclusion is seen in the light of education for all (Ainscow, 2006) we can accept the separated schools if the children are offered an education adjusted to their needs and conditions. The schools for visually disabled, the UNESI-schools and the vocational training in secondary schools are providing education adjusted to the children’s needs and conditions in special settings and can from this view be regarded as inclusive schools.

In the UNICEF supported schools there is a pilot project where children in special educational needs are educated in their local and mainstream school whereas the teachers receive capacity building by a special program as a part of their employment. It agrees with the criteria of inclusive schools; the children are educated in their local schools and the teachers are developing the competence to teach a class with diversity of children and to give special support to the children (Nilholm, 2006; Tetler, 2000, UNICEF 1994).

From the perspective of the capability approach, one can see that education tries to make it possible for children to reach academic success by adapting training. In Tunisia the adapted training is given most of all in separated comprehensive schools to children with disabilities. In this case the school system can better meet students’ differences (Terzi, 2005) than in the mainstream schools. None of the perspectives relational or categorical are overemphasized when the benchmark is to give education to children in special educational needs (Reindahl, 2010). In the view of Ainscow (2006) Tunisia inclusion is seen as the promotion of a school for all.

5.2 Teachers’ education
One prerequisite in order to reach an inclusive school is that each teacher has the competence to give the supportive teaching for groups of children in special educational needs (Tetler, 2000; Ainscow, 2007; Nilholm; 2006, UNICEF, 1994). The education of teachers does not include how to meet children’s diversity. Only the education of “maîtrece”, a four years
education, includes a module which deals with children’s failure in education and how to recover the children. The education for the profession special educator is given for three years and they are only teaching at the handicap center, not at the mainstream schools. The university that I visited is planning to start a master’s program in which how to teach children in special educational needs will be a part of the education.

At the special setting of schools, UNESI and schools supported by UNICEF, there is an on-going program of capacity building for the teachers. At the UNESI-schools there are other professions giving support to the children adjusted to their needs, like psychologist and speech-therapist. At the schools for visually disabled the teachers get the special competence in teaching visually disabled and blind persons at the local school by teachers or directors who are working in school. In the Salamanca declaration (UNESCO, 1994) it is emphasized how important it is for creating inclusive schools that the teachers training programs are including courses in special education.

At the schools for the visually disabled, blind teachers are employed and it agrees very well with the intentions from the Salamanca declaration, since teachers with disabilities can serve as role models (UNESCO, 1994).

Developing teachers’ ability to teach children based on their differences and needs equalizes in the long run students' various advantages and disadvantages when it comes to academic success (Terzi, 2005). The space where the skills develop will be larger for students in the school where the child normally belongs if the teachers have the competence to give the diversity of children an adapted teaching in their local school.

5.3 Collaboration between professionals
In Tunisia there is a national collaboration going on between the three ministries; Education, Health and Social Services, with the aim to educate all children with respect to children’s handicap, conditions or special educational needs. Collaborations between different expertises are a condition to create education for all children. This is also true with how the national agencies are leading the organisations, curricula and teachers training programs (UNESCO, 1994; Ainscow, 2007; Nilholm, 2006). The three ministries have a common program where different professions are supporting children with special educational needs. They encourage early identifications and interventions (Björck-Åkesson, 2007) for those children by the medical investigation which is expressed in the Salamanca declaration (UNESCO, 1994). Terzi (2005) emphases the importance of identifying differences at both individual and systemic level.
At the special settings of schools there are examples of collaboration and cooperation. At the UNESI-schools there are different professions employed and they are all giving support to the children who are in special needs. The different professions have continuously occurring conferences about the development of the children. Cooperation is one of the solutions to reach an inclusive school (UNESCO, 1994).

At UNICEF-schools there are no experts employed but they have collaboration with the local handicap center where some of the children are spending the last lessons of the day (UNICEF, 1994).

When different professions with different expertise collaborate it increases the opportunities to see each individual's specific situation and to adapt or create an optimal environment possible for learning. In Tunisia, there are several examples of a cross-professional collaboration, both national and at special schools, which shows that in these cases, attention is paid to the differences between people in relation to environmental factors in order to create favorable conditions in education (Terzi, 2005).

