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ABSTRACT OF DOCTORAL THESIS

THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN ROMANIA

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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KEY WORDS

access, adapting, impaired, dropout, curriculumadapting, educational support, database, special educational needs, the school centre for inclusive education, County Centre for resources and educational assistance, psycho-pedagogical counseling, impairment, disability, diagnosis, multidisciplinary teams, inclusive education, special education, equal opportunities, school and professional orientation and evaluation, function, disability, integration, inclusion, school integration, special education, school mediation, special needs, educational improvement, partnership, resources, educational services, support services, statistics, special school, inclusive school, home schooling, educational therapy, volunteering

CHAPTER I: Inclusive education – a modern perspective on education

This investigative work initiates from our own concerns and from the desire to clarify the theoretical and practical aspects regarding certain attitudes and behaviors observed at a community level, such as: segregation, isolation and, sometimes, even rejection of certain social groups and categories which we call "of risk" or "disadvantaged".

That is why in this paper we advocate for *inclusion*. The key principles of inclusion are considering fundamental concepts such as: valuing diversity, the right to be respected, the dignity of the human being, the individual needs that must be understood as individual requirements, planning, collective responsibility, developing relationships and a professional culture, professional development, equal opportunities.

In the field of education, inclusiveness requires that schools and the educational system as a whole must change and adapt to the needs of the student. The inclusive education should be regarded as an ongoing process of improving the school as a institution, with the goal of exploiting the existing resources, particularly the human resources, in order to support the participation in the educational process of all members in a community.

The ***inclusive school*** is accessible and of high quality, and it fulfills its purpose to address all the children, to turn them into students and acquaint and empower them with the essential elements that are needed for their social integration. When the school fails in dealing with the challenges of the different needs of children, then the school needs ***support***. Here's a fundamental concept from which we start building our theoretical construction on the development and improvement of educational services that support children, school and family when needed. By developing educational services, the child, the teacher and the parent are no longer alone.

In the theoretical part of this work we begin to clarify certain conceptual and legislative aspects with regard to people with special needs, and to present some experiences regarding the organization and the development of educational services in Romania and in other countries.

Currently, there are *two major approaches* underlying the policies in the matter of disabilities: a *medical approach* that involves the development of services designed to compensate the disability, and a *social approach* which implies a profound change in the entire society, meaning that it is not the person with disabilities who must rise to the social requirements, but the society which must identify the social usefulness of each individual according to his or her own potential. As a result, a "Bed of Procustes" concept in which all individuals of a society must fit becomes obsolete. Diversity is no longer seen as a deviation from normality, but as normality itself.

The ***medical approach*** sees the disability as a problem of the individual, directly caused by illness, trauma, or some other health condition which requires medical care provided as individual treatment by medical professionals. Disability management is aimed at curing or adapting and changing the behavior of the individual. Medical care becomes, in this sense, the main focus. At political level, the main response is one of changing or reforming the health care system.

The ***social approach*** of disability sees the disability mainly as a problem created by society and as a matter that belongs, first and foremost, to the full integration of the individual in society. **"Disability is not an attribute of an individual, but a complex mix of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment"** (CIF – CT, 2007). Therefore, the management of this problem requires social action and is the joint

responsibility of the whole of society to make those environmental changes required for the full participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of social life. Furthermore, the management of disability is a matter of **attitude or ideology, which implies a social change**, which in terms of policy becomes a matter of human rights. With this approach, disability is a political issue.

For a short overview of how we approach disability **in this work**, we propose the theoretical approaches of three world organizations with regard to disability: World Health Organization, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations.

a. the **World Health Organization** has been concerned over time with defining concepts as clearly as possible. Thus, the epidemiologist Philip Wood, in *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps* (ICIDH), defines handicap as a "consequence of the diseases on the individual" and analyzes it in three planes:

– the **deficiency** (infirmity) plane, seen as "altering a structure or a psychological, physiological or anatomical function";

– the **incapacity** plane, seen as "the partial or total reduction of normal fulfillment of a task";

– the **social disadvantage or handicap** plane, seen as a "consequence of deficiency or incapacity on the possibilities of social educational or professional inclusion; the downside is the result of the interaction of the impaired or disabled person with the environment."

In 2001, WHO developed the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICF), which uses a standardized language that allows effective communication worldwide in various disciplines. ICF also serves as a statistical tool, as a research tool, as a clinical investigation tool, and as a tool for social and educational policies; it is also a means to achieving human rights.

The functioning and disability of an individual are seen as a dynamic interaction between health conditions (diseases, disorders, injuries, trauma, etc.) and contextual factors (environmental and personal factors). Environmental factors are valued in terms of their positive or negative impact, as facilitators or impairers of physical, social or attitude characteristics. ICF does not classify individuals, but describes their specific status in a

specific area of the health field, and this description is always made in the framework of contextual factors.

Each component of the ICF may be expressed in positive or negative terms, for example:

Positive	Negative
functional and structural integrity	affected
activities	activity limitations
participation	restricted participation
functioning	disability
facilitating elements	barriers, impediments, obstacles

Table 1. Positive and negative factors that characterize health

The environmental factors interact with the functions and structures component of the body. Disability is seen as a result or an effect of some complex relations between health condition, personal factors and external factors. The society may obstruct performance through barriers (inaccessible buildings), or by the lack of facilitators (the lack of technical devices). The personal factors (gender, race, age, lifestyle, education, physical shape, adapting skills, profession, etc.) are not detailed in the IFC, but may have an impact on the resultant of the various interactions.

Between 2002 and 2005, a working group of the WHO set up for *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth* (ICF-CY) had a series of meetings and conducted field studies to review the existing ICF codes and to identify new codes to describe the characteristics of children and youth. In particular, the WHO acknowledges that, despite everyone's efforts, even the terms used in the classification can become stigmatizing and may put tags. In response to this problem, even from the beginning of the review process, **the decision was made to give up entirely on the term "handicap"** due to its increasingly pejorative connotations in English – **and to use the term "disability" not as a designation of a component, but as a general or global term**.

It is important to point out that the ICF is by no means a classification of individuals. It is a classification of health characteristics of persons in the context of individual life situations and the effects of the environment.

"Disability is caused by the interaction between health characteristics and contextual factors" (ICF-CY, 2007). This being the case, individuals must not be reduced to, or characterized exclusively in terms of the affectation, the activity limitations or the participation restrictions they face.

