

**EXPERIENCE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION
IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

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Abstract

Education has always been a special function of the society and the state, aimed at the formation and development of socially significant qualities of each person as a society member and a citizen of the country. The society's consciousness formation is influenced through education, and the processes of conscious self-development of citizens are regulated. As a social and cultural phenomenon, education is the humanity attribute, its integral supporter in the progressive movement of evolutionary development.

The European system of general secondary education with its variety of types and diversity of educational institutions, in particular those that take care of the education of children with special needs, is a key element of the modern European model of the social system, which is attractive to countries with a post-totalitarian regime (including Ukraine) in view of the tasks, goals and prospects of solving urgent problems of a social and pedagogical nature.

Starting from the '70s there were changes in the system of special education in advanced European countries, and as a result, integrated and inclusive education of children with developmental disabilities was defined as the main form of their education.

The article identifies the conceptual and terminological field of inclusive education; the trends and problems of the inclusive education formation in some European countries are highlighted, in particular, it is about the state policy of supporting inclusive education in Italy, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Keywords: *children with special educational needs, education of children, European countries, inclusive education, inclusive training.*

Introduction

According to the law, every person has the right to define and exercise his/her social rights. The Malta Declaration, which was adopted at the Conference on Access to Social Rights in 2002, calls on governments and leading forces in society to develop and strengthen policies that promote access to social rights.

Social rights are one of the main concepts based on which the new Europe was built in the 20th century. However, some of the rights defined by the European Convention and the European Social Charter, including the right to education, are still inaccessible to many people with disabilities.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe declared in 2003 that "the main goal for the next decade is to improve the life quality of people with disabilities and their families, while special importance should be attached to their integration and full participation in public life" (Malaga Declaration, 2003).

That is why, in our opinion, it is relevant to study the experience of inclusive education implementation in other countries, the main problems and obstacles faced by people with disabilities in accessing social rights, and primarily, it concerns access to quality education. We will focus our research on the study for the implementation of the inclusive component in the education system in some European countries.

Inclusive education (inclusion means involvement) is a system of educational services based on the principle of preserving the basic right of children to education and the right to obtain it at the place of residence.

Inclusive education is a complex process that ensures equal access to quality education for children with special educational needs (SEN) by organizing their training in educational institutions based on the application of personally oriented teaching methods, taking into account the individual characteristics of the educational and cognitive activities of such students.

Training (if necessary) is held according to an individual curriculum, provided with medical and social and psychological and pedagogical support.

Inclusive education is based on the principle of ensuring children's basic right to education and the right to study at their place of residence.

Basic principles of inclusive education:

1. all children should study together in all cases where this is a possibility, regardless of certain difficulties or differences existing between them;
2. educational institutions should recognize and take into account the diverse needs of their students, coordinating different types and paces in learning;
3. provision of quality education for all due to appropriate educational and methodological support, organizational measures application, teaching strategy development, resources usage and partnership relations with their communities;
4. children with special educational needs should receive additional assistance, they may need to ensure the success during the learning process.

The concept of inclusive education reflects one of the main democratic ideas that is all children are valuable and active members of a society. Studying in inclusive educational institutions is beneficial both for children with special educational needs and for other children, family members and society as a whole.

Integrated and inclusive education in Italy

Italy occupies a prominent place among European countries in implementing the ideas of integrated and inclusive education, because this country was one of the first to recognize integrated and inclusive education as the most acceptable form of education for children with special needs. According to Paolo Tortora, director of the Department of National Studies in the Field of Educational Innovations in Italy, "Italy has become a laboratory for the whole world, because it is Latin culture that is oriented towards recognizing the autonomy and dignity of every person" (Leshchinska, 1998).

Thanks to the active public pressure, in 1971 in Italy a new "Law on Education" was adopted, which at the legislative level established the right of parents of children with special needs to choose an educational institution, defined the status of mass schools, where all children with developmental problems study, as well as provided state support for the education of children with special psychophysical development; "the law approved the changes that occurred in life, as the time required it" (Banathy, Bela, 1998).

Moreover, the public association "Democratic Psychiatry" initiated an educational reform (1972). According to the deep conviction of this social movement participants, the emergence of mental disorders (in many cases) can be provoked by society, school, including special educational institutions. That is why this public movement has chosen as its goal the

introduction of progressive changes in psychiatric treatment institutions, the maximum isolation elimination and mentally disturbed persons isolation who have become "prisoners" of isolated institutions. Such a goal could be realized by initiating changes and, first of all, introducing a school reform that would enable children with special needs to feel like full members of society.

