



**INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH  
DISABILITIES IN EDUCATION**

**SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

Chişinău 2018

## Contents

List of abbreviations.....	3
Executive summary.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
Methodology of the study.....	10
RESULTS OF THE STUDY.....	15
I. General assessments of inclusion in the education system.....	15
II. Attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs.....	20
III. Inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream education: advantages and disadvantages .....	35
IV. Assessing the level of training of the educational institutions for the inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special education needs.....	45
V. Specialized Resources in Inclusive Education .....	57
VI. The role of parents in children’s inclusion.....	62
VII. Contribution of the civil society to inclusive education .....	67
VIII. Discrimination of students with SEN.....	69
IX. Opinions on the education of children in special schools/boarding houses.....	76
X. Expert Opinions on Inclusive Education: Realities and Recommendations .....	84
XI. Other aspects.....	92
School dropout .....	92
Violence .....	93
CONCLUSIONS .....	97
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	101
List of documents subject to analysis in the study.....	102
List of figures .....	104
List of tables .....	105
ANNEXES.....	106
Annex 1. Profile of the study respondents .....	106
Annex 2. Tables .....	108
Annex 3. Design of the qualitative research.....	121
Annex 4. Nuber of children (0-18 years old) deinstitutionalized from the Boarding House, Orhei, years 2013-2017 .....	122

## List of abbreviations

ST – support teacher

CES – Special educational needs

CR – resource center

RCPA – Republican Center of Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance

FG – focus grup

FISM – Social Investment Fund from Moldova

IA – indepth interview

NGO – non governmental organisation

p.p. – percentage points

PAS – psycho-pedagogical assistance service

UNESCO – Organisation of United Nations for Education, Science, and Culture

UNICEF – United Nations Children Fund

The study „*Inclusion of children with disabilities in education*” was carried out by the Center of Sociological Research and Marketing „CBS-AXA” for UNICEF Moldova.

**Authors:** Vasile Cantarji, Patricia Vieru, Natalia Vladicescu, Maria Vremiş.

In this study we would like to express our gratitude to the Education Specialist, Liudmila Lefter and Child Rights Monitoring Specialist, Elena Laur, UNICEF Moldova for providing information and documents and offering the relevant support during all the stages of the study. The representatives of UNICEF Moldova contributed to this report with their expertise and suggestions.

We also express our sincere gratitude to the Director of the Republican Centre for Psychopedagogical Assistance, Virginia Rusnac, representatives of Regional Services for Psychopedagogical Assistance, managers of educational institutions, NGOs representatives: Keystone – Strehie-Dilion Maria, Partnership for Every Child – Daniela Mamaliga and KulturKontakt – Nadja Vetters, as well as the team of the Orhei Boarding House for children with mental disabilities for the valuable information provided during the in-depth interviews.

We thank the representatives of state institutions, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection for facilitating the access into general education and residential institutions.

Last but not least, we are grateful to all our respondents: teachers, parents, and students, for their involvement, openness, and trust. We appreciate their sharing of personal experiences and opinions.

The direct involvement of all the individuals mentioned above brought an added value to this study.

## Executive summary

By ratifying a series of international acts in the field of human rights, the Republic of Moldova has undertaken basic commitments in terms of inclusive education.

In the last decades, especially in the period 2005-2011, a normative framework was elaborated that regulates the specific aspects of the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the educational system.

For implementing the legal provisions, in the period 2011–2020, the Program of Development of the inclusive education in Republic of Moldova is in the process of implementation. In this context the present study comes to capture the situation in the period of inclusive education implementation.

Republic of Moldova recorded progress in the last years in education, especially in inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs in mainstream schools.

This study has the purpose to analyze the situation regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools in the Republic of Moldova through the analysis of policies, public perceptions on inclusive education, practices of children's inclusion, analysis of educational practices used in boarding homes for children. High importance is given to the comparison of main indicators of similar studies carried out in 2009 and 2012, in order to capture the trends and dynamics.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following sociological methods were applied:

- The analysis of the benchmark normative framework, policies documents and national statistics in the domain of inclusion of children with SEN and/or disabilities.
- Quantitative study – survey among key actors in the implementation of the inclusive education (students, caretakers, teachers)
- Qualitative study – focus groups and individual interviews with key actors (parents of children with SEN, parents of regular children, teachers), as well as categories of persons involved in the implementation process (representatives of state institutions and civil society).

The methodology of the study was adapted to the complex character of the study objective, the multitude of the involved actors, as well as the fact that the evaluation of the situation required both quantitative and qualitative expressions.

### *Main findings:*

The public perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with SEN and/or disabilities still remain predominantly exclusive, when the majority of the respondents stick to the opinion that these children need to be cared for in the family or in special institutions.

Over the years, slight improvement tendencies are attested, expressed through increased proportion of respondents that accept that these children should be included in the mainstream institutions and the decrease of those who opt for placing the children with SEN in residential institutions.

A higher degree of rejection is attested for inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities.

The perceived disadvantages of the inclusion of children with SEN in regular classes are determined by both objective and subjective factors, namely:

- still incomplete technical and material endowment of the institutions;
- fragmentary training of the teachers for inclusive education;
- inherent difficulties in the implementation of inclusive and child-centered education;
- insufficient mechanisms for inter-disciplinary, inter and intra-institution collaboration to ensure inclusive education;
- persistent preconceptions about inadequate behavior of children with SEN, especially those integrated from residential institutions and those with intellectual disabilities;
- insufficient mentoring mechanisms for children with SEN in transition from one level of study to another, as well as from education to the job market;

The general problems the educational system is facing –shortage and fluctuation of staff, aging of the teaching staff, inadequate level of staff wages and endowment of institutions, are also difficulties in implementing inclusive education.

#### *Recommendations*

Continuation of the efforts to promote the concept of inclusive education among the population, combating inappropriate perceptions.

