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Pupils With Special Educational Needs in Polish and German Educational System

Although many endeavors of European countries for preparation an optimal didactical offer in their institutional education system, there are more often found children with learning difficulties. These pupils have special educational needs, whose problems stem from disabilities and developmental dysfunctions, and also social maladjustment.

Every European country by legislative solutions of the way of supporting these children, aims on creating for them comfortable conditions , as well in the range of didactic aims realization as in effective functioning in social environments. Therefore, it became necessary to introduce methods and rules of acting towards children, who need special care in didactic process, the European countries integration, however, facilitates the experiences exchange and creates a chance for finding the effective practical solutions.

The aim of this article is to present and compare binding Polish and German institutional solutions and practical experiences in the area of supporting children with special needs from Polish and German primary school (Grundschule). It has also practical aim in conducted researches, which is to use the outcomes from the research in upbringing, for example, in preventing schools failures, to improve a didactic work – educational and therapeutic.

The realization of assumed aims: cognitive and practical, was able only thanks to researches conducted in chosen schools in Berlin and in Stettin. Observations and interviews in institutions enabled to collect data of many detailed elements of education system, including local conditions, pedagogical competences, methodical solutions from the area of therapeutic activities, and even the cooperation of institutions with those external, which support the revalidation of children with special educational needs. Because the educational system of both European Union countries differentiate from each other in some way, it was necessary to analyse the actions, which were taken outside the school environment (especially German institutions).

Children with special educational needs in the system of school for general use – arrangements, definitions and education models

[1In polish education system, the children with learning difficulties used to go to mass school. There weren't organized for them special school \(therapeutic\) as it happened in other countries; e.g. Germany and Czech](#)

The definition of special educational needs refers to this group of pupils, which can not fulfill the prevalent and common demands of education program, and therefore needs additional and specialist pedagogic help(M. Bogdanowicz, 1989). These pupils should be taught by specially prepared staff in the special base conditions, with taking into consideration different organizational solutions. They need also special programs of teaching and upbringing, special methods and means of pedagogic influence, adjusted to their individual needs, abilities and limitations (M. Bogdanowicz, 1996).

Special educational needs are assigned to specific types of disability, which may appear as sense defect, physical disability, intellectual disability, chronic diseases, and maladjustment behaviors. Moreover, they may appear as specific learning difficulties, where, children with normal level of intelligence (or even higher) with maturity in their development, and residence in right and normal cultural environment, have problems in learning he basic school competences.

Currently, the definition *a child with special educational needs* is seen as an every individual that needs an educational support no matter what the type and the character of the developmental differences(U. Morcinek, 2007, s.5). The needs of the majority of pupils of distinguished etiology used to solve, and still is fulfilling, a revalidating activity of special pedagogues in the area of intuitions of special education¹. This is also very often universal education activity open for use concerning fulfilling pupils needs in the basis of integration ideology.

In the European literature it can be found the term *mainstreaming* - what means inclusion instead of *integration*. The concept of inclusion – the common stream, it is realized by similar rules and it assumes creation of education models for children with special educational needs in the environment, which is the least restricting and limiting (T. Żółkowska, 2007, s.14). It should be understand in the way that in the each class of regular school we can find only one pupil with special educational needs, among whom are disabled who have a medical opinion of having a need for special education (Standard rules for leveling of chances for disabled, 1993). What gives the basis for this type of actions in Poland is , for example, education rules. It regulates the range and the kind of help for children with special educational needs

(see, *Ustawa o systemie oświaty z dnia 7 września 1991 r., Rozporządzenie w sprawie warunków organizowania kształcenia, wychowania i opieki dla dzieci i młodzieży niepełnosprawnych oraz niedostosowanych społecznie w przedszkolach, szkołach i oddziałach ogólnodostępnych lub integracyjnych z dnia 18 stycznia 2005 r. i nne*).

Rozporządzenie w sprawie zasad udzielania i organizacji pomocy psychologiczno – pedagogicznej.....z dnia 7 stycznia 2003 r. This article points on the realization of this help in the form of didactic, leveling ,and specialist, such activities as: compensatory, speech therapy, socio-therapeutic, psycho-education or corrective exercise

In Germany, however, in the Berlin area, new legislative regulations toward children with special education needs are obligatory since 26th of January 2004 (Schulgesetz fur Berlin, 2004, s.43-44). Children with special educational needs, who may be subject to including education, are: visually challenged, chronically hard of hearing, have speech and learning disabilities, are even intellectually disabled with disabled movement development and with

somatic illness, they may have even autism or any other socio-emotional disability. The therapeutic work, however, in the areas of Berliner schools (land) is based on a different model of support than in Poland, and this would be discussed in the next part of this article.

