Issues: Specialised Settings

Ferrell, K (2007) Issues in the Field of Blindness and Low-Vision <http://nclid.unco.edu/joomla> Retrieved July 2011

Based on beliefs that blind people should be cared for by and able to contribute to society, specialized schools for the blind were created during the early 19th century to provide access to quality education in ways that supported blind students to succeed in life and employment as “contributing members of society” (Ferrell 2007:1).

When examining the social and historical context of the beginning of specialized schools for the blind it is important to note that schooling was not yet compulsory for children and was not viewed as a social and political goal. Therefore specialized schools for the blind were viewed as a means to support capable children to become contributing members of society. There was not intent to keep the blind segregated but to provide access to society. Blind students when possible attended local schools but resided at the blind school. Residence in a specialized setting supported mainstreaming and inclusion at local schools prior to the creation of Education Acts supporting mainstreaming.