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## Development of special education in Ukraine (90<sup>th</sup> years of the XX – the beginning of the XXI century)

### Abstract

The author describes the features of special education in Ukraine. The article deals with the issues of development and reform of special education in Ukraine after 1991. The experience of organization of special education is analyzed. The general tendencies and problems in the system of special education are revealed. Stressed is the importance of scientific research of scientists in Ukraine for the development of special education. Considered are the most common single controversial issues in teaching children with special needs. Ukrainian educational legislation and current regulations in the field of inclusive education presented by the author show that the trends of the present stage of national education system's development, are possible only in continuous improvement of general and special educational systems and the elimination of borders between them, which still exist today. The article notes that the reform of special education started in Ukraine requires deep, comprehensive and creative interpretation of correction and rehabilitation activities as a social phenomenon.

**Keywords:** special education, special needs, limited abilities, integration, inclusive education, children with special needs, correctional-rehabilitation activity, the reform of the system of special education

Integration of the national education system into the European and world educational spaces makes education one of the most important directions of the state policy of Ukraine. In the process of democratization of Ukrainian society, the ideas of humanization of education and personality priorities are becoming widespread.

The market economy and the democratic system of socio-political development of Ukraine put forward new requirements for the education system. In particular, to the education of people with special educational needs<sup>1</sup>. Such people by their nature and behavior are different from each other and from each other. Before Ukraine raises the question of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for children and young people with special needs in the new social

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<sup>1</sup> А. Колупаєва, *Спеціальна освіта в Україні та модернізація освітньої галузі*, Особлива дитина: навчання і виховання, 2014, № 3, с. 7.

situation, conditions for their successful integration into society<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the existing system of special education needs qualitative changes.

Such changes in educational policy are already taking place. After 1991, Ukraine began to develop its own legislative framework. Government regulations have reflected effective measures and programs of state support for children with special needs (Law of Ukraine «On education», «National doctrine of education development in Ukraine in the XXI century», Concept of pedagogical education, Laws of Ukraine «On secondary education», «On Higher Education» and others).

Problems of education of children with disorders of psychophysical development became the subject of scientific research. The modern development of special education in Ukraine is devoted to the research of V. Bondar, V. Berzin, L. Borschevskaya, L. Vavina, O. Gavrilov, V. Zasenka, A. Kolupayeva, O. Koleshkin, S. Mironova, V. Lipa, T. Sak, V. Sinyov, M. Suprun, V. Tarasun, L. Fedorovich, L. Fomichova, O. Khokhlina, A. Shevtsov, M. Sheremet, etc. They emphasize the priority tasks for the development of special education.

In the early 90's of the twentieth century. Finally, an understanding was reached that the special education should not be guided by the presence of diseases. It should focus on the formation of a harmoniously developed personality on the basis of the implementation of the social model of care. The component of such a model is the special pedagogical help<sup>3</sup>.

At the same time, the economic crisis did not contribute to solving the problems of accommodating children with special needs in special institutions. Some of them were converted and shifted. Other institutions were not funded enough. As a result, the number of children with special needs who studied in mass educational establishments has considerably increased. This led to spontaneous integration<sup>4</sup>.

At that time, there was an urgent need to provide specialized schools with skilled personnel. In order to implement the State National Program «Education» («Ukraine XXI Century»), an order was issued by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine dated February 23, 1994 No. 47 «On the opening of special departments for the specialty «Defectology» on the basis of higher pedagogical education». Graduates received professional training in «Defectology» under a certain specialization.

<sup>2</sup> С. Іноземцева, *Спеціальна освіта на сучасному етапі розвитку суспільства, Vzdelávanie a spoločnosť. Medzinárodný nekonferenčný zborník*, Ed. Renáta Bernátová, Tetyana Nestorenko, Prešov, 2016, с. 273.

<sup>3</sup> Т. Дегтяренко, *Корекційно-реабілітаційна допомога особам з психофізичними порушеннями як суспільний феномен та об'єкт спеціальної педагогіки*, Науковий часопис НПУ ім. М. Драгоманова. Серія: Корекційна педагогіка, 2017, № 24, с. 80.

