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Inclusive education – the need for systemic changes

Kształcenie integracyjne – konieczność zmian systemowych

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule przedstawione zostały zmiany systemowe w strukturze edukacji na Litwie; prezentujemy również ruch na rzecz kształcenia integracyjnego. Litwa stosuje międzynarodowe podejście do kształcenia integracyjnego (UNECOSO, 2008). Zrozumienie tego rodzaju edukacji spowodowało przesunięcie uwagi od zaburzeń do praw i potrzeb człowieka. W świetle prawa uznaje się, że dla dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi niezbędna jest pomoc i opieka w procesie edukacji, która pojawia się w związku z ich wyjątkowym talentem, wrodzonymi lub nabytymi zaburzeniami lub niekorzystną sytuacją w otoczeniu osobistym. Celem autorów opracowania jest przegląd zmian systemowych litewskiego systemu edukacji prowadzących do kształcenia integracyjnego. Podstawą badań była teoria systemów przy uwzględnieniu dwóch ogólnych podejść: 1) *podejścia przekrojowego*, w którym nacisk kładzie się na interakcje zachodzące między dwoma lub większą liczbą systemów, oraz 2) *podejścia rozwojowego*, w którym szczególnie uwzględnienia się zmiany zachodzące w systemie z biegiem czasu. Zastosowanymi metodami badań poszukiwawczych były przegląd dokumentacji oraz metaanaliza. W opracowaniu wykazano, że zmiany systemowe dotyczą rozwoju strategii i praktyk edukacyjnych, ram finansowych i administracyjnych, wsparcia edukacyjne poprzez usługi psychologiczno-pedagogiczne oraz szkolenia nauczycieli w zakresie kształcenia integracyjnego.

Słowa kluczowe: kształcenie integracyjne, specjalne potrzeby edukacyjne, zmiany systemowe

Abstract

In this paper we present the systemic changes in education in Lithuania as well as the simultaneous movement towards inclusive education. Lithuania is following an international approach on inclusive education (UNECOSO, 2008). The latter understanding prompted a shift of focus – from disorder towards human rights and needs. It is legally recognised, that children with special educational needs have a need for assistance and services in the education process that

occurs due to being exceptionally gifted, having congenital or acquired disorders or disadvantages in their personal surroundings. The authors of the paper aimed to overview the systemic changes of the Lithuanian education system leading towards inclusive education. The research was based on systems theory taking into account two general approaches: 1) *a cross-sectional approach* – with a focus on the interactions that take place between two or more systems, and 2) *a developmental approach* – with a focus on the changes occurring in a system over time. Documentary review as well as meta-analysis have been employed as the methods of the exploratory study. The paper discloses that the systemic changes cover developments in educational policies and practices, including the financial and administrative framework, educational support through Pedagogical Psychological Services, and teacher training for inclusive education.

Key words: inclusive education, special educational needs, systemic changes

Introduction

The educational system in Lithuania has been developed progressively over the past 25 years with the aim to create an inclusive education system which is based on the principle of equal opportunities and social justice. Lithuania is following an international approach on inclusive education (UNESCO, 2008), which is understood as an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all whilst respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination.¹ The latter understanding prompted a shift of focus – from disorder towards rights and needs. It is legally recognised, that children with special educational needs have a need for assistance and services in the education process that occurs due to being exceptionally gifted, having congenital or acquired disorders or disadvantages in their personal living environments¹. A paradigm shift from a clinical model towards a social educational model influenced the substantial changes in concept used in Lithuania. The main changes in concepts and terms are based on the principle of ‘person first’ and non-discrimination. The concepts and terms used in the field of inclusive education in Lithuania are relevant to a social educational paradigm and thematic key words for special needs and inclusive education, defined by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education². The authors of the paper aimed to overview the systemic changes of the Lithuanian education system, which leads-towards inclusive education.

Research Methodology

The exploratory study, including document review and meta-analysis, has been used as a method of the given research. Using exploratory research we, as researchers, sought to

1 Lithuanian Republic *Law on Education* (2011, article 2/24), XI-1281.

2 *Thematic key words for special needs and inclusive education. Glossary of Terms*. 2014, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

understand better the systemic changes in the field of inclusive education in Lithuania. An exploratory research was an attempt to determine if the results might be explained by the currently evident systemic changes in the field of education. The research was based on a systems theory taking into account two general approaches: *a cross-sectional approach* – with a focus on the interactions that take place between two or more systems, and *a developmental approach* – with a focus on the changes in a system over time. The research presented in this article has been implemented in two stages. The first stage of the research reviewed the documents relating to inclusive education in Lithuania and covered the main issues such as educational policy, educational support, educational inclusion in practice and teacher training for inclusion. The second stage studied research findings from other independent studies, published in scientific periodicals ‘Special Education’³ and ‘Social Welfare: Interdisciplinary Approach’⁴ in the period 2011–2016. A meta-analysis was employed for this purpose. In this particular context of inclusive education, a meta-analysis responds to several problems in educational research while the important issues are studied by numerous investigators⁵. Good meta-analyses aim for complete coverage of the relevant studies, look for the presence of heterogeneity, and explore the robustness of the main findings using sensitivity analysis⁶. Meta-analysts have played an important role in formalising the methodology of research synthesis. To facilitate comparisons across studies, meta-analysis has allowed the bringing together of seemingly diverse findings from individual primary research studies into a common metric called an effect size (*Harsh & Clarke, 2009*).

