



THEMATIC REPORT

Ensuring the right to education for children with sensory impairments

AUTHOR: Tatiana TOFAN, Expert

COORDINATOR:

Vasile COROI,
People's Advocate for the Rights of the Child

CONTRIBUTORS:

Tamara TENTIUC,
Head of the Directorate for the Rights of the Child, Office of the People's Advocate

Vitalina URSU,
Senior Consultant, Directorate for the Rights of the Child, Office of the People's Advocate



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ABBREVIATIONS

PARC – People’s Advocate for the Rights of the Child

NBS – National Bureau of Statistics

UNCRC – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

STS – Support teaching staff

UNCRPD – UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

SEN – Special educational needs

AGC – Adapted general curriculum

MC – Modified curriculum

ISMC – Intra-School Multidisciplinary Commission

ChildHub – Child Protection Hub

RCPA – Republican Centre for Psychopedagogical Assistance

RCIE – Resource Centre for Inclusive Education

NIHR – National Institution for Human Rights

MER – Ministry of Education and Research

MENSANA – Moldovan-Swiss project

MLSP – Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

MoH – Ministry of Health

OPA – Office of the People's Advocate

WHO – World Health Organization

UNO – United Nations Organisation

IEP – Individualized Education Plan

PAS – Psychopedagogical Assistance Service

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Vision: All persons with disabilities have the right to live independently in the community, equally with any other person, with access to the support they may need to exercise this right in full.

INTRODUCTION

Promotion of inclusion and teaching from an individualized perspective requires a comprehensive, holistic and continuous approach, and also specific competencies that all teachers who directly assist a child/student with special educational needs shall have.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the tendency to see a child as an active participant in his or her development process is encouraged. Child development involves encouragement, providing conditions for development, and also protection against various forms of threats, as defined in the Convention. As for development, it is to be promoted in line with the evolving capacities, abilities and autonomy of the child (Art. 5). Child's development is enhanced by protection, encouraged development of skills and strengthened participatory roles in their own evolution and transformation as active actors of society.

The concept of education for the rights of the child is founded in humanistic pedagogy and psychology, which represents the 'philosophical notion of education of a concept based on the development of personality', according to its founders: Maslow, Rogers and Steiner. They proceed from personality as an essential characteristic of a human being, from human dignity and development needs of the individual.

The basic concepts of education for the rights of the child can be found in the system of humanist pedagogy focused on democracy and building the civil society. The core interests of humanistic pedagogy include issues of personality and its development, activity, creativity, autonomy, self-actualization, freedom of choice, responsibility, and orientation toward higher goals and values, all of which are essential parts that have been included in the CDC. In the humanistic approach, positive orientation in education, with an emphasis on positive human skills rather than issues of violence or behavioural disorders, can be noticed.

The basic activity of the education system is education of children, which has a major impact on their development and therefore is directly responsible for the exercise of the right of

access to education and the right to education of an adequate quality. Since all children are involved in this system and spend a large part of their childhood where they build enhanced relationships with their peers and teachers, the education system is naturally responsible for demanding respect for every right of the child.

The school, as a social institution, influences through its actions the strengthening of the environment in line with social expectations, enables individual development of the intellectual potential and personality of students. School is the core environment of growth in the modern society, it is the place where children are prepared for independent life in the community. This approach involves participation of students in the life and work of both the school and the community. Thus, teachers and other professionals in public fields related to the education system must perceive child participation as a process aimed at socialization, responsibility and mutual activities between students, as well as between students and adults.

This Report was produced at the request of the Office of the People's Advocate (OPA), as the National Institution for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (NIHR), in order to fulfil its duties of supporting the respect of 'rights of the child' in the society, including by 'participating in the design of formal and non-formal educational programmes' (Art. 17, Law No. 52/2014 on the People's Advocate).

The Report is part of the programme of Partnership between the People's Advocate's Office and UNICEF for 2023-2024, as well as the Action Plan of the OPA.

Thanks are due to all respondents who participated in this study for the information provided and for sharing their opinions on the right to education of children with sensory impairments in the Republic of Moldova.

SUMMARY

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989. Up to date, the Convention has been adopted by 196 member states of the United Nations (excluding the U.S.). Any state that signs and ratifies the Convention undertakes to fully and properly apply legal standards in the field of promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

The Republic of Moldova ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 12 December 1990. To put into practice the provisions of the Convention, the Parliament adopted in 1994 the Law No. 338 on the rights of the child, which was later repealed by the new Law No. 370/2023 on the rights of the child.

In the Republic of Moldova, the institution in charge of ensuring that the rights and freedoms of the child are respected and that central and local public authorities, persons holding management positions at all levels put in place nationally the provisions of the UN Convention on the rights of the child is the People's Advocate for the Rights of the Child. In this context, the *Report on ensuring the right to education of children with sensory impairments* is part of monitoring of the national implementation of the Convention by the People's Advocate for the Rights of the Child (PARC).

Structurally, this Report consists of two chapters, conclusions, recommendations and appendices.

Chapter I '*International and national legal framework analyzed in terms of the respect for the right to education of children with sensory impairments*' provides an analysis of the international legal framework that governs the right to education of children with sensory impairments. It describes international and European strategic documents, in which the right to independent life and community integration of children is recognized.

The legal framework of the Republic of Moldova that governs the right to education of children with sensory impairments was reviewed. Activities carried out by the Central Public Authorities according to the National Programme for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2022 and the Action Plan on its implementation, approved by Government Decision No. 723/2017 were analysed. Also, the new policy documents in the field of education, which provide for actions in this regard, were analyzed. For example, one of the objectives of the

'Education 2030' Strategy, approved by Government Decision No. 114/2023 and its Implementation Programme 2023-2025, involves modernization of the infrastructure of educational institutions, in such a way that they meet the needs of students, persons with disabilities, providing a safe, protective and inclusive learning environment for all.

Chapter II '*Ensuring the right to education of children with sensory impairments*' presents the actual situation of visually impaired children and hearing impaired children that attend general education institutions. Point 2.1 *Education of hearing-impaired children* describes the conditions that shall be provided for hearing-impaired children so as they are integrated and study in general education institutions.

Point 2.2. *Education of hearing-impaired children* describes the actual situation in general education schools where hearing-impaired children study.

Conclusions and *Recommendations* sections provide conclusions and recommendations based on the findings made following the visits to general education schools, discussions held with visually impaired children and various professionals from education and the associative environment, use of questionnaires among the teaching staff, principals of general education schools. They are aimed at ascertaining the situation of children with visual and hearing impairments enrolled in general education institutions, improving and modernizing the infrastructure of educational institutions in such a way that they meet the needs of students, and raising awareness among all the actors involved in creating conditions and providing the educational inclusion of these children.

The main conclusions are:

- General education institutions are not physically adapted to the needs of children/students with sensory visual impairments and hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.
- General education institutions, with some exceptions, do not have assisting equipment and technologies to meet individual needs, to ensure access and full participation in classes by children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.
- The individualized assistance offered through inclusive education services does not fully meet the needs of children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students. There is a shortage of support staff for children with SEN.

- The existing methodologies of psycho-pedagogical approach to children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students, and teaching supports within general education institutions do not fully ensure the quality of education in accordance with the needs of the children/students concerned.

- General education has a shortage of teachers with special psycho-pedagogical training and knowledge of the sign language, support staff, speech therapists, and in general, the entire teaching and auxiliary staff does not have a proper background;

- General education institutions do not have textbooks, necessary teaching materials depending on the needs of children with SEN;

The main recommendations are:

- Implement the Inclusive Education Development Programme in the Republic of Moldova 2024-2027, and namely: develop an accessible physical environment and an individualized educational process according to the needs and development potential of children/students with sensory visual impairments and hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students;

- Provide general education institutions that integrated children with SEN with specific equipment and assisting technologies, according to the needs of children/students (hearing aids; glasses to see better; walking frame, sticks, modified computer keyboard, communication boards, special chairs etc.);

- Solve some problems of the ergonomic structure so as the child with SEN benefits from it, and namely: adapt the classroom space, including the furniture, to the somato-physiological and health needs of students; pay special attention to place in the classroom a bank where the child with SEN sits;

- Provide educational institutions that integrated children with SEN with textbooks, necessary teaching materials, depending on the needs of children with SEN;

- Include in all initial teacher training courses ('Ion Creanga' SPU, Faculty of Special Psychology and Psychopedagogy; MSU, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Sociology and Social Assistance) an education module for children/students with various disabilities (including for those with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students);

- Strengthen the capacities of the teaching and management staff to develop, implement, monitor, evaluate and revise the IEP, in order to have IEP adapted to programmes in force,

which will facilitate harmonious and balanced interaction between curricular subjects, interests, needs and suggestions of children, parents and teachers, in order to support, stimulate and ensure the individual development of children;

- Reduce the number of children in grades with students/children with SEN study, up to 20 children;

- Train auxiliary staff in general schools to interact with children/students with visual sensory impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students;

- Inform the parents of children with hearing and visual impairments about the benefits for the development of the child in the inclusive school;

- Inform and prepare the parents and children in general schools to interact with children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.

METHODOLOGY

When developing the Thematic Report, we focused on collecting and structuring data, information and other relevant written materials, with an emphasis on their thorough examination through:

Analysis of documents

- legislative acts on the respect for the rights of the child with disabilities.
- strategies, concepts, programmes that define the rights of the child with sensory disabilities and how to ensure their compliance;

Analysis of researches and reports in the field

- ✓ Analysis of reports on the UNCRC implementation;
- ✓ Analysis of reports on implementation of plans in the field of child protection, ensuring the right to education, social protection, active participation in community life, etc.;
- ✓ Analysis of good practices in respecting the rights of the child.

Collaboration with the Ombudsman's team

Three meetings organized with the team of the People's Advocate for the Right of the Child, for coordination and validation of the methodology and structure of the research report, as well as for presentation of the draft report.