<sup>4</sup> А. Колупаєва, *Спеціальна освіта в Україні та модернізація освітньої галузі*, Особлива дитина: навчання і виховання, 2014, № 3, с. 7.

In the 1990s, the vision of a modern strategy for the development of the system of special education in scientific research was reduced to an alternative. It was as follows: whether to continue to improve the existing system of special education, or completely abandon the existing system and move on to find its fundamentally new principles and organizational structures, focusing on Western models. In the 2000s, A. Kolupayeva carried out comparative studies on the implementation of special assistance to children with special needs in different countries. She substantiated the theoretical and methodological foundations of inclusive education and identified ways to implement it in Ukraine. As a result of understanding this experience, scientists came to the conclusion about the need for evolutionary advancement in the development of the system of special education<sup>5</sup>.

2001, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Institute of Special Pedagogy of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Foundation «Step by Step» developed a seven-year program of scientific and pedagogical experiment «Social adaptation and integration into society of children with special needs by organizing their education in secondary schools». A program was developed and a plan for research, training of teachers (tutors) of inclusive education classes (groups) and a training program was prepared. On the basis of four institutes of post-graduate pedagogical education in Poltava, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and the White Church realized problem-thematic courses. The experiment lasted until the end of 2007. During this time the influence of inclusive education on the personal development of children was gradually studied<sup>6</sup>.

The integration of education in Ukraine into the international educational space has contributed to the fact that in 2005 Ukraine signed the Bologna Convention. There was a restructuring of the strategy of correctional and rehabilitation care for persons with psychophysical disorders. The conceptual foundations of special, inclusive education and rehabilitation were substantiated and developed. This led to the development of new directions for the implementation of correction and rehabilitation assistance<sup>7</sup>.

For many years in Ukraine, most children with special needs have been educated in specialist institutions. Until recently, they remained for them the traditional and leading form of study<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Т. Дегтяренко, *Корекційно-реабілітаційна допомога особам з психофізичними порушеннями як суспільний феномен та об'єкт спеціальної педагогіки*, Науковий часопис НПУ ім. М. Драгоманова. Серія: Корекційна педагогіка, 2017, № 24, с. 82.

<sup>6</sup> М. Талан, *Корекційна освіта в Україні: стан, тенденції, перспективи*. Соціальний захист, 2006, № 9, с. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Т. Дегтяренко, *Корекційно-реабілітаційна допомога особам з психофізичними порушеннями як суспільний феномен та об'єкт спеціальної педагогіки*, Науковий часопис НПУ ім. М. Драгоманова. Серія: Корекційна педагогіка, 2017, № 24, с. 82.

<sup>8</sup> С. Іноземцева, *Спеціальна освіта на сучасному етапі розвитку суспільства*, *Vzdelávanie a spoločnosť*. Medzinárodný nekonferenčný zborník, Ed. Renáta Bernátová, Tetyana Nestorenko, Prešov, 2016, с. 278.

Experience of functioning of special institutions in Ukraine testifies to their significant achievements. The undeniable achievements include the creation of a sufficient material base, the provision of appropriate conditions for the provision of corrective assistance, the organization of vocational training, training and recreation. In special establishments children receive education, which is aimed at obtaining knowledge on the basics of science, improvement of personal qualities, correction of developmental violations, further socialization<sup>9</sup>.

Recently, measures have been taken in Ukraine not only in order to preserve the experience of special education. They are aimed at multiplying it, developing modern technologies of correctional and compensatory work, creating conditions for realizing their right to choose the type of educational institution, content and forms of education.

Currently, special education in Ukraine is being reformed in the light of progressive world trends. We are moving from differentiation and institutionalization to integration (creation of special groups, classes of compensatory studies in the conditions of ordinary educational institutions) and inclusions (inclusion of a child with developmental problems into the educational environment of the ordinary group, class, but under conditions of creation for it of its appropriate possibilities of obtaining conditions education) of children with special needs into society. Such a system provides for a variety of forms of joint education and upbringing of children with special needs and their healthy peers.