5.4 Compensation in teaching
Compensation in teaching was perceived most clearly in the schools for the blind. The schools have modern technology like computers with digital voice to compensate for the blindness. The children are also educated to read and write in Braille. It gives children the opportunity to take part in teaching with minimal assistance from the teacher or other staff members (UNESCO, 1994). The compensation provides the possibility to learn the same thing as other children do in mainstream schools but in it another way (Terzi, 2005).

5.5 Integration contra inclusion
The schools for the blind have tried to integrate some few children without success. It is not enough to physically integrate children in a school in order to reach an inclusive school (Tetler, 2000), since the environmental facts have not been investigated and intervention has not been taken into account the children’s different needs (Terzi, 2005).

The aim at the UNESI-schools is to integrate the children in classes at the mainstream classes of the school, when the child has recovered from the lack of knowledge and the self confidence that they lost in the early years in school.

At the UNICEF-supported schools the children who are in special educational needs are more or less included in the schools. Most of them participate in teaching in the classrooms when the teaching is well adapted for the children. Many of them are also well included in the social participation, when they are accepted of both their classmates and the teachers at
school. The children participate also when the schools establish an individual skill program for the children in special educational needs.

There are also examples of environmental factors not succeeding in including the child, this occurs when the child does not participate in the teaching in the classroom and/or in other situations at school. In those situations the child participates passively (Tetler, 2000), which integrates the child in the local school but does not include them. The environment is not designed to give children the opportunity to develop and reduces the possibility to achieve well-being (Terzi, 2005).

In the mainstream school that I visited there was a girl with a plurality of needs of support in education. The support that the school is able to give is to arrange a class with less pupils and a teacher who gives individual support during some lessons. During the lessons the girl takes part in the same teaching as her classmates. She is doing her tasks as well as she can with the support, but she is not able to do all tasks. The gap between her and her classmates was obvious. The teaching in the classroom contains more compensation than learning situations for the girl. There was no external support from expertise to the school to enhance the education. In the learning situation the girl is integrated in the local school, not included (Tetler, 2000). She is socially included when she is accepted as a member of the class from her classmates and the teachers (UNESCO 1994). In the mainstream schools, they may improve the situation for children like the girl, create good teaching by thinking over the questions described by Ainscow (2006); How can schools and classrooms be more inclusive? What form of teacher education is needed? What kind of special support stuff is needed? What forms of research are needed in respect of inclusive schools? How can psychology contribute to developments in the field?

5.6 Attitudes
I found two different attitudes about the topic of inclusion. One teacher thought it was impossible to educate blind children in mainstream schools for the reason that the teachers are not be able to support the blind pupil’s needs. The other opinion, from the second director, was the thinking that it can be possible but it depends on the organization, knowledge and co-operations from the staff. The two attitudes show the complexity of the thinking about the opportunities to integrate blind pupils in mainstream schools. Success necessitates a cocktail of pedagogy, curriculum, school organization, and the ideologies that inform these components of schooling (Vlauchou, 1997).
The diversity of children is in several of the cases I experienced, accepted by both teachers and children in schools on the social level. It is more problematic with acceptance when it comes to the differences in the classroom situations in children's local schools. Children are placed in separate schools where ambient factors can better accommodate students of different needs and individual circumstances. This is basically an attitude issue that affects many levels within the education system and is a prerequisite for changing the environment in several schools so that education can better meet students’ differences (Terzi, 2005).

5.7 Early intervention
In the view of inclusion the fact that the children have failed early in their education as children have in the UNESI-schools, does not agree with early prevention and intervention to avoid marginalization and stigmatisation of the children (Björck-Åkesson, 2007).

When children fail in the early school years, because of lack of support that they need, it shows how it affects the child's future schooling and the opportunity to achieve well-being (Terzi, 2005).

5.8 Categorical and relational perspectives
In the UNESI schools there are examples of both categorical and relational thinking. The categorical thinking is obvious when the children’s disabilities are placed in several categorical names like intellectual disability, problems of memory functions, speech and languages impairments etc. The children with different disabilities are educated in schools separated from their local schools to receive special education. In the specialized schools they are taught in special groups. These children have been excluded from their classes and their local schools in one of their first years of school (Clark, Dyson & Millward, 2005).

