

# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Unity in diversity



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Edited by  
Joanna Głodkowska



WYDAWNICTWO AKADEMII PEDAGOGIKI SPECJALNEJ

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Publication financed by The Maria Grzegorzewska University  
through the funds for statutory activities

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Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej  
Warszawa 2020

ISBN 978-83-978-83-66010-74-1

e-book 978-83-66010-75-8

Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej  
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# Inclusive education in Ukraine within the context of European values and guiding principles in a field of education for children with special educational needs

Olena V. Martynchuk, Tatiana V. Skrypnyk, Natalia Z. Sofiy, Julia M. Naida\*

## Introduction

The majority of European countries implement the concept of an inclusive education and prioritize meeting diverse students' educational needs. At the international level, the national policies of most countries are underpinned by a constellation of conventions, declarations, statements, and resolutions on disability, inclusion, and special education. In Ukraine, inclusion policies have been in place since 2001, and the country is pursuing large-scale educational reforms aimed at achieving the "New Ukrainian School," which will embody a more inclusive ideology and an acceptance of differences and diversity.

Introducing an inclusive education is a fairly long, responsible and complex organizational and methodological process that requires weighted management decisions, basic research in various areas relating to the education of children with special educational needs, and, above all, respect for fundamental human rights. The Salamanca Declaration about principles, policies and practical activities in the field of education of people with special needs (1994) became an important milestone on the way of defining the conceptual framework for the education of children with special educational needs (SEN), which put most countries in the world, including Ukraine, in need of providing equal access to education to all children, including children with special educational needs. The increased international orientation towards integration and inclusion has led to the fact that educational policies and practices in the field of special educational needs are undergoing big

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changes and development in many countries of the world, including the post-Soviet countries (Ainscow, 2010; Haug, 2017; Bulat, Kara, Solovey, 2016; Kolupayeva, Taranchenko, 2016; Khitruk, 2015; Kutepova, Suntsova, 2016).

However, there are still numerous issues regarding inclusive education and mechanism of ensuring equal rights for students with SEN in Ukraine; inclusion is undertaken on ad hoc basis, rather than systematically, and the families of SEN students face barriers to access for high-quality programs.

A large contribution to the development of educational policies and practices in Ukraine was made by national scientists and practitioners in the framework of the Canadian-Ukrainian project to develop a local capacity for the implementation of inclusive education for children with disabilities in Ukraine “Inclusive education for children with special needs in Ukraine” (2008–2013) with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The results of research activities in the process of project implementation have shown that successful implementation of inclusive education requires: positive attitudes, teacher training, appropriate resources, stimulating policies and legislation, family support, quality pedagogy, leadership, cooperation and an organized approach (Loreman, McGhie-Richmond, Kolupayeva, Taranchenko, Mazin, & Crocker, 2016). The implementation of this project contributed to the intensification of research activities in the field of inclusive education in Ukraine (Kolupaieva, 2009; Taranchenko, Kolupaieva, Danilavichutie 2014; Skrypnyk, 2017; Sofiy, Nayda, 2007; Sofiy, 2017).

The research results showed a fairly high level of consciousness of the Ukrainian society regarding the acceptance of the values of inclusion (European Research Association, 2012), a fairly developed methodological base of inclusive education (Kolupayeva, 2009; Kolupayeva & Taranchenko, 2016), a fairly well-built inclusive policy today (Kolupayeva & Taranchenko, 2016; Sinyov, Sheremet, Rudenko, Shulzhenko, 2016). However, this does not provide enough positive practice of introducing inclusive education (Loreman, McGhie-Richmond, Kolupayeva, Taranchenko, Mazin, Crocker, 2016; Taranchenko, Kolupayeva, Danilavichute, 2014; Sinyov, Sheremet, Rudenko, Shulzhenko, 2016; Martynchuk, 2019).