Research Findings I

This section is based on the review of the documents relating to inclusive education in Lithuania, and covers the main findings relating to educational policy, educational support, educational inclusion in practice, and teacher training for inclusion.

National policies on Inclusive Education in Lithuania: developmental approach

The legislation towards inclusive education has been developed progressively over the past two decades to reflect Lithuanian shifts in its democratic and humanistic tradition. The creation of a new education system and the implementation of the new educational aims declared in *the Education Act of the Republic of Lithuania*, passed on 25 June 1991, represented a challenge to the entire educational community at the time. This document had a strong impact on the fate of children with severe mental

3 <http://socialwelfare.eu/index.php/SE>.

4 <http://socialwelfare.eu/index.php/sw/index>.

5 Bangert-Drowns, Robert L. – Rudner, Lawrence M.: <http://www.ericdigests.org/1992-5/meta.htm>.

6 Davies HTO, Crombie IK. *What is a Systematic Review?* Newmarket: Hayward Medical Communications, 1998: www.evidence-based-medicine.co.uk.

disabilities – they have been allowed to learn in educational settings as ‘educable’. The education of children with special educational needs (SEN) and the guarantee of educational support in institutions of comprehensive education became one of the main challenges at that time. Schools were not sufficiently prepared to accept every child, mainly due to teacher training issues (teachers were not adequately educated to support every individual child with diverse needs in the classroom). However, the movement for inclusive education was very active, and, in the 20 years since Lithuania regained its independence, an intensive transition from a medical clinical (‘defectological’) to a social educational approach towards the education of students (especially those with SEN) has occurred (Ališauskas et al. 2009; Evans & Sabaliauskiene 2010). The previous *defectology* terminology, which focused on diagnostic categories and problems located ‘within the child’, has been replaced with the notion of special educational needs (SEN), which stresses the importance of the context in which children are educated (Evans & Sabaliauskiene, 2010, *Law on Education, 2011*). This has led to the creation of a decentralised system that passes responsibility for special schools to municipalities on the assumption that they will change into resource centres. This went along with requirements for all schools to be made accessible, and the provision of funding to support students with SEN in regular schools with teacher assistants and other professionals (special teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, social pedagogues). In recent years, the majority of children with SEN in Lithuania are educated at general education schools together with their peers through inclusive education. According to statistical data, in 2015 there were 344 721 school aged children in Lithuania. 39 219 students (11,3 percent of the total school population) are identified as having SEN. 3 615 students (1,04 percent of the total school population) are educated at special schools and classes. The majority (up to 98,2 percent) of school age children with SEN are educated at general education schools together with their peers through inclusive education. Children with SEN may complete education programmes within a shorter or longer time than prescribed. Children with profound SEN can study at designated general education schools up to 21 years of age.

The main ideas of inclusive education and the inclusion concept are stated in the strategic national documents – *Law on Education (2011)* and *National Education Strategy 2013–2022*. The latter document ensures equality for individuals irrespective of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social position, religion, beliefs or convictions. It assures each individual access to education, opportunity for attainment of a general education level and a primary qualification and creates conditions for in-service education or gaining a new qualification. Equal opportunity is one of the main principles upon which the educational system is based. The legal developments towards inclusive education are illustrated in Table I.

The main ideas of the *Law on Education (2011)* and relating documents correspond to the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*⁷. The Convention states that persons with disabilities should be guaranteed the right to inclusive education at all levels, regardless of age, without discrimination, and on the basis of equal opportunity. States Parties should ensure that: children with disabilities are not

7 Lithuania became a State Party in 2007 March 30.

excluded from free and compulsory primary education or from secondary education; disabled adults have access to general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education, and lifelong learning; disabled persons with receive the necessary support, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education; and effective individualised support measures are put in place to maximize the academic and social development of a person.