Modern special education in Ukraine is a complex, branched and differentiated system of special institutions, rehabilitation and medical psychological centers, educational complexes, special classes at mass schools, and others<sup>10</sup>.

The system of special education in Ukraine has a vertical-horizontal structure.

The vertical structure is based on age characteristics of students and levels of general education programs. The horizontal structure takes into account the psychophysical development of the child, the peculiarities of his cognitive activity and the nature of the violation.

The vertical structure is determined by age periods:

- Early childhood (from 0 to 3 years old);
- Pre-school period (from 3 to 6–7 years);
- The period of school and professional training (from 6–7 to 16–21 years).

In the period from 0 to 3 years (early childhood), children are at home, in kindergartens. Special needs children can receive special care in early intervention centers, rehab centers, psychological, medical and pedagogical centers, and spe-

<sup>9</sup> А. Колупаєва, *Спеціальна освіта в Україні та модернізація освітньої галузі*, Особлива дитина: навчання і виховання, 2014, № 3, с. 8–9.

<sup>10</sup> О. Гаяш, *До питання про окремі проблеми сучасної спеціальної освіти*. Спеціальна освіта: стан та перспективи, ред. кол. О. Проскурняк, В. Коваленко, А. Явтушенко. Харків, 2017, с. 23–24.

cial pre-school institutions. For preschool children there are: special kindergartens, children's educational institutions of compensatory type, special groups at pre-school educational institutions of the combined type, preschool groups at special schools, rehabilitation centers.

The main public educational institutions for such children of school age are: special general educational boarding schools, educational and rehabilitation centers and special classes in general educational institutions of mass type.

Special educational institutions implement programs of primary, basic and secondary (full) general education, compiled on the basis of the State standard of special education.

The horizontal structure of special education in Ukraine is represented by the following types of specialist institutions: for children with hearing impairment, hearing impaired, with visual impairment, low vision, with severe speech disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, mentally retarded, with mental retardation.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, in 2017 there were 334 special educational institutions (106 thousand children), more than 100 training and rehabilitation centers, 142 special pre-school establishments, about 1500 special groups in pre-school institutions of mass type (about 60 thousand children).

Along with the undeniable positive ones, it is worth highlighting the significant shortcomings of the modern system of special education, namely:

- Its uniformity, which makes it impossible to meet the educational needs of all pupils with special needs. This impedes the implementation of various curricula, making necessary changes and appendices to curricula;
- isolation of children with psychophysical disorders in special boarding schools, which are the main special educational institutions. Such isolation has many negative social consequences (alienation of the family from the educational process, social infantilism of students, limited development of vital competencies, etc.);
- insufficient social and practical orientation of the educational process. Its consequences are the low level of social and domestic competence development of students, poor orientation in the system of social norms and rules, lack of skills of independent life;
- insufficient individualization and personal orientation of the educational process. They cause difficult emotional and personal development of students, inadequate perceptions of their qualities, abilities and opportunities;
- Low efficiency of correctional and developmental activities. It determines the low level of communicative competence, isolation, isolation;
- lack of licensed psychological and pedagogical tools for diagnosis of violations. This complicates the proper staffing of specialized institutions and

the organization of appropriate training;

- insufficient scientific and methodological and educational provision of educational process for children with severe pathologies, atypical abnormalities requiring additional educational and correctional and rehabilitation services<sup>11</sup>.

Since 2013, the active introduction of the inclusive form of training for children with special needs has begun in Ukraine. Inclusive education is a joint education and upbringing of children with psychophysical disorders with healthy peers in the conditions of a mass educational institution at the place of residence.

At the same time, the problem is not limited to the inclusion of such a child in the schools of general education. It affects the content, methods and forms of education for this category of children. Necessary creative and scientifically substantiated development of content, methods of teaching and education of children with special needs in conditions of inclusive education<sup>12</sup>.

Integration of children with special needs into the educational space of Ukraine meets the priorities of state policy. They are outlined in the «National Strategy for the Development of Education in Ukraine until 2021», the State Target Program «National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by 2020» and other state documents. This is one of the areas of humanization of the entire education system. In place of one educational system, where the main goal was defined as the formation of the individual according to certain standards with rigid regulation of the educational process, another system of education must go. It is dominated by the focus on the interests of the child, to meet her needs.

