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FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DOCTORAL SCHOOL "EDUCATION, REFLECTION, DEVELOPMENT"

EXTENDED SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

**Developing teachers' skills for inclusive, quality education, through
the development and implementation of educational projects**

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df = degrees of freedom

M = mean

MD = median

MR = mean of ranks

n = number of cases

NR – no response

p = statistical significance

rs = Spearman correlation coefficient

U = is the Mann-Whitney test value based on ranks

VIF - variance inflation factor, measures collinearity between predictors

Z = standardized value

α = Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

β - standardized regression coefficient

PART I: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1.1. Conceptualizing inclusive education

The relevance of this research is supported by the increasing need for professionalization of teachers in the field of inclusive education, in a context in which the school is called upon to respond to the increasing diversity among students. Given that educational policies promote inclusion, it is essential that teachers be supported not only through general theoretical training, but also through personalized interventions, adapted to their own professional development needs.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of a continuous professional training program and individualized mentoring (1:1) on the development of writing skills and implementation of inclusive educational projects. The present research aims to analyze the impact of the training program "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" on the self-efficacy of teachers in working with students with special educational needs (SES). This program, carried out during the period 19.10.2024 - 15.01.2025. Information regarding the training program can be found in Annex no. 1 regarding the planning of the activity by modules and Annex no. 2 with the identity sheet of the training program.

The proposed research responds to this need, investigating to what extent such an approach can contribute to strengthening the skills of designing and implementing inclusive educational activities - a priority direction in contemporary education.

Chapter 1 of the Thesis provides a theoretical foundation for the concept of inclusive education, tracing the evolution of educational ideas from special education to full inclusion in mainstream school. In a context in which contemporary schools are called upon to respond to the increasingly diverse nature of students, continuous teacher training is necessary in order to overcome this aspect.

Inclusive education is presented as a process that involves transforming the educational system to meet the needs of all students, not just those with disabilities. This educational model values diversity and equity, being based on the rights of the child and the social imperatives of

participation and non-discrimination (UNESCO, 1994; Walker, 1995 apud Gherguț, 2016; Armstrong, 2003).

Fundamental notions such as disability, special educational needs (SEN) and inclusion are conceptually delimited. A chronological analysis of the evolution from special education – based on separation and recovery – to integrated education – which involves adapting the child to the regular school, and finally, to inclusive education – which requires adapting the school to the child (Vrăsmaș, 2001; Verza, 1998; Loreman and Deppler, 2002) was carried out.

In recent decades, the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools has become a priority, involving changes in educational policy, the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of values such as tolerance, respect and acceptance of diversity. The implementation of these principles requires open and inclusive communities (Watson, 2009), specialists to support children with special educational needs and adequate services.

One contribution is the analysis of the historical and legislative context, both at the international level (e.g. Salamanca Declaration, 1994; UN Convention, 2006; Inclusion Index – Booth & Ainscow, 2016) and national level, by detailing the regulations and strategies adopted in Romania (Law no. 1/2011 and Law no. 198/2023).

In addition, inclusive educational practices from other European countries such as Italy, Portugal and France are also presented, highlighting the importance of resource centers and support teachers. At the national level, there is a slow but constant evolution of the legislative and institutional framework, supported by organizations such as RENINCO or GREI. However, practical implementation is still deficient due to systemic barriers and insufficient training of teaching staff (Hoară, 2020; Horga & Jigău, 2009). Inclusive education cannot be achieved through legislative regulations alone, but involves a profound change in educational mindset and practices (Vrăsmaș & Vrăsmaș, 2021; Stainback et al., 1998).

Education must respond to the special needs of students with learning disabilities, attention disorders or high abilities. They have various difficulties – learning, emotional or social – and require adapted methods to reach their potential.

1.2. Inclusion Psycho-pedagogy and School Adaptation

Adaptation can be understood as a process through which the individual constantly regulates his/her relationship with the environment, alternating between integrating new information and

adjusting his/her own mental structure. This flexibility allows individuals to maintain a functional balance with the reality that surrounds them (Bonchiș, 2009). The individual's adaptation manifests itself in neurophysiological, psychobiological and social terms, having the role of ensuring survival under certain given conditions (Negovan, 2006).

In pedagogy, school adaptation is viewed in an institutional context. The child's adaptation involves a transformation process through which he/she becomes prepared for the requirements of the school, capable of responding to the instructional-educational demands and compatible, from a bio-psycho-social point of view (Coașan and Vasilescu, 1988). Thus, inclusion psycho-pedagogy provides the theoretical and methodological foundations for school adaptation. Definitions of school adaptation highlight a process and not an isolated moment, having a complex, dynamic and evolutionary character (Păunescu & Mușu, 1997; Cristea, 1998; Negovan, 2006).

School adaptation is constantly presented as an integral part of social adaptation, assuming the correlation between the student and the educational environment (Rudică, 1998; Negovan, 2006). Another common element is the fact that school adaptation involves the student's response to the requirements of the educational process, including the acquisition of norms, rules and curricular content (Coașan & Vasilescu, 1988; Cristea, 1998; Negovan, 2006). In this context, the child with a disability often faces additional challenges, since the school adaptation process involves not only adjusting to academic requirements, but also integrating into a new social framework that is often insufficiently prepared to respond adequately.

In recent decades, the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools has become a priority, involving changes in educational policy, the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of values such as tolerance, respect and acceptance of diversity. The implementation of these principles requires open and inclusive communities (Watson, 2009), specialists to support children with special educational needs and appropriate services. Research highlights the importance of teachers accepting universal access to the curriculum (Crockett, 2011; Shepherd and Hasazi, 2008).

The adaptation process is not without obstacles. The school environment can generate numerous stressful situations that affect the emotional and behavioral balance of students. Factors such as the transition from independence to dependence, the phenomena of intimidation or isolation, the confrontation between cooperation and competition, lifestyle changes (change of school, residence, personal habits), as well as pressures related to assessment or the need to learn at the

expense of enjoyable activities, can negatively influence the adaptation of the student (Atkinson et al., 2002). Thus, the psycho-pedagogy of inclusion aims at integrating and supporting each student in an equitable and accessible educational environment, and school adaptation involves adjusting the educational context to individual needs.

1.3.Modern Strategies for School Adaptation

This doctoral thesis presents three modern strategies for supporting inclusive education: Universal Design for Learning (UDL), blended learning, and the adaptation of New Public Management (NPM) to education.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – a concept originating in architecture (Connel, 1997), adapted to education to create environments accessible to all. It is based on accessibility, ease of use, and user satisfaction (Nielsen, 1993), rejects the idea of the “average learner” (Meyer et al., 2014), and promotes a flexible curriculum. It includes guidelines such as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and DECAL, which capitalize on the experiences, culture, abilities, and language of each child. The classroom space is organized to support communication, autonomy, and the reduction of barriers (Novak and Tucker, 2021).

Blended learning – defined by Staker and Horn (2012) as a harmonious integration between online and offline activities, providing autonomy to students. The “unstoppable learning” model (Fisher and Frey, 2015) proposes the coordination of seven components (planning, launching, consolidating, evaluating, adapting, managing, leading) and the adoption of the Support Triangle (Castagnera et al., 2003) – personal supports, curricular adaptations and educational technologies (Zapata and Brooks, 2017).

Adapting the New Public Management (NPM) to education – derived from the reforms of the 1980s (Hood, 1991), promoted through decentralization, efficiency and local accountability (Tolofari, 2005), but criticized for bureaucratization, inequalities and elite orientation. In education, NPM has changed the role of the principal to a managerial one (Kowalczyk and Jakubczak, 2014) and has influenced European reforms (Gunter et al., 2016). Studies show that without integrating the principles of social inclusion, the exclusive focus on efficiency can amplify inequalities (Hovdhaugen and Haug, 2016).

CHAPTER 2. QUALITY IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the relationship between the quality of inclusive education and the professional competences of teachers, in an educational context in transition from a traditional model to one centered on the student and lifelong learning. The new paradigm of education emphasizes the active role of the student and the transformation of the teacher into a facilitator of learning, in a framework that values initiative, personalization and learning in various contexts (Vlăsceanu et al., 2002).

Quality in education is analyzed both from the perspective of educational standards and the educational process as a whole. A vision is outlined that proposes criteria of equity, accessibility and individual progress (Albulescu & Catalano, 2020; Iosifescu, 2007). ISO standards (9000 and 8402) are applied to education, emphasizing the need for effective quality management and the involvement of all stakeholders, including through institutional self-evaluation and external evaluations (European Parliament & Council of the EU, 2001; UNESCO, 2004).

The analysis of the quality of national education takes place through the ARACIS and ARACIP institutions, established by GEO 75/2005 and Law 198/2023, respectively, which introduced authorization, accreditation and reference standards in the evaluation of educational institutions (Government of Romania, 2005b, 2008, 2022). These standards include indicators dedicated to vulnerable categories and students with SEN.

A major point of interest is the section dedicated to the professional competences of teachers, which argues that lifelong learning is essential for personal and professional development in a constantly changing educational context (Bârna, 1995; Păun, 2002). The role of the teacher is being redefined, including multiple functions: trainer, counselor, researcher, evaluator and active member of the community (Condor et al., 2017; Molan, 2007). Competencies are classified into several categories: moral, professional-scientific, psycho-pedagogical and psychosocial (Marcus, 1999; Jinga & Istrate, 1998).

