

SING

Q&A

1. What is inclusion?

Inclusion characterises a society in which everyone participates without distinction - under the motto it is normal to be different. Initially, the term meant a way to enable children with special educational needs, such as deaf children, disabled children or children with mental disabilities, or with different mother tongue or culture, to study in mainstream schools. However, inclusion has a much wider meaning. It is based on the concept of sense of belonging of all involved. Inclusion is not a target state, but a process in which society learns that everyone has the right to fully participate in joint life and culture.

An inclusive school and an inclusive society becomes a school and a society for all because: 1. They enable children and their parents to understand that everyone is a part of the school without distinction. 2. They help people to know that everyone has a unique life experience and worldview that enrich others. 3. They enable all children to participate in teaching, school life and the whole society. If inclusive education is really to be functioning, the idea of inclusion must spread not only to one school class, but to the whole school and eventually to the community in which we live with our children.

2. Where did the idea of inclusion originate?

Inclusion is based on the belief that all people, without distinction, should be proper members of society. No disability, disadvantage or difference should restrict their right to participate fully in the life of the community in which they live. The first efforts at inclusive education are rooted in the parents' movement for the right of disabled children to be included in mainstream schools (especially in the USA and the United Kingdom). As early as the 1980s, inclusive education was defined by the international organizations OECD and UNESCO. Under international agreements (such as Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN, 1989; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, UN, 1965; Convention against Discrimination in Education, UNESCO, 1960), the placement of children in non-mainstream schools has become considered a violation of the child's right to equal education.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children with special educational needs have the right to live a decent and full life, enabling the child to participate actively in society. This convention also guarantees these children's access to education and training. These rights are further defined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Chapter 15), according to which children with special educational needs have the right to education together with their peers. The Convention also defines the right of children to have access to the same general curriculum under which children are taught in mainstream schools. These international conventions were followed by the Salamanca Declaration (1994), in which UNESCO declared a call to all Member States to promote inclusive education through practical steps. These conventions and declarations were also reflected in Czech education policy in the form of the Education Strategy 2020.

3. What is the story of the film based on?

The film is based on a true story that the film's director Kristóf Deák heard from his Swedish friend. The screenplay for the film already existed (it was set in an English-speaking environment) and was written in 2012 by two English comedians, Bex Jarvey and Christian Azzola. In 2014, director Deák rewrote the screenplay and received a subsidy of 23,000 Euros from the National Media and Communication Office for its film adaptation. It was the highest possible subsidy that can be obtained for a short film in Hungary. He received another 6,000 Euros from the state and the film studio.

Dorka Gáspárfalvi and Dorottya Hais played the first major roles in the film. They were selected from eighty other candidates. The choir was selected from five school choirs. The film itself was shot in six days. Subsequent post-production work lasted one year. The film was completed in the autumn of 2015.

4. How has the education system in Hungary changed since the 1990s when the film takes place?

After the coup in 1989–1990, the gradual liberalization of Hungary's education system began. At the lower and middle levels, alternative schools began to appear, and school principals and the curriculum could now be freely elected. At the same time, higher education gained full autonomy after Hungary joined the so-called Bologna Process. However, since 2010, with the advent of the ruling Fidesz party, centralization tendencies have reappeared in education. Individual measures of educational reform were gradually being abolished, alternative education and study materials were being pushed to the margins of the educational spectrum. The upper age limit for compulsory school attendance has been reduced to 16 years, the operation of universities is supervised by the state and state subsidies for schools are lower from year to year. The capacities of Hungarian grammar schools have been reduced by almost half compared to the previous year, in favor of secondary vocational schools.

5. What does someone have to do to get into a prestigious choir?

The conditions for admission to a prestigious choir are usually determined by the choirmaster, who prepares talent rehearsals. He must first consider what he will test and in what way and to what extent the individual candidates must meet the given criteria. Key criteria include: 1. natural liking of the voice (the voice cannot be flashy so as not to disturb the sound of the whole choir), 2. pure intonation (correct use of tone in terms of pitch and performance), 3. vocal range (based on inclusion in the relevant vocal groups - e.g. male tenor or female alto), 4. musical memory (ability to easily learn a certain melody and rhythm), 5. ability to sing directly from music notation. The choir singer is expected not only to have a well-mastered singing technique, but also to be able to live well together in the choir and to be responsible towards the choir.

6. What does someone have to do to get into a prestigious choir?

In the choir, working with more and less talented children is practically the same. Only the learning process is different here. With more talented singers, work goes faster. However, it happens that sometimes a less gifted child is more hardworking and catches up with less talent with more effort and better preparation. In the choir, it is important to give all children a chance, and if someone is not completely good, say it in front of everyone kindly, sensitively, and give the child a different task in a particular composition. In general, it is important for all children in the choir to be enthusiastic about singing and to awaken them to perform well, to be patient and to have understanding. The role of the choirmaster is crucial in this regard. It determines not only the repertoire, but also chooses a certain approach to children.

Resources

Interview with director Kristóf Deák

<https://viewofhearts.com/2017/01/18/in-conversation-with-kristof-deak/>