Table 1. Documents related to Inclusive Education in Lithuania

Title	Year	Priorities
The Education Act	1991	Consolidated democratic principles of education in the country. This document had a strong impact on a fate of children with severe mental disabilities – they have been allowed to learn in educational settings as ‘educable’.
The Law on Integration of the Persons with Disabilities	1991	Stated that persons with disabilities must not experience any discrimination; they have the right to education, studies, and work regardless of the cause, character and degree of their disability. Employment quota for disabled has been foreseen.
Concept Paper on Education in LT	1992	Legitimated the universal access to education, integration of children with special education needs (SEN) into mainstream groups/classes; the lexicon has been changed from ‘deficit-based’ towards ‘empowerment and education-based’.
The Act of Special Educational Provision for Children with SEN in Regular Educational Institutions	1993	Basis in legislation for integrated education of children with SEN.
<i>Education Law of the Republic of Lithuania (new edition)</i>	1998, 2011	Law on Education for everyone: the main statements of the Law on Special Education (1998) were integrated into the <i>Law on Education (2011)</i> . Law foresees educational support for children, their parents, and teachers, psychological support, social pedagogical, special pedagogical and special support, also support for schools and teachers, health care in school, transportation of children if needed.
State Education Strategy	2003–2012	Accessible system of continuing education that guarantees life-long learning and social justice in education. Establishment of a wide network of Pedagogical Psychological Services.
State Education Strategy	2013–2022	The main aim – autonomous and networking schools, qualified teachers, wide possibilities for every learner.

Title	Year	Priorities
<i>The Concept Paper on Good Enough School</i>	2013	The purpose – to provide a conceptual framework for assessing the quality of school activities. Emphasises the school as a learning community.
Action Plan for Education	2014–2020	Focused on accessibility of IE (inclusive education) and quality of multi-sectorial / multi-professional educational support for children with SEN and their families.

Source: own research

As many EU member States that are parties to CRPD, Lithuania is currently in the middle of a learning process implementing different articles of the CRPD. In the *National Education Strategy 2013–2022* of Lithuania it is clearly stated that it is a priority to create opportunities for the efficient education of children with different abilities and needs. Learning and studying conditions for children of ethnic minorities shall be ensured, and the opportunities to learn, and acquire education shall be created for children of migrant families; the system of support for children and youth of exceptional abilities shall be developed and expanded. In the *National Education Strategy 2013–2022* the goals for the development of education, the means of achieving these goals, as well as the establishment of the key quantitative and qualitative outcomes to be used as the basis for the development of the Lithuanian education and evaluation thereof in 2013–2022 are defined.

Educational Support through Pedagogical Psychological Services

The three level model of pedagogical psychological support (PPS) has been implemented in Lithuania since 2003⁸.

- 1) **First level – School Child Welfare Commission (SCWC).** The aim of the SCWC is to provide the initial special educational and psychological support to a child in their nearest environment. This includes methodological support to teachers, psychological support and educative actions for schools community and families. Every school, including pre-school settings, has a SCWC, which is lead by the Vice Head of the school. SCWC consists of special pedagogue, social pedagogue, psychologist, speech therapist, and teacher (according to the situation – primary school teacher, subject teacher et al). The child and his / her family members take part according to the situation.
- 2) **Second level – Pedagogical Psychological Services (PPS).** The aim of PPS at municipality level is to provide special educational and psychological support in case the SCWC is not able to do it due to the complexity of the situation or if there are not enough professionals in the SCWC. The role of PPS is to assess the SEN

⁸ *Dėl Pedagoginės ir Psichologinės Pagalbos Teikimo Modelio*, 2003 Nr. Įsak-897, Vilnius/ Order of the Ministry of Education *Due to Pedagogical Psychological Support Model* (2003) Nr. Įsak-897, Vilnius.

of children, to identify the level and a character of the child's needs, to support pre-school and school age children, their families and teachers, and to coordinate the educational support⁹, e.g. The PPS of Siauliai city coordinates the educational support with 68 educational settings (schools and pre-schools). The PPS is a permanently working team of professionals, including special pedagogue, social pedagogue, psychologist, speech therapist, neurologist, and administrative staff. The educational support for children, families and teachers can be provided at the PPS or in a school / classroom/ at home etc. according to the needs and situation.

- 3) **Third level – National Centre for Special Needs Education and Psychology (NCSNEP).** The aim of the NCSNEP¹⁰ is to promote the implementation of the educational support strategy at national level. The main functions of the NCSNEP are as follows: coordinate the first and the second level of the special pedagogical and psychological support system; organise training programs for specialists of the municipal PPS; provide advice on assessment / supervision to psychologists, speech therapists and special teachers of the municipal services in problematic cases; construct or adapt psychological and achievement tests and make recommendations for their use in the municipal PPS; develop and adapt the legislation acts that follow the implementation of the Law on Education; coordinate the activity of the municipal PPSs. Also, the NCSNEP provides methodological support for PPSs, certification for PPSs specialists, suggestions to the Ministry of Education and Science regarding special education materials, catalogues of special educational materials, assessment of textbooks' adaptation, etc.