Naturally, the development of these professional competences is directly correlated with the need to create an inclusive educational environment, in which the diversity of students, especially those with SEN, is managed effectively. It is stated that the inclusive school must be accessible and adaptable for all students, especially those with SEN, and educational actors (teachers, parents,

decision-makers) must collaborate in support of a tolerant and equitable educational climate (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2021). An important role is played by the individualized educational program (IEP), which defines the necessary interventions for students with disabilities, including related services such as occupational therapy, counseling or social assistance (Bateman & Cline, 2016). Curricular adaptation and differentiated teaching are the tools of effective inclusive education. The curriculum must be flexible, accessible, relevant and allow the personalization of the educational process according to the needs of each student (Bocoș & Jucan, 2008; Vrăsmaș & Vrăsmaș, 2001). The final conclusion of the chapter is that continuous staff training conditions the functioning of a modern inclusive school.

The national legislative and strategic framework in Romania supports adult continuing education through regulations that promote equitable access, the development of key competences and social inclusion. The relevant normative acts define the modalities of training, assessment and certification of competences, and the methodology regarding the quality of teacher professional development programs structures educational interventions into three categories. In this context, the “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” program aligns with these policies, being the only training offer focused on inclusive education at the Bihor Teaching Staff House for the 2024–2025 school year.

PART II: PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH: TESTING THE EFFICIENCY OF A CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM BASED ON PROJECT WRITING AND MENTORING ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Research Stages

The research was structured on two complementary methodological components – one qualitative and one quantitative, with a mixed, quasi-experimental design, with parallel groups and longitudinal intervention. The data obtained have primary sources, coming from the subjects involved in the case of qualitative research from parents, teachers and school principals, and in the case of quantitative research from teachers. The research was conducted according to the following stages:

- **pre-test (T1)** – aimed at the initial assessment of design and implementation skills, self-efficacy, attitudes towards inclusion, as well as the number of projects written and implemented, in the case of both groups – those who enrolled in the training course (experimental group) and those who did not participate in such a course (control group);
- **intervention** – applied exclusively to the experimental group, consisted of participating in a training course, followed by individual mentoring sessions (1:1) with experts in inclusive educational projects;
- **immediate post-test (T2)** – aimed at re-evaluating the same variables in the experimental group, immediately after completing the program;
- **qualitative data collection** – was carried out through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and documentary analysis of examples of good practices regarding educational projects.

3.2. Research objectives and directions

The formulated objectives derive from the applied orientation of the scientific approach and aim to evaluate both the direct effects of the intervention on the professional skills of teachers and

the role of psychosocial factors (such as self-efficacy or attitudes towards inclusion) in mediating this process.

O1: Analyzing the attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusive education in mainstream schools, in order to identify the factors that influence the acceptance and implementation of school inclusion.

O2: Evaluating the effectiveness of the training and mentoring program on design skills in different evaluation stages.

O3: Investigating the role of self-efficacy as a mediating variable between participation in the continuous professional training program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational projects for an inclusive school" and improving design skills.

O4: Analysis of the influence of attitudes towards inclusion (cognitive, affective, behavioral) as mediating factors in the relationship between the intervention and design skills.

O5: Determination of the differences between the experimental group and the control group in terms of the number of projects written and implemented in the field of inclusive education.

O6: Testing the capacity of the mediation model (including self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion) to explain the influences of the intervention on the development of design and implementation skills, in relation to a model without mediating variables.

O7: Evaluation of the real impact of the continuing professional training program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled "Educational projects for an inclusive school", on attitudes towards inclusion and their applicability in educational projects.

O8: Exploring how modern school adaptation strategies are reflected in the educational practices of teachers in Bihor County, in the context of promoting inclusive education.

A first research direction aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational intervention over time, by comparing the professional performances declared between the experimental and control groups at two distinct moments: before and after completing the training.

The second direction aims to investigate the psychosocial mechanisms that can mediate the effect of the intervention, by analyzing the role of self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion in the process of training design and implementation skills.

The third direction focuses on validating the applicability of the acquired skills, by quantifying the projects actually drafted and implemented by the participants, as indicators of the practical implementation of theoretical training.

3.3. Research questions and hypotheses

Q1. What is the attitude of parents and teachers towards inclusive education in mainstream schools in Bihor?

Q2. What is the impact of the continuing professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School”, compared to the control group and immediately after the intervention?

Q3. How does self-efficacy mediate the relationship between program participation and skills development?

Q4. To what extent do attitudes towards inclusion mediate the effects of the continuing professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” on design skills?

Q5. What role does the number of projects written/implemented play in assessing the impact of the continuing professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” on the applicability of acquired skills?

Q6. How does the proposed mediation model describe the relationships between the intervention, mediating variables and skills outcomes?

Q7. What is the real impact of the continuing professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” in which teachers participated?

Q8. To what extent can modern school adaptation strategies be captured in Bihor’s educational practices?

H1. Teachers' participation in the professional training program *"Educational Projects for an Inclusive School"* is significantly associated with their socio-demographic and professional characteristics, such as background, gender, age, length of service in education, level of education, teaching degree, occupational status, teaching level, presence of students with SEN in the classroom and previous experience in working with them.

Independent variable (VI):

- Participation in the continuous professional training program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" (nominal, dichotomous: participated/did not participate).

Dependent variables (VD):

- socio-demographic:
 - Background – nominal (urban / rural);
 - Gender of the respondent – nominal (male / female);
 - Age – ordinal (categories: 18–25, 26–35, 36–45 etc.);
- professional:
 - Length of teaching experience – ordinal (under 4 years, 5–9 years, 10–14 years, etc.);
 - Level of education – ordinal (high school, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate);
 - Teaching degree – ordinal (beginner, permanent, grade II, grade I);
 - Occupational status – nominal (tenured, qualified substitute, unqualified, fixed-term contract, seconded);
 - Teaching level – nominal (preschool, primary, middle school, high school, special education)
 - Presence of students with SEN in the classroom – nominal (yes / no);
 - Experience in working with students with SEN – ordinal (under 1 year, <1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, over 10 years).

H2. Participation in the continuing professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled: *"Educational Projects for an Inclusive School"* will lead to a significant improvement in the skills of writing and implementing inclusive educational projects in the experimental group, compared to the control group, and this relationship will be mediated by the level of self-efficacy and attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in the mainstream education system.

Independent variable (VI):

- Participation in the continuing professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School"

(categorical, with two levels: experimental group - participants and control group - non-participants);

- determining the Cohen's d coefficient to assess the magnitude of the effect that participation in the continuing professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" has on the level of teachers' professional competencies.

Dependent variable (VD):

- Global professional competencies score, continuous (for mediation model 4 applied according to the Hayes procedure).

Mediating variables (VM, intervene in the relationship between VI and VD):

- Teachers' self-efficacy (continuous), assessed by scores on the TSES (Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale) scale;
- Attitudes towards inclusion (continuous), assessed by scores on the MATIES (Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale) scale.

H3. The experimental group will register significant improvements in design and implementation skills compared to the control group at post-intervention.

Independent variable (VI):

- Type of group (categorical), with two levels:
 - Experimental group (intervention participants);
 - Control group (non-participants).

Dependent variable (VD):

- Design and implementation skills for inclusive educational projects
- continuous, measured by post-intervention scores:
 - analysis and planning;
 - writing and development;
 - implementation and management;
 - monitoring, evaluation and reporting;
 - sustainability and dissemination.

3.4. Survey methods

To assess the impact of the training program on inclusive education competencies, two complementary methods were used: qualitative survey, through semi-structured interviews, and quantitative survey, through the application of a questionnaire. The interviews provided data on the individual perceptions and experiences of teachers and parents, while the questionnaire allowed for the comparative measurement of teachers' competencies, attitudes and sense of self-efficacy.

3.4.1. Interviews conducted with two categories of participants

In the case of the interview applied to teachers (11 interviews conducted according to the guide in Annex no. 3), the topics addressed focused on the competencies involved in writing and implementing inclusive educational projects. The discussions focused on: initial planning and analysis (including assessment of the needs of students with SEN and SWOT analysis), drafting the project proposal (structure, budgeting), team coordination and risk management, monitoring and evaluation of the project (impact indicators, progress reports), as well as ensuring sustainability and disseminating the results. Finally, participants were invited to reflect on the lessons learned and provide recommendations for improving professional skills in the field of inclusive education. The interview addressed to parents (13 interviews conducted according to the guide in Annex no. 4) focused in particular on their perspectives and needs in relation to the inclusive education of their children. The topics included were: family context, perception of school and relationship with teachers, integration of the child into the team, support provided by institutions, experiences with inclusive education, difficulties encountered in educating the child at home, participation in extracurricular activities, meeting special needs, child development, the role of the state and expectations regarding the child's future in the education system.

3.4.2. Questionnaire

The quantitative research was carried out by applying a structured questionnaire, intended to analyze the differences in perception and professional competence between teachers participating in the training program and those who did not benefit from this intervention.

The target population consisted of teachers from pre-university education in Bihor County, including preschool, primary, middle school, high school, as well as special education. Respondents are divided into two categories: teachers who participated in the training program and teachers who did not benefit from this training, constituting the control group. Given the design with parallel groups and repeated measurements, we selected a mixed sample: exhaustive sample (for participants in the training course) and non-probability (for the control group).

In the case of respondents who participated in the training program, the full-scale interview technique was used, targeting all teachers enrolled in this program ($n = 369$ of which $n = 362$ completed the training).

The sample consisted of teachers enrolled in the training course, in the initial phase $n = 366$, and at the completion of the program $n = 344$. When analyzing the data, a number of $n = 22$ participants were excluded due to not completing the questionnaire in the T2 stage.

In the case of respondents who did not participate in the training course, the selection was carried out through a non-random, conventional (non-probabilistic) method, the group being made up of people available and interested either to participate in the training program or to complete the questionnaire as members of the control group. In the control group, the sample consisted of teachers who did not participate in the course, $n = 416$ responses were recorded. This technique can provide reliable results in the context where the studied population is relatively homogeneous, as is the case of the non-training teachers included in this research. All respondents belong to the same socio-professional category, sharing common features such as education level, field of activity and familiarity with educational issues. This homogeneity reduces the risk of large variations between subjects and contributes to increasing the internal validity of the study.