Complete and systematic training of the teaching staff to work with children with SEN in the institution. Development of student-centered education.

Appropriate provision/adaptation of institutions for the inclusion of children with SEN.

The periodic evaluation and adjustment of roles and attributions of institutions/actors involved in the implementation and delivery of inclusive education.

The general reform of the educational system, resulting in the elimination of the current general deficiencies (shortage and fluctuation of staff, aging of the teaching staff, inadequate level of staff wages and endowment of institutions) is, likewise, the necessary condition for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

# INTRODUCTION

## Context of the study

The subject of inclusive education is internationally covered by a series of conventions, declarations and resolutions, which provide the basis of the processes in the given field and serve as a reference for the development and implementation of inclusion policies at the national level. In addition to the documents on human rights and fight against discrimination (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination in Education, 1960; The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007), a wide range of acts explicitly targets children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their inclusion in the mainstream education:

- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Education on integration of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, as a result the Standard Rules on Equal Opportunities for Disabled Persons were approved (1993)<sup>1</sup>
- Resolution of the European Council on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (1996)
- Resolution of the European Parliament „Towards a barrier-free Europe for People with Disabilities“, (2001)
- European Parliament Resolution on the promoting and protection of rights and dignity of persons with disabilities (2003)
- European Council Resolution on the employment and social integration of people with disabilities (2003)
- European Council Resolution on the equal opportunities in education and formation for pupils and students with disabilities (2003).

Based on international standards and policies, in the years 2005-2011, a regulatory framework has been developed in the Republic of Moldova that regulates the specific aspects of children's rights in general and the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the educational system. The Constitution of Republic of Moldova, other organic laws and decisions of the Government of Republic of Moldova record the right to education irrespective of ethnic, racial, religious affiliation, as well as the right to education of persons with special educational needs and in difficulty.

RM has undertaken a number of commitments to effectively ensure the right to education:

- Ratifying a number of international conventions, such as the UN Convention on Human Rights, UN Convention on the Children's Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities;
- participating in the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals;

Likewise, it has developed a series of normative acts that explicitly regulates the deinstitutionalization of children and the right to education of all children.

The most relevant national normative acts in the domain of inclusive education are:

- **The Education Code**<sup>2</sup>, which explicitly regulates the inclusive education and establishes that education for children with SEN is an integral part of the system. The

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissre00.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/md/355156/>

Code contains a chapter on education for children and pupils with special educational needs and inclusive education.

- **Strategy Education 2020**<sup>3</sup> which aims to promote and ensure inclusive education at the educational system level, according to the specific Objective 1.6 of the Strategy. The Strategy envisages social and educational reintegration of children living in residential institutions with the aim of reducing the number of children in these institutions by 50% by 2020 and transforming by 2020 of at least 25% of residential education institutions in mainstream education institutions.
- **Program for the development of inclusive education in Republic of Moldova for 2011- 2020**<sup>4</sup>, - creates the normative-strategic framework of the processes for ensuring the adequate conditions for capitalizing the potential of all children. The program stipulates the objectives of inclusive education, sets its specific functions, the specific criteria to be met by the general education institution for achieving the objectives and functions promoted for inclusion. In time, it is implemented in three stages:
  - o 2011-2012- development of the legal framework for the inclusive education,
  - o 2013-2016 – piloting inclusive education models,
  - o 2017-2020 – implementation of inclusive education at the national level.
- **Action Plan for the years 2015-2017 for the implementation of the Inclusive Education Development Program in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2020**<sup>5</sup> – targets the actions, responsible institutions, costs and the sources of their coverage for the implementation of the program.
- The action plan for the years 2018–2020 is currently being developed for the implementation of the **Inclusive Development Program in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2020**<sup>6</sup>.
- Moreover, the Law on social inclusion of persons with disabilities<sup>7</sup> regulates the rights of people with disabilities to their social inclusion, ensuring the possibility of their participation in all areas of life without discrimination, at the same level as other members of society, based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Republic of Moldova has made progress in the last years in the field of education, especially in the field of inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. In the 2017/18 study year, the number of students with special educational needs (SEN) in general education institutions was 9840 persons<sup>8</sup>, twice the 2013/2014 study year (4495). The enrollment rate of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in regular education institutions in 2017/2018 reached 92,9%.

At the same time, the number of children with disabilities in special schools declined considerably, reaching 749 in the 2017/2018 study year, compared to 1807 in 2013/2014.<sup>9</sup>

The legislation of the Republic of Moldova on the right to education provides for the right to general education guaranteed by the state to a large extent. Primary and secondary education

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=355494&lang=1>

<sup>4</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=339343&lang=1>

<sup>5</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=362471>

<sup>6</sup> <http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=5511>

<sup>7</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/md/344149/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&id=5221&idc=168>

<sup>9</sup> [http://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/strategIA\\_sectoriala\\_de\\_cheltuieli\\_in\\_domeniul\\_educatiei\\_2017-2019.pdf](http://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/strategIA_sectoriala_de_cheltuieli_in_domeniul_educatiei_2017-2019.pdf)



is compulsory and state-guaranteed. At the same time, the complete inclusion in the education is not ensured for various reasons, with overall trends tending to decrease (Figure 1).

The inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities in mainstream education institutions<sup>10</sup> constitutes the core of this study. Of the total survey respondents, 4% said they had at least one child with disabilities in their household.

The extent to which the education system is technically and methodically prepared to include these children, the teaching staff competencies and the emotional preparedness of parents and children – these are to be studied in relation to the inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs in mainstream education institutions.

As an inheritance from the Soviet past, even after independence, children with disabilities were and are sometimes enrolled in special schools. In 2011, the government approved the Program for Development of Inclusive Education in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2020. Subsequently, a minimum inclusive education package was created that includes school resource centers and support teachers in regular schools, followed by the adjustment of the funding formula per pupil, in order to allocate 2% of the total amount for inclusive education.