Starting from this, we propose a taxonomy of terms developed using the concept sphere criterion. We can observe that the term of **special needs** has the largest sphere and includes **medical, social, educational and legal assistance**. Within the sphere of the educational assistance concept, we include **special educational requirements**. **Disabilities** require special educational needs. The concept of **disability** replaces both the **deficiency** (seen as an organic or functional impairment) and the **handicap** (seen as a social consequence of deficiency). In ICF's understanding, disability is explained by: **affectation, limited activities and participation restrictions**.
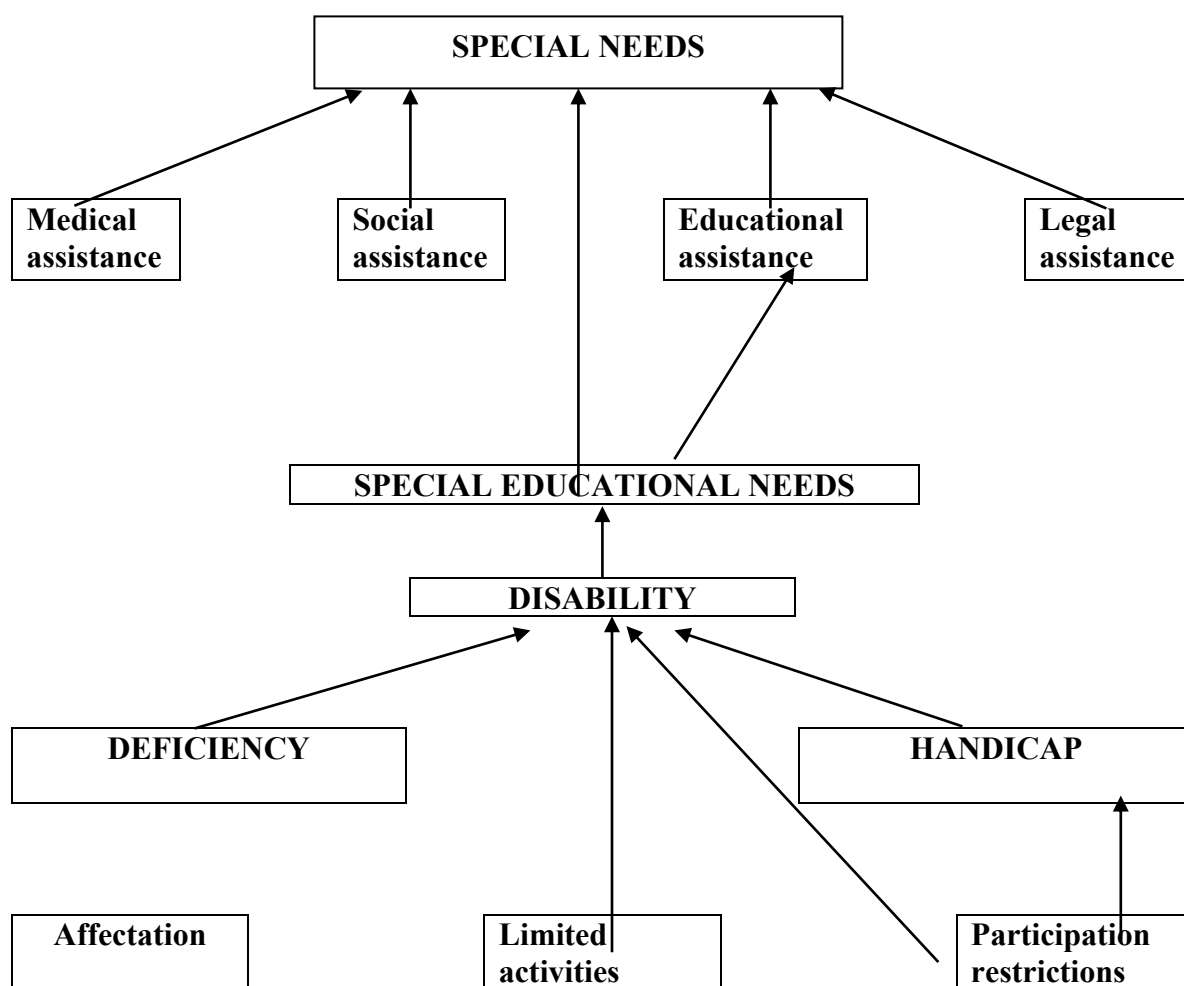
Fig. no. 1 The relation between the special needs, didability and special educational needs (in the CIF aception)

b. The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December 2006. This is the first general treaty on human rights ratified by the European Union as a whole. **The Treaty was also signed by all 27 EU Member States and, up to this time, it was ratified by 16 of them**. The European Union thus becomes the 97th part in the Treaty, which lays down the minimum standards for the protection and safeguarding of a full range of civil, political, social and economic rights for persons with disabilities. It reflects the broader commitment of the European Union to creating a barrier-free Europe for the 80 million persons with disabilities in the EU estimated by 2020, as stated in the European Commission's Strategy for persons with disabilities (IP/10/1505).

The European Union has signed the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities on March 30, 2007 (IP/07/446), the date of its opening for signature. As of this date, the Convention has been signed by all 27 EU Member States and by 120 countries in the world. Following the conclusion of the ratification procedure, the EU as a whole is now the first international organization which became official part of the Convention (along with 16 EU Member States).

The document specifies the rights of persons with disabilities and its signing by the Member States means committing to these rights and assuring their safe-keeping by their signatories.

With regard to ensuring the right to education of persons with disabilities, the **UN Convention** stipulates in article 24:

"States Parties recognize the *right of persons with disabilities to education*. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

a. The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

b. The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;

c. Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society."

At present, the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is in the process of ratification** in our country. The procedure for the ratification of this document was assumed by the National Authority for Disabled Persons (NADP) in 2007. On the occasion of the ratification procedure, each central institution established its directions of action to implement the provisions of the Convention at national level. The special education expert of the Ministry of Education has participated in all the steps taken by NADP to ratify the Convention and has proposed legislative measures that result from this action.

c. The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** proposed a new perspective in defining the special educational needs within the program *"Education for Disabled and at Risk Students"*. **"Those with special educational needs are defined through additional public and/or private resources secured to support their education"**(OECD Manual, p. 8). The definition emphasizes the adjustments that have to be made by the educational system to meet the demands of the child, and not the disabilities that the child may have. In this definition are included both students with disabilities and those with learning disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds. It also raises the question of the allocation of resources **to support the education of children** and that of insuring those resources when students **have difficulties accessing the regular curriculum**.

The study seeks to facilitate the comparison of categories of special educational needs in different countries using the transnational categorization of educational requirements. The reference contents of each category are described below (OECD Manual, p. 10):

CATEGORY A – "Refers to the educational requirements of students when a regulatory agreement exists – for example, blind or visually impaired, deaf or with impaired hearing, or severe or profound mental disability (handicap), multiple disabilities. These conditions affect students from all social classes and occupational fields. As a rule, measuring instruments and agreed criteria are available. From the medical point of view, these are considered **organic disorders**, which can be attached to certain organic pathologies (e.g., related to sensory disabilities, neurological or motor)".

CATEGORY B – "refers to the educational requirements of students who have **learning, language or behavior difficulties,** and which do not appear clearly or primarily related to factors that may warrant inclusion in A or C categories".

CATEGORY C – "refers to the educational needs of students which are considered to be primarily the result of socio-economic cultural and/or linguistic factors. There is a certain form of ***disadvantaged or atypical context*** for which education tries to provide compensation".

Another taxonomy can be formulated from the **concept content** criterion: the concept of **special needs** includes **special educational requirements**. These special educational requirements include **disability** (which may manifest in the sphere of the intellect, of sensory or psychomotor development, or it can take the form of a chronic diseases), **difficulty/functional disorder** (which can be related to language, learning, adapting skills or behavior) and **disadvantage** (social, linguistic, ethnic, age, gender, etc.).

Special needs		
Special educational needs		
Disability	**Difficulty/functional disorder**	**Disadvantage**
intelectual	learning	social
sensorial	language	ethnic
psychomotor development	adapting skils	linguistic
chronic deseases	behavior	gender, age etc.

Fig. No.2 The concept of special educational needs in OECD acception

This paper aims not to clarify concepts, or to make an inventory of the existing definitions in pedagogical theory and practice. We do not want to develop a new glossary

of terms that supplements or replaces the definitions proposed so far. We wish, however, to present, in summary, the way they have evolved over time and what are the significations/meanings used in this work.

Synthesizing theoretical perspectives in the **special needs field** we propose a taxonomy of terms developed using the concept sphere criterion.

In this paper we use the concept of **a person** or **a child with disabilities** to reflect the latest tendencies in legislative, teaching and educational policies and practices in the field. Concepts like: **deficiency, disability, abnormality** etc. will be present only in so far as they are to be found in documents or are quoted in various publications. We believe that *from the standpoint of education* **a person/a child does not have special needs nor disabilities,** *but special educational requirements*. These special educational requirements are answered by an educational offer, a national adapted or special curriculum, educational services, material and human resources, and methodological and psycho-pedagogical support. **In school, it is not the disabilities of the child that are important, but his/her abilities, his/her individual potential and his/her capacity of adjusting and learning**.