In 1977, amendments to the "Law on Education" were developed, which determined that children with special needs have the right to attend schools close to home and study in classes with their peers. The number of classes in schools cannot exceed 20 students - and no more than 2 children with disabilities can study in such a class; special classes in mass schools are cancelled; schoolchildren with special educational needs should be provided with qualified support from educators and multidisciplinary specialists who work with them according to agreed programs; special educators should work together with teachers in classes including combined education.

In the updated "Law on Education" of 1992, in the section dealing with the education of children with special needs, among the priorities is the work on the interaction of schools with institutions of various subordinates with the aim of providing comprehensive assistance to schoolchildren with special educational needs by specialists of various fields who must work in concert and in close contact; parents' involvement in the process of teaching children with special needs, etc.

The data provided by the well-known Italian researcher Banathy B. (Banathy, Bela, 1998) prove that today in the country more than 90% of children with special psychophysical development receive their education in general (mass) type institutions. The educational departments of the country's provinces have special advisory services, which include specialists in various fields, schools' administrators, education departments, public organizations representatives, etc., and if necessary, the health care services representatives are involved. Employees of these services organize inclusive education, diagnosing children and determining their needs, providing advisory and teaching and methodical assistance to teachers and school administration. In mass municipal institutions, both in preschools and in schools, teacher's assistants work to provide assistance to schoolchildren with limited health opportunities and, together with the class teacher, are responsible for the success of students with special needs. Teacher's assistants, together with the teacher, draw up individual training plans for each student with psychophysical development characteristics, taking into account his/her

educational needs, including correctional and rehabilitation assistance, which in some cases is provided outside the school in medical and social rehabilitation centres.

Psychological, medical and social centres (Belgian experience)

Belgium has an interesting experience in teaching children with psychophysical developmental disabilities. In this country, the legal basis for the education of persons with disabilities is the "Law on Special Education", adopted in 1970. Substantial changes were made to it by the Government Decree of July 28, 1978. The law defines the basic provisions for obtaining education for children with special needs in light of the education system general reform, including the right of parents to choose an educational institution for their child. As Belgian scientists in the field of special education W. Weiss and W. Werdajk point out, the ways of obtaining education for the disabled have been determined in Belgium for a long time (Weiss, 1981). Back in 1960, the "Law on Education" determined the need to create psychological, medical and social support services that would solve the problems of choosing an educational route for children with special psychophysical development. It is these services that determine the child's future stay in special institutions, where 4% of all school-age children receive their education. There are eight types of special institutions in Belgium i.e. for children with a mild mental retardation, with medium and severe, with emotional and volitional disorders and behavioural disorders, with physical disorders, with visual and hearing impairments, with somatic diseases and with learning difficulties.

After children with developmental disorders undergo a thorough psychological-medical-social-pedagogical examination, taking place in PMS-centres, a general conclusion is drawn up and recommendations are made regarding the child's future education. The child's parents (guardians) take an active part in discussing the results and making the final decision concerning the choice of an educational institution.

Legislative educational acts of Belgium provide for a certain freedom in the organization of municipal educational institutions, the financial support of which is held at the local self-government bodies expense; public educational institutions maintained by public funds; private institutions, where the financial maintenance is undertaken by private individuals and public organizations, including religious ones.

The Belgian "Law on Special Education" legislated the removal of barriers between special and general education systems, providing for experimentally tested co-education models of children with special educational needs together with their peers.

The law provides for free compulsory education of children with special psychophysical development (aged from 6 to 18) for a period of 12 years, although it can be extended under certain circumstances; geographical accessibility and availability of all types of special schools in each district of the country.

When providing a child with developmental disabilities the opportunity to study in an integrated manner, all participants in this process conclude an agreement and develop an individual educational plan. This plan consists of a detailed description of the child's characteristics and needs, as well as a definition of the additional help he/she should receive (including who will provide it, how often and where exactly).