The characteristics of educational institutions, in which the researches were conducted

Researches in the Polish side were conducted in two Stettin primary schools; PS nr 54 and PS 64

Primary School nr 54, which is located in the centre of Stettin, was built in 1959 and in its first period of existence there were 1000 pupils. Nowadays, there are 410 pupils in 20 different departments and 8 of them are integrative departments. With children and teenagers work 50 teachers. Moreover, there are employed: speech therapist, school pedagogue and psychologist. This institution has 19 classes, and 1 thematic workshop class - computer class and one for gymnastics. In this institution pupils can sign for additional, faculty workshops: journalist, theatrical, Stettin or art devotees, or they can participate in the vocal band.

The school is placed in the city centre, however, pupils are from different and sometimes distant districts. The institution is valued by parents because it gives a possibility of including their children, who need a specialist support, into the international education mainstreaming. Generally, in the integrative departments there are 150 pupils, where 42 of them have medical opinion of the need of special education.

The next institutions, where the researches took place is the Primary School nr 64, which was built in 1960, and which is now placed also in the city centre, in, so called, Old Stettin. At the very beginning, there were 600 pupils, and in the result of giving this school a musical character, and in the result of a great amount of students coming from different districts, it reached over 1090 pupils. This institution is renovated, classes and workshops (physical, biological etc.) have new, better equipment. There is a big sport field, track, ski jump, and other sport equipment. Since 1985 the institutions started working on special didactic school plan. For the special attention were put gifted children and those with various, different talents. They could develop their talents and interests with regard to author's individual didactic program. In the school there are also children with various, different dysfunctions and development disabilities, for example, with ADHD syndrome, dyslexia, rebellious-opposition disability, visually impaired, hard of hearing, with health problems and one autistic child. In this institution there is one integrative class, which was conditioned to be created by the needs of children from this school with medical opinions (4 persons).

The researches on the German side were conducted in two primary schools in Berlin; „Justus – von – Liebig – Grundschule” nr 3 and „An der Geissenwelde” nr 40. **The school „Justus – von – Liebig – Grundschule” nr 3** was created in 1903 as an evangelical school for boys, and later girls there were also accepted. In the very beginning there were three schools as one, and since 1995 this school functioned as one, independent institution. Now there are 330 pupils, with whom work 17 teachers. In the school are many workshop classes, for example, designed for foreign language learning, computer engineering, painting, music, nature and environment protection. Moreover, there is a special place for dance learning, and for theatrical workshops. When the child is in the third grade he or she is obliged to start learning to play any musical instrument he or she chooses, for example, flute or piano. The institution

give the access, for pupils, to sport field and playground with lots of attractive entertaining equipment.

The school organizes very often, different exhibitions of children's creativity, musical concerts, outdoor parties, and so forth. Annually, in the summer time, the parties begin, which aim is to promote the school.

In this school at the beginning of the educational level learn 15 children that need special educational support. Among them are pupils with mild and moderate level of intellectual disability. Children that have problems with acquiring knowledge, and among them are children from dysfunctional and very often illiterate families. There are even children with speech disorders, and those having difficulties with reading or those being visually impaired. Moreover, there is a child with ADHD syndrome and one autistic child. It is also worth mentioning that to this group are also included children from dysfunctional families, very often from pathological families (in this case, those family are very often from other, different countries).

The school „**An der Geissenwelde**” nr 40 exists since 1994 and is placed on the east side of Berlin. It was renewed in 2006-2007 and has now 280 pupils, who are being taught by 17 tutors. Similarly, as previous institution, this one has many didactic workshops, and among them one that was design for pottery, and the class design for dance learning, for music and so forth. This school has been participating in the program „Demokratische lernen & leben” (democratic education and life), in which take part over 22 schools from Berlin, and the aim of this program is the integration of children with different nationalities. This school activity is very important, because in this district exists many nationalistic groupings.