Examination of the opinion of actors/experts in the field

A mixed approach was applied to data analysis, using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, as well as an analysis of legislation and policies in the field. These methods were selected in order to emphasize the strengths of both methods, and to collect as complex and accurate data as possible. All the qualitative data analyzed were collected from primary sources, using questionnaires and talking with beneficiaries (children/students). To prepare the Report on ensuring the right to education of students/children with sensory impairments, on-site visits were made, talks were held with principals of some school institutions: the Theoretical High School for Visually Impaired Children in Chisinau municipality, Special School No. 12 for hard of hearing and late-deafened children, with former students who graduated from an ordinary gymnasium and high school. Also, meetings were held with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Republican Centre for Psychopedagogical Assistance, the General Directorate of Education, Youth and Sports from Chisinau municipality, the Association of the Deaf, the 'Hear and Speak' Association.

GLOSSARY¹

Dysfunction – disturbance of the function of an organ, device or system.

Sensory dysfunction – a neurological disorder resulting from the inability of the brain to integrate certain information received from the body, from the seven sensory functions (auditory, olfactory, gustatory, visual, tactile, proprioceptive and vestibular ones).

Impairment – loss or alteration of a structure or a function.

Sensory impairments – are determined by some dysfunctions or disturbances at the level of the main (visual and auditory) analyzers, with major effects on the proper evolution of life and the relation with environmental factors, and also on the mental processes of the person, having a strong impact on his or her behaviours and way of existence.

¹ <https://dexonline.ro/definitie>

Hard of hearing children – decrease in hearing sensitivity in children, showing all forms of hearing loss, starting with the discrete ones and going up to the severe ones. The causes are some injuries of the sound transmission system, of the inner ear or the cortical level. It can negatively influence language acquisition and use, schooling and even personality development.

Deafness – a disability that consists in the (total or partial) impossibility to perceive sounds.

Late deafness – acquired disability, which consists in the (total or partial) impossibility to perceive sounds; deafness.

I. INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK ANALYZED IN TERMS OF THE RESPECT FOR THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS

1.1. Analysis of the international legal framework that governs the right of children to education

The right to live independently and to integration into community is recognized both by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and by a number of international, European and national strategic documents. The legal and strategic framework also provides for the implementation of a number of measures aimed at ensuring the exercise of this right, including development of a varied range of support services in the community, as well as ensuring the access of persons with disabilities to services intended for the general population: housing, employment, education, health.

Table No. 1 describes the international and European strategic documents in which the right to independent life and integration into the community of children is recognized.

Table No. 1

International and European strategic documents recognizing the right to independent life and integration into the community

United Nations Organizations	
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Art. 19. Living independently and being included in the community.	States Parties to the present Convention recognize the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement; – Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living

	<p>and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 23	<p>1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.</p> <p>2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.</p> <p>3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development</p> <p>4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.</p>
Council of Europe	
European Social Charter (revised).	The revised Charter establishes the right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and

	participation in the life of the community, irrespective of age or the nature and origin of their disabilities, and calls on the Parties to develop the necessary measures to exercise this right (Art. 15).
Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly on Deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities.	The Resolution calls on the member states to ‘take concrete actions to put an end to the practice of institutionalization and to ensure that persons with disabilities and their families are adequately supported in the process of reintegration into the community’ and ‘to develop, in cooperation with adequately funded organizations of persons with disabilities, human rights-compliant strategies for deinstitutionalization, with clear timelines and targets for a genuine transition to an independent life for persons with disabilities in accordance with Art. 19 of the Convention.’
Human rights: a reality for all: Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023.	<p>‘The overall goal of the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023 (CoE Strategy) is to achieve equality, dignity and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. This requires ensuring independence, freedom of choice, full and active participation in all areas of life and society, including the life in the community.’</p> <p>The CoE Strategy recognizes that ‘living arrangements isolated or segregated from the community as such, are not only contrary to the right to live in the community as enshrined in Art. 19 of the Convention, but often give rise to some of the worst human rights violations in Europe. The widely documented violence and abuse in such arrangements is one of the many reasons why they must be progressively replaced by community-based services.’</p>
European Union	
Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.	The Charter sets out the right of persons with disabilities and the elderly to live independently (Art. 25 and 26), as well as the right to participate in community life, including through social, cultural and occupational integration.
Union of equality: Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030.	The European Commission calls on the EU Member States ‘to implement good practices of deinstitutionalisation in the area of mental health and in respect of all persons with disabilities, to strengthen the transition from institutional care to services providing

	<p>support in the community’.</p> <p>The commitment of the European Commission ‘to make the transition from institutional to community care by [...] supporting the development of services in the community and raising awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities living in residential institutions, especially children and elderly.’</p>
Romania	
National strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities ‘A fair Romania’, 2022-2027.	The Strategy recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and included in the community, and aims to both deinstitutionalize persons with disabilities (including through the development of a unitary strategic framework and a deinstitutionalization guide) and improve access to services in the community necessary for independent life (including personal assistance, mobile teams, respite care services).
National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).	Component 13 – Social reforms include under the Health and Institutional Resilience Pillar a specific measure regarding the Reform of the system of protection of adults with disabilities (C13-R2). The measure covers milestones and targets regarding both enactment of a National Strategy on the Prevention of Institutionalization and a guide for speeding up deinstitutionalization, as well as provision of support to persons with disabilities for transition to independent living and reduction of the number of persons in institutions.

Sources: Council of Europe (1996) (revised) European Social Charter. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168007cf93>²

According to General comment No. 14 (2013) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the right set out in Article 3, paragraph 1 of the UNCRC, to have the child’s best interest taken into account as a primary is one of the four general principles of the Convention for interpreting

² Council of Europe (1996) European Social Charter (revised). Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168007cf93>

and implementing all the rights of the child, and applies a dynamic concept that requires an assessment appropriate to the specific context³.

The Convention also explicitly refers to the child's best interest in other articles such as: article 9: separation from parents; article 10: family reunification; article 18: parental responsibilities; article 20: deprivation of family environment and alternative care; article 21: adoption; article 37(c): separation from adults in detention; article 40, paragraph (2) (b) (iii): procedural guarantees, including presence of parents at court hearings for penal matters involving children in conflict with the law. Reference is also made to the child's best interest in the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (preamble and art. 8) and in the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (preamble and art. 2 and 3).

It can also be noted that the concept of the child's best interest is aimed at ensuring both the full and effectiveness enjoyment of all the rights recognized in the Convention, and the holistic development of the child. The Committee has already pointed out that *'an adult's judgment of a child's best interests cannot override the obligation to respect all the child's rights under the Convention'*. It recalls that there is no hierarchy of rights in the Convention; all the rights provided for therein are in the 'child's best interest' and no right could be compromised by a negative interpretation of the child's best interest.

The full application of the concept of the child's best interests requires the development of a rights-based approach, engaging all actors, to secure the holistic physical, psychological, moral and spiritual integrity of the child and to promote his or her human dignity.

The Committee emphasizes that the child's best interest is a triple concept:

a) *A substantial right*: The right of the child to have his or her best interests assessed and taken as a primary consideration when different interests are being considered in order to reach a decision on the issue at stake, and the guarantee that this right will be implemented whenever a decision is to be made concerning a child, a group of identified or unidentified children or children in general. Article 3, paragraph 1, creates an intrinsic obligation for States, is directly applicable (self-executing) and can be invoked before a court.

b) *A fundamental, interpretative legal principle*: If a legal provision is open to more than one interpretation, the interpretation which most effectively serves the child's best interest

³ General comment No. 14 (2013) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

should be chosen. The rights enshrined in the UNCDC and its Optional Protocols provide the framework for interpretation.

c) A rule of procedure: Whenever a decision is to be made that will affect a specific child, an identified group of children or children in general, the decision-making process must include an evaluation of the possible impact (positive or negative) of the decision on the child or children concerned. Assessing and determining the child's best interests require procedural guarantees. Furthermore, the justification of a decision must show that the right has been explicitly taken into account. In this regard, the States Parties shall explain how the right has been respected in the decision, that is, what has been considered to be in the child's best interest; what criteria it is based on; and how the child's best interest have been weighed against other considerations, be they broad issues of policy or individual cases.

According to General comment No. 1 and 2 (2002) of the *Committee on the Rights of the Child, Independent National Institutions for Human Rights (INHR) are an important mechanism to promote and ensure the implementation of the Convention*, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child considers the establishment of such bodies to fall within the commitment made by States parties upon ratification to ensure the implementation of the Convention and advance the universal realization of children's rights⁴. Independent specialized human rights institutions for children can be ombudsmen or commissioners for children's the rights with the responsibility to promote and protect the rights of children. The main concern of the Committee is that the institution, whatever its form, should be able, independently and effectively, to monitor, promote and protect the rights of children. It is essential that promotion and protection of the rights of children is 'integrated' and all existing human rights institutions in a country work closely together for this purpose.

Also, General comment No. 4 (2003) *Adolescent Health and Development in the Context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children's rights are indivisible and interrelated*. Articles 6 and 24 of the Comment mention the right of adolescents to health and development. The right to express their views freely and to be duly taken into account (art. 12) is fundamental in realizing adolescents' right to health and development. In order for adolescents to be able safely and properly to exercise this right, public authorities, parents and other adults

⁴ General comment No. 4 (2003).

working with or for children need to create an environment based on trust, information-sharing, the capacity to listen and sound guidance.

The school plays an important role in the life of many adolescents, as the venue for learning, development and socialization. Article 29 (1) states that education must be directed to “the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential’. In addition, General comment No. 1 on the aims of education states that “Education must also be aimed at ensuring that ... no child leaves school without being equipped to face the challenges that he or she can expect to be confronted with in life. Basic skills should include ... the ability to make well-balanced decisions; to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner; and to develop a healthy lifestyle [and] good social relationships ...’. Considering the importance of appropriate education for the current and future health and development of adolescents, as well as for their children, the Committee urges States parties, in line with articles 28 and 29 of the Convention to (a) ensure that quality primary education is compulsory and available, accessible and free to all and that secondary and higher education are available and accessible to all adolescents; (b) provide well-functioning school and recreational facilities which do not pose health risks to students, including water and sanitation and safe journeys to school; (c) take the necessary actions to prevent and prohibit all forms of violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, corporal punishment and other inhuman, degrading or humiliating treatment or punishment in school, by school personnel as well as among students; (d) initiate and support measures, attitudes and activities that promote healthy behaviour by including relevant topics in school curricula.