With the approval of the Government Decision nr.732 of 16.09.2013, services of psycho-pedagogical assistance (PAS) were created in all regions of the country and the Republican Center for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance (RCPA) instituted to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.<sup>11</sup>

Children with severe disabilities are the most excluded from educational services, being kept at home or in homes for children without access or limited access to education. Inclusion of children with severe disabilities in the mainstream schools is still difficult for several reasons, including: the attitude of parents, students, teachers and other professionals towards the education of children with disabilities in regular classes; level of adaptation of the institutions' infrastructure; teachers' competencies etc.

Parents are concerned with the teachers' ability to effectively manage time in classes with children with disabilities. Teachers are worried, because they do not know how to meet the needs of children with disabilities from regular classes.

### **Purpose and objectives of the study**

**The purpose of the study** is to analyze the situation regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools infor the Republic of Moldova.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

- analysis of policies, procedures and existent practices on the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classes/groups;
- assessment of parents'/carers' attitudes/opinions on the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classes/groups and comparison of the results with the study data from 2013 and 2009;
- analysis of practices for assessing children's school results and establishing, in consultation with children and teachers, whether children learn and progress after deinstitutionalization and/or integration into regular classes;

---

<sup>10</sup> We rely on the notion of „mainstream education institutions” to delimit these institutions from those within the residential system.

<sup>11</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/md/349661/>

- analysis of educational practices used in boarding houses and evaluation of learning achievements of children in those institutions.

### *Methodology of the study*

The following sociological methods were applied to achieve the study objectives:

- Ex-officio analysis of the benchmark normative framework, policy documents and national statistics on the inclusion of children with SEN and/or disabilities
- Quantitative study – survey
- Qualitative study – focus groups and individual interviews.

The ex-officio analysis served as a basis for initiation in the field, presentation of the national framework and determination of research tools.

The quantitative study focused on three categories (audiences) of actors that have links with the education system, namely:

- Teachers in primary and secondary education;
- 6-9 grade students;
- Carers (parents or other caregivers in the absence of parents) of children aged 0-15 years old.

Within each category opinion polls were conducted, the results of which are representative at national level.

At the same time, the sampling method, research tools and data collection were conducted similarly to the 2009 and 2013 studies, with which comparisons are made in the analysis.

### *Opinion poll among teachers*

The sample was established on the basis of the distribution of territorial education units (residence areas, administrative territorial units), the size and type of school. The statistical data produced by the National Bureau of Statistics were used for the sampling design.

Elaboration of the sampling scheme included the following steps:

- Establishing a proportional distribution of the sample by type of education unit;
- Proportional distribution of institutions by place of residence;
- Selection of schools, from each pre-set group through the random number table.

The groups of institutions were formed according to the type of education institution (primary, secondary, high school and the residence area (urban or rural).

*Distribution of the sample within the selected educational units.* In order to achieve the distribution of the sample within the educational institutions in proportion to the number of teachers in each institution, all the selected institutions were contacted beforehand, requesting the number of teachers currently active in the institution. Proportional distribution was performed according to the formula:

$$n_c = \frac{p_c}{N} \times 400,$$

where  $n_c$  is the number of teachers to be interviewed at the educational institution;  $p_c$  – the total number of teachers from that institution;  $N$  – the total number of teachers, 400 being the size of the projected sample.

*Selection of respondents.* In schools, the teachers were randomly selected from the list of teachers through a statistical step. This step was set according to the formula:

$$p_s = \frac{n}{n_r},$$

where  $p_s$  is statistical step;  $n$  – total number of teachers from the list;  $n_r$  – number of persons to be interviewed in the institution and the level of education.

Subsequently, the step was applied for the full list of teachers, sorted in alphabetical order, numbering starting with number two from the list.

The final sample: 408 interviews.

The data were collected in the period 6 - 23 February 2018.

### Opinion poll among students

In the case of students, the study was conducted in schools with gymnasium classes. These schools were selected from the set of institutions that were included in the sample for the interviews with teachers.

*Stratification.* The sample for students was stratified based on their distribution by residence area, classes and types of schools.

*Selection of respondents.* Within the educational units, the number of interviewed students was determined by the total number of students in grades 6-9 according to the formula:

$$n_e = \frac{p_e}{n_{te}} \times 600,$$

where  $n_e$  is the number of students that will be interviewed at the institution in the study;  $p_e$  – total number of students from secondary school of the institution in the study;  $n_{te}$  – total number of students from the secondary schools from all the schools included in the sample, 600 being the size of the projected sample.

In every school only students from 6-9 grades were interviewed. The total number of interviews was equally divided between study years. If it was not possible, the students were selected as follows:

- For schools in which 7 students were to be interviewed, one year of study was randomly chosen, of which only one student was interviewed, and in the case of the other years of study, two students were interviewed;

- For schools in which 6 students were to be interviewed, randomly were selected two years of studies, of which only one student was interviewed; from the remaining years of studies two students were interviewed each.

*Selection of class.* If there were several classes in the same year of studies, the class selection was performed in a similar way to the selection of the years of study from which a single student was interviewed.

*Selection of the student from the class.* The student was interviewed, the number in the register of which is given by dividing the total number of pupils in the class list by two.

The second student in the class, where two students were interviewed in the class, was assigned the student, the order number of which is given by dividing the total number of pupils in the class list by three.

If the selected student was absent or the quotient was not a whole number, the next student on the list was interviewed.

The final sampling: 611 interviews

The data were collected in the period 6 - 23 February 2018.

### **Opinion poll among carers**

The survey among carers was conducted according to a typical methodology for a representative national survey.

The research was done on a stratified, probabilistic, multistage sample.

