

2.9. Educational counselling services

The 1990 Organic Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE) includes educational and vocational counselling among the factors enhancing the quality of education. The Act mandates the Autonomous Communities to create specialised services in educational, psychopedagogical and vocational counselling to attend educational establishments within the General Plan. The goal therein is to guarantee academic, psychopedagogical and vocational counselling for pupils. Counselling is the right of pupils and calls for the setting up of specialised services.

The organisational levels of the counselling system follow a simple hierarchical plan, starting from the more general order up to a more concrete and specific one. In any case, it is incumbent upon all teachers to carry out counselling in education, notwithstanding the fact that tutorial and counselling activities *per se* are the responsibility of one sole teacher for each set group of pupils. The latter teacher will in turn work in co-ordination with and receive support and advice from the other specialised services.

The general framework within which educational counselling is to be carried out is built around the three levels which give structure to school organisation: the classroom or group of pupils; the school or education establishment; and the educational system, which is specified in the drawing up of districts or sectors.

The first level, counselling in the classroom, is carried out by form teachers. Each group of students is to have one of form teacher.

The second level, that of the education establishment, signifies the setting up of Guidance Departments in schools, or at least ensuring the presence of a counsellor. Putting this service into practice responds to the possible need for a specialised qualification in order to carry out some counselling activities. Among the functions of the Departments are to structure, plan, support and co-ordinate the tutorial role.

The third level of counselling, the sector counselling teams, are to attend: requests for assistance and technical advice from the teaching staff itself; counselling for pupils in the transition from one stage or school to another; and for psychopedagogical intervention in the case of very complex and specific learning problems and difficulties.

The organisation throughout the entire State is based on this triple structure, with slight variations in the various Autonomous Communities.

Support services have been set up throughout the entire State territory for education establishments and educational and psychopedagogical teams. These services are organised by sectors and receive different names in each Autonomous Community. Moreover, many Autonomous Communities have set up other specialised and specific teams in addition to the zone counselling teams. These further teams would have a different geographical sphere for counselling and educational attention for the student body with disabilities and specific dysfunctions.

The sphere of actions for counselling teams is generally constituted by all the centres providing non-university level education which are located in the assigned area of each of them. Their makeup is multi-disciplinary and greatly similar throughout the entire State. They are generally composed of psychologists, pedagogues, Maestros[™] and social workers. The roles and powers attributed to them follow similar lines. Their functions could be summarised as follows: to advise centres and teachers of the zone regarding the curricular design and to participate in its development, especially in matters concerning psychopedagogy, guidance and attention to diversity; to carry out the psychopedagogical evaluation of pupils requiring it, as well as providing proposals, advice and programming for the most suitable educational response in each case; to collaborate with teachers' centres, other educational institutions,

social and health services within their sphere of influence; and to give advice and guidance to the student body and family members.

The 2002 Organic Act on the Quality of Education gives special importance to educational and professional counselling. It stipulates the right to it as one of the basic pupils' rights. Likewise, it is also included in the teachers' permanent training programmes, and for the improvement of the quality of teaching and the operation of educational establishments.