Thus, the analysis is based on a total of $n = 760$ responses (excluding the 22 participants who did not complete the continuous professional training program).

The same instrument was applied to both the experimental group and the control group, in two stages: pre-test (T1) and immediate post-test (T2), giving the research a longitudinal character.

The quantitative research was conducted in two successive stages – pre-test (T1) and immediate post-test (T2) – with the objective of assessing the impact of the training program on the competencies, self-efficacy and attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education. In the initial stage (T1), both the experimental group and the control group completed the questionnaire,

analyzing the declared competence levels, perceptions of professional self-efficacy, attitudes towards inclusion, as well as – in the case of the experimental group – the number of projects written and implemented prior to the intervention.

The intervention applied exclusively to the experimental group consisted of completing a continuous professional training program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities, as presented in Section 3.4.2.

In the post-test stage (T2), the questionnaire was reapplied to the experimental group, in order to evaluate the changes in the level of skills, self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education.

The questionnaires were completed between October 15 - November 12, 2024 for T1 - the experimental group before training, and in February for T2 - the group after training. The initial questionnaire for the experimental group was sent to the participants for completion immediately after enrolling in the training program. The period in which the participants could complete the questionnaire was for the 15 groups of learners.

The questionnaire for the control group was applied between November 2024 - February 2025.

For the processing of quantitative data, Excel and SPSS v. 22 were used, using descriptive and comparative techniques and the PROCESS v. 4.2 extension of Hayes for SPSS.

3.4.3. Focus group

The focus group was conducted with the school principals who participated in the training program. The focus group guide is presented in Annex no. 6 aims to explore in depth the perspectives and experiences of school principals in relation to the writing and implementation of educational projects for students with special educational needs (SES).

For the focus group, the content sample consisted of the full transcription of a focus group session, previous participants in the training program. The composition of the group (representatives of kindergartens, mainstream schools and special education units, coming from diverse backgrounds) ensures a broad managerial perspective on the applicability of the acquired skills. The discussion, structured on the basis of a thematic guide, aimed in depth at perceptions on the planning, implementation and sustainability of educational projects for inclusion.

In total, 11 principals participated, of which 2 were men and 9 were women.

Of these, 5 principals came from Oradea, and the others represented the localities of Marghita, Aleșd, Valea lui Mihai, Sântandrei, Suplacu de Barcău and Sânnicolau Român.

The choice school principals as participants in the focus group is justified by the role they have in coordinating and supporting educational projects at the institution level. Being directly involved in decision-making processes, in team management and in ensuring the conditions for the implementation of projects, principals represent a credible source of information on the impact of professional training on inclusive educational practices.

The focus group was held online, on the Zoom platform on 10.04.2025, lasting 2 hours and 5 minutes. With the consent of the participants, the discussion was audio recorded, and the data were subsequently transcribed. The confidentiality of the responses was fully respected, and participation was voluntary. We used a manual thematic coding, which allows the identification and organization of the content according to the recurring themes that emerged during the discussion. Based on this thematic analysis, the report summarizing the main results will be written.

3.4.4. Analysis of the activity products: final portfolios and educational projects developed

To complete the research approach, a complementary qualitative approach was applied, using the documentary analysis method, targeting the individual portfolios of the teachers participating in the training program. Following this analysis, relevant examples of good practices were identified and extracted. The analyzed examples aim to provide a perspective on how the skills acquired during the course were reflected in the initiation and structuring of educational projects aimed at the integration of students with special educational needs (SEN).

The information was collected through documentary analysis, targeting the educational projects developed by the participants and presented in the final course portfolios. Of the total of 362 students who completed the training program and submitted the final portfolio, each containing, among other things, a project proposal. In total, 170 projects were carried out, of which 106 local projects were implemented, 31 county projects, 6 national and 4 international projects. A number of 23 teachers drafted only project proposals for the 2025–2026 school year, not having the opportunity to implement them during the training period.

For this analysis, the content sample is represented by the final portfolios of the trainees participating in the training program "*Educational Projects for an Inclusive School*". These portfolios contain educational projects developed following the program and reflect the application of the acquired skills. The selection of materials was carried out based on explicit criteria: coherence of the document, relevance for the inclusion of students with SEN, creativity and applicability of the proposals, as well as the complexity of the implementation. Thus, 5 representative projects were selected from the perspective of applicable good practices, all with maximum scores in the internal evaluation, belonging to teachers from diverse educational backgrounds.

The analysis aimed to highlight how the participants applied the skills developed during the training program and to what extent the projects developed reflect an inclusive approach.

CHAPTER 4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The data analysis highlights important aspects regarding teachers' access to the training program "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School".

Depending on the environment of residence (urban/rural), teachers from rural areas are less represented in the training group than in the control group, which suggests a lower access or lower interest in professional training in this environment.

The overwhelming majority of participants are women, which indicates the predominance of the female gender in the preschool, primary, middle and high school educational professions.

Depending on age, it is observed that teachers in the middle age category (36-45 years) are more numerous in the training group, while young people and older teachers are better represented in the control group. This trend is also supported by the level of seniority in teaching, where teachers with medium experience are more likely to participate in continuous training, while beginners and those with long experience are less involved.

Educational level also influences participation in training, with teachers with advanced degrees (master's and doctorate) being more active in professional development. In contrast, those with bachelor's degrees are less involved.

The distribution of teaching degrees shows that training programs are accessed predominantly by teachers with a first degree, while beginners are more numerous in the control group.

Regarding occupational status, qualified substitute teachers are less present in the training group than in the control group, and tenured teachers have a similar representation in both groups.

Preschool and high school teachers are better represented in the training group, while primary and secondary school teachers predominate in the control group.

The principals participating in the focus group confirmed the existence of differences in access depending on the locality and, therefore, suggested the creation of local branches, as well as the adoption of flexible formats, to increase accessibility to training courses.

Next, I will present aspects regarding the impact of teachers' previous experience working with children/students with SEN. Regarding contact with students with special educational needs (SEN), there are no significant differences between the groups. In both the training and control groups, the distribution of teachers working with students with SEN is similar, indicating that the

presence of these students in the classroom does not significantly influence the decision to participate in the training. Also, previous experience with students with SEN does not differ significantly between the groups, suggesting that the training programs are accessed equally by teachers with different levels of experience in working with these students.

The aspects regarding teachers' competence in carrying out projects with SEN children allow some conclusions to be drawn.

Thus, before the training, the level of skills related to carrying out projects with SEN children was moderate, with median scores between 3.33 and 3.67. After the training, a significant increase was recorded in all skills, with median scores between 4.5 and 4.67, indicating clear progress. The control group did not register any notable changes, with scores remaining similar to those before the training.

The results of the Wilcoxon test indicated a significant increase for all skill categories ($p < .01$), confirming the positive impact of the training program. The scores obtained after completing the course were significantly higher than the initial ones, suggesting a considerable improvement in the skills of the participants.

Comparing the initial level of skills between the training and control groups, no significant differences were identified for most skills after performing the Mann-Whitney U test ($p > .05$). This result indicates that the two groups started from a similar level of skills. However, exceptions were noted in the case of project implementation and management skills, as well as those regarding sustainability and dissemination of results, where the training group obtained significantly higher initial scores ($p < .05$).

Principals participating in the focus group report visible improvements in the skills acquired through training, especially in the relationship with SEN students and in writing inclusive projects. Adaptation and relationship skills have been developed, but difficulties related to the lack of resources and specialized staff persist. The main motivation for participation remains the desire for improvement and the practical applicability of the training.

To ensure the sustainability of the projects, principals participating in the focus group proposed maintaining relationships with partners and resuming activities that have proven successful, as well as constantly promoting the results through online channels, publications and dedicated events. Last but not least, they highlighted the need for active institutional marketing,

which would strengthen the school's image and attract reliable partners, especially in international projects.

Difficulties were highlighted in carrying out projects involving children with SEN.

Teachers encountered major problems related to the lack of financial resources, budget management, lack of experience and information, as well as finding partners and collaborators. Other significant challenges were the involvement of colleagues, time management and project planning.

Regarding the writing and implementation of inclusive education projects, the principals participating in the focus group insisted on the importance of building a solid team and consulting partners from the planning stage. They recommended integrating project activities into the existing school curriculum by capitalizing on thematic days or national and international events. They also encouraged the use of partnerships with local universities, both for logistical support and by involving students in educational activities.

At the end of the program, difficulties in writing and planning projects decreased, suggesting an improvement in the skills acquired through the training. However, problems with funding, finding partners and lack of involvement of colleagues remained constant.

Teachers who did not follow the training reported more difficulties related to lack of experience and information, as well as limited access to institutional resources. In contrast, they reported fewer difficulties in implementing and evaluating projects, which may indicate a lower level of involvement in such activities.

Comparing the groups, the training contributed to reducing problems related to writing projects, but financial and collaboration difficulties remained a major challenge for all participants.

The results of the interviews with teachers highlight the development of a coherent set of skills in relation to writing and implementing inclusive educational projects. Teachers demonstrate the ability to identify resources, assess special educational needs, write structured and relevant project proposals, but also to coordinate teams and educational activities. We also identified real concerns for ensuring sustainability and disseminating project results.

To improve the content of the training, the principals participating in the focus group suggested including more concrete examples and real situations, especially regarding the management of complex cases, such as working with students with severe disabilities. Direct

collaboration with special education units and specialists in the field was seen as an essential opportunity for mainstream teachers to develop their skills in an applied and supported setting.

Another suggestion concerned the duration and structure of the courses. Participants proposed organizing sessions with a duration limited to a few days, but which would include a large number of practical activities, so that what is learned can be applied immediately.