The Committee also stresses that in accordance with article 23 (3) of the Convention, the special rights of adolescents with disabilities should be taken into account and assistance provided to ensure that the disabled child/adolescent has effective access to and receives good quality education. States should recognize the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for disabled children/adolescents, where possible in regular schools.

In General Comment No. 5 (2003) *General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6) Article 2: the obligation of States to respect and ensure the rights set forth in the Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind⁵. This non-discrimination obligation requires States to actively

⁵ General comment No. 5 (2003).

identify individual children and groups of children the recognition and realization of whose rights may demand special measures. For example, the Committee highlights, in particular, the need for data collection to be disaggregated to enable discrimination or potential discrimination to be identified. Addressing discrimination may require changes in legislation, administration and resource allocation, as well as educational measures to change attitudes. It should be emphasized that the application of the non-discrimination principle of equal access to rights does not mean identical treatment. The General comment by the Committee on the Rights of the Child has underlined the importance of taking special measures in order to diminish or eliminate conditions that cause discrimination.

Article 3 (1): the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. The article refers to actions undertaken by “public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies”. The principle requires active measures throughout Government, Parliament and the judiciary. Every legislative, administrative and judicial body or institution is required to apply the best interests principle by systematically considering how children’s rights and interests are or will be affected by their decisions and actions – by, for example, a proposed or existing law or policy or administrative action or court decision, including those which are not directly concerned with children, but indirectly affect children.

Article 6: the child’s inherent right to life and States parties’ obligation to ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child. The Committee expects States to interpret “development” in its broadest sense as a holistic concept, embracing the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development. Implementation measures should be aimed at achieving the optimal development for all children.

Article 12: the child’s right to express his or her views freely in “all matters affecting the child”, those views being given due weight, given the child's age and degree of maturity. This principle, which highlights the role of the child as an active participant in the promotion, protection and monitoring of his or her rights, applies equally to all measures adopted by States to implement the Convention.

In the Republic of Moldova, by Law No. 52 of 03.04.2014 on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman), respect for human rights and freedoms is ensured by public authorities, organizations and enterprises, regardless of the type of ownership and legal form of organization,

by non-commercial organizations and persons with management positions of all levels. According to Art. 17 (1) of this Law, the People's Advocate for the Rights of the Child ensures implementation, at the national level, by persons with management positions at all levels, of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and of other relevant international treaties to which the Republic Moldova is a party. On 14 October 1992, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the 3rd of December – International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Every year, the international community celebrates this event as a sign of solidarity with persons with disabilities.

1.2. Analysis of the legal framework in the Republic of Moldova that governs the right to education of children with sensory impairments

The Republic of Moldova adhered to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova through Law No. 166/2010, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1990, which was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on 12 December 1990, in force for the Republic of Moldova since 25 February 1993, and therefore undertook to: bring the national legislation in line with the Convention, which implies improvement of the child's position in all aspects of life, including evolution of the education system against the standards set out by Art. 28 and 29 of the Convention, mass information of children about their rights, periodic reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the realization of rights based on the points above.

The issue of the rights of the child in the education system of the Republic of Moldova is governed in the national legal framework. Thus, the Education Code adopted on 17 July 2014 governs the general guidelines on the rights of the child against the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the area of child education. The Education Code together with subordinate normative acts defines specific aspects of implementation. Here we are going to highlight the legislation on work quality standards in educational institutions, which defines specific standards and indicators on the rights of the child; competence standards for education professionals; standards on teacher's roles against the rights of the child; and competence standards of

managers of educational institutions, which are to recognize and develop education aspects of the rights of the child.

In the same way, Quality Standards for primary and general secondary education institutions were developed having due regard to the principle of child-friendly school, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 970 of 11.10.2013; Framework Regulation of the Intra-School Multidisciplinary Commission, Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 683 of 03.06.2019; Order of the Ministry of Education No. 99 of 26.02.2015, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 99 of 26.02.2015; Methodology for the organization and operation of the Resource Centre for inclusive education in the pre-university education institution, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 100 of 26.02.2015; Instruction on the organization of education at home, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 98 of 26.02.2015; Instruction on the organization of remote education for children with disabilities, Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 1934 of 28.12.2018; specific regulations and conditions on final evaluation and certification of students with special educational needs in compulsory education, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 311 of 05.05.2015; Instruction on specific procedures for examining students with special educational needs, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 156 of 20.03.2015; Methodological benchmarks on the activity of the speech therapist in general education institutions, Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 01 of 02.01.2018; Methodological benchmarks on the activity of the psychologist in general education institutions, Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 02 of 02.01.2018; Methodological benchmarks on the activity of the psychopedagogue in general education institutions, Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 212 of 27.02.2018; Methodological benchmarks on the activity of support teaching staff in general education institutions, Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 209 of 27.02.2018, etc.

The Strategy of Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2010-2013, which was approved by Law No. 169 of 07.09.2010, concerned the issue of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova, and was implemented on the basis of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy of Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (2010–2013).

The general objective of this Strategy was to ensure the social rights of the population, to raise the standard of living and promote the social well-being assumed by the Republic of

Moldova by ratifying the revised European Social Charter. The Strategy was a harmonization of the national legal framework with the European one. Emphasizing the prospects of adjusting the national legal system to international standards after the Republic of Moldova signed the UNCRPD on 30 March 2007, the Strategy reaffirms the commitment of the Republic of Moldova to ensure effective realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. Activities set forth in the Strategy comply with the provisions of the Convention, which are binding in nature. Thus, the Strategy was a precondition for ratification and, subsequently, for implementation of provisions of the Convention.

Later, the National Programme for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2022 and the Action Plan for its implementation were approved based on Government Decision No. 723/2017.

The Programme provided for an intersect oral approach in social inclusion of persons with disabilities and ensuring respect for their fundamental rights to the same extent as for other citizens in all areas of social life. The need to develop that Programme aroused from the problems of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova and the need to create conditions for the implementation of the UNCRPD, as well as to implement the recommendations, observations of experts of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, who heard the Republic of Moldova between 21.03 – 22.03.2017 in Geneva, as well as the observations, recommendations of international experts with reference to the respect for the rights of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova.

The National Programme for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2022 and the Action Plan for its implementation were aimed at addressing the strategic directions of actions at the national level in order to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and their effective and full participation in the society. According to the Programme, a number of activities were conducted to achieve the objectives related the rights of children with sensory impairments, and namely⁶:

Objective 2 'Ensuring the right to quality education for children and young people with different types of disabilities in educational institutions under conditions of equality with others'.

⁶ National Programme for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2022.

✓ In action 2.1. of the Action Plan – *Development, approval and implementation of concepts, mechanisms for individualizing the educational process, augmentative and alternative communication systems, educational technologies for supporting children and young persons with different types of disabilities*, in 2021 the Ministry of Education and Research developed and approved methodological guides on educational inclusion of children with sensory impairments: Educational inclusion of visually impaired children. Methodological Guide, approved by Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 792 of 25.05.2018 and Educational inclusion of children with hearing impairments. Methodological Guide, approved by Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 792 of 25.05.2018. In the same vein, we make clear that for the individualization of the educational process for children with sensory impairments, the Ministry of Education and Research approved the Sample Structure and the Guide of implementation of the Individualized Educational Plan, approved by Order of the Ministry of Education No. 776 of 01 August 2017 and Individualization of the educational process through curricular adaptations. Methodological Guide, approved by Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 671 of 01.08.2017.

✓ In action 2.2. of the Action Plan – *Ensuring access for children with disabilities to early pre-school education services*, the Ministry of Education and Research undertook the following actions⁷:

Out of 1485 early education institutions, access ramps were built for 200. To ensure quality educational inclusion in early education institutions for children with special educational needs and disabilities, support services were developed and support staff was employed, thus – 98 resource centres for inclusive education were developed, and the following staff was employed – 126 support teaching staff; 172 – speech therapists; 20 – psychologists. Thus, a friendly, protective, secure and developmental environment was created for these children.

✓ In action 2.4. of the Action Plan – *Ensuring a minimum package of educational support services (resource centre, support teaching staff) for each child and young person with disabilities enrolled in the educational institution, depending on their needs*, in 2021 the Ministry of Education and Research established and equipped in general education institutions 880 Resource Centres for Inclusive Education (RCIEs). Around 1154 support teaching staff (STS), 131 speech therapists and 420 psychologists are employed for them.

⁷ National Programme for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2022.

✓ In action 2.5. of the Action Plan – *Development and provision of career counselling and guidance services for adolescents and young persons with disabilities in educational institutions*, the Ministry of Education and Research undertook the following activities:

Qualified professional counselling and guidance during the 2020-2021 academic year, of about 950 students with special and vulnerable educational needs, graduates from gymnasiums and high schools, carried out using a validated tool – the JVIS Test with the involvement of professional specialists from PAS.

✓ It action 2.6. of the Action Plan – *Organization of continuous training courses for all teaching staff and supporting teaching staff who work with children and young persons with disabilities*, the Ministry of Education and Research carried out the following activities:

In April 2021, about 100 professionals from psychopedagogical assistance units and local bodies specialized in the field of education, were trained in order to strengthen their knowledge of preventing and combating bullying in schools.

The training activity was conducted by Terre des hommes Moldova, with the support of UNICEF Moldova and ChildHub, within the project ‘Joint efforts to combat bullying in Moldova’.

In the period from May to July 2021, 450 support teachers and psychopedagogues who work with students with disabilities and special educational needs participated in continuous training in the field of inclusive education and individualization of the educational process. The action was carried out with the involvement of 20 national trainers from psycho-pedagogical assistance services, who were also initially trained on the basis of a structured course. The activity was part of the ‘Education Reform in Moldova’ project, implemented by the MER and financed by the World Bank⁸.

In the period from September to November 2021, the Republican Centre for Psychopedagogical Assistance organized training activities for about 200 specialists from district/municipal psychopedagogical assistance units and support teachers from general education institutions who also benefited from specialized equipment to use it in educational practice, subject to the needs of children with special educational needs.