Special education is defined in a UNESCO paper published in 1983 and entitled "Terminology of Special Education" as: *"adaptation of the educational process, as well as specific intervention (rehabilitation recovery) for children and people who fail to achieve, within the framework of general education (mainstream), educational and social levels corresponding to their age."*

Special education is aimed at children, young people and adults with disabilities. It is organized into a public or private educational system through educational establishments. These use a special curriculum that varies depending on the type and degree of disability.

The purpose of special education, as resulting from the legislation, is aimed at individual development according to individual potential. The basic principles of special education are also provided for in legislative texts as follows:

- the right and access to education,
- equal opportunities and the right to social participation,
- individualization,

- early intervention,
- accessibility;
- comprehensiveness,
- diversity,
- flexibility,
- cooperation and partnership. (Vrăsmaş, T., 2004, p. 244).

The concept of **special educational needs** (SEN) was consented by the British psycho-pedagogy in 1978. The term was picked up later by other states and it extended its scope to educational policies and practices worldwide. There are differences as regards the sphere of the concept, especially in terms of the categories of persons included; for example in UK, Spain and the United States in this category are included people with disabilities but also highly gifted people. In most countries, this concept includes all categories of people who are experiencing learning difficulties, regardless of the cause that generates these difficulties.

In Romania, until the 1990s, the social and educational policies were starting from the medical paradigm on disability. According to this paradigm, children and adults have a deficiency involving a major disability in terms of their social and educational integration in the community.

There were some attempts of educational integration of children with disabilities before 1989, such as: the establishment and functioning of inter-schools speech therapy centres, classes with reduced number of students or recovery classes, a centre for hearing and speech rehabilitation at Cluj-Napoca, etc.

In the 1990s, the large number of children in Romania living in residential and full caring institutions attracted national and international attention. As a rule, these institutions were located either on the outskirts of towns or near them, so as not to draw attention.

After 1990, however, things have changed considerably in this paradigm, but also in the social and school integration, the policies and the institutions in the field. Romania signed some major international acts in the field of disability and human rights and ratified them. The medical approach is more and more replaced by the social approach. The person with special needs is no longer exiled outside the community; new forms of

educational, social and professional integration are searched for. New institutions are created for the protection and safeguarding of his/her rights and the existing ones are brought up-to-date. The legislation in the area is improved. The NGOs are becoming more consistent and more effective.

In 1992, Bucharest hosted the International Conference on "Education and Disability" carried out with the support of UNESCO and UNICEF. It was at this Conference that, for the first time, the question of deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities and their school and educational integration was raised.

There followed a number of initiatives and projects carried out at pre-University level (e.g. in Timişoara, a pilot school for the integration of children with special educational needs began to function – School No. 22 –, which cooperated with 3 mainstream schools: Schools No. 18, 23 and 25, 3 special schools, the *"Speranţa"* ("Hope") Centre and *"Miu"* Technical Highschool) and at University level. At this level, we must mention the TEMPUS projects:

• TEMPUS JET (structural, advanced), a 3 years program, with the partnership of 4 Romanian universities (University of Bucharest, Babeş Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, West University of Timişoara and Iaşi University) as well as 4 Western European universities (from London, Malaga, Bologna, Copenhagen) having as a main goal the organizing of undergraduate courses for master degree for the formation of integrated education specialists;

• A project for complementary measures with the duration of an academic year, with the same partners nominated above, which had as objective: strategic and institutional planning of Romanian universities in the field of training and perfecting school personnel for special education needs.

The coordinator for both projects was the University of Bucharest and the Babeş Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca as contractor. Both projects have been approved and have been implemented successfully, thus opening a new era in special education.

Particularly important in this early period of the inclusion process in Romania was the non-governmental movement. One example is the involvement of the RENINCO Association, Romania, a network of associations and NGOs from Romania acting in the special needs field. It has impemented a multitude of projects in which were involved

central authorities, public universities in the country and abroad, international bodies with authority in the field of special needs education, parents, teachers and children.

Evidently, not only the non-governmental experience is representative for the inclusive education in Romania. The Romanian government, through the Ministry of Education has developed policies that have promoted schoolar inclusion of children belonging to vulnerable groups. In this respect, we pass in review the following measures and projects:

• Supporting the education for individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups through PHARE Programme projects "Access to education for disadvantaged groups" conducted between 2001 and 2009, and continued by SOPHRD Programme (Sectoral Operational Program for Human Resources Development), which extended the experience of PHARE projects at national level;

• The financial support of children through the provision of scholarships, social grants, „Bani de liceu" ("Money for high school"), "EURO 2000" and "Cornul şi laptele" ("Roll and milk") programs and others;

• The programs supported by the World Bank to re-launch rural education;

• The school rehabilitation program supported by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Ministry of Education

• School endowment programs in order to increase the quality of educational process

• School minimal endowment with IT equipment and Internet access.

• SOPHRD Programme projects carried out after Romania became member of the European Union.

The Ministry of Education has adopted legislative measures that have created the institutional framework conducive to an inclusive education.

We, therefore, find ourselves in the face of an irreversible decision: we must eliminate the segregation and promote inclusion in all policies, legislation, practices and mindsets.

The first step on the path to inclusion is **integration**. This implies, broadly, the transfer of the individual from a segregated environment into an ordinary one, and takes

into account a number of specific measures meant to eliminate segregation in all its aspects.

The integration is carried out at several levels (Vrăsmaş, T., 2001, p. 34-35):

• at spatial level (physical integration of the person);

• at social level (group integration of the person)

• at school level (integration of the person in the learning activities together with the other members of the group).

If we refer to school integration, we may have two possible meanings: one who refers to the first time someone joins a new class/group of students, and one that refers explicitly to placing a child with special educational needs in an ordinary school. In the second instance, school integration is based on the objectives and goals of special education established in the ordinary school environment plus a number of educational support services (see Table 2).

Integration	Inclusion
Involves the child adapting to the school requirements	Involves the school adapting to the needs of the child
Involves allocating human and material resources in order to compensate for the potential difficulties or deficiencies	Involves allocating human and material resources in order to enhance the individual maximal potential
Deals with the "problem-child"	Deals with all the children
Starts from special individual needs	Starts from the rights of all children
Requires a special or adapted curriculum	Requires a flexible national curriculum
Focuses on special education objectives and goals	Focuses on education objectives and goals for everybody

Table 2: Comparative table on the concepts of integration and inclusion

Inclusive education is not a static phenomenon, but it evolves in different ways and witnesses a continuous development.

CHAPTER II: THE CURRENT STATE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES SYSTEM. THEORETICAL, LEGISLATIVE AND METHODOLOGICAL LANDMARKS

Over time, depending on the needs identified and on the human and material resources available, there has been a development of various stand-alone educational services. Because the school by itself cannot answer the entire problematic of development, adaptation and integration of children, educational services with complementary use have been created. Their complementarity is obvious, by the fact that any child is approached holistically; the evaluation and intervention activities are carried out by multidisciplinary teams involving the child, the teacher, the specialist/team of specialists, the family and the community representatives.

In the Romanian education system until 2005, various types of educational services existed independently: speech rehabilitation therapy (through inter-schools speech therapy centres), psycho-pedagogical assistance (through psycho-pedagogical assistance centres and offices), support services (through support/itinerant teachers) and psycho-educational evaluation through the internal committees for continual evaluation. Also at the beginning of the road are the school mediators, a category of auxiliary teaching staff that has emerged in the wake of the Phare 2001 project "Access to education for disadvantaged groups – with focus on Roma". At first, for each of these categories of professionals, conjuncture solutions were found with regard to their professional status and payment; their status was quite unclear for teachers, students and parents.

In order to prevent and eliminate the effects of the various disruptive factors of the normal development of the children, a series of educational services was organized at the level of the Romanian education system:

• **Educational support Services carried out through the support/itinerant teacher**

• **Psycho-pedagogical support services carried out through the school counselor**

• **Therapy services for language disorders carried out by a speech therapist**

• Psycho-pedagogical assessment services carried out by a multidisciplinary team

• Volunteering services in the framework of the National Strategy on Community Action

• Home schooling services

We propose a comparative analysis designed to underscore the motives for which we plead for the development of educational services in schools, the way in which this action is possible at the moment, as well as some suggestions for the improvement of the current situation.