Teachers' perceptions of their own skills were expressed. Thus, teachers who did not participate in the training reported a lower perception of their own skills, greater uncertainty and a limited awareness of the need to improve skills in the field of inclusive projects.

After the course, participants expressed a significant increase in confidence in their own educational project management skills, noting that the training provided them with clarifying information and applicable tools in the following areas:

- improvement of writing and implementation skills;
- the role of experience and external support;
- perceived benefits on teamwork and resource management;
- the need for continuous improvement.

Useful information can be highlighted regarding the application of the TSES and MATIES scales.

Before the training, teachers' sense of self-efficacy, measured by the TSES scale, was relatively high, but with greater variability in responses, suggesting individual differences in the perception of teaching effectiveness.

The results obtained support the positive impact of the training program on teachers' perception of teaching effectiveness measured by the TSES scale. The participants in the training reported significant improvement in managing student behavior, an increased ability to motivate students, to strengthen teaching skills through greater confidence in questioning and classroom management, as well as increased adaptability in using alternative teaching strategies and explaining concepts through various methods.

Teachers demonstrated a positive attitude towards inclusive education measured on the MATIES scale, based on high scores for items supporting the benefits of an inclusive school. Opinions regarding the integration of students with disabilities, however, diverge.

Participation in the training program did not produce significant changes in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education measured on the MATIES scale, with median scores being identical before and after the training course.

According to the Hayes mediation analysis (Model 4), participation in the training program determined a significant indirect effect on the development of professional skills by increasing the level of perceived self-efficacy, indicating the role of this variable as a psychological mediator. In contrast, attitudes towards inclusion, although positively associated with the skills score, were not directly influenced by the intervention and did not mediate its effect. Thus, the intervention proved effective in activating motivational resources rather than in modifying declarative beliefs regarding inclusion.

The three regression models highlight that the perception of professional competences is mainly determined by their existing level, with the other predictors having a marginal impact. After training, perceived self-efficacy becomes a more relevant factor, while in the control group it does not play a significant role, thus underlining the importance of training programs in strengthening the perception of competences in inclusive education.

Overall, views towards inclusive education and previous experience with children with SEN did not have a significant influence in the models. In contrast, the increase in the feeling of self-efficacy after training suggests that the perception of competences is shaped more by the confidence gained through training than by previous experience.

The reflections and recommendations formulated by the teachers during the interviews indicate a desire for continuous improvement and openness to collaboration.

Overall, the focus group with the directors of institutions confirmed the efficiency and relevance of the training program, both from the perspective of competence development and the impact on the activity in schools. Participants expressed their appreciation for the practical value of the courses and made concrete proposals for improving access, training content and sustainability of inclusive education projects.

The projects carried out at the end of the training programme by the participating teachers demonstrate the potential of professional training to produce concrete changes in educational practices, by directly applying the principles of inclusion in real learning contexts. They illustrate the effective transfer of the skills acquired within the training programme to educational initiatives adapted to students with specific needs.

The SWOT analysis based on interviews with parents highlights a contrast between the sustained individual efforts of families and teachers and the systemic limits of inclusive education. While there are examples of successful integration, these are mainly due to direct involvement and collaboration, not necessarily to the efficiency of the system, which remains underfunded and unevenly prepared.

The difficult situation of families with children with SEN does not diminish the success of the teacher training program, but on the contrary, provides additional justification for the continuous expansion and adaptation of these initiatives, so as to more effectively respond to real needs in practice and reduce existing gaps in the education system.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the results obtained in relation to the formulated research questions are analyzed and the proposed hypotheses are tested, based on the empirical data collected. At the same time, these results are correlated and interpreted in relation to the benchmarks provided by the specialized literature, in order to highlight the theoretical-applicative convergences or dissonances identified.

Q1. What is the attitude of parents and teachers towards inclusive education in mainstream schools?

Teachers are considered key factors in the school transformation process, as it is necessary for them to demonstrate positive attitudes, openness and availability to adapt the educational process to the diversity of students. Vrăsmaş (2001) and later Vrăsmaş & Vrăsmaş (2021) emphasize that inclusive education involves restructuring the school environment and a change in mentality at the level of teachers, who must recognize and value individual differences. Teacher training is seen as a tool for changing teachers' attitudes towards students with SEN (Condor et al., 2017; Păun, 2002). The training program "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" had as its explicit objective the increase of self-efficacy and the change of teachers' attitudes.

Regarding parents, the specialized literature frequently mentions the need for educational partnership and the involvement of parents as active actors of inclusion (Stainback et al., 1998; Ainscow, 2001). Achieving inclusion requires constant support from parents, volunteers and other children (Manea, 2016). This implies that the attitude of parents may vary depending on the degree of information and support provided by school institutions.

Based on interviews with parents, their attitude towards inclusive education in mainstream schools in Bihor is, on the whole, favorable, but there are also critical voices. The decision to keep their children with SEN in mainstream education is often justified by the desire for socialization and integration into society. A concrete example comes from a parent who states: "for me and my son, school is like a family." Parents appreciate the efforts of teachers and schools where these are visible and genuine, but they also point out important systemic shortcomings – especially in terms of teacher training, the implementation of intervention plans and the lack of resources. In many cases, parents expressed sincere gratitude towards teachers who truly supported the integration of

children with SEN. One parent noted: “I thank them for taking it as it is... my message is of gratitude. My message is: this is how it can be”, while another stated: “teachers get involved, inclusive education manifests itself in the classroom”. Such experiences reflect trust in the educational process when it is supported by empathy, adaptation and real cooperation between the family and the school. There are also parents who reported significant difficulties in the relationship with the school or teachers. In some cases, inclusive education is felt more as a theoretical formula than as real practice: “we don’t have an adapted curriculum, we don’t have materials, we don’t have the necessary things”; “I don’t see any effort from the school to be integrated”. Another parent found that the teacher “left everything to the support teacher”, which reflects a delegation of responsibility without real assumption of integration.

Regarding the attitude of teachers, this is, in the perception of parents, predominantly positive, especially when real help is provided by the support teacher, psychological counseling and active involvement. The mother of a student said: “the teachers do their best, they want to help and you can see that they care”. Efforts to adapt the educational content are noted: “she makes special worksheets for him, reads separately with him”.

On the other hand, as emerges from the interviews, the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education in mainstream schools is marked by empathy and a desire to integrate children with SEN, despite systemic obstacles.

The interviewed teachers demonstrate a deeply human and motivational attitude towards inclusion. Subject 1, for example, recognizes the difficulties related to the lack of support teachers and the difficult involvement of parents, but at the same time expresses attachment to the children: “it would seem monotonous to me not to have them”. This phrase expresses not only acceptance, but also affection and normalization of the presence of children with SEN in the children's group.

Subject 2 emphasizes the importance of human relationships in the inclusive educational process: “that's the most important thing, the bond between people... humanity”. Even though he does not have complete formal training in working with children with SEN, he compensates through self-documentation: “I don't have 100% education, but by documenting myself in both directions, I try to help him”. Subject 4, in the absence of specialized support, adapts his activities and space for a child with Down syndrome on his own.

This involvement is often supported by personal efforts. Subject 4 admits: “and now I still make teaching materials, because I like to invent something”, and Subject 5 shows empathy

towards the parents: "they are in the denial phase", emphasizing the importance of "the intervention of time" in the collaboration process.

In some institutional contexts, the framework for inclusion is already well structured. Subject 6 describes a modernized school, with digital equipment, counselors, speech therapists and support teachers, even if they do not have full norms. There is an active concern for adapting educational plans: "we take care to draw up both service plans and personalized plans in such a way that they are as specific as possible for each child and we adapt them as we go". The school promotes collaboration with families, and their involvement is encouraged: "a mother became a facilitator for her own child".

The interviews also reveal a strong affective dimension of educational work. Subject 8 testifies about children with SEN: "for me they behaved the same", "I never saw them differently. I always integrated everyone the same".

Based on the interviews analyzed, the attitude of parents towards inclusive education in mainstream schools in Bihor is generally favorable, with expressions of gratitude for teachers who support integration, but also with critical remarks regarding the lack of resources, specialized support and school involvement. As for teachers, the interviews reveal an empathetic and dedicated attitude towards children with SEN. Although conditions vary, a clear orientation towards integration is emerging, supported by personal motivation and professional responsibility.

Q2. *What is the impact of the continuing professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" on the participants' competencies, compared to the control group and immediately after the intervention?*

According to the research design, the continuing professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" was applied exclusively to the experimental group, while the control group did not participate in any type of intervention. The evaluation was carried out at two time points – before the intervention (T1) and immediately after the completion of the program (T2), using quantitative instruments. The evolution of skills was assessed using the following instruments: questionnaire on writing and implementing educational projects skills, Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) – for assessing teachers' self-efficacy in areas such as classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk

Hoy, 2001) and MATIES Scale for measuring attitudes towards inclusion (Mahat, 2008). In addition, a mediation model inspired by Hemdi and Mohamad (2017) was applied, according to which the impact of training on skills is mediated by the level of self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion.

The continuing professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” carried out between 19.10.2024–15.01.2025 had a significant positive impact on the skills of the participants. After the intervention, they recorded clear increases in all areas assessed, both in terms of practical skills and in confidence in their own capabilities. The scores increased significantly compared to the initial moment, and the comparison with the control group, which did not participate in the training, shows that these improvements did not occur in the absence of the intervention. Based on the results, it can be argued that the training strengthened the skills and reduced the uncertainties regarding the realization and implementation of inclusive educational projects.

Q3. *How does self-efficacy mediate the relationship between program participation and competence development?*

Self-efficacy – defined as the individual’s confidence in his or her ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve goals (Bandura, 1997) – is treated in the present research as an essential mediating variable between participation in the training program and the development of professional competences for inclusive education.