*Stratification criteria:* 13 geographical regions (based on former counties), the residence environment, the size of localities according to the number of inhabitants (two types of urban localities and four types of rural localities).

The stratification was done as follows:

1. Distribution of the sample by geographical regions depending on the distribution of the total number of households, where the children are under 15 years old.
2. Selection of localities included in the study using a table with random numbers.
3. Distribution of localities on roughly equal areas, from which random sampling points were then randomly selected. The number of selected areas has been set according to the total number of interviews to be made in the locality divided by six. Therefore, at each sampling point, six people were interviewed at most.
4. Next, using the random route method, the addresses of households where the interviews were conducted were selected.
5. Within each household, the interviewed parent was selected based on the answer to the question „Who is most often in charge of children’s schooling? In the absence of both parents, the person in charge of the children was interviewed.

The research was carried out in 129 localities, including Chisinau and Balti municipalities. Number of sampling points – 258.

In order to eliminate households without school-age children, we used the *screening methodology* procedure. According to this procedure, households that were selected according to the statistical step, but where there were no children, were recorded by the field operator in the roadmap as „uncontacted” households. The same procedure was applied to households with children of school age but not covered by the education system.

Final sample: 1299 interviews

Data were collected in the period 24 February – 10 March 2018.

**The profile of the study respondents** can be seen in Annex 1, tables 1-3.

### **Qualitative study**

The qualitative study was carried out to complement the information provided by the quantitative study as well as to target some categories of specific respondents from the perspective of the studied issue, the share of which, however, in the quantitative samples is too small for separate analysis.

The study included 7 group discussions and 15 in-depth interviews. Respondents relevant to the subject of the survey were interviewed: parents of children with SEN, parents of regular children, teachers, as well as specialists in the field – representatives of state institutions and civil society. For more details on the design of quality research see Appendix 3.

Period of data collection: February – April 2018.

In the context of the study, one of the difficulties was in the usual use of disability notions and special educational requirements, in the sense that, for teachers, the term of special educational requirements is more common, while among the general population the notions of disability and special needs in the tools of research was used respectively. The analysis mainly deals with the words „special requirements“, „special needs“, each time these phrases express complex „special educational needs and/or disability“.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study was conducted in accordance with the UNICEF Procedures for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis<sup>12</sup>, as well as with deontological requirements in sociological research<sup>13</sup>. Especially:

On developing research tools, care was taken to avoid wording for questions and phrases that could harm the participants in the study, as well as other categories of persons.

After the interview, the participants were provided contact details of the study coordinator for any additional questions or complaints, with information about the project and its outcomes.

The following requirements were made for the interview:

- Initial information to the potential respondent about the research, the project, the interview procedure, its rights (the non-obligation to give the interview in its entirety or the answer to some particular questions), the anonymity of participation and responses, the particularities of the project and its outcomes.
- Informed consent of the respondent.
- In the case of students, the informed consent of the manager of the institution and the teacher (apart from the student's consent).
- Suitable conditions for keeping anonymity.

CBS-AXA has storage compartments for secured electronic surveys and questionnaires. For security reasons, the contact data of the respondents, collected for the purpose of checking the quality of the field work, are collected on a separate support, not related to the completed

---

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT\\_IV-UNICEF\\_Procedure\\_for\\_Ethical\\_Standards.PDF](https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF)

<sup>13</sup> ESOMAR Code - [https://www.esomar.org/uploads/public/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines/ICSENOMAR\\_Code\\_English\\_.pdf](https://www.esomar.org/uploads/public/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines/ICSENOMAR_Code_English_.pdf)

questionnaire. This way, it becomes impossible to identify the questionnaire answers given by a particular respondent.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### I. General assessments of inclusion in the education system

The results of the study reflect the social factors that restrict the total inclusion of children in the educational system. Teachers and carers have been asked to assess the extent to which different groups of children (socially, health care and abilities delimited) have unhindered access to education.

Thus, as in the 2012 study, almost one hundred percent of carers and teachers participating in the study believe that „rich children”, „children that can study well”, „physically and/or mentally healthy children” have full access to pre-university education (Figure 2). It should be noted that among carers in the 2009 study, the share of those responses with respect to these groups was slightly above 85%<sup>14</sup>.

At the same time, 5% carers – with a slight downward trend compared to 8% in 2012; and 3% of teachers – as in 2012 – believe that NOT „all the children in the locality” have free access to education. Among the caretakers in 2009 this share was about 10%<sup>15</sup>.

An even greater number of respondents believe that „children in the residential system” and „from socially vulnerable families” do not have full access to education.

Over 40% of carers doubt that access to the pre-university education system is ensured for „children with physical and/or mental disabilities”, the same opinion being expressed by one in five teachers. These trends are observed in both studies, with a slight decrease in the weight of answers „more than yes, certainly not” in 2018 compared to previous studies (38% in 2018, 46% in 2012 and 46% in 2009<sup>16</sup> carers, 18% in 2018 and 24% in 2012 by teachers).