At present, we have not been able to find theoretical and empirical studies that would provide a thorough analysis of the reasons for the gap between educational policy and the practice of inclusive education in the Ukrainian educational space. Understanding these reasons will help develop tools and mechanisms to ensure equal rights for children with special educational needs to quality education. This chapter will illuminate the conceptual evolution of inclusion in Ukraine’s legislation and policy, examining how the concept has shaped educational provision and reform.

There is an evident essential contradiction in Ukrainian educational field between specific innovative steps in the context of reforming inclusive education. The discrepancy appears between the international experience and the real stage of introducing inclusive education into the schools’ practice.



Due to the above, the aim of research is to explore relevance of Ukrainian legislation to European values and guidelines in a sphere of education for children with SEN.

## Method

In the research project we used the empirical materials, which included the national policy documents issued in the period between 2009–2019 (among them the laws of Ukraine, orders of the President of Ukraine, resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, orders and letters of the Ministry of Education and Science) and analyzed them in detail using quality content analysis. We used content analysis approach to make replicable and valid inferences by interpreting textual materials mentioned above.

We have analyzed separate parts of the national policy documents and have identified the tendencies of the development of inclusive education in Ukraine based on the main principle of the content analysis.

The research included the following stages:

1. Preparing the program of content analysis. During this stage we developed the hypothesis concerning informational data of an array of legislative documents on the inclusive education.

Hypothesis: a qualitative content analysis will allow following the logic of the implementation of inclusive practices. These practices are in accordance with the conceptual evolution of the legal framework of an inclusive process. The process is based on the implementation of the provisions of Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. At the same time, there is still inconsistency and non-compliance in the Ukraine's legal framework as well as a lack of implementation mechanisms and conceptual specifics. This leads to an extremely low level of implementation of inclusive education in educational institutions. We believe that systematization of the strong and also the weaker aspects of Ukrainian legislation, will enable a formulation of proposals for improving the legal framework. This will be an important factor in the successful implementation of inclusive practices.

2. Selection of the content analysis sources. We have identified the number of sources, which included the documents on the planned topic: laws of Ukraine, orders of the President of Ukraine, resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, orders and letters of the Ministry of Education and Science, reports of the state and non-governmental organizations regarding realization of the policy and practice of inclusive education. The conditions of selection restricted the material to legislative and normative documents for the period of 2009–2019.

The documents were textual and also mixed (texts with graphs, tables, diagrams etc.).

3. Collection of the initial empirical information. Location of search: web-sites of legislative and executive bodies, civic organizations related to the inclusive education implementation.
4. Interpretation of the obtained results, research conclusions. In order to interpret the obtained results according to identified research task we have selected the content analysis categories, condensed meaning units (units of count), which showed the direction/focus of the analysis.

To solve the research problem, we analyzed how certain provisions of Article 24 “Education” of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are implemented in the Ukrainian legislation and regulatory framework, based on the main comment No. 4 (2016) to Article 24 of the UN CRPD.

We have identified the following meaning units of analysis:

- definitions (persons with special educational needs, inclusive education);
- topics that concern the process of inclusive education (respect for the value of diversity, understanding of the principles of partnership, teacher support, etc.).

In our research we also used comparative method, which allowed to identify consistency or inconsistency of the statements of the Article 24 “Education” of UN CRPD (2006) with the existing statements in Ukrainian legislation in the field of education for students with SEN.

The research included the following stages:

1. A separate comparison of the objects, identification of their characteristics.
2. Comparison of the identified characteristics of the similar objects and determination of the general characteristics (similarities) as well as differences (through comparing).
3. Assessment of differences based on the identified research position in the context of determination of inclusive education relevance to the European values and guiding principles in a field of education for students with SEN.

Based on the interpretation of the obtained results we have made contextual conclusions related to context (realities reflected in the text), which have been formulated considering interconnections of contextual elements and their relative meaning in the structure of the text documents.