The theoretical model adopted in the research is inspired by Hemdi and Mohamad (2017), who propose that professional training does not directly determine performance, but produces indirect effects through psychological mechanisms such as self-efficacy and attitude towards the task. This model was adapted in the context of education, to analyze the relationship between participation in the training program, self-efficacy and competences in designing and implementing inclusive projects.

Self-efficacy was measured with the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), an internationally validated instrument (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The data analyzed show that self-efficacy seems to play an important role in mediating the relationship between program participation and competence development. At the beginning, participants already had a positive perception of their own abilities, which suggests a relatively

high level of self-efficacy. This positive perception was strengthened after completing the training program. The increase in scores reflects the accumulation of knowledge. Increased confidence in one's own abilities seems to facilitate the transformation of information into functional competence.

Following the Hayes-type mediation analysis (Model 4), it was found that participation in the training program produced a significant effect on the level of perceived self-efficacy of teachers ($\beta = .3141$, $p < .01$). Moreover, self-efficacy was found to be a robust predictor of the global skills score and significantly mediated the relationship between experimental group membership and acquired skills (indirect effect = .0914, 95% CI [.0464, .1448]). These results confirm the existence of a psychological mechanism through which educational intervention indirectly contributes to skills development, by strengthening the sense of personal efficacy in a professional context.

Q4. To what extent does attitude towards inclusion mediate the effects of the continuous professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled “*Educational Projects for an Inclusive School*” on design skills?

Teachers with a positive attitude towards inclusion are more motivated to create relevant and sustainable projects, to seek creative solutions and to take responsibility for the integration of students with SEN. In contrast, those with a reserved or negative attitude may inhibit practical application, even in the presence of quality training. The specialized literature reports on cases in which rigid mentalities and stereotypes of teachers represent real barriers to the application of the principles of inclusive education, respectively, they may persist in the idea that they should be educated in special schools (Moldovan and Bălaș-Timar, 2006). Such attitudes were assessed using the MATIES Scale (Mahat, 2008), also an internationally validated instrument.

Based on the results, especially the answers to the open-ended questions, it is found that, from the beginning of the program, participants with a positive attitude towards inclusive education recorded a clearer progress in the development of design skills. After the training, they not only strengthened their technical skills of analysis, planning and writing, but also assumed with greater clarity the inclusive purpose of the proposed projects. Perceptions regarding their own skills improved significantly in all the dimensions analyzed (from median scores of 4 to 5). In contrast, in the control group, even teachers with experience in educational projects showed uncertainty in relation to the inclusive nature of their approaches, expressing the need for support

for the real integration of students with SEN. This hesitation was reflected in a lower level of design skills. In the Hayes mediation analysis, an attempt was made to determine the role of attitudes towards inclusion (MATIES), as a possible mediator. Although this variable was positively and significantly correlated with the skills score ($\beta = .2833$, $p < .01$), the intervention did not generate a significant change in attitudes ($\beta = .0127$, $p = .765$). The mediated effect of MATIES in the relationship between group and skills was not statistically significant (indirect effect = .0015, 95% CI [-.0108, .0123]), suggesting that this attitudinal dimension was not sensitive to the influence of the program and, therefore, did not function as a mechanism for transmitting the effect of training on skills.

Q5. *What role does the number of projects written/implemented play in assessing the impact of the continuous professional training program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” on the applicability of acquired competencies?*

According to Tardif (2003), a competency is not a simple set of knowledge, but implies the ability to mobilize, integrate and apply this knowledge in a real context. In this sense, the number of projects written and implemented becomes a direct marker of learning transfer in inclusive educational practice. Also, in Păun’s (2002) vision, quality teaching activity must be reflected in the teacher’s ability to propose and carry out relevant educational actions, adapted to the diverse needs of students. From the analysis of the qualitative answers given to the open questions, it emerges that, for some participants, the training program represented the starting point in writing their first project, while others stated that they had perfected projects already in progress.

These statements support the idea that the training had a real impact, not only on the level of understanding, but also on the capacity for action. In addition to this, it is also noteworthy that the control group, which did not receive training, reported a lower involvement in writing and implementing projects, indicating a clear difference in applicability between the two groups. The analysis of the five examples of good practices from the final portfolios confirms that the training focused on concrete applications and personalized support led to the creation of relevant, applicable and sustainable projects, which directly validates the impact of the program on the targeted skills. The projects written at the end of the program can be considered evidence of the

effectiveness of the training, thus the participants managed to integrate the principles of inclusion and respond concretely to the needs of students with SEN.

Q6. *How does the proposed mediation model describe the relationships between the intervention, the mediating variables, and the competence outcomes?*

The mediation model used in the research is an adaptation of the one proposed by Hemdi and Mohamad (2017), which, as mentioned above, argues that professional training does not act directly on performance, but produces indirect effects, mediated by psychological factors such as self-efficacy and attitudes. This model was transposed to the field of inclusive education through the training course conducted as an intervention in this research. The proposed mediation model describes a dynamic relationship between the intervention through the training program, the mediating variables – in particular self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion – and the outcomes regarding the development of competences in the design and implementation of inclusive educational projects. The intervention acts as a trigger, providing participants with knowledge and design tools. It can be argued that training is more effective when participants also develop self-confidence and the belief that inclusion is worth supporting.

Q7. *What is the real impact of the continuous professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” in which teachers participated?*

Bârna (1995) shows that man is a being in continuous development, and his efficiency depends on an uninterrupted learning process. This perspective is reinforced by Niculescu (1996), who emphasizes that professional development must be sustainable and adapted to the stages of development, constituting an essential condition for personal and professional evolution. Glava (2009) proposes a model of professional development based on reflection and action, which highlights that continuous training optimizes teaching performance and leads to the acquisition of new skills. Chiș (2005) and Pânișoară et al. (2009) emphasize that teacher training is necessary for teachers to respond to new roles – as counselor, facilitator, evaluator, value trainer – in an educational system in constant transformation. Training thus becomes an essential means for developing transferable, adaptable and grounded skills in educational reality. According to Păun (2002), teaching activity must be governed by professional standards, based on clearly defined

skills. Initial and continuous training are necessary to maintain quality in education and to respond to the demands of society. Nicola (1996) complements this vision, defining education as a complex social process, in which professional training supports the development of the teacher's active and creative personality. Condor et al. (2017) and Molan (2007) highlight that the modern teacher is a multiple actor in the system – coordinator, counselor, evaluator – and his or her ability to respond to these challenges depends on continuous professional training. Opinions in the specialized literature converge on the idea that training produces real and positive effects on the quality of education.

The real impact of the training course attended by teachers from Bihor County is multiple: the research confirms that the program was not a simple accumulation of information, but a training experience that produced changes in the way teachers understand, plan and apply inclusive education.

On a quantitative level, significant increases in scores on the TSES (Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale) were recorded, in all three measured dimensions: self-efficacy in adapting instruction increased from an average of 6.13 to 7.41, management of student behavior from 5.87 to 7.28, and student involvement from 6.02 to 7.46. These values reflect not only a consolidation of professional confidence, but also a higher capacity to act effectively in an inclusive educational context.

In terms of attitude, the data obtained by applying the MATIES scale confirm a favorable change in the perception, emotion and behavior of teachers towards inclusion. Teachers became more open and therefore more involved in supporting students with SEN in a real way. This change is supported by direct testimonies. For example, one of the teachers states: "By participating in the course, we realized, from the experience of others, that I could do the same", signaling the impact of collaborative learning and awareness of one's own possibilities.

Reflecting on the effect of the course, teachers emphasized the role of practical experiences and the exchange of ideas with colleagues: "In the future, have meetings with colleagues from special education, because they have more experience and we are more panicked about what awaits us." Other observations concern the rapid impact of the applied content: "The duration of the course and the period during which it is carried out are very important... to include a lot of practical activities, so that we can immediately apply what we learn."

The impact of the training was also felt at the institutional level. In the focus group with school principals, it was noted that “the training increased the teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in carrying out inclusive projects”, and the post-course educational interventions contributed to motivating student groups and creating a favorable school climate for students with SEN.

The most important impact, however, remains the real transfer of the knowledge acquired in practice. Following the training, 170 educational projects were developed, of which 147 were implemented – 106 at local level, 31 at county level, 6 at national level and 4 in international partnerships –, involving students with SEN, parents, colleagues and the local community, and 23 remained in the proposal phase. The projects developed and implemented testify that the training and mentoring directly supported inclusive education in the participating schools.

Q8. *To what extent can modern school adaptation strategies be captured in Bihor's educational practices?*

Modern school adaptation strategies aim to adapt the educational environment according to the needs and particularities of each student. In the context of Bihor's education, the research results show that these strategies are partially captured in the current practices of teachers, especially after completing specific professional training programs.

One of the central strategies is Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a concept taken from the field of architecture and adapted in education to support learning for all students by creating flexible and accessible environments (Connell, 1997; Meyer et al., 2014). According to Novak and Tucker (2021), this approach starts from the idea that variability is the rule, not the exception, and that every student can achieve educational standards if given the necessary conditions.

In Bihor County, the application of UDL principles is particularly visible through the ability of trained teachers to adapt the curriculum, methods and learning environment according to the needs of students, including those with special educational needs (SEN). The balanced structuring of the classroom space, the diversification of educational resources and the attention paid to communication and emotional support reflect a progressive assumption of this educational philosophy. Another central concept is blended learning, defined by Staker and Horn (2012) as a harmonious integration between online and offline learning, in which students have a high degree of control over their own learning. Fisher and Frey (2015) also propose the “Unstoppable Learning” model, which is based on the coordination of seven educational components (planning,

launching, consolidating, evaluating, adapting, managing and leading), complemented by the “support triangle” (Castagnera et al., 2003), which targets personal supports, curricular adaptations and the use of instructional technologies.