---

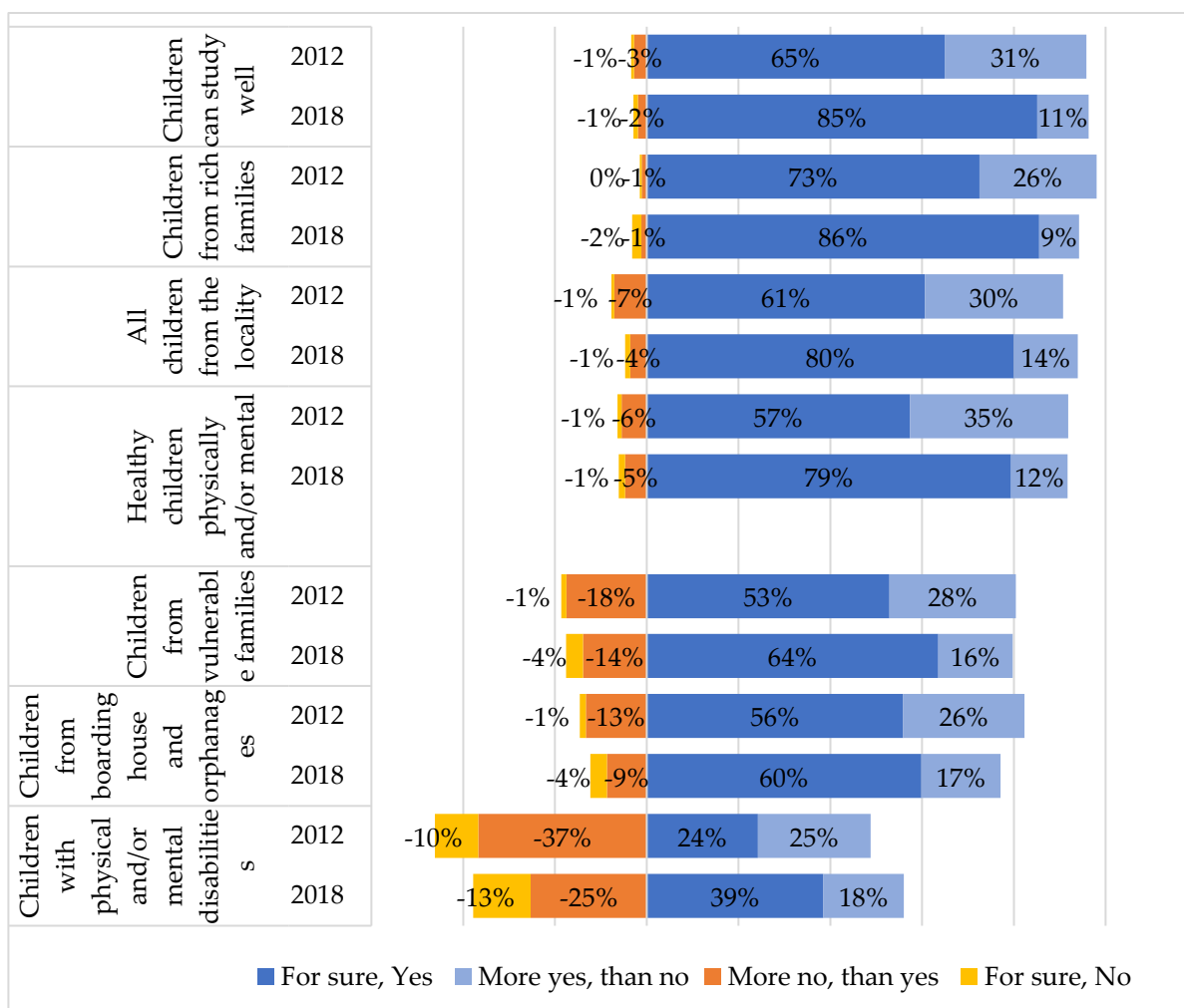
<sup>14</sup> Data from the opinion poll conducted for the study “Basic education in Republic of Moldova from the perspective of the child-friendly school”: Arcadie Barbarosie, Anatol Gremalschi, Ion Jigau [et al.] ; Institute of Public Policies/ UNICEF