Educational inclusion in practice

In Lithuania, any school is available for every child because of the legal requirement¹¹, and, because of usual school practice. There is a legal requirement that every school should be available for all children, as the diversity of children is the main principle of inclusive education. The availability of education means that the environment of the school should be adjusted, educational support, also, technical assistance and educational materials should be accessible to every child if needed. The legal requirements for all schools are the same all over the country. However, the strategies, models of management and education are flexible according to each school's decision and choice.

Every school and pre-school institution has a Child Welfare Commission, which is based on the teamwork of professionals, including teachers, speech therapist, special pedagogue, social pedagogue, and psychologist. The role of the School Child Welfare Commission is of most importance in the process of education of children with SEN. The role of the Commission is to provide educational support, prevent secondary difficulties, create the most available environment for every child, support teachers in adapting curricula for children with SEN, follow up the progress of children, analyse

⁹ The Order *Due to PPS work organization*, 22 July, 2011.

¹⁰ <http://www.sppc.lt/index.php?-1490251817>.

¹¹ Lithuanian Republic *Law on Education* (2011), XI-1281.

children's educational needs and their reasons, identify the priorities and measures of educational support. The School Child Welfare Commission analyses the situation, the needs, and the progress of every child with SEN twice a year. In cases where the school cannot provide a proper support to the child, school can purchase the needed support from the Resource Centres (e.g., for children with SEN due to visual, audial, etc. disorders) other institutions and / or apply to PPS for further assessment and educational support.

The requirements for teachers¹² of inclusive schools is very high – they should be able to adapt and / or individualise the curriculum according to an individual child needs, use alternative teaching methods and strategies if needed. Teachers need a lot of support from other professionals involved. Teamwork and cooperation of all participants, including school administration, teachers, educational professionals (special pedagogues, speech therapists, etc.), children and their families and other school community members facilitates the implementation of inclusive education at school.

In order to implement inclusive education in school, the systemic approach should be applied. The cooperation among different sectors, institutions and persons involved plays a vast role in the process of inclusive education.

Teacher training for Inclusive Education

In the *National Education Strategy 2013–2022* new developments in the training and work of teachers are out-lined: an integral teacher training and qualification upgrading system shall be developed; it should be oriented towards the changing role of a teacher in a knowledge society, and the new competences and values that are necessary for a contemporary teacher. In 1991, when the integration and inclusion process began, Lithuanian mainstream teachers' opinions were: 'we are not prepared to teach disabled pupils', 'we have no knowledge'. The initiative from policy makers was a course in initial teacher training programmes. From 1995, the Ministry of Education and Science made compulsory the inclusion of a course on special needs education in all teacher training programmes. The other impact on teacher education for inclusion was from 2000–2004, when the North and Baltic countries project '*School for All*' was carried out. One of the main priority was 'Teacher Training to Educate Children with Special Needs in Regular Classes'. The student teachers were aware of the main ideas of *School for All*. They had the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from foreign universities preparing the '*Guidelines for Teacher Training to Educate Children with Special Needs in Regular Classes*' (2003), as a result of the project. However, the real practice showed that not all higher education institutions responded to these recommendations. In 2009 Lithuanian experts of the European Agency of Special and Inclusive Education project 'Teacher Education for Inclusion' did research seeking to evaluate the content of initial teacher training programmes, and how this content related to

12 Profile of the Competence of the Teacher's Profession. The Commandment of the Minister of the The Ministry of Education and Science. 2007–01–15. No ISAK-54 [http://www.smm.lt/teisine_baze/docs/isakymai/2007-01-15-ISAK-54\(2\).doc](http://www.smm.lt/teisine_baze/docs/isakymai/2007-01-15-ISAK-54(2).doc).

teacher education for inclusion. The content of 70 universities and 11 non-university study programmes of initial teacher training using The Open System of Conveyance, Consulting and Counselling (AIKOS) were studied. It was found that in 25 programmes (31% of all analysed teacher training programmes) there was at least one course in special needs education or a course related to inclusive education. Usually these courses were found in programmes for primary grade teachers and in special pedagogue and social pedagogue training. Subject teachers were the least prepared to meet the special educational needs of pupils. Most of them did not study any course about special educational needs or inclusive education.

Research Findings II

This section is based on the meta-analysis of research findings from other independent studies, published in scientific periodicals ‘Special Education’¹³ and ‘Social Welfare: Interdisciplinary approach’¹⁴ in the period of 2011–2016.

Since 1991 until recently many research studies were undertaken with a focus on children with SEN in educational inclusion. In studies, which were published in the period of 2011–2016, the general principles of inclusive education as well as the quality of educational assistance, support for different groups of children with SEN, collaboration among teachers and specialists, teachers experiences, and their attitudes and roles were analysed (*Galkiene, 2006; Alisauskas et al. 2009; Geleziniene, 2010; Alisauskas et al. 2011; Alisauskas & Gerulaitis & Milteniene, 2011; Geleziniene 2011; Milteniene & Venclovaite, 2012; Ališauskas & Alisauskiene & Milteniene, 2013; ect.*). In most of the studies, the concept of inclusive education is more or less connected with the context of special needs education and system of meeting special educational needs in Lithuania.