The quality of our conclusions was influenced by our experience as researchers, our intuition, knowledge of the research object, because of the direct involvement of the authors of article in developing the policy and practice of inclusive education in Ukraine.

## Context

System of education for persons with special needs in Ukraine as well as in other countries developed in evolutionary way – starting from separate efforts to individualize learning to the organization of group learning and later to establishing separate educational institutions. During many centuries the special features of development of the educational system for persons with disabilities in Ukraine were conditioned by the complicated history of opposition of Ukrainian people to enslavement, repressions, aggressive offensive of the neighboring states, overcoming inner fragmentation – both territorial and social, being a part of different states (Poland, Lithuania, Austria-Hungary, Moldova, Russia, USSR) and others.

The period of development of the national system of education accompanied by essential transformational changes has started in 1991 when Ukraine became an independent state. These changes from institutionalization to inclusion were connected with the review of conceptual approaches to education of persons with disabilities according to legislative documents at the international level and considering the social changes in society.

Socio-political and socio-cultural processes, which took place in Ukraine on its way of joining European educational sphere, have caused identification of several stages of education development for children with special needs in the independent Ukraine (Kolupayeva, Taranchenko, 2016).

*The first stage (1991–2000)* of functioning of Ukrainian system of special education has started from the ratification of international documents regarding human rights. These documents are : UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993). Another important factor was a recognition of the right to education for all citizens, including persons with special needs, which was declared in the main legislative document. Constitution of Ukraine identifies the main human rights, among them the right to education (Article 53) and the right to social protection (Article 46). Other vital documents included the Laws of Ukraine: “On Education” (1991, 1996), “On Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine” (1991), “On General Secondary Education” (1999). The main idea of the first stage was a “state-centered” educational system with clear characteristics of institutionalization and rigid regulation of the educational process in special schools.

*The second stage (2001–2010)* of the educational system development was characterized by the efforts to transfer special schools from the regime of inert functioning to the regime of forward-looking innovative gait. A new trend of spontaneous integration of children with special needs into regular schools occurred. This process took place simultaneously with strengthening inclusive education in democratic countries. At the beginning of XXI century adherents of the innovative approaches in education, in particular researchers, parents and civic organizations

appealed to radical changes. These changes were based on the belief that all children can learn, receive quality education, realize their potential and be integrated in the society. During a period between 2001–2007 the state-wide experimental pedagogical program “Social adaptation and integration in society of children with developmental impairments through their education in regular schools” has started. The program was initiated by Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation under the scientific support of the Institute of Special Pedagogy of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine and organizational support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. In the process of experiment normative documents have been developed as well as scientific, methodological materials. Normative documents became the basis of legislative documents in a field of inclusive education, scientific-methodological materials launched further national publications on inclusive education.

Development of the normative base of inclusive education in Ukraine as well as development educational and methodological materials to train teachers in the system of in-service teacher training took place within Canadian-Ukrainian project. The project was focused on developing a local potential to implement inclusive education of children with special needs in Ukraine (2008–2013) and supported by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The results of research activities in the process of project realization have determined the factors of successful implementation of inclusive education such as: positive attitudes, pedagogical education, relevant resources, stimulating policy and legislation, family support, quality pedagogy, leadership, cooperation and organizational approach (Loreman, McGhie-Richmond, Kolupayeva, Taranchenko, Mazin, Crocker, 2016).

*The third stage (2011 – till now)* is characterized by the main tendency in education of children with special needs which includes optimization of special schools and implementation of inclusive education in Ukraine.