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem

**Figure 1. Access to the educational system (pre-university) of various categories of children**

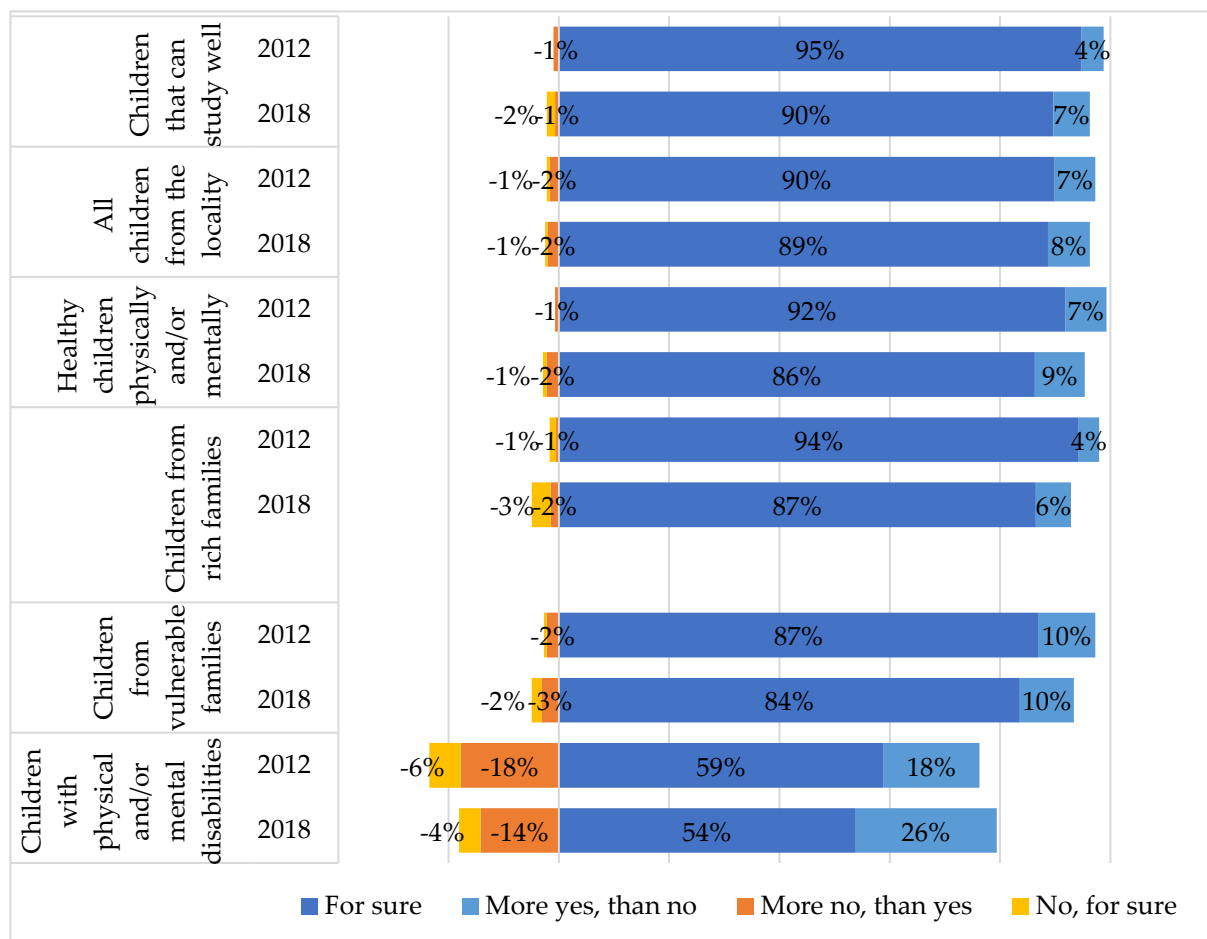
**a) Carers**



*Written question: Do you think that they have free access to educational institutions (school, kindergarten)...?*



**b) Teachers**



**Written question:** Do you think they have free access to school...?

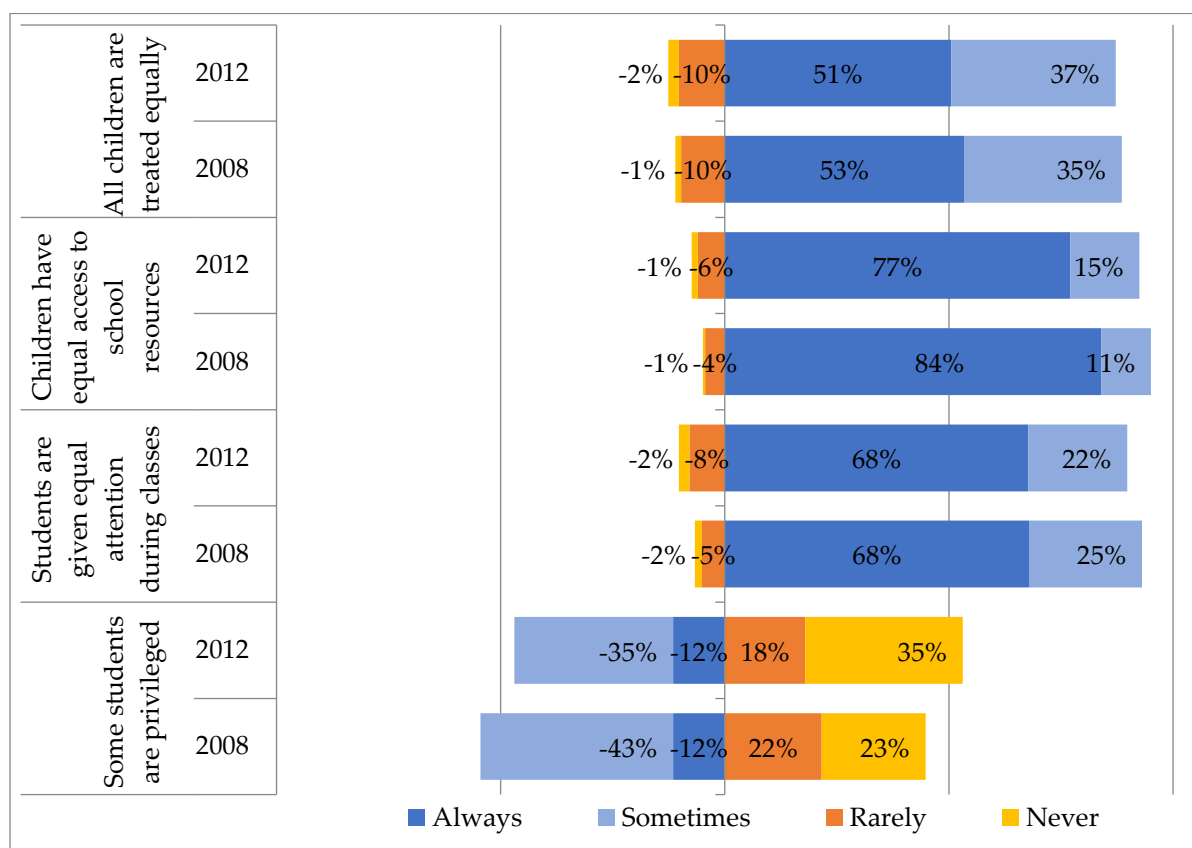
Study data shows that carers who are more reserved about access to the education system have the following characteristics:

- Have only one child;
- Both mother and father have higher education;
- Have high socio-economic status;
- Are from the urban area (Annex 2, Table 1).

The selective nature of the right to education is also mentioned by students, with a slight tendency to diminish negative opinion connotations compared to the 2012 study (Figure 3). Thus, the view persists that students are given equal attention to lessons *rarely* or *even never* (7% in 2018 compared to 10% in 2012). It is also questioned if all students have equal access to school resources (5% in 2018 compared to 7% in 2012), as well as the fact that not all children are treated equally in the pre-university education institutions (11% in 2018 compared to 12% in 2012).

The most widespread element underlying inequality in the treatment of students is the distribution of the assessments given by the interviewed students to the statement „some pupils are privileged”. About 12% of respondents in both studies believe that this is always true and the fact that this attitude is sometimes obvious is supported by 43% of the respondents according to the study of 2018 versus 35% in 2012.