An important condition for the formation of this system is the possibility of choosing an educational institution and a curriculum in accordance with the individual characteristics of the child; to promote the achievements of children in various spheres of activity; provision of social-pedagogical protection of children, etc.

The Laws of Ukraine «On Education», adopted in the years of independence, Article 3 state that «citizens of Ukraine have the right to free education in public educational institutions regardless of any signs, including health status»; «On general secondary education», article 29 states that «Parents or persons who replace them have the right: to choose educational institutions and forms of education for minors...»; «On the Protection of Childhood» states that «Discrimination against children with disabilities and children with mental or

<sup>11</sup> А. Колупаєва, *Спеціальна освіта в Україні та модернізація освітньої галузі*, Особлива дитина: навчання і виховання, 2014, № 3, с. 8–9.

<sup>12</sup> О. Гаяш, *До питання про окремі проблеми сучасної спеціальної освіти*. Спеціальна освіта: стан та перспективи, ред. кол. О. Проскурняк, В. Коваленко, А. Явтушенко. Харків, 2017, с. 24–25.

physical disabilities is prohibited...». The following laws on the introduction of inclusive education and other normative and legal documents have certified the right of parents to choose an educational institution for their child<sup>13</sup>.

Today, the organization of training and education, and the implementation of corrective work is determined by the State Standards for Children with Special Educational Needs. Also, this activity is regulated by programs, textbooks, manuals for the training of such children, etc. The scientific substantiation and development of the content of the study is provided by the scientists of the Institute of Special Pedagogy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

In the process of development of assistance to children with special needs, the main approaches have been developed that influence the formation of the medical-social model of care. It should be:

- complex: the society departed from the model of medical care for persons with psychophysical disorders and recognized the need for social assistance (including medical and psychological and pedagogical);
- qualitative: to be provided by specialists with appropriate training in specially created conditions in accordance with the individual and age requirements of persons with special needs;
- effective: to ensure the achievement of the result, namely: adaptation to environmental conditions, depending on the age of the person, socialization and integration into society<sup>14</sup>.

Inclusive education in Ukraine needs to be addressed on the basis of a well-balanced approach. It should be both from the state authorities and from the public. Indeed, the inclusive processes of teaching children with special needs in post-Soviet countries have their own specifics. They develop in the conditions of a special socio-cultural status, taking into account the positive and achievements of differentiated learning.

Implementation of the idea of inclusion as one of the leading trends of the current stage of development of the national education system does not mean the curtailment of the existing differentiated system of special education. Effective integration is possible only in conditions of continuous improvement of the systems of general and special education, elimination of the existing boundaries between them. Principally important here is a well-considered state policy. It should be based on optimizing the integration process of students with special needs in the general education space, taking into account the scientific and methodological approaches to the introduction of inclusive education. Therefore,

<sup>13</sup> А. Колупаєва, *Спеціальна освіта в Україні та модернізація освітньої галузі, Особлива дитина: навчання і виховання*, 2014, № 3, с. 9–10.

<sup>14</sup> Т. Дегтяренко, *Корекційно-реабілітаційна допомога особам з психофізичними порушеннями як суспільний феномен та об'єкт спеціальної педагогіки*, Науковий часопис НПУ ім. М. Драгоманова. Серія: Корекційна педагогіка, 2017, № 24, с. 81-82.

the introduction of inclusive education should occur gradually, with the professional elaboration of all its components<sup>15</sup>.