In practice, research indicates a moderate receptivity towards these concepts in Bihor schools. Although online communication and digital resources are used – especially in extra-curricular activities or in organizing project teams – the use of modern technologies as a pedagogical tool remains limited. The lack of school infrastructure and digital skills can constitute a barrier to the implementation of blended learning.

The third strategy analyzed is the adaptation of the New Public Management (NPM) theory to the educational field. Hood (1991) defines NMP as a managerial approach that values efficiency, decentralization and local responsibility in the provision of public services. In the field of education, this perspective implies a paradigm shift, in which the principal becomes an active manager, able to coordinate projects, attract resources and stimulate community collaboration (Tolofari, 2005; Gunter et al., 2016).

In schools in Bihor County, research reveals partial application of NMP principles, especially among trained teachers who have acquired increased skills in planning, managing and evaluating inclusive educational projects. At the same time, the training contributed to the consolidation of a pro-active attitude towards collaboration with parents, colleagues and external partners. However, challenges persist related to the lack of financial resources, the uneven involvement of the school team and the insufficient effective decentralization, which prevent the full assumption of a modern managerial logic.

The analysis of research data shows that in-service training programs, especially those that include individualized mentoring and practical applications, facilitate the real transfer of these strategies into the daily work of teachers. The impact is also visible in the increase in the feeling of self-efficacy after training. The examples of good practices analyzed demonstrate that the application of modern school adaptation strategies, but for these strategies to become more widespread, more pronounced systemic support and in-service training of teachers focused on inclusion are necessary.

H1. *Teachers' participation in the continuing professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" is*

significantly associated with their socio-demographic and professional characteristics, such as background, gender, age, seniority in education, level of education, teaching degree, occupational status, teaching level, presence of students with SEN in the classroom and previous experience in working with them.

The hypothesis formulated assumed the existence of a significant relationship between teachers' participation in the professional development program and a series of socio-demographic and professional characteristics, such as background, gender, age, seniority in education, level of education, teaching degree, occupational status, teaching level, presence of students with SEN in the classroom and previous experience in working with them. To test the hypothesis, statistical tests of association and difference specific to categorical data (chi-square test and Fisher's exact test) were used, each variable being analyzed in relation to the status of participation in training.

The results obtained highlighted the existence of significant differences between groups in terms of most of the variables analyzed. Thus, statistically significant differences were recorded depending on the environment of origin ($\chi^2 = 11.68$, $p < .01$), the participation of teachers from rural areas being considerably lower. Also, the analysis of gender distribution (Fisher test, $p < .05$) indicated significant differences between groups, with a dominant, but unevenly distributed, female representation. Regarding age, the distribution of respondents varied significantly between the two groups ($\chi^2 = 15.62$, $p < .01$), the age group 36–45 years being predominant in the training group. Correspondingly, seniority in education also presented a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 24.54$, $p < .01$), with staff with medium seniority (25–29 years) being more involved in training. The correlations between age and seniority were positive and highly significant ($r_s = .78$, respectively $.85$, $p < .01$), confirming a natural correlation between the two variables. Significant differences were also identified according to the level of education ($\chi^2 = 17.67$, $p < .01$), with training participants predominantly holding postgraduate degrees (master's degrees). Similarly, teaching degree significantly influenced training participation ($\chi^2 = 13.64$, $p < .01$), with staff with a first degree being the most active in professional training. At the same time, occupational status proved to be a significant differentiating factor ($\chi^2 = 14.82$, $p < .01$), with qualified substitutes and those with temporary contracts being less present in training programs.

Participation in training also varied by teaching level ($\chi^2 = 33.20$, $p < .01$), with pre-school and high school teachers being more represented in the training group than primary and lower secondary teachers. On the other hand, two important variables – the presence of students with

SEN in the classroom ($p = .77$, Fisher's test) and previous experience working with students with SEN ($\chi^2 = 6.94$, $p = .44$) – did not show significant differences between groups. These results suggest that participation in training is not directly influenced by the pedagogical reality of working with students with special educational needs, but rather by demographic and professional status factors. The χ^2 test was used to verify the existence of a significant relationship between group membership and experience with students with SEN. The results do not indicate a statistically significant association, $\chi^2(7, N = 781) = 6.94$, $p = .44$, indicating that the distribution of experience does not differ between the training group and the control group. The above results show significant differences between teachers regarding access to the training course. In addition to these data, school principals, focus group participants discussed at length the difficulties teachers face in accessing continuous professional development programs. They explicitly highlighted the barriers encountered especially by teachers in rural areas. Among the problems repeatedly mentioned are the long distance to the centers where the training is organized and the considerable time required for travel, which limits the participation of many teachers. One participant emphasized that “compared to Oradea, it is indeed a considerable distance, about 70-75 kilometers. I know my colleagues and I know that when there are training courses that involve face-to-face participation at the CCD, the inspectorate or other institutions, the travel itself is not necessarily difficult, but the main problem is time.” The same person also emphasizes the importance of the direct relationship between the trainee and the trainer, stating that they prefer face-to-face training due to its efficiency and direct interaction, despite the difficulties related to travel: “And I have even seen that you come to our support with these synchronous and asynchronous training courses, which are very welcome. Indeed, I also prefer face-to-face courses because the transfer of knowledge is achieved differently, a much better connection is created between the trainer and the participant.”

The participants also proposed some solutions, such as implementing mixed forms of training, both face-to-face and online. The idea of developing local branches of institutions responsible for continuous training was also mentioned, in order to partially eliminate the problem of travel and to facilitate access for more teachers from rural areas: “I would really like there to be an area where, for example, the CCD could come and there would be an institution exactly like the one on the Beiuș side, a branch, so to speak, in the Marghita area, to facilitate this transport.

Because, indeed, I say once again, there is a means of transport, but time does not allow, especially in the framework of training courses that involve 4-5 hours of face-to-face time in Oradea.”

The discussion also revealed clear differences between urban and rural areas in terms of teacher participation in training. In the participants' perception, teachers from urban areas would be more willing to participate due to the complexity and greater challenges encountered in their daily work: "I think that probably in urban areas the challenges that teachers are subjected to are greater than those in rural areas. That is, at the level of students, at their level of knowledge, at their degree of involvement in learning activities that require or not a greater degree of involvement." Another aspect addressed was gender representation in participation in professional training programs, with participants explaining the predominantly female presence in these programs by the general structure of the teaching staff: "there are more female teachers than male teachers."

The analysis of the issue of access to professional training courses highlighted challenges for teachers from rural areas related specifically to distance and time. Participants suggested the creation of local branches and the adoption of flexible formats to increase the accessibility of these courses.

Following the analyses performed, hypothesis H1 is partially validated. Most socio-demographic and professional variables are significantly associated with teachers' participation in training programs, indicating the existence of distinct profiles of those accessing these programs. However, the lack of significant differences in terms of actual contact with SEN students suggests that direct practical demand is not always the dominant criterion for involvement in training, but rather status, age or level of training.

H2. *Participation in the continuous professional training program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" will lead to a significant improvement in the skills of writing and implementing inclusive educational projects in the experimental group, compared to the control group, and this relationship will be mediated by the level of self-efficacy and the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of students with SEN in the mainstream education system.*

The formulation of this hypothesis is based on a series of theoretical and methodological foundations presented in the analyzed chapters. First of all, continuous professional training is

recognized in the specialized literature as a determining factor in the development of teachers' skills, as we have also demonstrated in the case of the analysis of Q7. For example, authors such as Păun (2002) and Nicola (1996) emphasize that quality teaching activity is possible only under the conditions of systematic, continuous training, which allows updating and applying knowledge in practice. Teachers who believe in their own ability to manage educational processes are more willing to apply the acquired skills (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Studies show that, in the absence of positive attitudes, the implementation of inclusive education is often formal and superficial (Vrăsmaș, 2001; Moldovan and Bălaș-Timar, 2006).

The analyzed program “*Educational Projects for an Inclusive School*” includes not only the delivery of theoretical content, but also concrete applications, individualized mentoring and practical tasks (e.g. portfolio with educational project). This formative design supports the immediate applicability of learning and the development of transferable and reflective skills, as also supported by Glava (2009), Iucu (2001) and Cojocaru et al. (2010).

After participating in the program, teachers in the experimental group recorded a significant increase in skills, especially in the areas targeted by the hypothesis — writing and implementing projects. The median score for writing and developing projects skills increased from 3.33 to 4.50, and for implementation and management skills, from 3.67 to 4.67. These developments are confirmed by the Wilcoxon test, which indicated statistically significant differences before and after training ($p < .01$). In contrast, the control group did not show significant variations, maintaining lower scores, close to the initial ones of the experimental group.

In addition to the quantitative evolution of skills, the data also support the mediation component formulated in the hypothesis.

The result of the calculation of the Cohen's d coefficient indicates a significant and substantial difference between the experimental group (teachers participating in the training program) and the control group (non-participants), in terms of the score of the assessed professional skills. The obtained value of the d index is 1.47, which reflects a very large magnitude effect. Thus, the difference between the two groups is consistent and clearly favorable to those who completed the training program.

Consequently, the intervention – consisting of completing the continuing education program “*Educational Projects for an Inclusive School*”, based on project writing activities and

mentoring – had a considerable impact on the development of the targeted competencies, generating real and significant progress in the professional plan of the participants.

In order to understand the psychological mechanisms through which the intervention influences the development of competencies, a type 4 mediation model proposed by Hayes (2022) was applied. In this model, the independent variable was membership in the experimental group, the dependent variable was the global competency score, and the mediating variables were attitudes towards inclusion (MATIES) and perceived self-efficacy (TSES).

The analysis showed that participation in the program did not have a significant effect on attitudes towards inclusion ($\beta = .0127$, $p = .765$), which suggests that the declarative attitudinal dimension was not significantly modified following the intervention. In contrast, a significant and positive effect was observed on the level of self-efficacy ($\beta = .3141$, $p < .001$), indicating an increase in confidence in the ability to manage educational situations.