Also, about 50 skill development activities were organized for about 65 psychologists and psychopedagogues, including: – 36 online webinars for psychologists and psychopedagogues

⁸ Report on ‘Education Reform in Moldova’, implemented by the MER and financed by the World Bank

from psychopedagogical assistance units, with the topic ‘Specificities, applications and clinical psychological interventions in mental and behavioural disorders in children and adults’, an activity carried out by the MER in partnership with the Moldovan-Swiss project MENSANA within the project ‘*Support for the reform of mental health services in Moldova*’; – 16 training webinars on the topic ‘Psycho-emotional support and psycho-education. Strengthening the counselling capacity. Professional burnout syndrome, chronic fatigue and mechanisms for overcoming stress, maintenance techniques and strategies’, for about 500 psychologists from psychopedagogical support units and general education institutions, the MER and WHO initiative (Order of the Minister of Education and Research No. 1232/2021); – 38 specialists from the municipal/district Psychopedagogical Assistance Services /PAS/ became local trainers in the implementation of the Instruction on the inter-sectoral cooperation mechanism for primary prevention of risks for the well-being of the child, approved by GD No. 143/2018. In this way, cross-sectoral actions were coordinated to ensure protection of the rights and well-being of children, with the aim of promptly resolving well-being concerns, as well as preventing the risk of violence against children. The action was carried out by PA ‘Partnerships for every child’ in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research within the project supported by the EU – ‘Building a society where every girl and boy achieves their full potential with respect and dignity’.

✓ In action 2.7. of the Action Plan – *Training of teaching staff who assist or teach children with hearing disabilities and head of hearing to use the sign language*, and action 2.9. of the Action Plan – *Development, approval and implementation of training and accreditation programs for interpreters of the sign language*, the Ministry of Education and Research carried out the following activities ⁹:

By Circular Letter No. 04/1-09/1723 of 13.03.2020, the Ministry recommended to ‘Ion Creanga’ State Pedagogical University to introduce contents to study the sign language in the initial professional training programme of special psycho-pedagogy. It was also recommended to introduce them in continuous professional training programmes, or to design new programmes in the key to the training of specialists in this field.

‘Ion Creanga’ State Pedagogical University, Faculty of Psychology and Special Psychopedagogy, in the IInd cycle, master's degree, once every 3 years organizes the course

⁹ National Programme for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2022.

‘Sign Language’. The study programme includes the course ‘Alternative communication. Sign language and the Braille system’.

Interpreters of the sign language are prepared by the Continuing Education Department upon request. For this purpose, a group of 20 persons (teaching staff, support teaching staff, specialists from district/municipal psycho-pedagogical assistance services) was established, who are available to study argumentative communication within the master’s degree programme at the Faculty of Psychology and Special Psychopedagogy of the ‘Ion Creanga’ Pedagogical University, Chisinau municipality, from 01 September 2021.

✓ In action 2.8. of the Action Plan – *Provision of educational institutions with accessible vehicles and necessary equipment to facilitate the learning of children and young people with physical, mental, intellectual and sensory disabilities, for the development of an accessible physical environment and an individualized educational process according to development needs and potential*, the Ministry of Education and Research carried out the following activities¹⁰:

Also, with the support of the ‘Education Reform in Moldova’ Project, it was possible to provide Resource Centres for Inclusive Education in 100 general education institutions with teaching, learning materials and specialized equipment for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For this purpose, 19,117,249.64 MDL were allocated for the 100 Resource Centres for Inclusive Education.

Provision of the educational institutions with vehicles falls within the competence of LPA II.

More than 1,700 children with special educational needs and/or disabilities: sensory impairments, learning difficulties, dyslexia, ADD, ADHD, autism, Down syndrome, physical impairments, communication impairments, etc., and as the case may be, other children with special educational needs and/or disabilities from educational institutions in the district, benefited from teaching, learning materials and specialized equipment. The lot provides specialized equipment for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including sensory disabilities: IT equipment, audio books, adapted keyboards (keyboard with large keys for visually impaired children), hearing equipment (FM hearing device; FM transmitter for the teaching staff; the PHONAK care kit, educational software for the development of language,

¹⁰ Ibidem.

reading-writing skills, words and magnetic codes for composition of words, sentences with the talking pen, etc..).

✓ In action 2.10. of the Action Plan – *Gradual integration of children with disabilities, including those with sensory (hearing, vision) disabilities in general education institutions*, the Ministry of Education and Research informs that, in 2021, the following students studied in educational institutions¹¹:

- 61 children with hearing disabilities in early education institutions;
- 37 children with visual disabilities in early education institutions;
- 161 students with hearing disabilities in general education institutions;
- 119 students with visual disabilities in general education institutions;
- 34 students with hearing disabilities in vocational and higher education institutions;
- 9 students with visual disabilities in vocational and higher education institutions.

✓ In action 3.11. of the Action Plan – *Ensuring accessibility to the infrastructure of medical and sanitary institutions to the needs of people with physical and sensory (hearing, vision) disabilities*, the following actions were taken:

In 2021, 1019 patients, including 251 children aged 0-18, were consulted at the LOW VISION Centre.

In total, 504 vision correction devices and visual aids (for children and adults) were issued, worth 650,709.04 MDL, including:

- Electronic-magnifiers, CCTV (Closed Circuit Television System) – 34 pcs.;
- Fixed magnifiers, hand magnifiers with and without light, pocket magnifiers, etc. – 444 pcs.;
- Telemicroscopes, MLVidi – 35 pcs.;
- Magnifying glasses (loupe glasses), including with spectral filters, accessories – 219 pcs.

All vision correction devices and visual aids were provided free of charge.

‘Help Moldova’ from Norway donated 331 devices worth 453,270.68 MDL, the Public Association ‘Inimi Solidare’ from Moldova donated 33 pcs., worth 197,438.36 MDL and 140 pcs. worth 197,438 36 MDL were purchased with the funds from the state budget.

¹¹ Ibidem.

In 2022, 892 hearing aids worth approx. 6372.0 thousand MDL were purchased with funds from the centralized sources of the state budget.

According to the NBS data, in 2022 there were 10,567 children with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova.

Table No. 2.

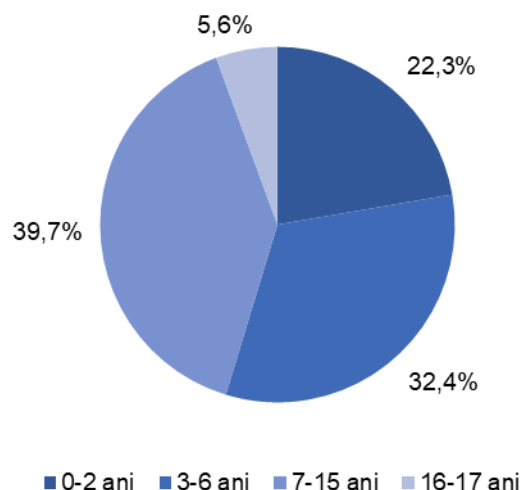
Number of persons with disabilities, 2022

Persons with disabilities	Persons with disabilities
<i>Children</i>	
with severe disabilities	4,863
with pronounced disabilities	3,478
with average disabilities	2,226
Total	10,567

Source: https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9578_60434.html¹²

At the beginning of the 2021 - 2022 academic year, 9.5 thousand students with special educational needs and disabilities were enrolled in general primary and secondary education institutions in the country, most of whom studied in general education institutions (94.2%), and 5.8% – in schools for children with intellectual or physical development impairments.

¹² https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9578_60434.html



Source: www.statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9578_60434.html¹³

In 2022, 1.6 thousand children aged 0-17 were recognized with primary disability (new case), 57.5% of them were from rural areas. Every fourth diagnosed child was 0-2 years old, and every third was between 3-6 years old. The main causes of primary disability are mental and behavioural disorders (36.1%), congenital malformations, chromosomal deformities and abnormalities (22.4%) and diseases of the nervous system (13.5%). It should be noted that in the rural area the share of children with a severe disability in the total number of children recognized as having a primary disability was lower compared to the urban area (32.9% compared to 45.8%). In 2022, 11.9 thousand children with disabilities were served by public health institutions.

According to the *Information on the situation of children in 2021*, presented by the National Bureau of Statistics at the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year, 9,500 students with special educational needs and disabilities were enrolled in primary and general secondary education institutions throughout the country, of whom 94.2% attended general education institutions, and 5.8% – schools for children with intellectual or physical development impairments. It was also found out that the share of students with special educational needs and disabilities, who attend general education institutions, increased by 1.3 percent during the last five years.

¹³ https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9578_60434.html

The share of boys with special educational needs and disabilities enrolled in general education institutions is still relatively higher than the share of girls; in the 2021-2022 academic year, this indicator constituted 65.7%, compared to 34.3%.

The number of students in schools for children with intellectual or physical developmental impairments decreased by 26.4% compared to the 2017-2018 academic year. In the 2021-2022 academic year, 71 of the students of these schools were children with intellectual development impairments. Table No. 3 (from the Appendix) shows the number of children with sensory impairments in Chisinau municipality, disaggregated by type of institution, sex, age, educational level, form of education and type of disability. According to the data of Table No. 3 of the Appendix, there are 28 educational institutions in Chisinau municipality with a general, special and professional technical profile where children with sensory impairments study.

In the 2020-2021 academic year, 221 children with hearing disabilities were included in the general education (65 children in community kindergartens, 156 children in primary and lower secondary schools), other 73 children attend Special School No. 12 from Chisinau municipality. There were 165 children with visual disabilities (37 children in community kindergartens, 128 children in primary and lower secondary schools). Another 75 children attended the Technological High School for visually impaired children from Chisinau municipality¹⁴.

Based on these findings, we note that despite the actions taken by public institutions, there are still many activities to be carried out for the realization of the right to education of children with sensory impairments.

We also found out that children with SEN do not have assistive equipment and technologies for their individual needs, which would ensure their access and full participation in classes, hence their access to education in general education institution, as well as learning and development opportunities decrease substantially.

