Chapter 15
Training and Mentoring Activities for Teachers Involved in the Inclusive Education Process in Romania

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors present the activities that they have designed and implemented in a project that had as its theme the continuous training of teachers for the development of psycho-pedagogical and specialized skills, necessary to build an inclusive school. The intervention on teachers was conceived as a mentoring program, which would provide a structured framework for opportunities to improve the teaching activity carried out with all students in the class. Today's schools are educational institutions whose mission is to ensure a quality education for all students by using all resources and partnerships with their communities.

INTRODUCTION

Education in general and inclusive education in particular are areas that governments and communities need to address through a universal and rights-based approach that ensures real learning and development opportunities for all children. As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on the Rights of the Child, education is a fundamental right that must be guaranteed according to the abilities and needs of each child, without excluding anyone because of their personal characteristics.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a continuous process that includes all the activities through which joint efforts are made to develop and capitalize on existing resources in schools, so that all students learn and participate together. Inclusive education aims to ensure access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is receptive, acceptable, respectful and supportive. Students participate in the education program in a common learning environment, with support to reduce and eliminate barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion (Ghergut, 2001).

Inclusive education is a broad, lasting, complex process that requires a lot of involvement, creativity, adaptability and flexibility, empathy, availability, special interpersonal relationships and understanding (Vrăsmaș & Vrăsmaș, 2021, p. 63).

Inclusive education takes place in a common learning environment, an educational environment in which students from different social backgrounds and with different abilities learn together. Common learning environments are used for most of the students' regular instructional hours and may include classrooms, libraries, gyms, performance halls, music halls, canteens, playgrounds, and so on.

Common learning environments are characterized by the following features:

- allow each student to fully participate in the learning environment that is designed for all students and is shared with classmates,
- provides a positive climate, promotes a sense of belonging and ensures students' progress towards appropriate personal, social, emotional and academic goals.
- respond to individual learning needs by providing sufficient levels of support and by applying student-centered teaching practices and principles, and
- propose a learning process to be offered to students with mixed skills, in order to realize their full potential.

The basic conditions necessary for organizing an inclusive education process are:

- use of teams of specialists; teamwork carried out by various specialists allows addressing the needs of all students, creating an inclusive educational environment,
- use of an inclusive curriculum; an inclusive curriculum is one adapted to the needs and learning styles, designed to capitalize on relevant topics at local, regional level, and
- creating the school-family-community partnership; Inclusive schools manage to create a real partnership between school-family-community, through which they get the involvement of parents and the community, to support the activities carried out in the school.

The implementation of inclusive education is achieved through the creation and development of a community. In the inclusive educational environment, all resources are valued, so as to offer all students equal opportunities for training and development, in a fair and cohesive system, able to take care of all citizens, ensuring their dignity, respect for differences and equal opportunities.

Inclusive school and inclusive classroom are educational environments in which all children are guaranteed the full enjoyment of the right to education and respect for the right to non-discrimination, in which children with special educational needs are included in learning by qualified teachers, able to meet the needs of each child.

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