The overall model explained 46.9% of the variance in the skills scores ($R^2 = .469$, $p < .001$), reflecting high predictive power. The direct effect of training participation on skills remained significant ($\beta = 1.4118$, $p = .004$), suggesting a direct and robust contribution of the program on performance. Both attitudes towards inclusion ($\beta = .2833$, $p < .001$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = .2645$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of skills, but only self-efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between group and skills score.

Indirect effects confirmed that the trajectory Group $\rightarrow$ TSES $\rightarrow$ cumulative skills score was significant (indirect effect = .0914, 95% CI [.0464, .1448]), while the trajectory mediated by MATIES did not reach statistical significance (indirect effect = .0015, 95% CI [–.0108, .0123]).

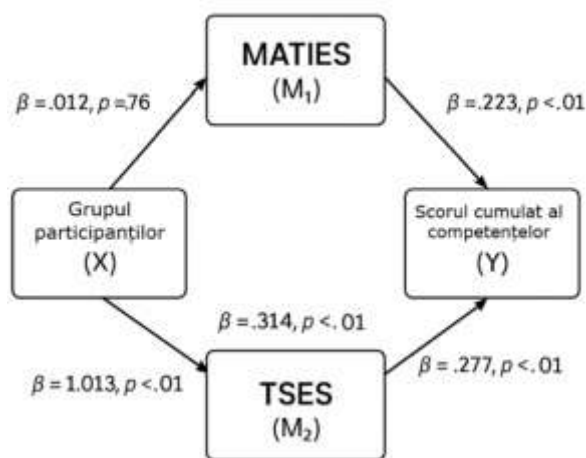


Figure 1 – Mediation model tested with Hayes analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the mediation model tested with Hayes analysis (Model 4), which examines the relationship between participation in the training program (Group) and the final score of declared professional competencies, having as mediating variables perceived self-efficacy (TSES) and attitudes towards inclusion (MATIES).

In conclusion, the mediation analysis supports the existence of a psychological mechanism of self-efficacy type through which the training program contributes to the development of professional competencies. Attitudes towards inclusion, although relevant in structuring the competency profile, were not directly influenced by participation in the program.

The level of self-efficacy increased considerably after the training, with participants reporting increased confidence in their ability to manage complex educational projects and achieve positive outcomes for students with special educational needs. In parallel, attitudes towards inclusion strengthened, with teachers expressing the belief that they could create an inclusive and sustainable educational environment. These changes are reflected in the median values of self-reported perceptions, which increased from 4 to 5 after training, while the control group remained at a constant, lower level. Self-efficacy and positive attitude functioned as facilitating factors in the process of transferring learning into practice. Teachers who felt confident and motivated in relation to the idea of inclusion were able to achieve better results after the training course. Thus, the mediation model proposed to explain the impact of training on competences, through self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusive education, is considered validated.

Therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed by the results presented in the research.

H3. *The experimental group will register significant improvements in design and implementation skills compared to the control group at post-intervention.*

The hypothesis is substantiated both in the methodological model of the research and in the specialized literature regarding the positive impact of professional training on the development of teaching skills specific to inclusive education. For example, according to Tardif (2003), skills imply the ability to effectively mobilize and apply knowledge in real contexts. Therefore, the significant differences between the experimental and control groups at post-test validate the effectiveness of the intervention, and the increase in scores on design and implementation skills directly reflects the transfer of training into educational practice.

This hypothesis is also supported by the works mentioned above (in justification of Q7). Păun (2002) and Chiș (2005) argue that continuous training is an essential condition for the professionalization of the teaching career and adaptation to the requirements of modern education. Condor et al. (2017), in turn, state that teachers' professional development must lead to visible changes in practical activity, reflected in concrete projects and initiatives.

In the research analyzed, the experimental group benefited from participating in the training program. After participating in the training and mentoring program, teachers in the experimental group recorded notable increases in median scores in all dimensions of the analyzed competencies. In particular, for design competencies (which include analysis and planning, as well as writing and developing projects), scores increased from average values between 3.33 and 3.43 to values between 4.50 and 4.57. Also, for implementation and project management competencies, the median score rose from 3.67 to 4.67.

By comparison, the control group, which did not benefit from the intervention, maintained constant and significantly lower scores: between 3.17 and 3.42 in all dimensions analyzed. This difference is confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U test, which indicates significant variations between the two groups at post-intervention, especially for implementation skills ($Z = -2.25$, $p < .05$).

Furthermore, Wilcoxon tests applied to the experimental group showed that all skill categories improved significantly after the program ($p < .01$), while in the control group there were no significant differences between pre and post.

Therefore, hypothesis H3 is validated.

CHAPTER 7. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 1 of the thesis includes the theoretical foundation of inclusive education, starting from the topicality of the topic in an educational context marked by diversity and curricular reforms. The importance of continuous training of teachers to face the challenges of school inclusion is emphasized, and the research is oriented towards evaluating the efficiency of an individualized mentoring program for the development of professional skills in inclusive education.

The paper presents the evolution of the idea of education from a process of transmitting information to one of reconstructing personal experience (Dewey, 1916), in which active and personalized learning is valued. The need for educational equity and equal access to learning opportunities (Schwartz, 1976) is emphasized, with an emphasis on the importance of early education as a foundation of inclusion (Heckman, 2006; Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). According to UNESCO (1994), every child has the right to an education that reflects his or her individual needs, without discrimination.

The conceptualization is made in the context of special educational needs (SEN), resulting in the need for an education adapted to the specific needs of each child. Integrated education is seen as a transitional stage between special and inclusive education, in which the child with SEN is integrated into the mainstream school, but without essential transformations of the system. Integration is analyzed on several levels: physical, functional, social and societal (Vrăsmaș, 2001; Nirje, 1976), highlighting the need for collaboration between teachers and the community to achieve authentic participation. By contrast, inclusive education brings a paradigm shift: it is not the student who must adapt to the school, but the school must transform itself to meet the needs of all children. Inclusive education involves respecting differences, educational partnerships and eliminating barriers to access (Loreman & Deppler, 2002; UNESCO, 1994).

Inclusive education is a process that involves the entire educational community and values the potential of each child, regardless of social, cultural or medical status. At the end of the first Chapter, the concept of inclusive psychopedagogy was introduced, which emphasizes that the success of inclusive education depends on the transformation of educational practices, creativity, collaboration and adaptation on the part of all actors involved.

Chapter 2, entitled “Quality in inclusive education and specific professional skills”, investigates the relationship between quality assurance in inclusive education and the role of teachers in guaranteeing it. Quality is defined as the totality of activities that lead to personal and societal development (Albulescu & Catalano, 2020). The shift from the assessment of elite performances to an assessment that takes into account the entire system and individual progress is emphasized. A democratic vision of quality is being outlined, oriented towards equity, accessibility and adaptation to the needs of students (Iosifescu, 2000, 2007). Quality assessment is presented as a multidimensional process, including internal self-evaluation and external evaluation through inspections and accreditations, all based on educational and performance standards (China, 2015). In Romania, institutional evaluation is guided by three types of standards: authorization, accreditation and reference (Government of Romania, 2008), and the indicators proposed by ARACIP explicitly target the inclusion of disadvantaged categories, including students with SEN (Government of Romania, 2022).

Chapter 3 includes the research methodology on the evaluation of the impact of the continuous professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School" on the self-efficacy of teachers and their competencies in working with students with special educational needs (SEN). The study uses a mixed methodology, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, to obtain a complete picture of the effects of the intervention. The research has a longitudinal quasi-experimental design, with two parallel groups (experimental and control), conducted in four stages: pre-testing (T1), intervention (training and mentoring program), post-testing (T2) and qualitative data collection. The program was conducted during the period 19.10.2024–15.01.2025 and included training sessions in a hybrid format, as well as 1:1 individual mentoring.

The quantitative component of the research involved the application of validated questionnaires to measure competencies, self-efficacy (Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale), attitudes towards inclusion (MATIES scale) and the number of projects implemented. Data analysis was carried out through repeated measurements and statistical tests on the effects and mediators (self-efficacy and attitudes), according to the mediation model adapted from Hemdi and Mohamad (2017).

The qualitative component of the research included semi-structured interviews, focus groups and examples of good practices extracted from the final portfolios of the trainees. The

qualitative analysis was carried out thematically, identifying perceptions, barriers and facilitating factors in professional development.

The results of the quantitative data analysis (Chapter 4) reflect trends regarding the profile of participating teachers and the impact of the training on their competencies in the field of inclusive education.

A lower representation of teachers from rural areas in the training group is observed. The predominance of women confirms the gender profile specific to the educational professions in Romania, while the more active participation of middle-aged and medium-experienced teachers indicates their increased availability for continuous training. The level of education and teaching degree significantly influence participation, with teachers with advanced higher education and a first teaching degree being more involved in training programs.

Working with students with SEN does not significantly influence participation in training.

Regarding the skills regarding the implementation of inclusive educational projects, their level was moderate before the intervention, but increased significantly following the training from the perspective of self-assessments. The feeling of self-efficacy, measured by the TSES scale, increased after the training. In contrast, general attitudes towards inclusive education, assessed by the MATIES scale, remained constant. The control group did not show significant developments, which confirms the positive impact of the continuous professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” on the participants.

The main difficulties reported by teachers in carrying out projects concern the lack of financial resources, challenges related to partnerships, the involvement of colleagues and the lack of time. After the training, a reduction in difficulties regarding project writing and planning was found, but problems persist, such as financing and collaboration.