The meta-analysis of the studies, which were published in Lithuanian periodicals in the period of 2011–2016, revealed three groups of research themes: 1) Experiences in inclusive education; 2) Collaboration and teamwork; 3) Teacher education for inclusion.

The **first theme** reflects the inclusive educational experiences of different groups of participants – starting from the voices of young disabled people, children with SEN, their parents, pedagogues, speech and language therapists and special needs teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists and representatives of school administration (see Table 2).

The experiences of young people show the presence of physical barriers alongside more challenging cultural and institutional barriers, which strongly limit access to inclusive education (*Genova, 2015*). The other research findings show, that Lithuanian pedagogues (especially primary school teachers) take responsibility for the education of children with SEN and acknowledge the advantages of inclusive education. At the same time, empirically identified features of educational models are more characteristic to integration rather than inclusive education.

¹³ <http://socialwelfare.eu/index.php/SE>.

¹⁴ <http://socialwelfare.eu/index.php/sw/index>.

Table 2. Summary of the Studies: Experiences of Inclusive education

Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
Barriers to Inclusive Education in Greece, Spain and Lithuania: Results from Emancipatory Disability Research (Genova, 2015)	To give voice to three local organisations of disabled people and for disabled people in Spain, Lithuania and Greece, discussing the EU policy for inclusive education in relation to personal experiences and national policies.	58 young people with disabilities	The voices of young people show the presence of physical barriers alongside more challenging cultural and institutional barriers, which strongly limit access to inclusive education, showing an opposite trend to the EU policy, and overshadowing the social model of disability.
Development of Functional Mathematical Literacy of Pupils with Moderate Special Educational Needs (Tomeniene, 2014)	To analyse measurements of participants of the (self-) educational process and to disclose possibilities of developing functional mathematical literacy of pupils with moderate SEN in inclusive school.	Eighth form pupils (N = 3) with moderate SEN, parents of these pupils (N = 3), teachers (N = 4) of math and special teachers (N = 2).	Teaching methods, aids, ways of work, which were chosen considering special educational needs, determined pupils' active and independent participation in the lessons. This affected the achievements of pupils with SEN. Therefore, it is important to consider this criterion when choosing teaching methods. It was noticed that the participation in the research affected teachers' and parents' general competencies related to personal growth and the person's general abilities as well as subject-based abilities in the area of special education. Changes in value approaches towards the pupil with moderate special educational needs are observed (acknowledgement of SEN child's individuality, the pupil's cognition, positiveness, etc.).

Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
Teachers' Experiences in Educating Pupils having Behavioural and / or Emotional Problems (<i>Alisauskas & Simkiene, 2013</i>)	To reveal pedagogues' experiences in educational practice educating pupils having behavioural and emotional problems	Teachers of 2nd–4th forms (N = 101) from inclusive schools who educate pupils having behavioural and / or emotional problems	Experiences of pedagogues are very much focused on the clinical aspects (disorders are emphasised, difficulties are related to the child) and behavioural purpose (orientation towards “normalisation”, regulation, controlling, etc.), and are insufficiently related to the systemic point of view (orientation towards interactions with others). Resources indicated by pedagogues show that pedagogues are aware of the importance of collaboration, interactions, team work, individual approaches when coping with pupils' difficulties and improving their behaviour and communication with other participants of education. However, only one third of suggestions are linked directly to pedagogues' personal in-put and responsibility (cognition of a child and individualisation of education as well as consolidation of team work.
Early Support Based on an Ecological Systems Approach within Institutions of Pre-school Education (<i>Alisauskiene & Kairiene, 2013</i>).	To reveal the theoretical concept of family-centred early support and its' interpretations in practice.	Members (N = 10) of the Child Welfare Commission(CWC): 2 speech and language therapists-special needs teachers, 2 movement correction specialists, 1 social pedagogue, 1 psychologist, 2 pre-school	Importance of (non)formal, (non)direct services to the child and family were emphasised. Professionals' support is provided with consideration to the child's environment and his/her functioning, the empowerment of the child and family, emotional and informational support to the family, and the strengthening

Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
		education pedagogues and 2 chairs of CWC.	of relationships between parents and the child. The direction of the support was predicted in collaboration with professionals and parents, considering the strengths of the child and family, using resources of the family and the institution, and in creating equal inter-relationships. The experience of professionals and pedagogues shows that practice is still based on a child-oriented philosophy, determined by the specialities of professionals' initial training and the legislation of professional activity.
Integration of Children with Disabilities into School Community (<i>Leliugiene & Kausyliene, 2012</i>).	To describe and define socio-educational conditions of the integration of disabled children into school community.	Teachers (N = 50), pupils from the grade 7.	The following conditions of successful integration have been distinguished: parent involvement into educational process, adjustment of school environment for disabled people, formation of school policy aiming to integrate children with disabilities, individualisation of educational programmes and adjustment of teaching methods, as well as teachers' cooperation and sharing experience with specialists. Highlighted the problems related to parents' participation: parents raise unrealistic expectations and requirements, are reluctant to cooperate and share information, perceive the

Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
			<p>child's disability inadequately, as well as are rather passive in participating in the activity of the school community, giving proposals. The problems faced by teachers while integrating disabled children include the lack of knowledge and skills about communication with disabled people, the choice of criteria to assess their achievement, as well as design of educational programmes for disabled people. Content analysis of compositions determined the greater part of schoolchildren, who attend school with disabled people, are tolerant and forbearing for the weaker ones and are ready to give them support.</p>
<p>The Realization of Educational Models in Lithuania, Meeting Students' Special Needs (<i>Alisauskas & Gerulaitis & Milteniene, 2011</i>).</p>	<p>To reveal educational models appropriate to students with SEN in Lithuania.</p>	<p>Pedagogues and specialists (N = 1518), who provide pedagogical and special pedagogical support.</p>	<p>Pedagogues, especially primary school teachers, take more responsibility for the education of children with SEN, and acknowledge the advantages of inclusive education. At the same time empirically identified features of educational models more characteristic favour integrated but not inclusive education. The acknowledgement of segregated models (special school, home education) as the most efficient in the present conditions show some negative attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education.</p>

Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
Empowerment of a Pupil with Behavioural and Emotional Disorders: Encouraging Participation in the Educational Process (<i>Geleziniene, 2011</i>).	To analyse and describe the empowerment of the pupil with behavioural and emotional disorders through active participation in educational process.	Pupil (N = 1), classmates (N = 3), grandmother (N = 1), teachers (N = 5), specialist (N = 1), administration (N = 2).	Developing activities together with the pupil in equal partnership with the teachers gradually passed from emphasising discipline on the pupil through control or excessive care to positive behaviour support, encouragement and enhancement. This enabled the pupil's participation and initiated a higher level of positive behaviour in the interactions between the teacher and pupil, the pupil and classmates, and the pupil and his/her family members.

Source: own research

The acknowledgement of segregated models (special school, home-based education) as the most efficient way of learning for children with moderate and profound SEN show negative attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education (*Alisauskas & Gerulaitis & Milteniene, 2011*). The problems faced by teachers while realising inclusive education are related with the lack of knowledge and skills about the communication with people with disabilities, as well as with the difficulties of parents' involvement, and choosing criteria of assessment and designing of educational programmes for children with SEN (*Leliugiene & Kausyliene, 2012*). *Alisauskas & Simkiene (2013)* found that pedagogues are still focused on the clinical aspects (disorders, difficulties related to a child, etc.), and behavioural issues (orientation towards "normalisation", regulation, controlling etc.). It is also evident, that teachers' awareness is based on the systemic point of view insufficiently, e.g., orientation towards interactions with other participants of education and perfection of these interactions. Teachers recognise parents' involvement in educational process, adjustment of the school environment for disabled people, the formation of school policy aiming to include disabled children, the individualisation of educational programmes and adjustment of teaching methods, as well as teachers' cooperation and shared experiences with specialists, as success criteria for inclusive education (*Leliugiene & Kausyliene, 2012*). More and more new research confirms that social participation and close supportive interaction between participants could change experiences towards successful inclusive practices. *Geleziniene (2011)* research showed that the development of activities together with the pupil in equal partnership with the teachers gradually passed from emphasising

discipline on the pupil through control or excessive care to positive behaviour support, encouragement and enhancement. This enabled pupil's participation and initiated a higher level of positive behaviour and emotions in the interactions between the teacher and the pupil, the pupil and classmates, and the pupil and his family members. *Tomeniene (2014)* states, that active participation and intensive interaction during the action research affected educators' and parents' general competencies related to personal growth and the person's general abilities as well as subject-based abilities in the area of special education, positively affected the achievements of pupils with special educational needs. Changes in values towards the pupil with moderate SEN were observed, e.g., the acknowledgement of the child's individuality and positiveness. The importance of (non)formal, (non)direct services to the child and family were emphasised in *Alisauskiene & Kairiene (2013)* study. The direction of the support was predicted in collaboration with professionals and parents, considering the strengths of the child and family, using resources of the family and the institution, and in creating equal inter-relationships.