The main approaches to the introduction of inclusive education in Ukraine:

- inclusive education needs to improve the regulatory framework. It consolidates the legal principles of education in various forms by persons with violations of psycho-physical development;
- inclusive education of children with mental and physical disorders should take place with the participation of diverse professionals (correctional teacher, teacher assistant, psychologist, medical worker, social teacher, etc.). And also provided that the corrective-development work performed on time;
- the effectiveness of inclusive education will significantly increase with the timely and qualified diagnosis and assessment of the child's development. As well as providing consulting and informational support to teachers, administration of the general educational institution in which she is studying, and her parents;
- in the context of inclusive education, it is very important to apply a multidisciplinary approach in organizing psychological and pedagogical support of students, involving local communities in solving the issues of integrating such a child into socio-cultural space;
- the development and further improvement of the teaching and methodological support (individual curricula, special programs, textbooks and didactic tools) must be developed and must take into account the requirements of the personality-activity approach in the education of children with special needs;
- effective inclusive education is possible only with the special training and retraining of teaching staff. The purpose of such training is to master teachers of comprehensive schools (pre-school establishments) with the main methods of differentiated learning, modern methods of assessing educational achievements and the development of children, etc.;
- wide introduction of inclusive education involves involvement of parents in the educational process on a partnership basis, cooperation with the community, support of initiatives of public and parental organizations<sup>16</sup>.

At the current stage, state support for people with special needs is manifested in the fact that, in accordance with the state order in the special pedagogy, fundamental and applied research is carried out. They consider the following issues: a) the development of new models of social and rehabilitation assistance

<sup>15</sup> А. Колупаєва, *Спеціальна освіта в Україні та модернізація освітньої галузі*, Особлива дитина: навчання і виховання, 2014, № 3, с. 9–11.

<sup>16</sup> А. Колупаєва, *Спеціальна освіта в Україні та модернізація освітньої галузі*, Особлива дитина: навчання і виховання, 2014, № 3, с. 11–12.



for persons with disabilities and children with special needs; b) development of a system of special educational and rehabilitation institutions; c) social and pedagogical support for children with disabilities and adults with disorders of psychophysical development.

These tasks are solved by the Ukrainian scientific schools in the field of special pedagogy and the Institute of Special Pedagogy of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine. There is a continuous improvement of existing means, forms, methods of training, education and correction work with children with special needs. This is reflected in the content of education (state standards and training programs, author's curriculum and individualization of the educational process, etc.), educational technologies (variational learning systems, application of personally oriented technologies), etc.<sup>17</sup>.

An important area of reforming and improving special education is the training of skilled personnel for working with children with special needs. The leading institution in Ukraine in this area is the Faculty of Correctional Pedagogics and Psychology of the National Pedagogical University named after MP. Drahomanov. He trains specialists in the following areas: speech therapy, surdo pedagogy, oligophrenopedagogics, tiflopedagogics, orthopedagogy and rehabilitation, special psychology and medicine.

It is important to note that at the present stage of the development of special education in Ukraine intensive introduction of innovative forms of education and education of children with disabilities. First of all, it is the use of elements of remote, integrated training, the opening of training and rehabilitation centers, educational and educational complexes of various forms of ownership.

In addition to positive points, you need to point out the problems.

The main problems of modern special education include:

1. Lack of proper technology of early diagnosis, registration (namely, the database of statistical data) of children with psychophysical disorders, advisory-methodical system, systems of early correction and rehabilitation for children and their families.
2. Absence of full coverage of children with psychophysical disorders by special training.

The reason for this is the inability of the existing network of specialist institutions to provide each child with adequate pedagogical, medical, psychological and social assistance. Many children study in general education. Their working conditions do not match the characteristics of children with special needs. Some children do not learn at all (these are categories of children with different forms of autism, with complex disorders).

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<sup>17</sup> Т. Дегтяренко, *Корекційно-реабілітаційна допомога особам з психофізичними порушеннями як суспільний феномен та об'єкт спеціальної педагогіки*, Науковий часопис НПУ ім. М. Драгоманова. Серія: Корекційна педагогіка, 2017, № 24, с. 80–81.

Recently, the public's attention to the needs of special institutions has diminished somewhat, their network is diminishing, material and technical equipment is deteriorating, and established links with production are broken. Special establishments are insufficiently provided with educational, methodological literature, didactic and visual materials, and special equipment. This complicates the realization of the ultimate goal of social and labor adaptation and integration of graduates into society.