The relational thinking dominates when environmental factors in the school are adapted to the children’s needs. For example different professions cooperate to support each child’s conditions at the UNESI-schools. They investigate the level of each child’s skills to ensure that they are given the right support and the staff follows up the skills of every child. The small groups of pupils make it easier to give good support for each child and they have an individual plan for each child’s development. The equipment and the containable in the lessons are adapted to the children’s skills and stimulate them at their level (Rosenqvist, 2007; Clark, Dyson & Millward, 2005).

In Tunisia, there are examples of how the categorical and the relational perspective exist side by side in several of the schools that I visited. In the view of capability approach one perspective does not dominate over the other (Reindahl, 2010). In Tunisia, in general, the
categorical perspective is the more dominant perspective when children in special educational needs have to leave the mainstream school to get the right support. Ainscow (2006) explains that one of the reasons why schools fail to teach many children successfully is the medical model of assessment, which explains the categorical perspective.

5.9 Exclusion contra inclusion
The education can be described as increasing the risk for the pupils to be excluded from the society. In the vocational training school the pupils who did not succeed when they took part of the mainstream education, led to absence from school. Ainscow (2006) presents criteria of inclusion to promote of school for all. Inclusion relates to the development of the common school for all or comprehensive school, which is generally used in the context of secondary education. Without the comprehensive school, in this case the vocational training school, the students were excluded from education and in the long run excluded from the participation in the society too.

There is a limitation of the capacity in comprehensive schools in Tunisia, they are not able to give education to all children with special educational needs. The limitations can be the result of the mainstream schools limited ability to meet and educate the diversity of children. The curriculum mentions the important part of an inclusive perspective of the educational thinking: education staff shall respect an equal opportunity for all, and enable pupils with special needs to exercise their right (Education Act, 2002).

In several parts in the Education Act it is declared that the schools in Tunisia shall give all children in special educational needs an education adapted to their needs and different opportunities. There is also a special part about special institutions of educations with a special curriculum and special decrees (Education Act, 2002). The education shall be adapted to the children’s conditions. This agrees with the intentions of the Salamanca declaration (UNESCO, 1994) with a suitable curriculum which provide the children’s different needs and different kind of learning.

At the UNESI-schools the dilemma of inclusion in Tunisia was clarified when the education there meets the diversity of children with all their conditions and special educational needs. But on the other hand the UNESI-schools exist for the reason that the mainstream schools are lacking conditions and capacity to meet all children in special educational needs.
6. Discussion

6.1 Special education in Tunisia today
Inclusion is possible in Tunisia since there is competence to meet students' differences by clerks and teachers at the schools. It is possible since schools are organized in a way that pupils with special educational needs are given space for supportive and appropriate teaching. Teaching methods have to be varied and students have to be actively involved in the context, both in educational and social situations. The conditions for inclusion are consistent in many cases with the basic principles of the capability approach where children’s diversity and variation is accepted. The children’s needs are benchmark to be met in education. Those conditions give students opportunities to be well-being, when they can succeed in their studies and be satisfied with their schooling. All this ultimately leads to options for further ways after their completed schooling.

According to the capability approach, it is important that people's differences are the starting point for societal planning which is also the starting point of inclusion. There is collaboration in Tunisia on a national level between the Educational, Social services and Health ministries, to meet children’s’ differences. There is also collaboration between several professionals of the UNESI-schools to meet the children’s needs and to create an ambient environment that is conducive to learning. In Tunisia the program takes into account students' differences and thus arranges and organizes education which is evidenced by the various special schools, UNESI- schools, schools for the blind, vocational training schools in secondary school. Students are also allowed to stay in their local school, where teachers get competence building to better meet the students' needs.

The special schools in the country, who receive students who are more different from the large number of children, live in many ways up to the capability approach when the education in Tunisia meet individual differences, creating space for the development of abilities to eventually create freedom for the individual which makes possible to achieve well-being. The condition to achieve well-being individuals is possible when none of the perspectives categorically or relationally are over emphasized.

The schools that have been developed in the country to meet the students in need of special supports, show in several aspects qualities that meet the requirements of the Salamanca declaration for an inclusive education. Examples of this are that the schools for the blind have employed blind teachers who are good role models for the students as examples for the opportunities of employment. Another example is the school that let the older students to get
vocational training to allow them to leave school with a sense of autonomy as well as ability. It provides them to become well-being.