Service	Definition	Goal	Legislation
Support services	Specialized educational services designed to facilitate school adapting and to streamline the school integration of children/pupils with special educational needs	School integration and avoiding school failure in mainstream education system for children with special educational needs	OMEC No. 4653/ 08.10.2001, OMEC No. 5379/2004, OMECTS No. 5574/2011
Psycho-pedagogical counseling	"The complex and permanent orientation of the education actors, a work designed by specialists, who carry out a number of specific actions (informing, consulting, reviewing, guidance, training, research, etc.) in the framework of inter-school, territorial and zonal institutions, integrated in the education system". (Cristea, S., 1998, p. 19).	Prevention and direct intervention, in situations of risk and crisis of the individual, in the development of his/her personality and his/her adaptation to the environment	OMECT No. 5418/2005, OMECTS No. 5555/07.10.2011
Language disorders	The specific activity carried out to correct language disorders using	Correcting language disorders in order to prevent	OMECT No. 5418/2005,

therapy	specialized tools and methods of intervention	and eliminate learning difficulties	OMECTS No. 5555/07.10.2011
School mediation	Specific activities designed for those communities in which the school population and other community members are experiencing difficulties in accessing a quality education	Eliminating cases of school abandonment	OMECT No. 5418/2005, OMECTS No. 5555/2011
Volunteering	The activity of public interest undertaken by individuals, referred to as volunteers, within the framework of legal relations other than the legal relationship of employment and civil legal relationship of a paid activity (Volunteering Act)	The social integration of persons excluded from the normal life of the community	Volunteering Act No. 195/2001, OMECT No. 1734/08.08.2007
Assessment and school orientation	The specific activity which involves the identification of the specific needs of children and the ensuring of optimal conditions for educational, professional and social integration	Psycho-educational assessment of children as well as optimizing their educational and/or future career orientation	OMECTS No. 5555/2011
Home schooling	Service designed for homebound children/pupils with special educational needs and for students from mainstream schools that are homebound, for medical reasons, for a period of time longer than 4 weeks	The prevention of school abandonment and school failure of homebound children for medical reasons, or of those hospitalized for too many of days	Standard specifications for home schooling No. 9233/08.02.1995, HG No. 1251/2005, OMECTS No.

				5575/2011

Table 3: Synthetic analysis on educational services in Romania

We can conclude that a modern and functional education system must develop various educational services in order to deal with all the challenges that affect the attending children. These services must be flexible, inter-related and provided by a teaching staff with a high professional qualification.

B. PRACTICAL-APPLIED AND EXPERIMENTAL APPROACHES

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH ON AN ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING AND PROCESSING DATA REGARDING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Our paper proposes the introduction of an experimental electronic system for collecting and processing data regarding children with special educational needs, as a result of external and internal context.

1. In 2009, the ***European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education*** has published a report entitled: "Development of a Set of Indicators – for Inclusive Education in Europe\" (Kyriazopoulou, M. and Weber, H. (eds.), 2009). This report states that the **"definitions and understandings of what special education requirements mean vary greatly from country to country. At worldwide level, we do not have a consensual interpretation of terms like *handicap, special requirement or disability*"**.

2. ***The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*** has developed a program called *"Education for Disabled and at Risk Students"*. On this occasion emerged the necessity for the establishment of a uniform database in the OECD member countries, because **the need was felt for the development of an analysis based on uniform criteria and concepts that could generate coherent policies at European and worldwide level.** Because, in general, OECD member countries have experienced

difficulties in collecting the data and completing the questionnaires, the OECD recommended the countries included in the project to start up micro-projects for more conveniently managing this task.

3. ***The current system of collecting and processing data*** which operates in the field of education in Romania is based primarily on three sources of data and statistics:

*a. **Data provided by the National Institute of Statistics*** are the most **complete** and **complex** statistical data available at the time. It is **public data** that are made available to all stakeholders, legal societies or individuals. These data **form the basis of policy decisions** regarding children with "deficiencies" for the vast majority of Romanian institutions that deal with people with disabilities. This data is also taken into account by **foreign institutions and bodies** when reports or analyses on Romania are carried out.

But there are a few **aspects** that should be evaluated and reviewed, such as: the **terminology used** (there are terms that are "obsolete" morally or legally: "deficiency", "special school for *behaviorals*", "special schools for re-education", "mentally debilitated"), **certain shortcomings/omissions in database** (information is missing on Sanatorium schools, on schools in prisons and on schools running programs like "second chance education", information on children with disabilities integrated into mainstream schools, on children with disabilities that are not schoolarized, at national or regional level or at the County's resource centres and for educational support).

*b. **Data obtained, at national level, through a program designed and implemented by SIVECO and titled BNDE (Baza Națională de Date a Educației – The National Education Database)***

With regard to special education, BNDE is collecting only a few categories of data relating to: children with vision, hearing and psychomotor impairments. The rest of the casuistry is completely missing. The system was officially introduced in Romanian schools in 2007 and has already recorded a number of **difficulties**: the data is filled in only by a very small number of learning facilities, it is incomplete and out of date, the electronic system overlaps all other data collection tools and does not replace them, it is regarded as an "additional load" and the requested information, although extended, does not cover the whole range of the required data for the school inspectorates and the Ministry.

c. Data obtained annually through specialized inspectors from the school inspectorates; they use two different operational tools which are to be filled in annually in October, by each County school inspector that works in special education. These are: "The Educational Unit Sheet" and "The County School Inspectorate Sheet". The information contained in these sheets is sent to the Ministry on paper and in electronic form. The periodof time in which these sheets must be filled in is usually 2 weeks. This is the only collection of data of this type throughout the entire school year. In an age of computers, we would expect a differnet procedure, for this one is rudimentary, and the process of collecting and analyzing the data is hindered and even disfunctional. **All sheets filled in at school and school inspectorate levels are processed "manually" by the inspector.**

Therefore, we consider that it is necessary to propose and to develop an operational tool able to provide us with the opportunity of gathering a database capable of generating diversified and updated statistics, able to address any educational policy makers at local and national level.

1. Research objectives

The real need of improving the educational services both locally and at the legislative level, as well as the lack of an effective operational tool for collecting and processing the data has generated as a **general objective of the study**:

> *the framing of a comprehensive model for a resource centre that, starting from the consistent and objective data which is to be updated on a regular basis and provided by a modern electronic database, is able to provide complex, consistent and high quality educational services, from the perspective of the principles of inclusive education.*

The overall objective can be operationalized through several **specific objectives**:

O1 – identifying the implementation methods in Romania of a basic model proposed by the OECD in a pilot project carried out in 11 counties in the country and in Bucharest

*O2 – establishing a national database by implementing the basic model proposed by the OECD with the **"Education for Disabled and at Risk Students"** project*

O3 – identifying the correct procedure for data collecting and obtaining coherent and updated statistics by attaining and implementing an electronic application

O4 – making an analysis on how to properly use the database by developing a theoretical framework for the organizing and functioning of the resource centre.

2. In this regard we considered as **working hypothesis**:

The implementation and use of complete and up to date electronic databases, as well as some advanced statistics able to provide data on children, their educational needs and the human resources available in the education system, allow for making fundamental and coherent decisions in the educational policies and in the field of protecting individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups*, measures that, if taken, would lead to the improvement and the harmonisation of educational services offered by the resource and educational assistance centres.

* the use of "disadvantaged groups" concept is justified, on the one hand, by the fact that we intended to eliminate any form of discrimination and, on the other hand, by the fact that the national and international policies are drawn up for large groups of individuals and not for specific issues.