Ponderable achievement at this stage is an implementation of inclusive education at the institutional level, which was promoted by the Canadian-Ukrainian project (2008–2013) mentioned earlier. Its realization facilitated activation of research activities in Ukraine in a field of inclusive education. This research resulted in the following outcomes: theoretical-methodological basis and theoretical-experimental model of inclusive education in Ukraine (Kolupayeva, 2009; Kolupayeva, 2018); the analysis of the development history of the national system of education in Ukraine (Taranchenko, Kolupayeva, Danilavichute, 2014); determining the conceptual principles of projecting pedagogical activities in inclusive classrooms, planning and realization of educational process in the inclusive environment (Danilavichute, Lytovchenko, 2013; Skrypnyk, 2017); determining the organizational-pedagogical conditions of the integrated support of students with special educational needs in the inclusive school (Sofiy, 2017); regulating

the organizational-pedagogical conditions and structure of teacher assistant activities in the inclusive school (Lutsenko, 2017); regulating the conceptual principles and the system of training of different specialists to work with children with special educational needs in the inclusive environment (Martynchuk, 2018; Demchenko, 2016; Malyshevska, 2018).

Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Optional protocol (December 2009) has promoted further development of inclusive education in Ukraine. At the same time, other documents which were determinative for development of inclusive education, were developed and adopted. They included e.g. a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On approval action plan on implementation of inclusive and integrated education in regular schools till 2012”. Important role was attributed to the changes to the Law of Ukraine “On general secondary education” in 2020. According to these changes the schools had a right to organize special and inclusive classrooms where children with special educational needs could study. It implied a transition of inclusion policy from functioning as a pedagogical experiment to the country level. Furthermore, the following steps have been done: in 2010 the Ministry of Youth and Sports approved the Concept of development of inclusive education. In August 2011 the Ministry approved the “Order of organization of inclusive education in regular schools”. It was the first time when the Concept introduced in Ukrainian legislation the definition of inclusive education. It was defined as a complex process of providing equal access to quality education for children with special educational needs. It should be achieved by organizing the education in regular schools based on child-centered teaching methods, considering every child as an individual with their own specific educational-cognitive capacities.

Based on scientific-theoretical analysis and identification of conceptual approaches in Ukraine the new State standards for primary education for children with special educational needs have been developed. They were approved by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine #670 as of August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013. This further resulted in a development of new educational materials to work with the children.

To evaluate the development of inclusive education in Ukraine a complex research “Inclusive education in Ukraine: achievements, problems and perspectives” was conducted. This research was interested in particular in studying the results, barriers and perspectives of the implementation of inclusive education. It was conducted by the European Research Association among Ukrainian population and teachers of inclusive schools during the period between 2011–2012. Research results have demonstrated rather positive attitude of the society to the idea of education of children with special educational needs jointly with their peers. In particular, 70% of respondents expressed positive attitude to the idea of inclusive education; 53% demonstrated positive attitude towards the idea of the children

with special needs studying together with their children; 76% of respondents were confident that implementation of inclusive education will help to promote the tolerance in society; 45% of respondents believed Ukraine should follow European way of development and implement inclusive education; 50% of respondents believed that inclusive education is a step towards changes, necessary not only in a field of education, but for the society as a whole. The results of survey of teachers in inclusive schools have demonstrated the main problems in inclusive education implementation. They were as follows: additional psychological pressure; lack of special knowledge and experience; lack of methodological materials. It implies that the most difficult and the most important were the problems related to the teachers themselves (“Inclusive education in Ukraine: achievements, problems and perspectives. Resume of analytical report based on the results of complex research”, 2012).

Scientific-pedagogical experiment “Inclusive education – the level of nation’s consciousness” (2016–2019) was initiated by Maryna Poroshenko, the Head of the Poroshenko foundation jointly with the Ministry of Education. It became an important and meaningful landmark in the process of implementation of inclusive education. The main achievements of this program included development of the official principles of inclusive education and adopting the number of legislative documents. This assured the right of children with special needs to education as well as identified the mechanisms of its implementation. In particular, the following documents have been adopted:

- The Law of Ukraine “On introducing changes to the Law of Ukraine “On Education” regarding providing the access to educational services for children with special needs” (May 23, 2017). The following concepts have been identified – “inclusive education”, “person with special educational needs”, “individual educational program” and others;
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On approval of the Order and conditions of providing subvention from the state budget to the local budgets and regarding providing the state support to persons with special educational needs”. According to this resolution Ukrainian government provided financial subvention of 209,4 million UAH for the first time. The State Budget for 2018 reserved more than 500 million UAH of such subvention including 200 million UAH to equip inclusive-resource centers (purchasing the modern assessment methodologies of child’s development, in particular Leiter-3, WISC-IV, Conners-3, CASD, PEP-3 and training of specialists (February 14, 2017);
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On approval of the Statement on inclusive resource center”, new services of systemic support of children with special needs (July 12, 2017);
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On introducing the changes to the Order of organization of inclusive education in regular schools” – according

to this document each child with special needs has to have an Individual educational program (IEP), which includes specific learning strategies and approaches, number of hours and types of psychological-pedagogical and correctional services (August 9, 2017);

- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On the National Strategy of reforming the system of institutional care and up-bringing of children for 2017–2026 and its action plan of realization of the first stage”. Among the expected results are: an annual increase (starting from 2018) of the number of children involved in inclusive education, on 30% of the general number of children with special needs (August 9, 2017);
- Order of the Ministry of Education “On the approval of the Typical list of the special means of correction of the psycho-physical development of children with special needs who study in inclusive and special classrooms of regular secondary schools (April 23, 2018);
- Order of the Ministry of Education “On the approval of the exemplary statement on the team of the psychological-pedagogical support of children with special educational needs in regular schools” (June 8, 2018).

One of the most important conditions of the systematic reform of the education for children with special needs at the present moment is a complex solution of the issues such as: legislative documents, organizational-financial provision, teacher training, scientific and educational-methodological provision.

## Results

To identify the content and relevance of Ukrainian legislation to European values and guidelines in a sphere of education for children with SEN, we referred to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Article 24. Comparative analysis of the most meaningful statements of the Article 24 and relevant statements from the Ukrainian legal documents are provided in the Table 1.

Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) states that inclusive education offers the best educational opportunities for learners with disabilities. It is argued that international documents *set out the central elements that need to be addressed in order to ensure the right to access to education, the right to quality education and the right to respect in the learning environment*. Most European countries have signed the Convention and the majority of these have also signed the optional protocol and are in the process of ratifying both the convention and protocol. Ukraine has also signed and ratified the UNCRPD.

**Table 1.** Comparative analysis of the most meaningful statements of the Article 24 and relevant statements from the Ukrainian legal documents

Article 24	Ukrainian legal documents for the period 2009–2019 which have impact on inclusive education
Right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunities	Mentioned as one of the main principles of the state educational policy in a new Law on Education (2017, Article 6) Understood as the creation inclusive classrooms close to places of living the family with children with SEN Providing the means of transportation
Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live	The concept of quality education is used in the Concept of inclusive education development (2010), in a new Law on Education (2017)
Education throughout all life	Mentioned in a new Law on Education (2017, Article 18) Education throughout all life is one of the key competencies outlined by the New Ukrainian School concept (2016)
The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;  The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity	Law “On Education” (2017) mentions the “development of personality and talents of all children”, their “individual educational trajectories”.  It is important to mention that the Law “On Special Education” was developed, but it was not adopted.  Law “On Education” (2017) was adopted, which included two separate articles related education of persons with SEN – “Education of persons with SEN”, and “Inclusive education” – it was a unique case when so many different stakeholders participated in the development and discussions of the new law.  There is a number of other legal documents, which introduce and regulate additional support for children with SEN: teacher assistants, team of psychological-pedagogical support, adaptations and modifications of the educational process, etc. All of this is a positive step towards inclusive education. However, the presence of such terminology as “correctional services”, “teacher-defectologist” are evidence of the medical model of understanding of disability.  Although the new Law On Education has rather wide definition of persons with special educational needs (“person who require additional temporary or permanent support”), in practice it is understood only as a person with disabilities or developmental disorders, which also reflects the medical model of disability (not a social one). Therefore, such an approach narrows the concept of “human diversity”.