Teaching strategies for children/students with SEN are a way of individualizing instruction by diversifying teaching contents, methods and means, giving each child the opportunity to study at his or her own pace, according to individual characteristics, potential and level of acquisitions, being flexible and accessible to all children/students. In this situation, teachers shall know and evaluate the individual mental characteristics of the children/students they work with, physical

¹⁴ <https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/subiect-03-nu-765-mec-2023.pdf>

and mental characteristics of the age, the learning capacity of each child, which is a major prerequisite for effective design of the activity. Also, teachers shall choose the teaching-learning-evaluation strategies depending on: the type of intelligence, the learning style of students/children, the learning contents and purposes. Knowing the main features of the learning style of the student enables the teaching staff to individualize the teaching process by adapting the teaching style, choosing teaching strategies, learning tasks, didactic materials so as to encourage student learning. Also, by applying teaching strategies in line with the learning style, teachers help students to know and develop their own inclinations, talents, to show their best in their field of excellence.

In organizing and developing the individualized educational process, teaching-learning strategies shall be selected and/or combined subject to curricular principles, learning contents and the established, including modified, objectives. The teaching staff may use various strategies that support and facilitate the learning of the child with SEN to reduce or overcome the difficulties they face, by: individualizing the educational process; selecting and combining appropriately the teaching strategies; adjusting objectives, contents; designing the individualized educational plan, adapting the pace of teaching and the volume of the material, adapting the working methods to the learning style and potential of the child, in order to meet the individual learning needs of each child.

Evaluation of the implementation of the *Inclusive Education Development Programme 2011-2020*, including the application of child-friendly school standards, by the Ministry of Education and Research in partnership with UNICEF, revealed that educational institutions, at all levels, are only partially prepared to facilitate the access of children with disabilities (especially with hearing and visual impairments), and specialists and teachers need much more applied, practical training as well as specific and in-depth training to work with children with hearing and visual impairments¹⁵.

Thus, the new education policy documents provide for actions in this regard. One of the objectives of the *Education 2030* Strategy, approved by Government Decision No. 114/2023, and of its Implementation Programme 2023-2025, involves modernizing the infrastructure of educational institutions, in such a way as to meet the needs of students, persons with disabilities, providing a safe, protective and inclusive learning environment for all. The *Education 2030*

¹⁵ Inclusive Education Development Programme 2011-2020.

Strategy aims to adapt the physical environment of general education institutions to the needs of persons with special needs (sensory disabilities).

According to the *specific objective 2.13* of the *Education 2030* Strategy, conditions shall be created for the provision of educational services in the sign language and Braille. Initial and continuous training of teaching staff in the provision of educational services, the sign language and Braille shall be ensured.

In the same vein, the *Inclusive Education Development Programme of the Republic of Moldova 2024-2027* was approved by the Government on 06.12.2023. The Programme provides for specific actions for provision of assistive technologies, quality services and training of teachers.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the current situation of realizing the right to education for children with disabilities, and reiterates its commitment to a continuous strengthening of efforts to increase the quality of education for all children and encourages strengthening collaboration between actors in the educational, social and child protection system, NGOs operating in the field, by combining efforts to enhance cooperation in ensuring that every child, including with sensory impairments, has access to quality education in common learning environments.

II. ENSURING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS

2.1. Education of visually impaired children

Visually impaired children with educational needs face learning difficulties, and for this reason it is more difficult for them to progress than the majority of students of the same age. These students need a ‘special educational offer’, which is defined as an ‘additional’ offer or an offer ‘different’ from that which is generally provided for students of the same age in general schools. Development of an educational offer for students with special educational needs begins from the teacher of the general education institution.

To encourage interaction and participation of visually impaired children/students in instructional and educational activities, teachers shall pay special attention to adapting the environment, the educational offer, the work tools and the content of tasks to the age, needs and potential of each child/student. To achieve this, the following strategies can be applied¹⁶:

- Seating visually impaired children at the desk or at the work table away from light sources, preferably in the first rows, in front of the classroom.
- Acquainting the children/students with the space of the school, the classroom, with didactic materials, with the places where special attention is needed: stairs, playground, announcing in advance about the changes in the classroom space.
- Giving instructions to the child/student using their names, to attract his or her attention and give him or her additional time for the response reaction.
- Using in the instructional and educational process assistive techniques to strengthen learning performance, communication, mobility, e.g.: screen readers, electronic magnifier for reading, magnifying device/monitor, optical amplifiers, text recognition applications, Braille display, screen magnifier.

¹⁶ Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 792 of 25.05.2018 approved the Methodical Guide: Educational Inclusion of Children with Hearing Impairments.

- Familiarizing and using non-optical tools: pens and special pens, which produce strongly marked letters; special supports for books; the acetate, preferably yellow one, which darkens the writing and improves the contrast and lamps with light intensity control.

- Adapting didactic materials and tasks: printing texts with large characters and visual effects during the reading process, respecting the contrast; black on white; using bold lines; using an arrow or a reading ruler, magnifying glasses, glasses; using raised graphic materials, or graphic materials associated with sound signs, in Braille (in case of blind children); using verbal and non-verbal expressions (e.g.: touching the shoulder); accessible books in DAISY format (Digital Accessible Information System); clear writing on the board of notes accompanied by verbal or tactile messages, any significant visual aspect shall be described in details.

- Giving appropriate number of tasks and providing additional time to complete the task.

- Training and re-educating visual perception using other receptive ways and first of all the tactile and kinesthetic one.

- Effective alternation of the forms of organizing the educational process (in front, in groups, in pairs and individually) and using active and participative methods. Involvement of the student in activities, in which he or she should use his or her intellectual, communication and relationship skills. It should be mentioned that the Individualized Educational Plan is part of the set of curricular documents, which ensures that inclusive education in primary and general secondary education institutions is developed. IEP facilitates inclusion of the child in the general educational process, ensures his or her psychophysical development in line with his or her potential. The IEP is also a tool of coordinated, coherent organization and provision of education for the child with special educational needs. The IEP is reviewed/updated on a regular basis, usually every six months. Certain sections of the IEP may be modified/updated, depending on the results of the student's comprehensive evaluation. The Individualized Educational Plan shall be developed with all factors involved in evaluating the child with visual impairments in education. In turn, the Intra-School Multidisciplinary Commission establishes IEP development teams. The IEP development team includes permanent members of the ISMC (the majority or a part of them, as the case may be), the classroom teacher, teachers and other specialists. The IEP

development team hold meetings, during which they fill out the IEP form having due regard to the recommendations of the PAS specialists¹⁷.

Before the individualized curriculum is developed, the teacher shall be aware of the concept of adapted curriculum (AC) and modified curriculum (MC). Thus, through curricular adaptations, the general curriculum is brought in line with the possibilities of the student with visual impairments in education, having due regard to the objectives of the process and his or her school and social inclusion. Development of the AC is aimed making adaptations within the instruction process. Adjustment of teaching methods, materials and means, forms of class organization, learning and evaluation tasks and activities, based on the needs of the child, is considered. Unlike the adapted curriculum, the modified one is aimed at changing the educational objectives by excluding some and simplifying others (or increasing the complexity), so that it meets the potential and will of the child with visual impairments in education.

Organization of the educational process in an inclusive grade

The management of inclusive education shall be structured by levels, including authorities, institutions, structures and services with specific responsibilities in this field, as well as specialists from these entities. Each institution/structure shall have a clear vision of its role and place in promotion and development of inclusive education, as well as shall define its position in the context of collaboration with other entities involved in the educational process.

Public and private general education institutions have¹⁸:

- a) an administration council of the educational institution, with a decision-making role in matters of administration;
- b) a teachers' council, with a decision-making role in matters of education;
- c) the management staff of the general education institution with educational management role;

¹⁷ Order of the Ministry of Education No. 99 of 26.02.2015 on approval of the Child Development Assessment Methodology

¹⁸ Law No. 169 of 09.07.2010 on approval of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2010-2013

d) an intra-school multidisciplinary commission (ISMC), with the role of general coordination of educational inclusion of children/students with SEN in the educational institution;

e) a team for developing the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), with the role of developing/revising/updating the Individualized Educational Plan.

➤ **The teaching staff in the classroom**

- evaluates, at the beginning of the school year, the competencies of the child/student with SEN for the school subject, in order to design and make curricular adaptations and/or changes to the school subject (modified objectives, selected/modified curricular contents, curricular adaptations, adapted teaching-learning-evaluation strategies), ensuring progress in children's development;

- selects/adapts the teaching-learning-assessment strategies according to the grade, the educational needs of students, goals and contents to ensure progress against the planned goals;

- selects/adapts summative evaluation strategies/methods for each learning unit, diversified according to the child's situation (orally, in writing, test/essay, etc.);

- develops and uses teaching aids (teaching supports: handouts, images, posters; specialized equipment, etc.);

- organizes the learning process for children/students with special educational needs in collaboration with the support teaching staff, other specialists and ensuring that information is transferred from specialized activities (speech therapy, psychology) in general context within school subjects and vice versa, coordination of actions with specialists;

- prepares the individualized evaluation test for students with SEN who studied according to the modified curriculum, which allows measuring and assessing the level of skills acquired by the student, and is established according to the general requirements of test development.

Teachers shall also establish very clearly how and for how long they will involve visually impaired children in education in a particular activity, what teaching tasks they will propose them so that they can participate in the learning process alongside the others. Therefore, the student with visual impairments in education shall be included during the class in both frontal and group activities. At certain phases of the class, the student can receive individualized tasks, including assessment tasks. If the child with visual impairments in education is 'overloaded' only

with tasks that he or she has to do on his or her own or with the support of STS and does not take part in the face-to-face or group activities carried out in the classroom, the educational and social inclusion of the child does not take place¹⁹.

The teacher should highlight the progress of the visually impaired child during classes and identify appropriate moments during the class to integrate the activities of the visually impaired child with those of his or her classmates.

Another responsibility of the teacher is to create a favourable psychological environment in the classroom, where equal treatment of all children contributes to the more effective delivery of classes. The teacher can facilitate creation of this environment by establishing relations of mutual understanding between him or her and the students, as well as among the students.

