

# Diversity Of Inclusive Education In Schools After "Kommunalreformen (Regional Restructuring)"

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## Abstract

Special needs education has significantly changed in Denmark since "kommunalreformen(2007)". "Kommunalreformen" means the municipal reform, that is regional restructuring. It was one of the distinctive feature in the special education system that all special schools had run by AMT (prefectures in Denmark) have been transferred from AMT to Kommune (municipalities) manage.

In general, inclusive education systems need developmental decentralization for in the view of the reason of social resources and financial status in each municipality. However, the number of pupils who has enrolled into segregated settings in the school system increased significantly. Danish government had introduced the new target point of inclusive education as setting the goal of the ratio of included pupils as 96%. In this study, the authors have made continuous field works and report some of valuable developments in special needs education in Denmark.

## Background

After the regional restructuring (2007), the number and percentages of pupils who have been in segregated education settings has increased. Although the percentages had increased before 2007 as well, it was great increasing after the municipality reform. The reasons why that increasing phenomenon of segregation has been progressed were mainly two.

- 1) Special schools had been transferred from AMT (prefectures) management to Kommune (municipalities) manage. The transfers were conducted just locally, some municipalities had special school(s) and the others had not. If there are pupils who have special needs and want to make schooling to special schools, the municipality should decide whether they will pay to the next municipality for the pupils or they will make other opportunities for them. In fact, many municipalities had chosen the latter and, as results, the number of special classes in "folkeskole" has increased.
- 2) Some new categories in the special needs area, such as ADHD, has been known and pupils who have such a kind of new diagnosis have made schooling in special schools.

Thus, the number and percentage of pupils who were in segregated education settings had increased. (Figure 1)

Figur 1. Udgifterne til ekskluderende specialundervisning som andel af de samlede udgifter på folkeskoleområdet, 1995-2010