Equality in obtaining an education (experience of Austria)

The experience of another European state as Austria it seems to us to be useful. In this country, a well-established system of special education functioned, which included special schools for children with visual and hearing impairments, musculoskeletal disorders, intellectual disabilities, emotional-volitional disorders, and complex developmental disorders. As noted by H. Walker, a well-known Austrian scientist in this field, from the end of the 40s to the beginning of the 80s of the 20th century, this system became increasingly differentiated and segregated (Walker, 1995). However, already in the 80s, public organizations had appeared, which included parents of children with special needs, teachers, employees of various medical and educational institutions, which were guided by the equality ideas, in particular, in obtaining an education. These public organizations arose spontaneously in different provinces, but in 1983 they united into a single community and turned to the Ministry of Education with proposals for an experiment in the integrated education of children with special psychophysical development. The Ministry of Education of Austria supported this idea, allocated funds and created a working group to conduct these experimental studies. The composition of this group included scientists who worked in the field of mass and special education, administrators and teachers of public and special schools, specialists of services to help children with developmental disorders, and public organizations representatives from among parents. The developed experimental program involved testing four models of integrated learning, in particular:

1. Integrated classes. There were 20 students in the class, four of whom had special educational needs. The training was conducted by two teachers, one of whom was a special

school teacher. For children with developmental disabilities, an individual educational program was developed, which provided for the provision of psychological and pedagogical assistance.

2. Interaction classes. Pupils from a special school and their peers from a public school must participate in joint activities, communicate during extracurricular work, but spend the entire educational time separately.

3. Small classes provided for the presence of a special class in a public school consisting of 6 to 11 students. Mostly, these classes consisted of students with a delay in the cognitive process development. The education of such students took place according to the program of a mass primary 4-year school, but the term of education was extended to 6 years.

4. Regular classes in which students with special educational needs, their parents and teachers receive help from specially trained school counsellors.

In 1991, the Austrian Centre for Experimental Education and School Development conducted an evaluation of all four experimental models. According to experts, integrated classes have become the most effective model.

One of the consequences of conducting a research experiment of state importance was the adoption by Austria of the "Law on Education" in 1993, which legally recognized the right of parents to choose an educational institution for their child and regulated the functioning of special and inclusive institutions. Today, only children with significant hearing, vision, and intellectual disabilities study in special institutions.

There are special education centres in the Austrian education system, which are responsible for the education of children with special needs in public general education institutions and coordinate the work of all specialists involved in this process. Specialists of these centres diagnose children, consult teachers, provide educational and methodical assistance to special teachers and parents of students with developmental disabilities, conduct seminars and trainings on professional development, cooperate with local administrative services, medical centres, etc.

Educational reform (experience of the Netherlands)

The United Kingdom of the Netherlands also made its way through radical reforms. This country is distinguished from other European countries by the peculiarity of the development of the special education system. Its progress is characterized by the logic of construction and the absence of untested training options.

At the end of the 40s of the XX century in the Netherlands, there was a significant increase in the number of special institutions, the number of children in the special education system, and an increase in the types of special schools. Data provided by the well-known Dutch specialist in the field of special education K. Raijswaik indicate that in 1948 there were 7 types of special kinds for specialized schools; in 1997, their number doubled (Salaman Declaration, 2000). The number of students who needed additional educational services and had special educational needs in the period from 1948 to 1997 increased in five times (from 24,000 in 1948 to 120,000 in 1997). A large group of children singled out who did not have significant developmental disorders and, subject to the provision of appropriate assistance was provided, could receive an education in general educational institutions.

Researches by Dutch scientists show that by the 60s of the XX century, the country's educational policy was aimed at supporting children with special psychophysical development only in special schools. This unilateral orientation supported the division of the educational system into general schools with a lack of adequate support for children with developmental disabilities, on the one hand, and special schools for these children, on the other. Scientists note that this division led to the emergence of a number of problems, in particular, public schools to some extent took no responsibility for children with special educational needs, believing that their place is in special institutions; a certain part of public-school students, who did not have noticeable psychophysical changes, also needed special conditions and help.

In 1991, the Dutch government approved the "Internal Support" educational project for the creation and operation of relevant school services. This project was aimed at solving the problems of children with developmental disabilities who were in general educational institutions. It stated that the school should clearly define the children need psychological and pedagogical support, how it will be provided, who will be responsible for its implementation, how parents will be involved, how corrective work will be planned and carried out, how the evaluation of students' educational achievements will be carried out, determining the level of their life skills, etc. The first four-year work experience testified that 93% of secondary school teachers supported the functioning of internal assistance services and indicated the need to introduce the position of correctional work coordinator (Shapiro & Lentz, 1988).