3. The target group that we had in mind during the study included: *students with disabilities in special education establishments, students with special educational needs integrated into mainstream education establishments, as well as teachers from special education institutions.*

Of this target group we have randomly selected a **sample group** consisting of subjects from special schools in three counties: Bacău, Mureş and Teleorman.

The table below presents a situation regarding the subjects included in the study:

Research participants	Number
Children/students with special educational needs in the special education system	1,006
Children/students with special educational needs who benefit from education services	2,987
Teachers in special education system	265
School managers in special education system	12

Table 4. The number of subjects included in the sample group

4. The methods used

a. Document analysis

In our study we examined various documents such as:

- **OECD Programme** "Education for Disabled and at Risk Students"

- The **Manual** entitled: "Students benefiting from additional resources for curriculum access. (*Disabilities, learning or behavioral disabilities and social disadvantages*). Instructions for completing the electronic questionnaire"

- The RENINCO Association **micro-project,** in partnership with the Ministry of Education, with the OECD founding, entitled "Developing a tool for including CES in statistics and databases".

- The **Final report** of the "Developing a tool for including CES in statistics and databases" micro-project.

- **Data** obtained from the county administration and by consulting the operational sheets of specialized inspectors as well as the electronic questionnaires

- **Legislative acts** (laws, strategies, government acts, rules, orders of the Minister, details)

b. Inquiry based on opinion Survey

During our research, we used two questionnaires, one addressed to school managers and one adressed to teachers, on the data collection system regarding children with special educational needs and the educational services.

c. Psycho-pedagogical experiment

5. Methods of analysis and processing of data as well as **their presentation tools**

The results of the study were analyzed using the following methods:

a. *Comparative analysis* of the statistical data; this is the method that we used most often for quantitative and qualitative analyses.

b. The *panel study* is used in the analysis that contains representative data for different school years but with regard to the evolution of the same group of children/students.

c. *Cross analysis* for data describing different groups of subjects at different times.

d. *Statistical analysis* of the data obtained from the various sheets and quantitative surveys, and from the responses to questionnaires, as well as data and statistics provided by the software.

The analyses are illustrated by: statistical tables, structural charts, comparison charts.

6. Presentation and interpretation of data obtained during our inquiry

Our investigative research was carried out in **three stages** ensuing from the logic of events.

Stage 1: The study carried out in Romania for implementing the data collection system proposed by the OECD

Between May and December 2006, for a period of 8 months, RENINCO Association, Romania, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education developed a micro-project called **"Developing a tool for including CES in statistics and databases"**.

The project was completed with the following products:

• A **manual with instructions** on filling out the electronic questionnaire (EQ) for students requiring additional resources in order to have access to the curriculum – translated and adapted in Romanian;

• An **electronic system of data collection** in the field of special education;

• A **resource person** (a key-person) identified and trained for using the electronic questionnaires and the database in each county;

• A **working group** set up at national level capable of correctly using and managing the database on children with special needs in a unified system.

Following the completion of the micro-project, we could formulate some **recommendations** in the assumption that the use of the CE CES DDD operational tool will be extended in the future and/or it will be generalized at national level:

- The need for an **extended period of time of about 2-3 months**, at local and county level, for collecting and consolidating the data

- The use of **multidisciplinary teams of professionals** who could be involved in the collecting, centralization and recording data processes regarding children with special educational needs in each county.

- Redefining **national categories of CES** according to the results of this project. Some counties identified the need for a new section, namely the children of school age who find themselves in a language disadvantage situation (as a transnational category C).

- The developing, debating, approving and submitting to the school inspectorates or directly in schools of a **methodology for using the CE CES DDD in Romania**; the findings and lessons learned from the current implementation of this project are a very good starting point in this regard.

Stage 2: The pilot project conducted by the county school inspectorates

Starting from the conclusions and recommendations of the micro-project presented earlier, in the school year 2007-2008 we initiated a project with the purpose of **completing the electronic questionnaire proposed by the OECD at national level**.

The pilot project covered the following **activities**:

a. In February 2007, in Bucharest took place a meeting of speciality inspectors from all counties of the country, when we presented the OECD project and discussed both the definitions, the concepts from the Manual, and the translated questionnaires, as well as the procedure for filling them out. We also agreed on national categories, and on the definitions accepted in the Romanian special education system.

b. One of the most important tasks was **filling out questionnaires and centralizing them at county level**. Each county had a month for collecting, filling out and

transmitting the centralized questionnaires. *Following this approach we can conclude that*:

– 30 out of 42 counties have managed to answer the questionnaires at educational establishment level; all of these counties have completed the questionnaires for special schools and special classes integrated in mainstream schools, but not those relating to mainstream schools.

– Not all counties have managed to do that in the indicated time (1 month).

– In some counties, the data was collected using questionnaires/Microsoft Word documents and only then the information was centralized in OECD questionnaires.

– School inspectors were forced to turn to the Child Protection Department to collect information about children with special needs who were not schoolarized or were integrated in the various services offered by the institution.

– Some individuals were difficult to categorize (e.g. In which category do we put a child who suffers from hearing impairment, belongs to a linguistic minority and whose parents work abroad?).

– The definitions have been understood differently from one county to another and from one specialist to another (e.g. "related deficiencies", chronic diseases, highly gifted children);

Some counties have not submitted all the questionnaires or have not centralized data at the county level.

c. with all our efforts, the process of centralizing data at national level could not be completed. This situation is due to several factors: the conceptual confusion, the difficulty of choosing one category (or subcategory) or another, the insufficient time for carrying out the collecting and centralization of data, the insufficient informing of persons directly involved in the collection and centralization of data, the lack of uniform and effective operational tools for collecting and centralizing the data.

This operation could have been accomplished if the centralizing of data would have been done by larger teams, if the period of time for this task would have been extended and if we would have had an efficient electronic tool for centralizing the data received from the counties.

In conclusion, Romania was not able to send the OECD the data requested by this institution due to lack of human and material resources, although great efforts were made in this regard.

Stage 3: Development and testing of a web application that allows the collection and processing of data and statistics on children with special educational needs

As we can conclude from the approaches outlined above, at this point we lack an operational tool that can ensure **a data collection reflecting the reality and in accordance with the legislation in force**.

The motivation that led us to this new way of data collecting and processing started from **the need to**:

• reflect reality

• play a dynamic image of reality

• use in an efficient manner the available material base

• reduce the human resources involved

• reduce the time allocated to the database

• replace the procedures and tools that, in most cases are overlapping and overcrowding the activity of schools

• ensure the transparency and accessibility of data obtained

• use effectively these statistical data.

The object of this study is the implementation in the educational system, at an experimental level, of an electronic tool for data collecting and processing, dedicated to the education of people with special educational needs.

a. The first substage took place in October 2011 and envolved the completing of the Education Unit Sheet and The School Inspector Sheet by the speciality school inspector and the directors of special education schools. Following the collection of data from these documents we have managed to obtain a series of data that allowed us to do a comparative analysis of these data with that collected in the school year 2007-2008 to track the quantitative evolution of educational services.

From comparing the data collected in the two school years we can observe that, during these 5 years, there is a certain **stability** in the number of special education units and of children enrolled in this type of education. In terms of **educational services, the trend is for growth and development** in all counties. First of all, we can observe that, in all three counties, the County Resources and Educational Assistance Centres are operational; they hired appropriate staff for the methodologies that apply and for the local needs. **The number of children that benefit from the various types of educational services** (support, health, psycho-pedagogical counselling) **incresed** and so did **the number of specialized teachers who offer these services**. We can also note that, as a result of the "Access to education for disadvantaged groups" Phare Project, a new category of educational services has established itself as a necessity – the **school mediation service**.

b. In the second substage we applied two opinion surveys in the counties of Bacău, Mureş and Teleorman. We used these surveys to find out what the teachers and school managers think about the current system of collecting and processing data regarding children with special educational needs and regarding educational services.