In this institution on the level of elementary education are four children with mild and moderate intellectual disability, also there are three children with reading difficulties and one autistic child. What is more, there are two children with socio-emotional problems, they were raised in pathological families.

The schools collaboration in the field of revalidation with the non-school environment

Polish and German education system differ in the range of participation the revalidation process of persons that deal with individual child's therapy. The aim of Polish institutions is to include the maximum number of children into integration and to provide an effective therapeutic activities, whereas the model of work in Germany is totally different. This difference is a reason of different legal regulations and different support concept of children with special educational needs.

Primary school nr 54 collaborates with Pedagogic- Psychological center, Urban Center of Family Support, Clinic for Chronically Hard of Hearing and Hearing Impaired. The second Stettin school collaborates with Pedagogic- Psychological center, police, board of social trustees. Although statutorily described actions regarding collaboration children with their parents and although pedagogues effort concerning this collaboration, only in few cases teacher can receive support in therapy from family environment. It has to be stressed that the biggest effort in the field of therapy make teachers – tutors that work indirectly with children having disordered development. In the investigated German institutions, school psychologist collaborate with Jugendamt (the institution which help in children and teenagers development), with other schools and with pupils' parents. If the given “circle of collaboration” gives no adequate support for child, so that the child have bigger problems, then it is sent to:

1. Freie Traeger „die Willa”-the Institution that helps school in its supporting children, that have severe problems with: reading, writing, speaking and supporting disabled children in various fields. Many experts are employed, those who work individually with children;

2. Spezialschulen „Schule“ - this is an institution designed for children, that have severe emotional problems, although these individuals are characterized by above average intelligent quotient. This institution employ highly qualified staff of psychology and psychiatry experts. The learning is everyday in the afternoon. The price of one day therapy is 350 Euro, however, this therapy is financed by National Health Service and Jugendamt; but in the case that economical situation of a given family is good, then they pay for the therapy by themselves.

3. Sonderschule – special schools, the segregation institutions designed for disabled children, who don't stay in the integration in regular, normal schools. It should be stressed here, that when in German normal school remains a child with a severe type of disability, for example intellectual disability, then it should be given him 15 hours per week of additional classes led by a teacher from special school.

Pedagogues competences to work with children with special educational need in investigated institutions

In the the Primary school nr 54 in the 8 integration departments work additionally 8 supporting teachers with special pedagogy education. There are also 2 school pedagogues, psychologist, speech therapist and therapist who conduct corrective- compensatory workshops. Many teachers from this school finished and passed qualifying courses concerning dyslexic disorders in children.

In the Primary School nr 64, however, classes of pedagogical therapy lead expert - reeducator, the majority of teachers that lead the mandatory classes have finished the postgraduated studies and many courses from the field of developmental dyslexia. In the integration class the teacher has a specialist preparation to work with pupils, that have special educational needs. In the German school we observe different model of the institutions functioning. In these schools there are no employment for pedagogues who are prepare as a specialists to deal with children that have special educational needs. As it was mentioned earlier, with German schools work specialized institutions, that support educational posts in work with children that have developmental disability or socio-behavioral disability. Nevertheless, when in class appears a child with some disability, the teacher must go to a special course that will prepare him to work, for example, with autistic child. Moreover, for these children in an institution are organized additional classes (15 hours per week) with a teacher that come there from special school (Sonderschule).

In the German education system (on the basis of Berlin area) there isn't commonly known and used the including education, as it happens in our country, there is only creating the comfort for children with problems that they are allowed to learn with normal and healthy peers. They received the specialist help in the non-school institutions.

Therapeutic actions toward children with special educational needs on the Polish and German primary schools

. The first of Polish schools – PS 54 in the field of additional, extra classes offers didactic and corrective workshops and also specialist workshops such as; revalidation, speech therapy, corrective-compensatory, sociotherapy and the therapy for dyslectic children. There are also

courses with corrective gymnastics .The area of specialistic pedagogic supporting toward children with special educational needs is financed by Stettin town council.

The second institution – PS 64, it offers not only the didactic-compensatory classes, but also speech therapy and corrective-compensatory classes. In this school there are no revalidation classes, children with severe development disability are sent, according to medical opinion, to special institution.