Article 24	Ukrainian legal documents for the period 2009–2019 which have impact on inclusive education
Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society	Social and civic competencies are one of the key competencies outlined by the New Ukrainian School concept (2016)
Creation of conditions, which promote knowledge building and social development according to the goal of full inclusion	The Concept of Development of Inclusive Education (2010) includes such issues, as “social development of children with SEN”, “providing their social-educational needs, providing conditions for social-labor rehabilitation, integration into society”, “providing access to social environment”
Providing reasonable accommodation and universal design	<p>The concepts of universal design and reasonable accommodation were introduced in the new Law on Education (2017, Article 1),</p> <p>It refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning environment</li> <li>Educational programs (curriculum) and services</li> <li>Teaching and learning strategies</li> <li>Educational materials</li> <li>Organization of the learning place</li> <li>Equipping of the rooms of teacher-defectologists, speech therapists, psychologists to conduct correctional activities (impact of the medical model)</li> <li>Organization of the resource room</li> </ul>
Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual technical aids (2011–2019)</li> <li>Special aids for correction of psychological and physical development (2011–2019)</li> <li>Providing budget subvention to purchase necessary additional aids (2017)</li> <li>Adaptations and modifications (2011, 2017)</li> </ul>
Effective approaches to individualize the support. Using language and means of communication, which promote social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing the psychological and pedagogical support (team of psychological and pedagogical support) (2017, 2018)</li> <li>Alternative forms of education</li> <li>Child-centered teaching strategies</li> <li>Individual educational trajectory (individual development program, individual educational plan, individual educational program)</li> <li>Monitoring</li> <li>Differentiation of education (2017)</li> </ul> <p>At the same time there are statements, which need to be revised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“child-centered approach is provided y the teacher assistant”</li> <li>“child assistant provides his/her educational and social needs”</li> <li>“individual development program provides individualization of education”</li> </ul>

Article 24	Ukrainian legal documents for the period 2009–2019 which have impact on inclusive education
Involvement of teachers who know sign language; Training of specialists and personnel who work at all levels of education	NO

## Discussion/conclusions

The analysis of legal documents during the last decade allowed us to come to the following conclusions:

1. All these documents include, in general, positive tendencies towards development inclusive education. However, there is strong impact of the medical model of the understanding of disabilities, which is reflected in terminology and approaches such as: “correctional activities”, “teacher-defectologists”, a fixed number of children with SEN in the classroom.
2. At the same time, the number of other important principles of inclusive education which are reflected in the Article 24 of UNCRPD, are not reflected in Ukrainian legislation. The most challenging are the following:
  - a) The content of education depends on the “level of development, abilities and opportunities of a child” – this statement limits to some extent the child development. According to the international guidelines educational process should be focused on the maximum potential development. Inclusive teaching and learning strategies together with the interdisciplinary approach should be the factors of successful inclusive practices.
  - b) Narrow responsibility of the educational institutions personnel– which is restricted only to the educational process. A lack of attention to the social and life skills development do not provide competencies for an effective participation in a social life. However, the New Ukrainian School concept, which includes social and civic competencies among other key competencies, can positively change this situation.
3. Some of the issues mentioned in Ukrainian legislation remain declarative and there are not yet any mechanisms of their realization. Among these issues are the following:
  - a) Providing transport to make sure the right to quality education for children with SEN is provided.
  - b) Providing principles of universal design and reasonable accommodations.
  - c) Creating conditions for socialization of all children.