Today, there is no capacity to meet all students in need of special educational support. The different types of schools that have been developed are in a too small volume in relation to the numbers of children who need special education. In UNESI-schools there are different competences available to support teachers' education and help to adapt to students' needs. It is inclusive in the sense that the children get a good development in the long term and hopefully a proper schooling. When a student finishes elementary school the student can, if everything works out, have a greater opportunity to choose their future.

UNESI schools are exclusive in the sense that the student has failed in the first two years of school and had to change school in the third year of school, to receive the support they need, which they could not receive in their local school. The Salamanca declaration emphasizes early and preventive interventions as a part of striving to establish an inclusive education. That does not exist when children fail in the first years of education.

One of the reasons that capacity building is not sufficient to provide all children in special educational needs is that there is no research at universities in special education. The subject is not included as part of teacher training which results in that no teachers have this special competence. The Salamanca declaration raised the importance of research in the field of special education and the importance of teacher training in the field. Another reason is that mainstream schools do not have access to external expertise that sometimes is necessary for schools which need support in order to offer students a good education.

At the UNICEF-supported schools all the teachers are trained to better meet students' needs of support. In time it can really create schools with a high degree of inclusion where students can go to their home school and get the kind of teaching so that they can develop positively. However, it may be more doubtful that students receive a well-adapted teaching based on their needs when teachers are still in training. One may also wonder whether all teachers who teach at the school have a positive attitude to teaching students in special needs in their class. Perhaps the requirement for training is experienced forced? Teachers' attitudes to individual differences and attitudes to teach children in special educational needs is a crucial element of teaching for the classroom to be regarded as inclusive.

In schools for the blind and in the UNESI-schools the children are different from the children who attend the local schools which they would normally belong to, which can be seen as excluding. However, there are several indications in both these schools that pupils are socially involved and accepted by their classmates. They may feel that they are not alone
having a disability and special educational needs. They get a customized teaching and their development monitored by teachers and psychologists in schools.

Since the schools in some respects can be regarded as inclusive in some points and not in others, and vice versa, it is legitimate to ask the question "What's the purpose of inclusion?" From a national perspective on education and using assumptions from the capability approach, Tunisia's education system is inclusive where all children, regardless of disability, have access to education. They are also socially accepted as individuals with their spread of inequalities. However, education is not inclusive in the sense that not all students can succeed fully in their studies. There is reason to think about if these children and young people are well-being when they experience failure in their studies and also how limited their choices are the rest of their life. The categorical perspective, where students’ individual conditions are regarded as the reason of the limitation of the student's academic success, dominates over the relational perspective in the mainstream schools in the country. In view of the relational perspective, where environment affects students’ development, is not the benchmark at the mainstream school when the students are sent to comprehensive schools to get educational support. Based on the capability approach, where neither of these two perspectives dominates over the other, it is the great challenge for the education system in Tunisia to create a balance between these perspectives in all schools in the country. Then all students benefit from an education with a high degree of inclusion.

To answer the question “What is the purpose of inclusion?” (Reindahl, 2010) the assumption of Nilholm (2006) can be a help to make it more concrete. Nilholm explains that there is difference between the ideological and pragmatic interpretation. The value of inclusion is seen as the children’s right to participate. But who has the right to decide what inclusion is? If we have given the power to the citizens it is important to make all citizens able to express their view of the society. The question of inclusion and special education is closely associated to what kind of society we advocate (Nilholm, 2006). In the time when the society of Tunisia is in the starting point of democracy, the citizens, and especially the children who are affected, should answer the question of when and how they feel that they participate or not in the education.

It is a challenge for Tunisia to create a school where all students have access to the teaching methods which are under development at the comprehensive schools in the country. Through this study, I have gained an understanding that there is a good knowledge and a great desire to develop education for students in need of special support. Different forms are being developed and tested and expanded and my hope is that in the not too distant future, these
forms will be available to all students who are in need of special educational needs. In summary, the major challenge is to plan and organize an education system where students’ differences are the starting point.

To achieve this, there are some areas that I think are particularly important to develop.