For the questionnaire addressed to teachers who are involved in the data collection process on children with special educational needs, the only county that sent data was Mureş county. This lets room for two interpretations: teachers are involved in this endeavor only in Mureş county, or the other counties have not responded to our request for various reasons (the questionnaire wasn't understood, the teachers did not have the time to answer it, etc.). For starters, we can bring a few considerations of a general nature:

- All teachers in the Mureş county have answered the questionnaire, regardless of their direct involvement in the activity of collecting and centralizing data on children with special educational needs in the county;

- The teachers were more open about the issues discussed than the school managers;

- The answers covered all possible range and were limited to the affirmative register;

- The teachers have expressed their views on various issues that they consider important for special education.

The conclusions arising from assessing the opinion questionnaires of teachers and school managers may be formulated as follows:

• **All counties** included **responded favorably to the request** of answering the opinion questionnaires and met the time limits laid down in advance.

• **Teachers were more "sincere" than the school managers** when they answered the questions.

• There is still a large dose of **superficiality, formalism** and **fear of expressing a personal opinion** when asked about a specific problem in our field activity.

• **The Mureş county was the only one in which the teachers have been consulted with respect to the data collection process**.

• In Bacău and Teleorman counties, **the database** is still considered as **a task for the school manager**.

• The degree of involvement of the specialty inspectors ranges from complete involvement (Mureş), to total lack of involvement (Bacău).

The final conclusion, relevant for our study **is that, in the counties surveyed, we can experimentally implement an electronic tool for collecting and processing of data regarding children with special educational needs and the educational services addressed to them.**
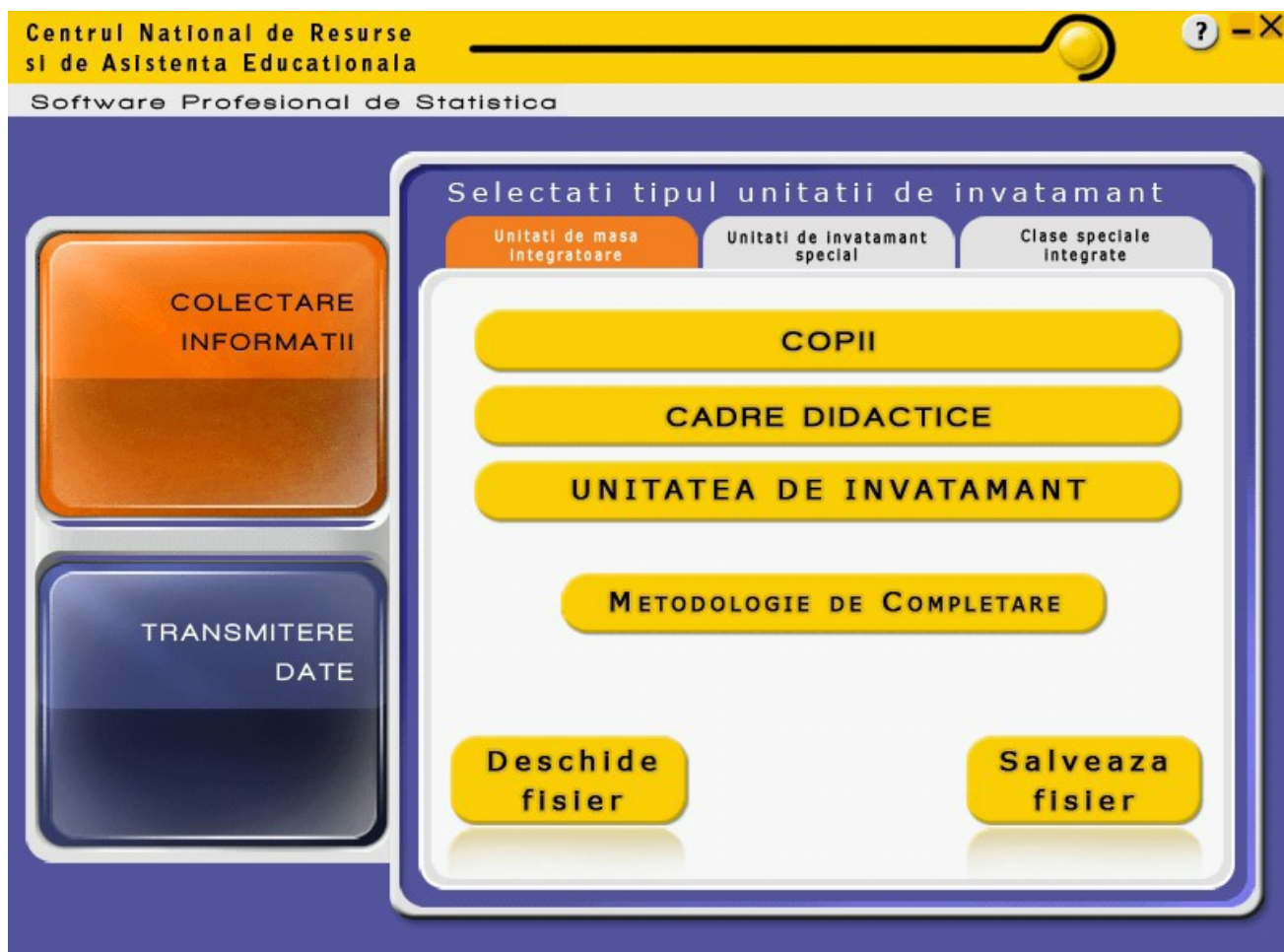
c. The third substage implied the experimental introduction of an electronic tool for collecting and processing data in the three counties included in the study.

This operational tool is a web application that has been installed, at this stage, on computers in each institution that has filled in data. The application is a simple and effective way of collecting and processing data and for statistical use. There are three categories of data that have to be filled in: special schools, special classes in ordinary schools and children/pupils with CES integrated in ordinary schools. At each school, these data is filled in by a person delegated especially for this purpose (preferably the psychodiagnostician of the school in the case of special schools, the speech therapist or the school counselor as well as the support/itinerant teacher, as appropriate). At school level, the sheets are filled in with complete data that can only be accessed from this level.

At county or national level, all pertaining to the identification data (name and surname, ID number, address, name and surname of parents, etc.) is not accessible. For statistics, the information is selected according to criteria such as: sex, age, diagnosis, specialization, etc., without personal references.

The application includes a **Methodology for perfecting the national database on the education of children/students/young people with special educational needs.** This methodology was developed by us in conjunction with the software and is based on the requirements of the OECD, on the micro-project of RENINCO Association, Romania, and on the discussions that took place all over the country with the school inspectors. The categories, definitions and methods of integration in a category/definition were tested in the school year 2007-2008 at the national level.

1 . COLECTING INFORMATIONS

1.1 – CHILDREN SECTION

1.2 - TEACHER SECTION

1.3 – SCHOOL SECTION

Presentation and analysis of data obtained from experimental approach

The experiment took place from 1 March to 1 May 2012. The experiment was attended by the three counties included in the sample group, i.e., Bacău, Mureş and Teleorman. The electronic application was accessed and used only by special education schools in these counties (with the exception of one education facility in Bacău county). County Resources and Educational Assistance Centres could not be included in the experiment because they currently go through a period of transition from one operating methodology to another and they currently lack the human and information resources about children with special educational needs in the county. Also, the mainstream schools that scholarize children with special educational needs could not be included in the experiment because we couldn't be certain that they have qualified people to fill out the application (in particular, for assigning an individual to a particular subcategory or another).

The process of filling out the data in the electronic application has been quite difficult for several reasons: the schools did not understand the requirement, did not have the personnel able to operate the electronic application or did not have enough time available. There was only one educational facility that managed to answer our request within the prescribed period. As we expected from the experiences of the first two stages of our study, two major problems that occured were the non-uniform understanding of the concepts and the assigning of the individuals to transnational categories.