4. There is a certain progress in development and introducing appropriate terminology, which is reflected in the new Law On Education. Such important issues as a definition of persons with special educational needs, reasonable accommodations, universal design concept, and others, are included in the new Law On Education.
5. In spite of numerous numbers of legal documents, which were developed recently, there is still the impact of the medical model of disability, which is reflected in the following issues:
  - a) Medical terminology: “correctional activities”, “teacher-defectologists”, etc.
  - b) Fixing maximum number of children with SEN per classroom. Such limitation contradicts with the natural concept of human diversity.
  - c) In spite of the existing terminology of the concept of a “person with special educational needs” (new Law on Education), its understanding is limited only to persons with disabilities and developmental disorders.
6. There are other misinterpretations, which are conditioned by the lack of understanding of the concept of inclusive education, such as:
  - a) The role of teacher assistant who (according to legal documents) should provide individualization of educational process. The teacher assistant’s role is to help teacher in his/her work with all children, including children with SEN.
  - b) Overestimated role of parents who have a primary right to choose the form of education, to request complex assessment, and to approve individual educational program. In case of parents’ incompetence, the right moment for assessment and interventions might be missed, which could have a negative impact on a child.

Recently, essential national changes have started in Ukraine, which represent a big step towards creating conditions for a systemic reform related to the education of students with special educational needs. At the same time there is a certain inconsistency in Ukrainian legislation and a lack of mechanisms and conceptual peculiarities of inclusive education realization, which leads to a very low level of inclusive education implementation in schools. This was mentioned in the studies supported by the International Renaissance Foundation in 2019. These studies focused on the situational analysis of providing services for children with SEN within the inclusive education reforms in Ukraine (Alishavskane, Onufrik, Florian, 2019).

The results of our research, unlike the existing ones (ERA, 2012; Lutsenko, 2013; Alishavskane, Onufrik, Florian, 2019), demonstrate a limited usage of the concept of inclusive education in Ukrainian legal documents, which is still interpreted based on the medical model of understanding disability. We can state that the definition of inclusive education in Ukrainian legislation is provided in the context of the social model of disability, but its understanding and interpretation in

other legal documents is still based on the medical model. It is stressed that during the last decades the state policies regarding persons with special needs were inert and aimed to support the special conditions of the education within the boarding schools. Therefore, they were based on the medical model. The paradigm of today's Ukrainian education is based on the transition from the medical to social model of understanding disability. There is a certain progress in the development and introducing the relevant terminology, which is reflected in the new Law on Education. However, in spite of numerous legal documents recently developed, there is still an influence of the medical model of disability, which contradicts the natural concept of human diversity.

In our opinion, there is an inconsistency between the readiness of Ukraine to develop the system of providing educational services to students with SEN within inclusive educational environment according to the European standards and the real steps, which have been made without any strategic planning of the development of the national educational policy and mechanisms of its implementation. This failure is frequently discussed in the research literature and corresponds to the voices that Ukrainian system of education remains the only sphere which has been stuck in the Soviet past, with its methods of education based on the "factory" principles – "all should be the same" (Hrynevych, 2017).

To summarize, we can state that the existing positive tendencies in the national education demonstrate a movement towards quality inclusive education in Ukraine. Importantly, they remain relevant to the European values and guiding principles within a field of education of students with SEN.

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## *Inclusive education in Ukraine in the context of European values and guiding principles in a field of education for children with special educational needs*

### *Abstract*

The purpose of this chapter has been to illuminate inclusive education in Ukraine in the context of its relevance to the European values and guiding principles in a field of education of students with SEN through study how Ukrainian legal documents reflect or implement the main statement of Article 24 of UN CRPD.

The data consist of national policy documents from 2009 (when inclusive education has started to be implemented at the institutional level) to 2019, and was analyzed using thematic analysis and comparative analysis. Analysis demonstrated that paradigm of Ukrainian education is based on the transition between medical to social models of understanding disability, that is why the main statements in the legal documents regarding providing the right to education to children with SEN do not correspond fully with the main statements of Article 24 UN CRPD.

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**Keywords:** inclusive education, medical vs. social model of understanding of disability, right to education, inclusive educational environment, students with special educational needs

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