The **topic of partnership and collaboration** has been analysed in depth by *Milteniene & Venclovaite (2012)*, *Alisauskas & Kaffemaniene & Meliene & Milteniene (2011)*, *Alisauskiene & Kairiene (2011)* (see Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of the Studies: Collaboration and teamwork

Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
Teacher Collaboration in the Context of Inclusive Education (<i>Milteniene & Venclovaite, 2012</i>).	To reveal the specifics of collaboration among pedagogues and special educators in meeting SEN of the students in inclusive education environments.	Teachers (N = 168): 12 special educators, 118 subject and 35 primary school teachers.	Positive attitudes of pedagogues and special teachers were identified towards collaboration and collaborative teaching, and their collaboration experiences at school were revealed. It was found that teachers are highly stimulated to collaborate with their colleagues through the need to discern the SEN of their students and to receive useful advice regarding their further education. This also determines the most frequently used form of collaboration – consultation, which ensures sharing of knowledge and information, but hardly orientates towards the more active collaborative teaching, which is necessary for the provision of quality education.

Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
Parents' Point of View towards Inclusive and Special Education (<i>Alisauskas & Kaffemaniene & Meliene & Milteniene, 2011</i>).	To assess the advantages and disadvantages of special and inclusive education in Lithuania and to ascertain the experiences of self-education of pupils with SEN.	Parents (N = 232) who raise school-aged children with SEN	Parents assess the best pedagogical assistance, which is provided by a teacher and (or) special pedagogue. From the parents' point of view, the educational assistance provided at institutional level is the most insufficiently developed. There is a lack of intensive support from a psychologist and social pedagogue. The need for better provision of compensatory technology was expressed. In regular schools, parents emphasise the need for specialists' (speech therapists, social pedagogues and psychologists) assistance, communication with the school and the need for counselling in the issues connected with their child's education. Higher expectations for pedagogical support in class were expressed.
Presumptions of Mutually Shared Team Competence Development in Early Childhood Intervention. <i>Alisauskiene & Kairiene, 2011</i>).	To present a theoretical model of the concept of the mutually shared team competence in an inter-professional team meeting early special needs of child and family and to find out presumptions of it's development.	Professionals (N = 29) from 6 teams (early intervention centres, pedagogical psychological centres, CWC) took part in the survey.	Individual professional and individual teamwork competences are considered to be most important for the teamwork.

Source: own research

Positive attitudes of pedagogues and special educators were identified towards their collaboration and collaborative teaching (*Milteniene & Venclovaite, 2012*). It was established, that teachers are highly motivated to collaborate with their colleagues

through the need to discern the SEN of their students and to receive useful advice regarding their education. *Alisauskiene & Kairiene (2011)* also found that for professionals, working in the field of early childhood intervention, individual professional and individual teamwork competences were considered to be of most important for the teamwork. Parents emphasised the need for specialists' assistance, e.g., speech therapists, social pedagogues, and psychologists, as well as for better communication with the school, and the need for counselling in issues connected with their child's education in inclusive schools. Higher expectations for pedagogical support in class are expressed (*Alisauskas & Kaffemaniene & Meliene & Milteniene, 2011*). The success of inclusive education is largely related to accessibility of the resources and the teacher's ability to differentiate and distribute these resources while meeting the SEN of children in the regular school class. Teacher's preparation, e.g., knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, etc., is none the less important in creating favourable relationships within the students (*Ališauskas et al., 2011*). There were only few articles analysing the competences of teachers and prospective teachers to acknowledge and tolerate diversity and to educate students with different needs in the context of inclusive education (see Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of the Studies: Teacher education for inclusion

Title, Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
Educators and Future Educators' Competence of Acknowledging and Tolerating Diversity (<i>Milteniene & Daniute, 2015</i>).	To evaluate the competence of educators and future educators to acknowledge and tolerate diversity.	N = 333: 166 inclusive school teachers and 167 pedagogy students	The competence of acknowledging and tolerating diversity was formed by 5 structural components: 1) a clear conception of inclusive education; 2) the assurance of the availability of education for all; 3) the acknowledgment of inclusive education as a measure to ensure every students' educational needs; 4) the understanding that different educational needs are not an obstacle; 5) the ability to follow provisions of inclusive education. The results showed that the lowest average estimate is the component revealing theoretical knowledge of the respondent about the notion of inclusive education. The notion of inclusive education is not completely clear for the respondents. Pedagogues,