Even with all these difficulties, we assess that the electronic application is now able to provide us with the relevant information about children with special educational needs, about the educational services they receive, about the transnational categories and teachers.

The conclusions resulting from the experimental approach:

1. The electronic application can provide us with data on the evolution and dynamics of children/students during the school year 2011-2012.

2. The electronic application allows us to fill out the data from OECD questionnaires.

3. Having access to the relevant information about the needs of the subjects (children with CES and families, educational establishments, teaching staff and the local communities characteristics), CJRAE can develop appropriate policies at county level: efficient allocation of human and material resources, effective ways of school and vocational guiding, the support needs of teachers, families and local communities.

Our research used as an *independent variable*: the introduction of an **electronic database** for the collecting and processing of data regarding children with special educational needs.

As for the local management we anticipate that the completion of a full and consistent database built using modern methods of collecting and processing data (***the independent variable***) will result in positive and long-term changes to the following (considered as ***dependent variables***):

V1 – relevance for the allocation of human resources (itinerant/support teachers, speech therapists, counselors, psycho-pedagogists, etc.);

V2 – relevance to the allocation of material resources;

V3 – the quality of school and professional orientation of children with special educational needs;

V4 – aknowledging the need for better informing and forming the teachers;

V5 – the level of awareness, support, involvement and valorizing the full potential of family and community

The paper describes at lenght the way in which the 5 dependent variables are positively influenced by the use of data supplied by the electronic tool for collecting and processing data, which has been the subject of the experimental study.

As conclusions of the experiment we can assert the following:

• The electronic database model proposed in the experiment **was accepted and used** by the subjects of the selected sample group.

• The study confirmed that the **proposed database model allows for taking the relevant decisions at local level** on the allocation of human and material resources needed for the education of people with special educational needs.

• The theoretical approach that underlies the functioning of the database brings a **conceptual clarifying** that is necessary from the perspective of inclusive education.

• A modern, flexible, coherent and updated database allows for **unitary statistics at local and national level**. This can represent the basis for fundamental decision making for school policies.

• The short duration of the study didn't allow us to observe and evaluate qualitative developments in the educational services in the counties that were part of the study.

CHAPTER IV: VALORIZING THE RESEARCH RESULTS BY DEVELOPING A SYSTEM OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR ROMANIA

The resources centres are specialized institutions in organizing and providing educational services through multidisciplinary teams for children, pupils, and young people with special educational needs as well as for their teachers and parents, and for the local community.

The legislation in force controls the framework for the organizing and functioning of this institution. The *Resources and Educational Assistance Centre* carries out actions and activities which materialize and apply the **principles** of inclusion, partnership, equal opportunities, access to education, and of resources that must answer the needs of the individual.

The main **advantages** for creating this institution are as follows:

- it organizes and coordinates educational services at the county level;

- it can coordinate all educational aspects regarding the persons with special educational needs in a time that deals with decentralization;

- it introduces new educational services: early intervention, school mediation, education of children with multiple sensory impairments;

- it develops activities in local communities;

- it currently opperates through partnerships and teamwork;

- it evaluates and assesses school and professional orientation for the child/student/young people from an educational perspective, taking into account the real needs of the individual;

- it addresses the child's needs from a multidisciplinary perspective;

- it monitors, at county level, the educational services and the evolution of the beneficiaries;

- it evaluates the quality of services by assessing the child's/student's progress;

- it expands the scope of beneficiaries by including in these services the parents, teachers and members of the local communities;

- it clarifies and strengthens the status of specialists who provide educational services in educational establishments.

Following this study, we could identify a number of **braking factors** in the process of creating and organizing the resources centres:

- the lack of a legislative base when we first started establishing the CRCEA;

- the lack of a positive response from the county councils;

- the different degrees of cooperation between school inspectorates, county councils and social support and child protection services;

- the lack of authority of the speciality inspector and his/her level of involvement in special education issues (not all counties have a speciality inspector for special education, not all school inspectors for special education have the required qualification, not all speciality inspectors manage to make themselves heard at the school inspectorate management level);

- the lack of qualified staff at county level (psychologists, psycho-pedagogists, pedagogists, because of the limited access to these specialities and due to the migration towards institutions that offer better payed jobs, such as Police, Guards, Gendarmerie etc.);

- the inertia and the inflexibility of institutions (the financial and human resources departments from some school inspectorates and from the Ministry of Education, the replicating of the educational services by the county directorates for social assistance and child protection);

- the insufficiency of material (the working spaces, technical facilities) and human resources;

- the insufficient number of employable teaching positions for teachers and teaching aids available at county level, for CRCEA operating;

- the difficulty of transferring employment record books from mainstream schools to CRCE/MBRCEA (for psycho-pedagogical counsellors and speech therapists).

A possible model for an efficient resource centre in the development of educational services from the perspective of inclusive education. Short description:

The Resources and Educational Assistance Centre is an institution specialized in providing educational services to all people in the community who require it. The Resources Centre is an institution in its own right, outside the school, the school

inspectorate or other educational or administrative institutions. It should operate in an accessible facility for assuring an easy access of all interested persons. It should also function as a centre for information and documentation for any person in the community who, at one point, needs help in solving a problem of educational matter.

Such a centre should be able to provide, directly and free of charge, all its statutory services but also to coordinate existing educational services at county level. On the other hand, it should be able to allocate the necessary human and material resources according to the needs of beneficiaries and not to select those beneficiaries depending on existing resources. The qualified personnel with professional experience and real availability must be able to provide the beneficiaries with both services and counselling. As holders of the Resources Centre, its employees are able move from one educational unit to another depending on the actual needs of the beneficiaries and without going through the procedures for deployment/transfer required for teachers employed in secondary education.

This paper presents in detail the structure of the County Resources Centre, the services it provides, a description of these services, and the implications of consulting the database that results from the use of electronic data collection in terms of improving the quality of the educational services rendered.

Here, we only describe two of these services, in order to avoid any confusion which might appear from their simple denomination:

1. The psycho-pedagogical counseling service

a. Components: school counselors who carry out counselling activities in the resource centre and in the psycho-pedagogical counselling offices in the educational establishments in the counties and Bucharest.

b. Description: the service provides school counselling for children, pupils and young people with behavioural and socio-affective disorders and for those with difficulties of integrating and adjusting to the school environment. The service also includes the prevention and intervention component in case of juvenile deviance. This service is available both in the resources centre and in the counseling cabinets operating in schools and kindergartens.

The database allows us to have precise information on the number of children in the transnational categories B and C, respectively: B.10. children with behavioral disorders; C.14. children in grave poverty situations; C.15. children whose parents are emigrants or immigrants, C.16. children belonging to linguistic minorities, C.17. highly gifted children. These data provide us with relevant information on the type of needs that children have in one given county (behavior problems, adjustment problems resulting from ethnic differences, problems related to the financial resources of the family or its educational level, problems related to adjusting to the curriculum or the school environment etc.). Other information that the database can provide is the school and the city in which these children live. In a situation where the school counselors and school psycho-pedagogists are optimal holders of the County Resources Centre, this institution can achieve a proper distribution of children to the existing professionals, so that all children who need psycho-pedagogical counselling and psychological therapy can benefit from these services. On the other hand, the **travel expenses** and the **allotted time** for these movements are reduced (the distribution of children who need psycho-pedagogical counseling can be done depending on the domicile of the school counselors; e.g. If the counselor lives in Reghin, he/she will be caring for the children in that particular town and for the children who live in the surrounding villages). This way, **we can reduce the discomfort of such professionals** who are forced to commute daily, and increase their capacity of intervention when needed. Particularly important is the fact that a greater number of children will benefit from counselling services if the counselors are no longer employed by a certain school, and thus they can provide services for all children in the area who need attention.