In the public school „Justus – von- Liebig- Grundschule” nr 3 are not only the basic courses, but also the compensatory, mainly these are the german language courses, for persons that have problems in this field (1 hour per week), and this mainly regard children from abroad. Although they were born in the german land the majority of them are raised in their ethnic groups, and mothers do not know the german language.

The primary school „An der Geissenwelde”offers only the additional compensatory classes for pupils with learning difficulties and from each 25-person classes there are sent one, two, or three pupils.

Concluding, in polish institutions there are much more specialist therapeutic courses , and this is a reason of different support model for children with disabilities in both therapeutic systems. Very often in german education system only the children with severe developmental and social disabilities are sent to institutions and special institution which are specially prepare to conduct pedagogic therapy.In Poland, however, if children with special educational needs are able to cope with duties in the regular school, they can continue to learn there and they may receive latter the specialist help.

The base an the specialist equipment in investigated schools

The base and the equipment of educational institution is an important element of the therapeutic supporting system toward children, who because of their limits and disabilities learn in this area. In the case of pupils that have more severe type of disability, for example, physical, these equipment are: adjusted restroom, driveway or the elevator. What is more, there are therapeutic classes designed for specialist workshops are equipped with the firs aid kit.

In the school nr 54 in Stettin can be found only restrooms for disabled, there is a lack, however, of elevators and driveways The second of investigated polish institutions has the restrooms adjusted to people with sever physical disability, there aren't many psychically disabled children, though. In the school are there are two therapeutic rooms, these have furniture and are adjusted to actual methodological requirements of conducting corrective-compensatory therapy and speech therapy.The observations on the german side reveal different arrangement of economical and apartment conditions.

In the „Justus – von – Liebig- Grundschule” nr 3 institution are two therapeutic rooms. One of them (Basale Forderung) is designed for children with speech disorders and with reading and writing disabilities; the other therapeutic room is for children with problems with learning mathematics.The rooms are furnished and are adjusted to therapy of tables and desks, there can be fond also a lot of didactic help used to exercises. The institution doesn't have any infrastructural and constructive facilities for psychically disabled children.

In the primary school „An der Geissenwelde” nr 40, there is also a lack of special infrastructural facilities for physically disabled. In this school are there is also a therapeutic room (Basal Forderung) designed for therapy of children with reading, writing , and counting disabilities and with speech disorders. This room is furnished and equipped with didactic helps; didactic games toys and library. By concluding it can be said that polish schools have much more equipment and their infrastructure is adjusted to children's' needs, who have special educational needs. Generally, in german schools there is a lack of specialist

constructive solutions for psychically disabled, because about those children care only non-school institutions.

Conclusion and the finishing summary

From the historic point of view in the German perspective of inclusion of pupils, that have special education needs into mainstream of regular, public school has very short history as well as in Poland. The first integrative classes were created in Hamburg in 1983, and in Poland the integration of children into mass school started simultaneously with the education system reform in 1999. However, the pupils' problems who have social and developmental disorders, although it is the same in every European country it looks different in different educational systems. As it results from conducted researches in German land and from the diagnostic material from institutions of this type in Stettin it can be stated:

- Two presented supporting models for children with special educational needs, although have the same elements of system of support, in many dimensions are different, however, they have the same aim – including children into society mainstream, that is open and gives access for everyone (E. Wapiennik, R. Piotrowicz, 2002).
- In the context of presented researches, it can be stated, that in Germany is obliged the system of partial including education; children's problems with deficits and developmental disorders more often than in Poland are resolved by specialist non-school institutions and by segregation education;
- Because of that in German regular primary schools there is a lack of teachers that are specialize in developmental disorders in order to work with different children; they have a great support from persons that are specially prepared for therapeutic work outside the mass school area. Meanwhile, in Polish schools, although they function in the system of including education, there is a lack of the enough number of teachers, that would conduct the integration workshops;
- German school collaborates with child's parents, however in Poland, although there are many trails for collaboration, it is still only the theory
- Methods and therapeutic supporting institutions in both systems are taken by teachers accordingly to child's educational needs, and their variety and usage depend on pedagogic competences and general financial conditions of system.

From the talks with German workers of regular schools, the biggest problem are pupils from abroad, who do not integrate with school society, because they very often remain in their ethnic groups, although they were born in the German land. This group of children are separated from normally functioning society and they during their development do not acquire any social predispositions, therefore they are today for pedagogues a significant challenge.

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