Title, Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
			<p>in comparison with the students, better understand the essence and the main principles of inclusive education. It was also determined, that inclusive education is better understood by social and special education students compared to students of pedagogy of a certain subject or education. The comparison of the self-evaluation of the competence of acknowledging and tolerating diversity according to students' specialisation showed that students of special pedagogy evaluate their competence more highly in all spheres in comparison with students of pedagogy of a certain subject.</p>
<p>Teachers' and Prospective Teachers' Competence to Educate Students with Different Needs in the Context of Inclusive Education (Milteniene & Daniute, 2014).</p>	<p>To reveal the specificity of the competence to educate students with different needs in an inclusive school</p>	<p>Teachers (N = 166): primary and high school teachers, special educators, speech therapists, social pedagogues, and prospective teachers (N = 167) studying on educational study programmes</p>	<p>Teachers feel competent to develop independence of all learners, their ability of learning to learn, to identify and develop the strengths of every learner; value collaboration with the family; take responsible for educational achievement of every student; believe that a good teacher is the one who is able to teach all students. Teaching experience is an important factor determining competence to educate students with different needs in an inclusive classroom. Voluntary and informal activities increase prospective teachers' competences and preparedness to work in an inclusive classroom.</p>
<p>Self-Evaluation of Prospective Special Educators' Competencies</p>	<p>To disclose how prospective special educators</p>	<p>First-fourth year students of the first study cycle of special</p>	<p>The study demonstrated that personal and social competencies were an integral part of professional competencies;</p>

Title, Reference	Aim of the research	Participants	Results
from the Standpoint of Personalised Learning Paradigm (Alisauskiene, Kaffemaniene, Alisauskas, 2016)	evaluate their acquired competencies and to interpret them from the standpoint of personalised learning.	education (N = 78).	therefore, in the students' opinion, these competencies should be given particular attention when educating future special educators. Prospective special educators emphasise the influence of studies on changes in and maturity of their values, self-awareness, personal changes. Less expressed characteristics of personalised learning are self-directed learning, implementation of experiential abilities and purposefulness.

Source: own research

The researchers (Milteniene & Daniute, 2015; Milteniene & Daniute, 2014) found that teachers and prospective teachers feel competent to educate *all* students. They are responsible for educational achievement of every student and they believe that a good teacher is the one who is able to teach all students. Teaching experience is an important factor determining competence to educate successfully students with different needs in an inclusive classroom. The lowest level of competence was identified in the field of theoretical knowledge on inclusive education. The comparison of the self-evaluation of the competencies of acknowledging and tolerating diversity of different students' specialisation showed that students of special pedagogy evaluate their competence in all spheres, higher in comparison with regular teacher education students. The recent research by Alisauskiene, et al (2016) showed that special education studies contain elements of personalised learning. Research results also reflect still flourishing traditional teaching approaches. In the academic environment, the teaching tradition is still supported by the approach of a share of 'classic' teachers and students who transfer this tradition from school.

Discussion

Inclusive education is based on striving to effect changes to the whole system of education, and it is closely related to the development of educational paradigms. The methodology for developing inclusive practices must take account of social processes of learning that go on within particular contexts (Ainscow, 2005, p. 11). Developments within individual schools are more likely to lead to sustainable development if they are part of a process of systemic change. In other words, inclusive school development has to be seen in relation to wider factors that may help or hinder progress (ibid, p. 14). The

author suggests that two factors, particularly when they are closely linked, seem to be superordinate to all others. These are: clarity of definition, and the forms of evidence that are used to measure educational performance (p. 14). The suggested factors are of most importance in a Lithuanian context while developing legal documents, collecting data from schools and elaborating inclusive practices, for example the definitions of 'inclusion', 'inclusive education', 'special educational needs', etc., can be interpreted with slight differences. Changing complex systems, sustaining, and scaling the change up are vital if inclusive schooling is to become the benchmark for practice. An innovation becomes systemic when incorporated into ongoing school policy and practice by school personnel without external intervention (Kozleski et al, 2005). *'As long as we have families that need to educate their schools, demand services that are guaranteed by law, and teach teachers to teach their children, we do not have systemic change'* (ibid., p. 13).

Conclusions

1. The research testified that systemic changes linked with inclusive education in Lithuania cover developments in educational policies and practices, including educational support through a three level support model, and teacher training for inclusive education. In this context the main systemic changes in education towards more inclusive induced a shift from a clinical towards a social educational paradigm. It is evident, that changes in the system of education closely relates to the development of educational paradigms: there is increasingly more focus on the learner – both on the pupil at school and on the future specialist as well as the already working pedagogue. As a result, the majority of children with SEN in Lithuania are being well educated at general education schools together with their peers through inclusive education.
2. The meta-analysis of the studies, which were published in Lithuanian periodicals in the recent five years revealed three main research topics: *experiences in inclusive education, collaboration and teamwork, and teacher education for inclusion*. Although, in Lithuania there is an evident lack of studies on subject teaching and learning in inclusive schools, educational research considerably contributes to the systemic changes towards inclusive education. The recent research is already based on the new paradigms and methodologies, such as collaborative teaching and learning, personalised teaching and learning, etc., which guides the whole education system to the learner and changes in his/her role, moving from "the user" to the collaborating partner and creating a unique learning path.

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