- Teacher training should include elements in which students in special educational needs are treated. Staff with expertise on students in special needs should be educated and be available at each school. Then, early intervention may become possible.
- Special education should be given room in the Universities as a topic and researched to develop and disseminate knowledge in general in the country.

There are parts that I believe that Tunisia should safeguard to preserve

- The social acceptance that exists for individual differences.
- The competence in education and the child development in the country, and the high ambition of these professionals to develop education in order to better meet students in need of special educational support.
- The established cooperation that exists between ministries to create the best possible environment for students with disabilities of various kinds.

6.2 Critical review of the study

The aim of this study was to understand how Tunisia, as a developing country, has organized and carried out instructions for students in special educational needs and how education is inclusive. The methodology for the study is ethnomet hodology with a hermeneutic interpretation in order to describe and explain the educational system in Tunisia concerning children in special educational needs.

Since the selection was determined by the Ministry of Education in the country, the study has been limited to the authorities and schools that I was referred to. It is difficult to know if the image from the education is representative of the whole of Tunisia. Another limitation of the study has been difficulties with the language as my French is not fluent, and only a small number of respondents in the study were able to speak English. I have still got enough information to carry out the study. However, I cannot fully guarantee that I have not misunderstood parts of what respondents wanted to communicate to me. To conduct a field study in a foreign country with a different culture and an education system other than the one
I am used to, has been a great challenge for me. When the material from the field study was processed, the perspective of the concept of inclusion was in many ways revalued. It has become clear that the cultural and environmental factors affect the interpretation and implementation of inclusive education.

The study render answers to the research questions and the study has given me an idea of how special education works in Tunisia. It has deepened and broadened the view of what inclusion means by reflecting on the perspective of the capability approach. It has become clear that the ambition of inclusive education in a country in a given school culture, does not have to be the same in another country. Hopefully the study comes to the joy and benefit to those involved in education in Tunisia.

6.3. Conclusion
The results show that in Tunisia there are ways to meet student’s differences in education. There are handicap centers where students with disabilities receive their education. There are schools for the blind children and schools that are developing integrated forms of teaching for children who are in need of special educational. In integrated and specialized schools several different professions work together to give students instruction in small class sizes. Some children are integrated into their local school, where teachers receive continuous training to better meet students’ different needs and requirements. There is a vocational training program for students in need of special support where students also will develop theoretical basic skills. The analysis shows that the special educational needs are met in several respects, including students in special needs are taught according to their needs, especially when several professions work together with the student. Blind students get the opportunity to be compensated, blind students are given good role models when they are taught by blind teachers. At some schools, students remain in their local class and the teachers are given training to develop their competence in special educational needs. The study also shows that education to some extent cannot be regarded as inclusive. For example, the majority of children with special educational needs leave their local school to get a customized teaching. The teaching is conducted in specific groups or special schools that are separate from the other students. Moreover, not all students in special educational needs have access to the special education activities in the country.

There are several examples that students are socially accepted by teachers and classmates at the schools, which is considered inclusive. Restrictions to create an inclusive school arise in classrooms when students' prerequisites call for alternative education for the student to
develop, which cannot always be met.

From a perspective based on the capability approach, education in Tunisia shows many examples that there is a desire to develop a system to equalize students' differences and to create a space where everyone can develop and become prosperous individuals’ and achieve well-being.
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Internet links

http://www.UNESCO.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/capacity-development/
http://www.UNESCO.org/education/pdf/JOMTIE_E.PDF
http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/
www.schome.ac.uk/wiki/Education_system_in_Tunisia
Description du projet

Dans le programme de Master à l’Université de Malmö je voudrais faire une étude sur l’enseignement pour les élèves qui ont besoin d’une formation spéciale en Tunisie.

Je m’intéresse aux élèves qui ont des difficultés pour apprendre à lire ou à écrire, et les élèves qui sont aveugles ou sourds, ou qui sont handicapés pour d’autres raisons.

Comment l’enseignement est-il conçu pour les élèves en Tunisie? Les élèves reçoivent leur enseignement dans l’école ordinaire ou dans l’école spécialisée, dans leurs classes traditionnelles ou dans des classes spécialisées?

Quelle est la formation des professeurs qui enseignent les élèves?

Pia Persson

Professeur d’éducation spécialisée et Proviseur suédoise