In 1994, the Ministry of Education of the Netherlands launched the national project "Step by step to school" ("Weer Samen Naar School"), its strategic plans consisted of the general and special education systems convergence, which was supposed to go through several stages. This law certified that all public and special schools for children with mild mental

retardation and learning difficulties should cooperate in providing quality education to students with special educational needs. The adopted law ensured the improvement of the conditions for the education of students with developmental disabilities in secondary schools based on the introduction of changes in the system of financing their education.

Currently, special institutions for children with severe speech, vision, hearing, musculoskeletal disorders, chronic diseases, mild and severe mental retardation, behavioural disorders, learning problems, and complex defects are functioning in the special education system in the Netherlands. 70% of the total number of pupils in the special education system are children with mental retardation and learning difficulties.

The Dutch education system underwent a fundamental reform, which enabled the parallel and full functioning of different types of educational institutions (special and general education) in a single system.

The Swedish model of inclusive education

The experience of inclusive education of children with special psychophysical development in Sweden worth our attention. So, in particular, in this country with a democratic system that has ratified all international agreements on education for the disabled, in 1980 the Ministry of Education approved a legal document called the Educational Plan, which defined the strategic direction of the state's educational policy. Pupils with special psychophysical development were given the opportunity to study in general educational institutions, having created appropriate conditions for this. Thus, since 1986, special schools for children with visual impairments have been disbanded in the country. All children with impaired vision study in schools at their place of residence, and receive the necessary help at the National Medical Centre and its branches.

In 1989, a new "Law on Secondary Education" was adopted, in which inclusive education is defined as the main form of education for the disabled. Having significantly increased the funding of secondary schools where students with developmental disabilities studied, the government supported legislative initiatives. During this period, a new educational standard was approved, which determined the obligatory knowledge for students who completed the 5th and 9th grades. This enabled teachers to work with students with special educational needs according to individual educational plans, developed taking into account their capabilities and needs.

It is worth noting that since 1995, only four types of special schools have been operating in the country for children with moderate mental retardation, with mild mental retardation, with learning difficulties, and for children with complex disabilities. Modern trends in Swedish education determine the course for the complete dissolution of special schools and the resource centres creation on their basis.

The Swedish Agency for Special Education, subordinate to the country's Ministry of Education, is responsible for providing support to families of children with special needs and educational institutions where they study. This agency advisors take care of children with special educational needs, helping municipal authorities to provide all the conditions for the education of such schoolchildren, taking into account the training courses for teachers and teacher's assistants, parents and all specialists involved in this process.

Psychological and pedagogical support variability (experience of Germany)

It should be noted that a similar reform of the educational sector took place in Germany, where in the early 1970s, thanks to the activities of the public parent organization "Life Help", the Ministry of Education, Religion and Culture adopted normative legal acts certifying that every child with disabilities has the right to choose an educational institution, must be provided with psychological and pedagogical support, be involved in the pedagogical process, regardless of the disease complexity degree.

The "Recommendations on the organization of special education", adopted in 1972, became the fundamental educational document regarding the organization of joint education of children with developmental disorders and their healthy peers for all regions of the country. This document made it possible to develop "cooperative forms" organizing the educational activities of general and special schools, which provide for the joint holding of mass events, educational classes, visits by students with special needs to general educational institutions and the provision of correctional and rehabilitation services to them in a specialized institution, etc.

In addition to the centres, students with special needs are supported by services that operate outside schools and are financed by local self-government bodies i.e. medical and social services, resource centres, rehabilitation institutions, etc. Currently, in parallel with the system of special educational institutions where are children with complex disabilities, institutions of inclusive education are functioning in Germany.

General conclusions

Therefore, the analysis of the learning experience of children with special psychophysical development in European countries proves that in the vast majority the reformation of special education has taken place, although with minor differences. In European countries, there are special institutions and they provide assistance to children with limited health opportunities, but they are not segregated centres (that is, those that separate people with special needs from society). The "borders" between special and general education are transparent, as democratic countries promote the values of civil society based on the ideas of equality, tolerance and inclusion.

Among the prospects for further research, we perceive the study on the issue of inclusion in the educational system of other European countries.

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