3. The problem of provision of special educational institutions by trained personnel, rehabilitation specialists, special psychologists, etc. remains significant.
4. Lack of interest and motivation of the administration of general education institutions to the introduction of innovative forms of education (including inclusive education).
5. The problem of formation of professional competence of teachers to work with children with peculiarities of psychophysical development in conditions of inclusive education. Also, search for ways to improve and apply innovative teacher training technologies.

Of course, any teacher should be prepared for corrective and developmental work with such categories of children. He should know their features, identify and develop potential opportunities. Most of this knowledge is needed for elementary school teachers. They can, within the framework of the program load, implement propaedeutic measures for the successful training of such children. The teacher's knowledge of the peculiarities of the development of the child, the state of her psychophysical functions, and the formation of the prerequisites for intelligence will allow many teachers to avoid abusive cases of inadequate techniques and methods. This will reduce learning problems.

6. Expansion of the functions of special schools (boarding schools). They would become consultative and methodological centers for correctional and development work in their territorial districts (that is, they provided counseling to teachers, educators of general education institutions). General education institutions with inclusive education should work in close connection with the special ones. They can use the elaborate methods of working with children, engage in counseling professionals with many years of experience working with such a category of children.
7. Further development and introduction of innovative forms and technologies for training of people with special needs (first of all – inclusive form of education).

8. Pay attention to the issues of social and labor adaptation and integration of people with disorders of psychophysical development in society<sup>18</sup>.

Today, on the way of the introduction of the inclusive model of education in Ukraine, the following main problems have emerged: insufficient funding, the need to improve the content of education, the resolution of personnel issues, the dissemination of interagency cooperation<sup>19</sup>.

Among the topical issues of inclusive education is the creation of an appropriate base for correctional units for the education of children with special needs in an ordinary general school: the availability of appropriate programs, textbooks, special equipment, teaching materials for children of different categories; provision of diagnostic, advisory services by specialist specialists. Qualified pedagogical help can be provided only by a specially trained teacher. After all, for successful work in the system of correctional education there is not enough traditional teaching preparation. The problem is that the legislation does not provide for the activities of a «team of specialists» in a general education institution. Staffing schedule does not provide classes with additional staffing units: correctional teacher, special psychologist, consultant<sup>20</sup>.

The disadvantages include weak training of pedagogical personnel. They are not yet ready to work with children with special needs. The existing system of teacher training and upgrading does not take into account the possibility of their work with such a category of children. Parents of parents also react negatively to joint education. They are afraid that their children can be offended by healthy peers.

Such a reaction is due to the complete lack of full information about the inclusive model of education, its benefits, confirmed by modern research and practice<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, the reform and updating of the system of special education in Ukraine is based on the principles of democratization, humanization and modernization. It also recognizes the right of every child to receive education that is adequate to her cognitive abilities and time requirements. This is a guide to finding the best ways to transform it, to socialize children with disorders of psychophysical

<sup>18</sup> О. Гаяш, *До питання про окремі проблеми сучасної спеціальної освіти*. Спеціальна освіта: стан та перспективи, ред. кол. О. Проскурняк, В. Коваленко, А. Явтушенко. Харків, 2017, с. 24–26.

<sup>19</sup> С. Іноземцева, *Спеціальна освіта на сучасному етапі розвитку суспільства, Vzdelávanie a spoločnosť*. Medzinárodný nekonferenčný zborník, Ed. Renáta Bernátová, Tetyana Nestorenko, Prešov, 2016, с. 279.

<sup>20</sup> О. Гаяш, *До питання про окремі проблеми сучасної спеціальної освіти*. Спеціальна освіта: стан та перспективи, ред. кол. О. Проскурняк, В. Коваленко, А. Явтушенко. Харків, 2017, с. 25.

<sup>21</sup> С. Іноземцева, *Спеціальна освіта на сучасному етапі розвитку суспільства, Vzdelávanie a spoločnosť*. Medzinárodný nekonferenčný zborník, Ed. Renáta Bernátová, Tetyana Nestorenko, Prešov, 2016, с. 279.

development, and to integrate them into society. Therefore, the development of the Ukrainian system of special education should be multifaceted and cover all the main aspects.

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