**Figure 2. Equal treatment of students in institutions: assessment of students**



*Written question: Do you believe that in your school...*

It is worth mentioning that boys are more reserved to assess equal treatment of pupils in some assertions about the selective nature of the right to education.

There are some differences depending on the language of study, when students in Russian language schools are more reserved regarding „all pupils being treated the same” and assessing equal access to school resources.

There is a direct relationship between the share of positive assessments regarding the equal treatment of students at lessons and at the class level, so in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 72% of the students claim that all students are given equal attention to lessons, while in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade – 63% (Table 1).

It is worth noting a single differentiation of responses depending on the presence of children with SEN in the institution. Thus, 74% of students in schools where the number of children with SEN is higher and 63% in schools with the lower share of students with SEN (under 4%<sup>17</sup>) claim that „students are given equal attention to lessons”.

<sup>17</sup> In the academic year 2017/2018 the average share of students with SEN per school was 4% of the total number of students (Integrated Management System in Education, [www.sime.md](http://www.sime.md))

**Table 1. Equal treatment of students in the institutions: by categories of students**

		All children are treated the same	Students have equal access to school resources	Students have equal attention at lessons	Some students are privileged
		<i>Always (%)</i>			<i>Never (%)</i>
Total:	2012	51%	77%	68%	35%
	2018	53%	84%	68%	23%
Sex of the respondent:	Male	50%	82%	68%	24%
	Female	56%	86%	68%	23%
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	55%	86%	69%	23%
	Russian	45%	79%	65%	24%
Residence area:	Urban	51%	86%	63%	20%
	Rural	56%	82%	72%	26%
Year of study, grade:	VI grade	50%	77%	72%	27%
	VII grade	53%	87%	69%	20%
	VIII grade	57%	86%	68%	25%
	IX grade	53%	85%	63%	21%
Weight of children with SEN:	Less than 4%	53%	86%	63%	22%
	More than 4%	54%	82%	74%	25%

*Written question: Do you believe that in your school...*

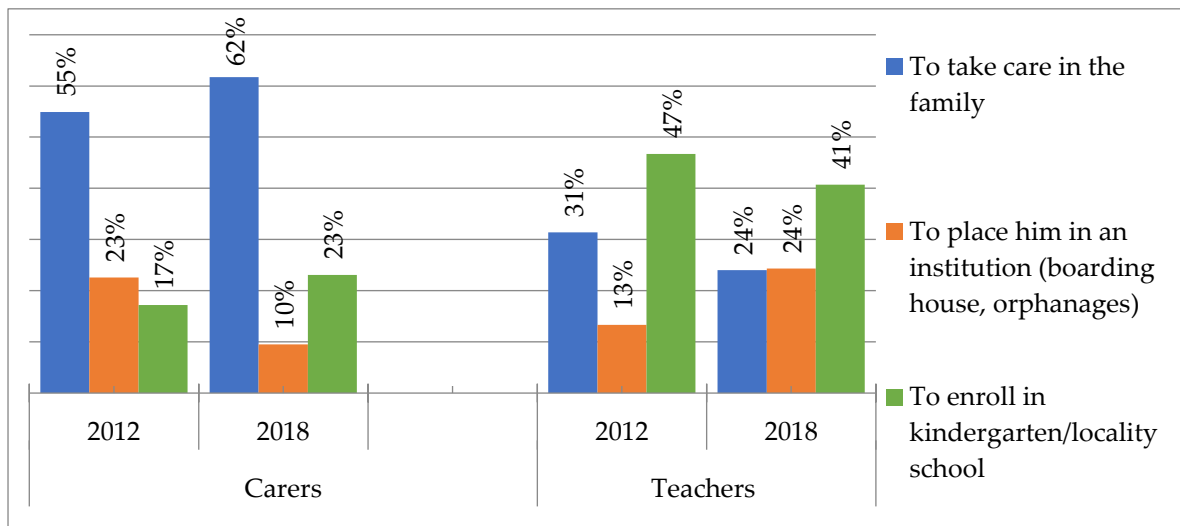
## II. Attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs

The survey data show the attitude in the society towards the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools. Respondents were asked to comment on how a family that has a child with special needs should proceed as far as his education is concerned.

Only 23% of the surveyed **carers** believe that the family should enroll the child in a mainstream educational institution, with a tendency of increased share of those who share this opinion compared to 17% observed in 2012 (Figure 4). The vast majority (62%) believe that these children should be cared in the family, their share also increasing compared to 55% in 2012, but below the 2009 level (69%). At the same time, the share of those who opted for their placement in residential institution (10% in 2018, 17% in 2012) is diminishing. It should be noted that a study carried out in 2009 shows that, with respect to children aged 4-7, the majority of respondents, 69%, stick to the opinion that a child with developmental problems has to be cared for in his family; every fifth respondent, 20%, believes that these children has to be placed in an institution and only 5% believe that the child should attend the community kindergarten<sup>18</sup>.

**Teachers** are more open to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream institutions compared to carers. About 41% of teachers surveyed in 2018 (47% in 2012) opted for the placement of children with disabilities in the local educational institution compared to only 23% of the same carers that had the same opinion (17% in 2012). At the same time, there is a decrease in their share compared to the previous study (41% in 2018 compared to 47% in 2012 and 49% in 2009<sup>19</sup>), although the exclusive attitudes are quite widespread, 24% of the interviewed teachers (31% in 2012) believe that these children should be cared for in the family and 24% (13% in 2012) opt for their placements in residential institutions.