The conclusions of the interviews with teachers participating in the continuous professional development program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled “Educational Projects for an Inclusive School” highlight an evolution in the understanding and application of the principles of inclusive education through educational projects. The interviewed teachers demonstrate a concern for identifying and responding to the needs of students with special educational needs (SEN), using the resources available in their institutions, direct observation,

collaboration with parents and colleagues, as well as the support of school specialists. They also signaled the need for inter-institutional collaboration.

Regarding the drafting of projects, participants emphasized the importance of clearly defining the purpose and objectives, correlating them with the real needs of the children, as well as establishing a realistic calendar of activities. In this process, both intuitive approaches, based on personal experience, and more rigorous planning models were highlighted, which integrate evaluation methods, risk management strategies and forms of monitoring. Even in the absence of substantial budgets, teachers managed to capitalize on local resources, to mobilize the school community in the implementation of educational projects.

Regarding team coordination and project implementation, teachers adopted various strategies, from informal communication and mutual support, to careful organization of tasks and rigorous monitoring of progress. The use of simple technologies, such as WhatsApp groups, facilitated communication and maintaining team coherence. Difficulties were also mentioned, such as the reluctance of some colleagues or the lack of specialized human resources, but these were overcome through personal involvement and collaboration.

The evaluation of the projects combined different methods, and the reporting included the description of the activities, the analysis of the impact on the students and the obtaining of feedback, in which the teachers emphasized the active participation of the children.

Sustainability was thought of as a continuity of the projects, by resuming or expanding the activities in the following years.

Dissemination was carried out through presentations in teacher councils, pedagogical circles and online platforms, but also through local educational events.

Overall, the interviews reveal a positive attitude, open to learning and continuous improvement, but also an awareness of the role of educational projects.

The qualitative results obtained within the focus group organized on 10.04.2025 with the participation of the directors of the educational units fully support the conclusions of the quantitative research, indicating a clear positive impact of the continuous professional training program based on project writing activities and mentoring activities entitled "Educational projects for an inclusive school" on the professional skills of the participants. The discussions highlighted that the training significantly contributed to improving teachers' capacity to plan, draft and

implement inclusive educational projects, especially in the context of activities with students with special educational needs (SEN).

Participants emphasized that the program provided them not only with relevant theoretical knowledge, but also with practical strategies, concrete examples and constant support from the trainer, which increased their confidence in their own decisions and strengthened their sense of self-efficacy. Repeatedly, the principals highlighted that this training clarified for them the importance of correlating the real needs of the students with the educational objectives formulated in the projects, considering this relationship as the “skeleton” of a well-written project.

Another aspect noted by the participants is the role of the internal team and external partners in writing and implementing the projects. Collaboration with colleagues, with special education units or with local universities was perceived as essential, especially for access to human, logistical or financial resources. Especially in the case of students with SEN, the principals stated that the success of educational activities depends largely on adapting them to the real needs of the children, which requires support, experience and sometimes specialized resources. There was also extensive discussion about the difficulties of accessing training, especially in rural areas, where distance from training centers and travel time are major obstacles.

Participants recommended the development of local branches of continuing education institutions, as well as the expansion of hybrid course formats, combining face-to-face and online meetings. However, the direct relationship with the trainer was perceived as an important element in the success of the training, which is why the face-to-face format remains valuable, despite logistical difficulties. The training also had a positive impact on the way teachers manage student behavior and classroom relationships. A deeper understanding of the particularities of children with SEN led to the adaptation of methods and the creation of a more empathetic and inclusive climate in everyday activities.

Regarding the implementation of the projects, participants recognized that although the training provided them with clarity in organization, the support of the team and partners remains vital for long-term success. Monitoring and evaluation of projects are frequently carried out using feedback from beneficiaries and the teams involved, and success is defined not only by achieving the proposed objectives, but also by the sustainable impact of the activities and their continuity after the official end of the project. Concrete examples were provided in which the methods or activities implemented within a project were maintained and developed in the following years,

proving the practical and sustainable value of educational interventions. The directors stressed the importance of constant practice and internal dissemination of the information acquired during the courses. Regular practice and sharing of experiences among colleagues contribute to the consolidation of skills and the formation of an organizational culture oriented towards inclusion. External dissemination of project results is carried out through various channels, from social networks and institutional websites to conferences, publications and thematic events such as “Erasmus Days” or pedagogical circles.

The principals’ reflections on the continuing professional development program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled “*Educational Projects for an Inclusive School*” highlighted the need to continue this type of educational interventions, but also to adapt and improve them. Among the recommendations made are the inclusion of practical and interactive activities, the organization of more focused sessions in terms of duration, direct collaboration with special education specialists and the creation of relaxed and empathetic contexts for learning. It was also emphasized that additional support in rural areas and specialized resources for the integration of students with severe disabilities are needed.

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of the five examples of good practices included in the teachers' portfolios confirm the effectiveness of training focused on the implementation of inclusive educational projects. These projects reflect the real transfer of the skills acquired during the training course to adapted educational practices. Teachers demonstrated the ability to design and implement relevant initiatives, in accordance with the needs of students and the particularities of the educational environment, using limited resources. All the projects analyzed support the idea that training based on concrete applications and direct support significantly contributes to the development of an inclusive organizational culture.

The interviewed parents highlight an active involvement in the education of their children with SEN and provide realistic feedback on the deficiencies of the mainstream education system. Although many appreciate the efforts of teachers and the successful integration of children into the school community, dissatisfaction is frequently noted regarding the superficial application of the adapted curriculum, the lack of specific training for teachers and the insufficient support from the state.

Parents report the rigidity of the system, the lack of infrastructure and difficulties related to transportation or participation in extra-curricular activities, highlighting the need for a more

personalized (adapted) education. However, the collaboration with the school is, in many cases, constructive, and the children's progress is visible. These results justify the need for teacher training programs to adequately respond to the needs of children with SEN.

As future research directions, in the perspective of expanding the research, a follow-up phase is planned that aims to evaluate the effects of the intervention in the medium term, scheduled 6 months after the completion of the training program and will track the dynamics of the developed skills, the feeling of self-efficacy, the attitudes towards inclusive education, as well as the number of projects initiated and implemented during this period.

As part of the mentoring activity carried out in the continuing professional training program based on project writing and mentoring activities entitled "Educational Projects for an Inclusive School", support, information and counseling were offered to participating teachers who have integrated children/students with special educational needs (SEN) in their classes, by implementing a communication system that included the provision of a mobile phone line dedicated to consulting and counseling on issues specific to inclusive education, as well as by providing concrete advice and solutions for teaching activities with these students. The consultancy and counselling program was provided in addition to the program trainer by 49 volunteer specialists from the Bihor County Center for Educational Resources and Assistance and the inclusive education school centers in Bihor County in Romanian and Hungarian on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 12:00 and 14:00 during the period December 2024- June 2025 (excluding school holidays); 7 phone calls were received during the mentioned period.

This information supports future research directions by providing a concrete framework for evaluating the medium-term impact of the program, especially on acquired skills, attitudes towards inclusion and application in practice (through initiated projects). It also allows analyzing the efficiency of the mentoring and counselling component, identifying barriers in accessing the support offered.

The novelty of this research lies not only in the description of the current situation of inclusive education in mainstream schools in Bihor, from the perspective of parents and teachers, but also in the proposal of a practical approach in the field of continuous training of teachers. The novelty consists in the design, implementation and validation of a continuous professional training and individualized mentoring program (1:1), adapted to the real needs of primary school teachers. This intervention model was tested in a mixed experimental setting, which combined quantitative

methods – by using validated instruments for measuring self-efficacy (TSES scale), attitudes (MATIES scale) and skills – with qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups and analysis of portfolios and implemented projects. To understand the mechanisms by which training influences competencies, a Hayes-type mediation model (Model 4) was applied, with mediating variables: attitudes towards inclusion (MATIES) and perceived self-efficacy (TSES).

The model showed that only self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between training participation and competency score, partially explaining the impact of the intervention. Attitudes towards inclusion, although positively correlated with competency level, were not significantly modified by the program.

The training proved to be effective in developing competencies for designing and implementing inclusive educational activities. The impact of the program is proven both quantitatively, through significant increases in the targeted competencies, and qualitatively, through the positive perceptions of the participants and through the educational projects implemented subsequently. The research represents a concrete step in promoting and practically achieving educational inclusion. The practical utility of this research lies in the clear identification of the training needs of teachers in the field of inclusive education.

The research validated a concrete model of continuous training and individualized mentoring for primary school teachers. The results can inform institutional decisions regarding continuous training, structure, content and development directions of courses.

The research demonstrates the effectiveness of interventions focused on developing practical skills and increasing the sense of self-efficacy. The results can support the development of educational policies to raise awareness of the importance of continuous training aimed at supporting inclusion, by promoting projects, collaboration networks and support offered to teachers.

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Annexes to the work

Annex 1-Planning of the activity by modules

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UmywgifcVELOpekVSeUNoe6SOnQi_B2cAMRU78An4iQ/edit?usp=sharing

Annex 2 - Identity sheet of the training program

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iKjPd9ebJuzDBUmuDaRkBdCH7jCc7PrXjuDcdrwUz10/edit?usp=sharing>

Annex 3 - Interview guide with teachers

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UG8gPMwYy_PaY7x1H4T7Q24ah0mgZ8guCGNzA9xbuB4/edit?usp=sharing-

Annex 4 - Interview guide with parents

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QFNnyQ4YloFw9IMwv8kf91VQ95GwRkt1UgdOkwtgUN0/edit?usp=drive_link-

Annex 5 - Questionnaire

<https://forms.gle/hBxhmqxEQW3G9r9o6>

Annex 6 - Focus group interview guide

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O-EYV6pJz3XqUnRwqZIFeEw4dWhtmndx16r39VbK8WA/edit?usp=drive_link-

Annex 7 - Normality tests regarding data distribution

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15ae_4R9Y-M4jnElyvtEjZuHB9dWyLV2swVETf-uDavU/edit?usp=sharing