2. The information and educational counselling service:

a. Components: library, information and documentation centre, database.

b. Description: the information and educational service address the needs of the school and the community. This service translates in:

- organizing a documentation centre containing specialized information materials that are useful and accessible to both education specialists and people who come from other areas of activity;

- consultancy and counselling for teachers and parents on the matter of promoting the partnership in education;

- consultancy for teachers on addressing education and curriculum development from the perspective of intercultural diversity;

- consultancy and counselling for teachers/other interested persons regarding the organization and developing of programs like "A second chance", the specifics of adult education, etc.;

- consultancy on managing change and managing the development of inclusive schools.

The existence, at the County Resources Centre, of a complete and updated database allows for providing to the community or to the central institutions of accurate information about the educational needs of the children in that county, about educational services available at county level, about the professional quality of teachers and the training needs they have, and about the needs of social and professional integration of young people who have benefited from the educational services available. County Resources Centre **can provide information to children's families** to support their efforts to raise and educate them, **to schools** that schoolarize children with special educational needs, in order to ensure their integration in school, and **to the local community** to ensure social and professional integration of the graduates of the educational system.

We believe that such a construction of the Resources Centre is more effective than the current one and eliminates the currently existing disadvantages and blockages. It is true, only practical experience will be able to provide us with any degree of certainty, but at least theoretically, we tryed to prevent all possible malfunctions

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

A first step in social inclusion is inclusion in education. Before anything else, this represents a strategic approach designed to facilitate the success of **learning for all children**. The inclusive school is an accessible one, which addresses all children's needs, turns them into students and empowers them with the essential elements necessary for their social integration.

At the end of this study, we can say with certainty that, in Romania and in the world, significant steps forward were made, both at decision-making level and at the level of educational practices. *Inclusive education is stated by the law and its principles are formulated explicitly in normative acts*.

Inclusive education is necessary and sufficient for the full development of the personality of all individuals in a society.

Educational support can be offered, through a complex system of educational services, to children, teachers and parents. The most difficult step in the education of a child with special educational needs is that of family and school **accepting** the fact that the child is in need of support.

Our study pointed out *the need for a modern database that uses new concepts and new electronic tools for collecting and processing data. A complex, coherent and updated database can provide information relevant for policy making and decision making at the county or national level.*

At european level, OECD proposes a series of criteria for the diagnosis of the problems as well as a common system for the collection of data, based on which they can build unitary policies and guidelines at a macro level. At the local level such a database allows for better allocation of resources and a better development of activities.

The Resources and Educational Assistance Centre is a flexible institution that can effectively manage the educational services locally. The Resources Centre can and must become, in time, the hard core which promotes and coordinates the inclusive policies and practices at local level, and facilitates the access of all children to a quality education appropriate to their needs and potential.

At this point it is necessary to rethink the procedures for allocating material and human resources from the perspective of inclusive education.

The study also pointed out another very important aspect: the opening of new opportunities for research in this direction, a fact demonstrated by the partial validation of the formulated hypothesis. We believe that our modest initiative can be extended to achieve the following:

- Assessing the level of understanding of the proposed concepts by identifying how to effectively embed the classification in national and transnational categories and by developping a glossary of terms that are accepted at national level and which would arise from the concepts used in the database;

- Implementing, at national level, of a pilot project that establishes the use of the proposed database model by all counties to highlight its real usefulness;

- Extending the study to county resources centres and mainstream schools level for obtaining complete data on all children with special educational needs and all existing professionals at county and national level;

- Formulating proposals to modify and improve the existing legislation in the light of the results of the studies carried out in support of the development of educational services ment to provide an education for all children.

Anexa

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                              │     COUNTY      │
                              │    RESOURCE     │
                              │      AND        │
                              │   EDUCATION     │
                              │      AL         │
                              │   ASSISTANCE    │
                              │    CENTRE       │
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Psycho-pedagogical support services	Specific therapy and support services for school integration	Psycho-pedagogical assessment services	Social assistance and school mediation services	The information and educational counselling service

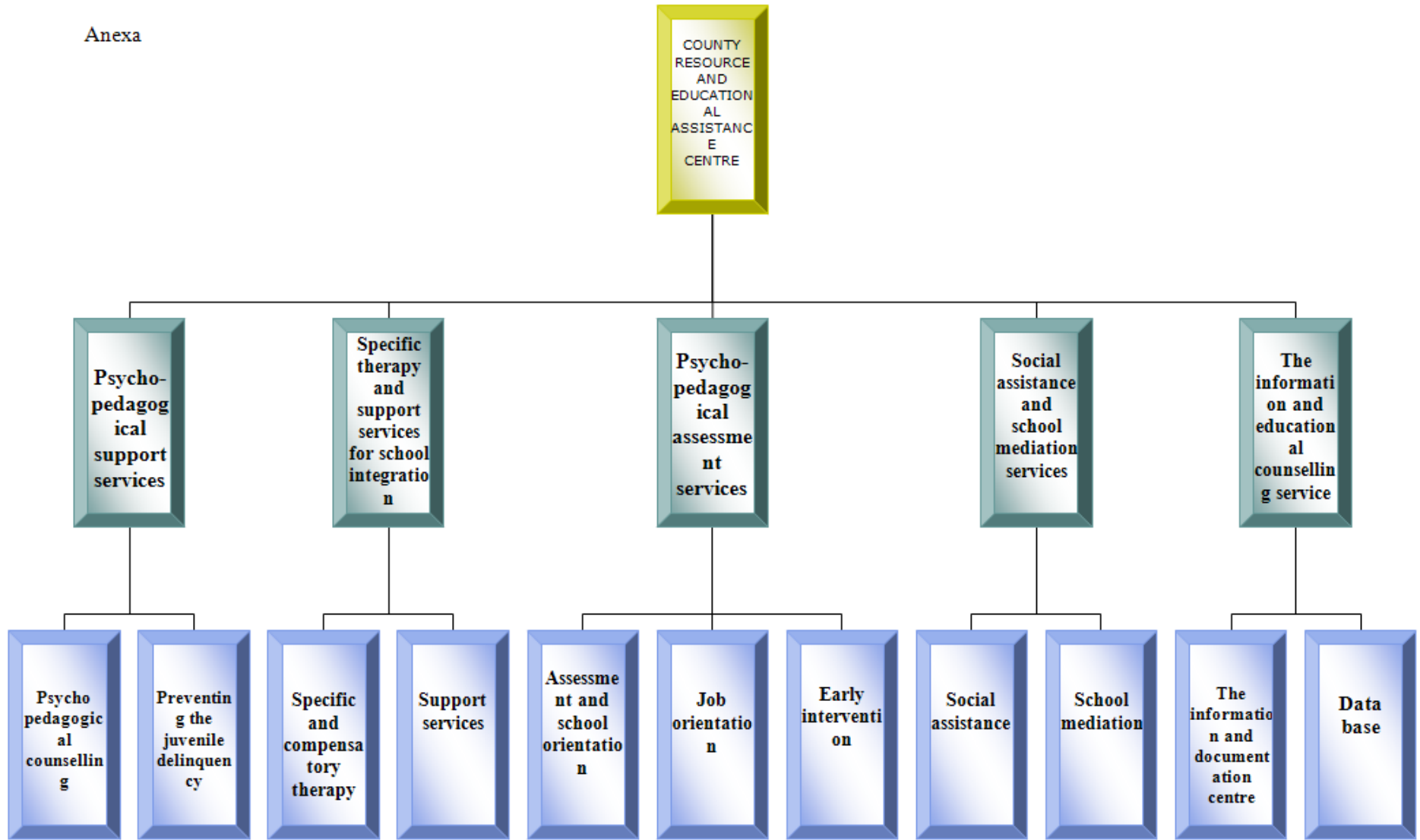| Psycho pedagogical counselling	Preventing the juvenile delinquency	Specific and compensatory therapy	Support services	Assessment and school orientation	Job orientation	Early intervention	Social assistance	School mediation	The information and documentation centre	Data base

Diagram 14 The County resource center diagram

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