To create an inclusive educational environment, teachers shall also have a series of managerial skills to plan and organize classroom activities, so as to ensure a climate favourable to the learning for all students. Here we can conclude that in classrooms with a large number of children, 35-40, including with children with SEN, creation of this favourable learning climate for all students is a problem, and the teacher fails to pay attention to all children²⁰.

It is recommended to reduce the number of children in classrooms where there are children with SEN up to 20 children.

➤ **The homeroom teacher**

- gathers and provides the IEP team, the intra-school multidisciplinary commission with relevant information on strengths, interests and needs of children/students with SEN, at the beginning and throughout the school year;
- examines, together with the teachers of subjects, specialists who assist the children/students with SEN, at the beginning of each semester, the level of achieving the objectives/competencies planned in the individualized curriculum and per areas of development;
- coordinates semestrial development/ implementation/ update/ revision of the Individualized Educational Plan for the student with NES;
- carries out, together with the teaching staff, management staff, specialists who assist children/students with special educational needs, career orientation and guidance, and transition

¹⁹ Order of the Ministry of Education No. 311 of 05.05.2015

²⁰ Order of the Ministry of Education No. 970 of 11.10.2013

planning activities (development of the student's interests and inclinations, building and use of applied functional skills, inter-sectoral collaboration between institutions and career counselling and guidance services, organization of visits, trips to vocational education institutions, enterprises, etc.):

- maintains relations with the child's parents/representatives regarding the strengthening and ensuring continuity of the educational and non-educational approach started by the institution's staff, offering the child at home opportunities for the development and practical application of the acquired skills;

- monitors the educational situation of children/students with SEN, the physical and emotional well-being of children and their involvement in the educational process, during the academic year²¹.

➤ **Support teaching staff and relevant specialists (psychologist, speech therapist, psychopedagogue, other specialists who assist the child)²²**

- plan and provide the individualized assistance to the child/student with SEN (in the classroom, RCIE) according to the timetable, the assistance plan;

- elaborate and implement the individualized intervention plan per (cognitive, physical / neuromotor, language and communication, socio-emotional, adaptive behaviour) development areas, subject to the needs of the child/student with SEN;

- (re)evaluate the development progress of the child and adapt the assistance plan subject to the potential and needs of the child;

- organize information/training activities and awareness campaigns for the educational community, including children/students and parents/legal representatives, identifying the needs per institution;

- monitor the progress/regress of the child/student with SEN and collaborate with the teaching staff, other specialists who assist the child to ensure that the learning objectives described in the IEP are achieved;

²¹ Order of the Ministry of Education No. 970 of 11.10.2013

²² Ibidem

- collaborate with the parents of the child/student with SEN and propose recommendations for involvement in the educational process, including decisions on programmes of continuous development/rehabilitation of the child.

We can also note that the support teaching staff has a special role in creating a climate favourable to inclusive education in the educational institution. Pedagogical tact and communication skills, which he or she shall have, will make his or her actions gradually accepted and supported. The STS is by the side of the child with SEN for a period of time, giving him or her the necessary support, so that he or she is able to participate in the activities of all the children in the classroom²³. If the work is organized in cooperation, he or she can sit in the group of the child with SEN, supporting not only to him or her, but also the other members of the group, and in certain educational situations, he or she can participate with the teacher in the teaching-learning-evaluation process, paying special attention to the child with visual impairments in education. If the child with visual impairments in education is not able to attend the class a whole academic hour, the STS can go with the student, after a certain period of time, to the Resource Centre for Inclusive Education, to continue the individual activity with the child. In the same way, the STS can support not only the student with SEN, but also other students in the classroom, as necessary²⁴.

An important point to mention is that in general schools the physical environment shall be friendly to children/students with SEN, i.e. provided with equipment according to their needs, markings, signs, tactile indicators focused on the needs of children with sensory impairments. RCIE needs to be equipped and functional for children with such sensory impairments.

We found out, based on the information of the General Directorate of Education, Youth and Sports from Chisinau municipality, that in terms of provision with special equipment of general education institutions, 'Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra' THS, 'Pro Succes' THS, 'Galata' Gymnasium, 'Decebal' Gymnasium from Chisinau municipality have specialized equipment (screen readers, electronic magnifier for reading, magnifying device/monitor, optical amplifiers, text recognition applications, Braille display, screen magnifier), and teachers were trained to use them. The organizational environment of these schools is friendly to children with sensory impairments, as they are intended for children/students with visual impairments.

²³ Order of the Ministry of Education No. 970 of 11.10.2013

²⁴ Order of the Ministry of Education No.100 of 26.02.2015

The situation is completely different in other general education institutions – most schools have neither this specialized equipment necessary for children/students with visual sensory impairments, nor special textbooks. This situation was also confirmed by a visually impaired graduate who studied in a general education institution. The graduate said that the ergonomic conditions in the school were not adapted for children/students with visual impairments. The study programme and the curricula were not adapted. It was also found out that the current psycho-pedagogical approaches to children/students with visual sensory impairments in general education institutions do not fully cover the educational needs of such children/students, neither the psycho-social services in the school were functional. Another problem of these students is taking exams in general education institutions, as well as baccalaureate exams. Baccalaureate centres shall be provided with equipment according to their needs and shall have installed markings, signs, tactile indicators focused on the needs of students with sensory impairments who will take the exams. To solve the tasks of baccalaureate exams, these students are given only one additional hour.

The Association of the Blind from Moldova published the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova in Braille. The document can be found in the libraries of territorial organizations for the blind.

Despite the progress achieved, currently only a small part of the school textbooks, including the optional subjects, are written in Braille. Thus, students with visual disabilities are not provided with all textbooks in Braille, and therefore accessibility of education for children with visual disabilities is only formal. Although the Education Code (Art. 40) stipulates that ‘the optional disciplines included in the framework plan have a weight of 10-15% in primary education, 15-20% in lower secondary education and 20-25% in higher secondary education’, children with vision problems cannot choose the optional subjects because no textbooks in Braille for optional subjects are available.

According to the NBS data, there are about 86 thousand visually impaired people in the Republic of Moldova, and three and a half thousand are blind. The Society of the Blind from Moldova has around 39 branches throughout all the regions of Moldova²⁵. Every year, on 15 October, the International Day of the Blind or the White Cane Awareness Day, which is the hope support of blind people, is celebrated.

²⁵ https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9578_60434.html

2.2. Education of hearing impaired children

To facilitate communication between hearing impaired (deaf, mute or deaf-mute) person(s) and representatives/employees of different authorities/institutions/organizations in situations when they need an interpreter to exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations, the Sign Language Interpretation Service for hearing impaired persons was established by Government Decision No. 333/2014, including with the approval of the Regulation on the organization and operation of the service. The provision of the Service is ensured by the Association of the Deaf from the Republic of Moldova, based on the funds of the state budget, which are provided through the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

A priority of the project of the Inclusive Education Development Program of the Republic of Moldova 2024-2027 is finding some general education schools to become inclusive schools, because not all schools can become inclusive from one day to the other, preferably with regional coverage²⁶. To include hard of hearing and late-deafened child in general schools, a comprehensive evaluation is needed to establish the level of study appropriate to the level of knowledge and skills of the child, as well as his or her particularities of development. A transition period is recommended, during which the child, as well as the students in the classroom and the teachers, are prepared for the new learning environment. Successful inclusion requires involvement of a support teacher, who knows theoretical concepts and has psychopedagogical intervention skills in the context of hearing disability. Each child shall have a personalized intervention plan, which includes the objectives, contents, necessary adaptations, methods, resources, and also specific evaluation methods. The support teaching staff uses a resource room/office to be able to carry out individual activities, depending on the learning and communication needs of the hearing impaired student. Children with hearing disabilities need access to educational, communication, psychosocial and attitudinal opportunities so as to enjoy the least restrictive environment, which is the most sensitive and appropriate to their needs.

The teaching staff shall have solid training focused on the development of general competencies of special psychopedagogy, including specific skills related to hearing disability. These competencies include skills of evaluation, design and planning of psycho-pedagogical

²⁶ Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 792 of 25.05.2018

intervention, and also transversal skills such as effective communication, use of technology and alternative and augmentative communication systems. Multidisciplinary teamwork and development of partnerships are also essential priorities in this context.

It is important, first of all, to know the impacts of hearing disability in development, communication, learning, and also specific psychopedagogical intervention strategies and how support is offered.

In the initial training of each specialist, internships during the years of study, an observational and psychopedagogical internship, which facilitates and ensures skill building, are important.

Development of a dynamic and flexible curriculum is a priority in the implementation of the educational inclusion of the hearing impaired child. Curricular adaptations include: designing tasks subject to the child's interests, offering alternatives, accepting answers, sequential activities, creating opportunities to use and strengthen newly learned knowledge, and above all, they refer to evaluation methods that shall reflect the real progress of the student with hearing disability²⁷.

In case of hearing impaired children, it is recommended to apply teaching strategies that take into account: age particularities of the child, cognitive level of development, degree of deafness, level of oral communication and general language, intellectual particularities. Thus, teaching activities shall be based on combining teaching strategies that have the development/compensation/recovery role, while using the child abilities to hear and speak.

In the teaching-learning-evaluation process, teachers will take into account the following strategies²⁸:

- Organizing the classroom/group of students in such a way that the hearing impaired child/student seats near the teacher at a distance of 0.6 – 1.5 meters, for him or her to be able to lip-read the message (following the movement of lips).
- Reducing the noise, echo, background noise in the room, applying felt strips on the chair, carpets on the floor or wall. Lighting the room, adjusting the position in relation to the light.

²⁷ Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 671 of 01.08.2017

²⁸ Order of the Ministry of Education No. 952 of 06.12.2011

- Selecting and adapting teaching strategies appropriate to the educational situation of the child/student, according to individual developmental characteristics and potential.
- Using intuitive methods: demonstration, graphic and image presentation to present learning contents, using ICT and educational platforms, etc.
- Using specialized equipment to make communication more efficient: sound amplifier, the FM system, the FM transmitter that help the child/student to transmit and understand the verbal message.
- Using visual aids, images, photos, video materials provided with subtitles, and if they are missing, it is recommended that the message be transmitted by an interpreter, the student can record the class.
- Adapting the teaching style of the teacher to the (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic/tactile) learning style of the child/student.