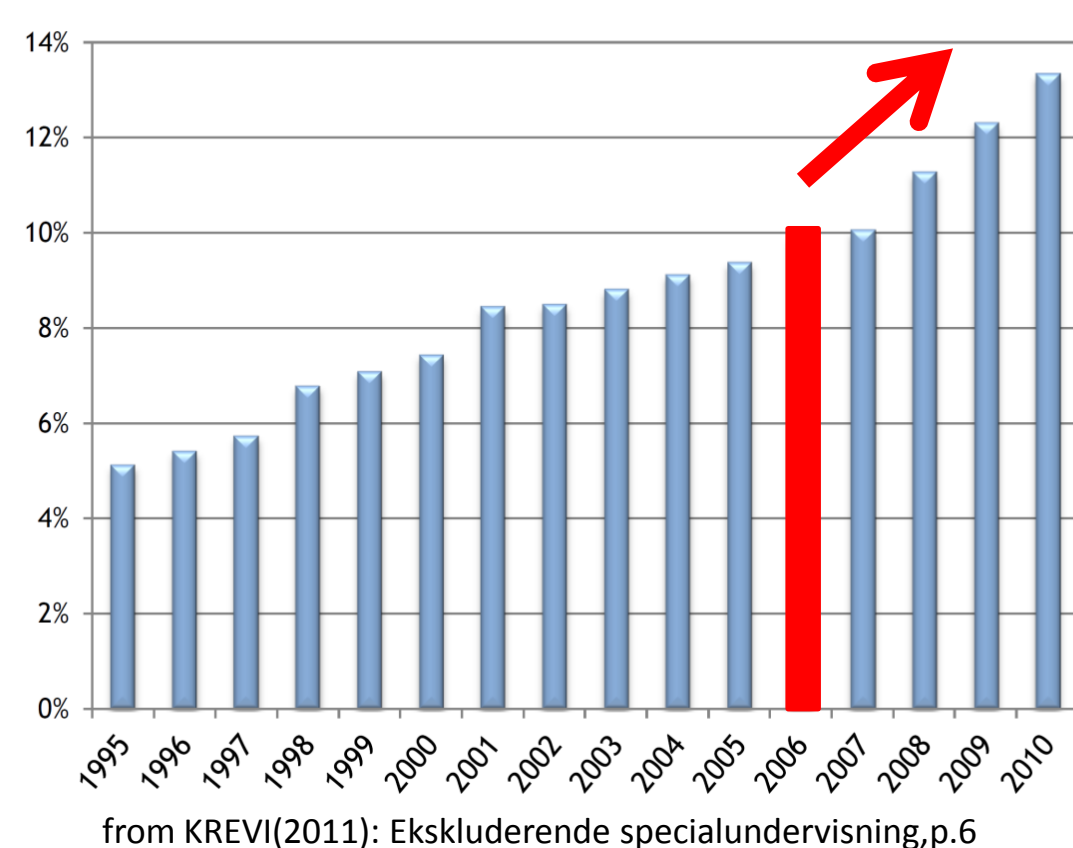


Table 1 List of municipalities in this study

KOMMUNE	TYPE	Folkeskole Total	Special Class	Special School	inclusion % 2010	inclusion % 2013	inclusion % 2014	population 2016	population per area(km <sup>2</sup> )	★
A	smaller city	8	20	2	94.2	94.4	95.1	24,732	366.7	enhanced teacher training
B	medium city	12	12	2	96.1	97.0	97.4	55,739	759.9	good inclusion policy
C	medium city	4	30	1	89.7	91.4	92.3	35,322	1,679.6	effective utilization of special class
D	medium rural	13	27	0	92.5	93.2	94.1	38,466	44.5	direction for headmasters
E	medium rural	4	32	0	92.0	94.3	95.6	37,904	29.5	decrease and reform school system
F	smaller rural	7	6	1	97.5	97.8	97.6	26,434	48.9	reorganization of PPR
G	large city	36	87	3	94.9	95.9	96.4	198,972	651.1	functioning strategy
H	medium rural	12	6	1	92.3	94.3	94.3	38,144	52.9	(PALS) Positiv Adfærd i Læring og Samspil
I	medium rural	13	14	0	91.8	96.3	96.0	51,236	80.9	advisory teacher system
J	smaller rural	4	8	2	91.7	94.5	95.4	31,886	115.2	enhanced knowledge centre
K	medium rural	21	40	6	89.5	91.3	92.2	32,816	92.7	inclusion advisor
L	medium rural	5	0	1	94.9	98.3	99.2	45,806	73.9	gathering special class to a school

from "Kommunernes omstilling til øget inklusion pr. Marts 2014" with adding some information by the author

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Danish government has intended to decrease the percentage of that kind of segregated pupils because those pupils had spent about 30 % of all budgets in "folkeskole" area. The government made some pilot study for seeking ways to find a good system in each municipality.

In this study, we have set the targets where we should make fieldworks as same as one pilot study that conducted by the government.

## Method

### Municipalities

- selected 12 municipalities that had joined national project in Denmark

### Data collection

- Fieldwork method : visiting to municipalities and making interviews
- conducted in September 2015 to September 2016

## Result

Municipalities have tried to introduce their own strategy for inclusive education in different ways. As it showed in Table 1, some municipalities have placed emphasis on staff training, including headmaster for inclusive education policy, like as introducing inclusion advisor, advisory teacher, direction for headmasters. Some other municipalities have emphasized reformation in the school system, e.g. decreasing the number of special classes and have got them together as one special school; making a new PPR system for inclusive education; effective utilization of special classes.

A unique practice has been introduced in municipality H, that is PALS (*Positiv Adfærd i Læring og Samspil* : Positive Behaviour for Learning and Interaction ). It recommends not only pupils but also teachers to behave positively and respect others in school, and it believes making good interaction will lead to good inclusive school. Municipality L is also a unique system because they locate rural area and has no special classes. However, the AMT, including municipality L had been known as no special schools in their own prefectural area until 2007. They had set many special classes instead of special schools. We have found municipality L have introduced a new special school and they had abolished special classes for "inclusion." As table 1 shows, the inclusion ratio of the municipality is highest among the municipalities, almost 100%.

## Conclusion

We have found that each municipality has sought their own way for effective inclusive education under the local conditions. It was not only by economic and population factors, but also by the policy for making good schools of the managers in the education office in municipalities. Another finding was that there was an example for making a special school lead to decrease the percentage of pupils who were segregated in education settings.