Conveying the message in an accessible language, having due regard to the communication level of the child/student, using clear phrases, without shouting and exaggerated movement of lips. If the child/student does not understand the message, the teacher shall repeat and reformulate the message in as simple and easy to understand words as possible.

- Establishing and maintaining eye contact in communication with the child/student, in group/classroom activities. It is recommended to always talk to the child and not to move around the room while talking or writing on the board.
- Encouraging the child/student to speak, ask questions, motivate and involve the child/student to participate in group activities, role-playing games, teaching games, excursions, etc.
- Checking and ensuring the operation of the hearing aid. Communication with parents to ensure the hygiene of the hearing aid and check the performance of batteries.

It is also necessary to develop some resource materials for specialists, such as: a guide on the adapted curriculum and differentiated training for students with hearing disability, methodological guides, manuals of good practices for specialists; another guide shall cover the adaptation of educational programmes and objectives for hearing impaired children. For example, in 2016, the Guide for Understanding the World of Persons with Hearing Disabilities was published by the Association of the Deaf from the Republic of Moldova, within the Project 'Ability versus Disability – from understanding to elimination of discrimination and social

inclusion of persons with hearing and visual impairments', financed by the Equality and Civic Engagement Programme of the Soros Foundation-Moldova. Also in 2016, the Association published the Methodological Guide for Learning the Sign Language in the Republic of Moldova²⁹, designed in partnership with the INFONET Alliance and with the support of the East European Foundation. These guides are aimed at creating a social framework, in which people with hearing impairments, adults, minors and their families are able to share their wishes, are supported in realizing their rights as citizens in order to make the opportunities equal.

Teachers who assist or teach hearing impaired and hard of hearing children shall know and use the sign language. In the Republic of Moldova, training of specialists in the sign language is provided by a single higher education institution, which has infrastructure, methodical support as well as teaching staff trained in this field – the 'Ion Creanga' State Pedagogical University.

To develop practical skills and knowledge about the world around them, hearing impaired students shall participate in activities/programmes aimed at learning the language, time perception, familiarization with the environment through classes and excursions outside their school and community.

The teacher shall speak clearly and at a normal pace (usually teachers in general education schools have a fast pace of teaching). Hearing impaired children have low listening skills and it is important for the teacher to know how to give them instructions³⁰. They should be simple and short. The teacher shall ensure that the student has understood the task before proceeding to it.

The use of a radio transmitter in the classroom to re-transmit to the hearing impaired child the answers of classmates would be welcome, since hearing impaired children wear an individual hearing aid that allows them to improve their listening ability. That is why it is necessary to take into account the fact that the acoustic properties of the classroom correspond to the hearing aids – the noise is not too high, and the echo is not too strong.

Integration of such children also depends on the attitude of teachers in regular schools towards their specific needs. Namely, the teacher is the person who creates a positive psychological climate in the classroom, guides the students to encourage and help their classmate with special educational needs, becoming his or her trusted peers.

²⁹ https://www.infonet.md/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GHID-metodologic_FINAL_web.pdf

³⁰ http://www.prime.md/ro/legile-pe-limba-orbilor-constitutia-tarii-noastre-editata-in-alfabetul-braille_52711.html

Another challenge that students face is taking the baccalaureate exams. During the exams, these students shall be assisted by a teacher who knows very well the sign language, in order to explain and answer the questions from hard of hearing and late-deafened students.

The Ministry of Education, with the support of PA ‘Partnerships for every child’, in 2016 developed the *Strategic vision of the development of a system of educational and specialized support services for children with hearing disabilities and their families in the Republic of Moldova*, proposing the following objectives: creation of the Republican Educational Recovery Centre for children with hearing disabilities, development of human resources and institutional capacities.

The Portage programme, a home education assistance and support programme for families with children with special needs, was launched in five districts (Cahul, Calarasi, Falesti, Nisporeni and Ungheni). However, parents of children with hearing impairments point out that the only alternative institution specialized in supporting hearing impaired children is the Rehabilitation Centre for Deaf Children, opened by the Association of Deaf Children with the support of UNICEF and other foreign donors.

Moreover, the MLSP supports children with disabilities by providing social payments until reaching the age of 18. According to the data of the National Office of Social Insurance, on 1 January 2023, the average amount of the disability pension was 2,104.3 MDL. The average amount of the pension depends on the degree of disability, making up 1,572.2.0 MDL for persons with moderate disability, 2,260.4.3 MDL for persons with pronounced disability and 2,557.6.1 MDL for those with severe disability. Compared to 1 January 2019, the average amount of the disability pension increased by 64.7%³¹.

The value of the subsistence minimum in 2022 made up on average 2,628.4 MDL/person per month. Therefore, the average amount of the disability pension made it possible to cover the subsistence minimum up to 80.1%. The average amount of the average disability pension is 59.8%³².

Despite all the efforts made by the state, an accessible physical environment and an individualized educational process shall be developed according to the needs and development

³¹ https://statistica.gov.md/index.php/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9460_60822.html

³² Ibidem

potential of children with hearing and visual disabilities, therefore, it is an important priority of the Inclusive Education Development Programme in the Republic of Moldova 2024-2027.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the Inclusive Education Development Programme in the Republic of Moldova, implementation of inclusive education is a complex process and involves participation of central and local public authorities, which shall develop assistance and support services. Due to the partnerships established between local mayor's offices and the administration of educational institutions, Resource Centres for Inclusive Education (RCIE) were opened.

These RCIE are a support service for all children in the school and community, for teachers, parents and community members who offer, coordinate and monitor specialized services, in order to ensure the educational and social inclusion of all children in the community. According to the Regulation on Redirection of Financial Resources within the Reform of Residential Institutions, approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 351 of 29.05.2012, the activity of the Resource Centre for Inclusive Education from the educational institution is managed by a support teaching staff member (coordinator).

The Republic of Moldova puts into practice the inclusion of children with SEN by developing and implementing public policies, transforming the culture of general schools and creating the necessary conditions for the inclusion of these children.

Following the analysis, the following **conclusions** were made:

- General education institutions are not physically adapted to accommodate children/students with sensory visual impairments and hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.

- General education institutions, with some exceptions (e.g. 'Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra' THS, 'Pro Succes' THS, 'Galata' Gymnasium, 'Decebal' Gymnasium from Chisinau municipality), do not have assistive equipment and technologies to meet individual needs and

ensure access to and full participation in classes for children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.

- The individualized assistance offered through inclusive education services does not fully meet the needs of children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students. There is a shortage of support staff for children with SEN.

- Travelling to school for visually impaired children is a challenge as there is no adapted street infrastructure and vehicles.

- Psychological, speech therapy and psychopedagogical assistance is insufficiently developed in general education to meet the individual development needs of children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.

- The inclusive education financing scheme (2% of the budget allocated to education per district) does not cover the real needs, as the funds are mainly used for the salary of support teachers.

- The existing methodologies of psycho-pedagogical approach to children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students, and teaching supports within general education institutions, do not fully ensure the quality of education in accordance with the needs of the children/students concerned.

- General education does not have enough teachers with special psycho-pedagogical training and knowledge of the sign language, support staff and, in general, its teaching and specialized staff is not enough training;

- There are no special textbooks in general education institutions;

- There is an implicit non-acceptance by some children, parents and teachers in general schools of children/students with sensory visual impairments and hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.

- Auxiliary staff in general schools show resistance in interacting with children/students with sensory visual impairments and hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.

- Parents of children/students with visual sensory impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students are not enough informed about the development benefits available to the child in the inclusive school.

- Families are not prepared for relationships with their own child with SEN.

- There are obvious failures in the social protection system in terms of support for children with disabilities depending on each type of disability, taking into account its specifics and adaptations corresponding to the impairment.

- The record keeping of children with disabilities, without taking into account the type of disability does not enable the public authorities to have a clear and exhaustive picture of the real needs of families and children with hearing and visual impairments, neither enables them to develop social services focused on the specific and real needs of each type of disability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ To the Ministry of Education and Research:

- Implement the Inclusive Education Development Programme of the Republic of Moldova 2024-2027, and namely: develop an accessible physical environment and an individualized educational process subject to the needs and development potential of children/students with sensory visual impairments and hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students;

- Place information on the situation of children/students with special needs on the web page in the 'reports' section;

- Provide general education institutions that integrated children with SEN with specific equipment and assistive technologies, subject to the needs of children/students (hearing aids; glasses to see better; walking frame, canes, modified computer keyboard, communication boards, special chairs, etc.);

- Solve some problems of the ergonomic structure that the child with SEN will benefit from, and namely: adapt the classroom space, including the furniture, to the somato-physiological and health needs of students; pay special attention to the place in the classroom of the desk where the child with NES sits;

- Provide educational institutions that integrated children with SEN with textbooks, necessary teaching material, depending on the needs of children with SEN;

- Include in all initial teacher education courses ('Ion Creanga' SPU, Faculty of Psychology and Special Psychopedagogy; MSU, Faculty of Psychology and Educational

Sciences, Sociology and Social Assistance) a module on education of children/students with various disabilities (including those with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late deafness);

- Strengthen capacities of the teaching and management staff to develop, implement, monitor, evaluate and revise the IEP in order to have IEP adapted to the programmes in force, which will enable harmonious and balanced interaction between curricular objectives, interests, needs and suggestions of children, parents and of the teaching staff to support, encourage and ensure individual development of children;

- Strengthen the skills of teachers of hearing-impaired children to apply teaching strategies that take into account: age particularities of the child, his or her cognitive level of development, degree of deafness, level of oral communication skills and general language, as well as intellectual particularities of each child.

- Train teachers who support or teach children with hearing and visual disabilities to use the sign language;

- Provide adapted transport to/from school for visually impaired students;

- Revise the inclusive education financing scheme and the organizational chart of general education institutions, in order to be able to hire additional support teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, psychopedagogues in general schools with students/children with SEN;

- Reduce the number of children in the grades with students/children with SEN up to 20 children;

- The MER and the Baccalaureate Exam Support Centres should also create conditions necessary to take the Baccalaureate exams for children/students with visual sensory impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students. At the moment, these children are given only one additional hour to take the baccalaureate exams, which is not enough for such students;

- Train the auxiliary staff in general schools to interact with children/students with visual sensory impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students;

- Inform the parents of children with hearing and vision impairments about development benefits for the child in the inclusive school;

- Inform and train parents and children in general schools to interact with children/students with sensory visual impairments, hard of hearing and late-deafened children/students.

➤ *To the Ministry of Health*

- Ensure fair access to prevention, detection, treatment and rehabilitation services for persons with vision and hearing impairments;
- Provide children with visual disabilities with technical means of optical correction and visual aid;
- Find financial resources to pay for cochlear implant surgical interventions in case of total hearing loss.

➤ *To the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection*

- Continue providing compensations for the transport of children with disabilities, persons accompanying a child with disabilities. The compensation should be paid once in 3 months, in the amount provided by Government Decision No. 1413 of 27.12.2016, with subsequent amendments;
- Provide material aid, including financial aid during the winter, to families who have dependent children with SEN.

APPENDICES

Table No. 3

Data on the number of children with sensory impairments in Chisinau municipality, disaggregated by type of institution, sex, age, educational level, form of studies and type of disability

#	Educational institution	Type of educational institution (general, special, vocational)	Child		Educational level	Form of study (full-time, remote, home)	Type of impairment	
			Sex	Age			Hearing	Vision
1.	PI 'Universul' THS	general	F	8	primary	full time	*	
2.	PI 'M. Viteazul' THS	general	M	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
3.	PI 'Rambam' THS ORT	general	F	16	higher secondary	full time		*
4.	PI 'Olimp' THS	general	M	9	primary	full time	*	

		general	M	15	lower secondary	full time		*
5.	'N. V. Gogol' THS	general	M	11	lower secondary	full time		*
		general	F	14	lower secondary	full time		*
6.	PI 'Alexandru cel Bun' THS	general	F	14	lower secondary	full time	*	
7.	'N. Gheorghiu' THS	general	F	11	lower secondary	full time		*
8.		general	M	10	primary	full time		*
9.	PI 'N. Balcescu' THS	general	M	14	lower secondary	full time	*	
10.	PI 'M. Berezovschi' THSAP	general	F	9	primary	full time	*	
11.	'I. S. Neciui – Levițchi' THS	general	M	10	primary	full time	*	
12.	'George Meniuc' THS	general	M	13	lower secondary	full time		*
13.	'Kiril and Metodii' Education Complex	general	M	14	lower secondary	full time	*	
14.	'Gloria' THS with Sport Profile	general	F	8	primary	full time	*	
15.	'Galata' Gymnasium	general	M	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
16.	'Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra' THS	general	F	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
17.	PI 'Pas cu Pas' Primary School No. 152	general	M	8	primary	full time	*	
18.	'Mihail Sadoveanu' THS	general	M	12	gimnazial	full time	*	
19.	Special School No. 12 for hard of hearing and late-deafened children	special	F	8	primary	full time		*
		special	M	7	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	8	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	6	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	8	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	8	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	8	primary	full time	*	
		special	F	9	primary	full time	*	
		special	F	8	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	10	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	9	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	9	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	9	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	9	primary	full time	*	
		special	F	9	primary	full time	*	
		special	F	10	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	10	primary	full time	*	
		special	M	10	primary	full time	*	

		special	M	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	13	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	12	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	13	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	14	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	15	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	14	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	15	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	15	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	15	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	17	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	15	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	F	15	lower secondary	full time	*	

		special	F	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	15	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time	*	
20.	Primary School No.82	general	F	11	lower secondary	full time	*	
21.	„Elena Alistar’ THSAP	general	F	15	lower secondary	full time	*	
22.	PI ‘Ion and Doina Aldea-Teodorovici’ THSAP	general	F	14	lower secondary	full time	*	
23.	Primary School No. 101, Bacioi commune	general	F	9	primary	full time	*	
24.	Gymnasium No.102, Braila village	general	M	9	primary	full time	*	
		general	M	8	primary	full time	*	
25.	‘S. Rahmaninov’ Republican High School of Music	general	F	9	primary	full time		*
26.	Center of Excellence in Energy and Electronics	profesional-tehnic	M	16	profesionala	full time		*
27.	PI ‘Gaudeamus’ THS	general	M	18	higher secondary	full time		*
28.	Theoretical High School for Visually Impaired Children	special	M	7	primary	full time		*
		special	M	8	primary	full time		*
		special	M	8	primary	full time		*
		special	M	8	primary	full time		*
		special	M	8	primary	full time		*
		special	M	8	primary	full time		*
		special	F	8	primary	full time		*
		special	F	8	primary	full time		*
		special	F	8	primary	full time		*
		special	F	9	primary	full time		*
		special	M	9	primary	full time		*
		special	M	9	primary	full time		*
		special	M	9	primary	full time		*
		special	M	9	primary	full time		*
		special	M	9	primary	full time		*
		special	M	9	primary	full time		*

		special	M	9	primary	full time		*
		special	M	10	primary	full time		*
		special	M	10	primary	full time		*
		special	M	10	primary	full time		*
		special	M	10	primary	full time		*
		special	F	10	primary	full time		*
		special	F	10	primary	full time		*
		special	F	10	primary	full time		*
		special	F	10	primary	full time		*
		special	F	11	primary	full time		*
		special	F	11	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	11	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	11	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	11	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	11	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	11	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	12	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	13	lower secondary	full time		*

		special	F	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	13	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	14	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	14	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	14	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	14	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	14	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	15	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	15	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	15	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	F	15	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	16	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	16	lower secondary	la domiciliu		*
		special	F	16	lower secondary	full time		*
		special	M	16	higher secondary	full time		*
		special	M	18	higher secondary	full time		*
		special	F	18	higher secondary	full time		*
		special	M	19	higher secondary	full time		*
		special	F	19	higher secondary	full time		*

Appendix No. 1

List of normative acts and methodological documents in the field of socio-educational inclusion

1. CODE No. 152 of 17.07.2014. Education Code of the Republic of Moldova, with subsequent amendments
2. Convention on the Rights of the Child. GENERAL COMMENT No. 1 (2001). The aims of education.
3. Convention on the Rights of the Child. GENERAL COMMENT No. 2 (2002). The Role of Independent National Human Rights Institutions in the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child.
4. Convention on the Rights of the Child. GENERAL COMMENT No. 4 (2003). Adolescent Health and Development.
5. Convention on the Rights of the Child. GENERAL COMMENT No. 5 (2003). General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art. 4, 42 and 44, paragraph 6).
6. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 351 of 29.05.2012 on approval of the Regulation on redirection of financial resources within the reform of residential institutions
7. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 732 of 16.09.2013 on approval of the Regulation on the organization and operation of the Republican Centre for Psychopedagogical Assistance

8. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 732 of 16.09.2013 on approval of the Framework Regulation on the organization and operation of the District/Municipal Psychopedagogical Assistance Service
9. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova No. 381 of 13.04.2006 on approval of the Regulations on the salary of support teachers (as subsequently completed).
10. Law No. 169 of 09.07.2010 on the Strategy for social inclusion of persons with disabilities 2010-2013
11. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 100 of 26.02.2015 on approval of the Methodology for the organization and operation of the Resource Centre for inclusive education in the pre-university education institution
12. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 100 of 26.02.2015 on approval of the Methodology for the organization and operation of the Resource Centre for Inclusive Education
13. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 156 of 20.03.2015 on approval of the Instruction on specific procedures for examining students with special educational needs
14. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 311 of 05.05.2015 on approval of the Regulations and specific conditions for final evaluation and certification of students with special educational needs from compulsory general education institutions, who studied according to an individualized educational plan, based on a modified curriculum
15. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 156 of 20.03.2015, on approval of the Instruction on specific procedures for examining students with special educational needs
16. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 776 of 01 August 2017 on approval of the sample Structure of implementation of the Individualized Educational Plan
17. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 970 of 11.10.2013 on approval of Quality Standards for primary and general secondary education institutions from the perspective of child-friendly schools
18. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 98 of 26.02.2015 on approval of the Instruction for the organization of education at home
19. Order of the Ministry of Education No. 99 of 26.02.2015 on approval of the Child Development Evaluation Methodology

20. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 671 of 01.08.2017 on approval of the Methodological Guide: Individualization of the educational process through curricular adaptations.
21. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 01 of 02.01.2018 on approval of the Methodological Benchmarks on the activity of the speech therapist in general education institutions
22. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 02 of 02.01.2018 on approval of the Methodological Benchmarks on the activity of the psychologist in general education institutions
23. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 1934 of 28.12.2018 on approval of the Instruction on the organization of remote education for children with disabilities
24. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 683 of 03.06.2019 on approval of the Framework Regulation of the Intra-School Multidisciplinary Commission
25. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 792 of 25.05.2018 on approval of the Methodological Guide: Educational inclusion of visually impaired children.
26. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 792 of 25.05.2018 on approval of the Methodological Guide: Educational inclusion of hearing impaired children.
27. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 209 of 27.02.2018 on approval of Methodological benchmarks on the activity of support teaching staff in general education institutions
28. Order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research No. 212 of 27.02.2018 on approval of the Methodological Benchmarks on the activity of the psychopedagogue in general education institutions
29. <https://rm.coe.int/168007cf93>, Council of Europe, European Social Charter (revised)
30. https://www.infonet.md/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/GHID-etodologic_FINAL_web.pdf
31. http://www.prime.md/ro/legile-pe-limba-orbilor-constitutia-tarii-noastre-editata-in-alfabetul-braille_52711.html

32. https://statistica.gov.md/index.php/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9460_60822.html
33. https://statistica.gov.md/ro/situatia-copiilor-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9578_60434.html
34. <https://dexonline.ro/definitii>