**Figure 3. Placing children with problems in development: assessments of carers and teachers**



\*\* Source: *Knowledge, attitudes and practices of families in the field of care and early development of children*, UNICEF, 2009

**Written question:** *In your opinion, if a family had a child with developmental problems, what should they better do...?*

<sup>18</sup> National study "Knowledge, attitudes and practices of families in the field of early childhood care and development 2009", UNICEF, 2010

<sup>19</sup> Basic education in the Republic of Moldova from the perspective of the child-friendly school: Study/Arcadie Barbarosie, Anatol Gremalschi, Ion Jigau [et al.] ; Institute of Public Policies/UNICEF

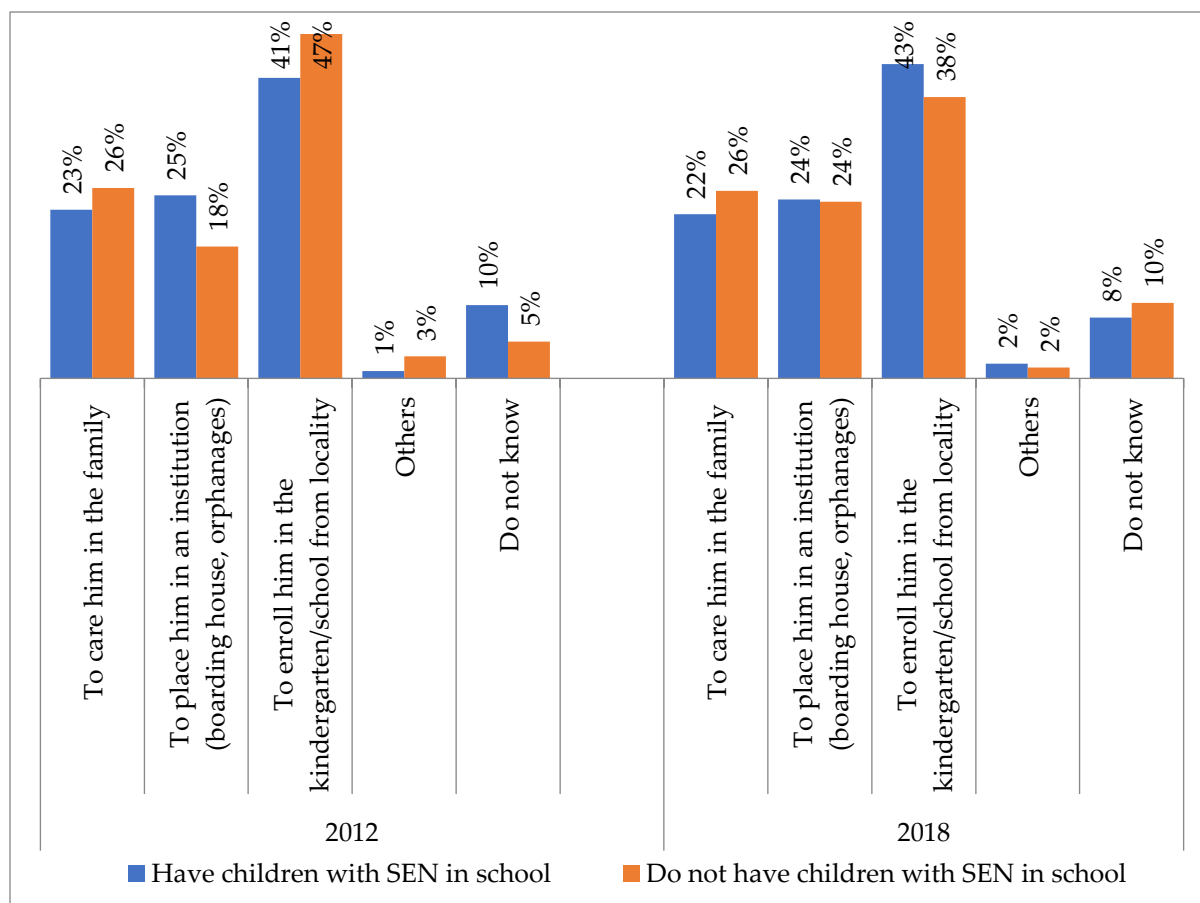
We note that 40+ age *carers* with several children, with a low level of education and socio-economic status claim to a greater extent that children with *developmental problems should be looked after in the family*, meanwhile those of 31-40 years old, with higher education, Russian speakers with medium and high economic status, opt to a greater extent for *their placement in residential institutions*. The respondents from families without 7-15 years old children, 18-30 years old youth, with higher education, from urban area opt to a greater extent *for the inclusion in the mainstream institutions*. (Annex 2, Table 2)

*As far as teachers are concerned*, differences recorded allow making the finding that *family care for children with developmental problems* is more sustained by primary school teachers with over 20 years of service, from urban areas. There is an enormous discrepancy based on the language of communication. Thus, 18% of Romanian-speaking teachers opt for family care, compared to 51% of Russian-speaking teachers. Higher weights of those who believe that these children *should be placed in special institutions* are recorded among high school male teachers with less than 10 years of service. Finally, secondary school teachers opt to a greater extent to include children with developmental problems in mainstream institutions, especially teachers who are not form masters, with more than 11 years of service, Romanian speakers, from rural areas. (Annex 2, Table 3)

Depending on the presence of children with SEN in school, the variation of opinions is insignificant (Annex 2, Table 3).

There are some discrepancies between the opinions of teachers that have children with special needs in school and teachers who do not have such an experience (Figure 5). Thus, among teachers in the schools where there are children with special needs, there is a tendency of opening for their integration into mainstream educational institutions, expressed by increasing the share of those who opt for inclusion of this category of children in the local educational institutions (43% in 2018 compared to 41% in 2012). At the same time, among teachers who do not have such children in the institution, there is a decrease of the share of those who mentioned this (38% in 2018 compared to 47% in 2017), but also an increase in the share of those who opt for placement in a specialized institution (24% in 2018 compared to 18% in 2017).

**Figure 4. Options for placing children with developmental problems: assessments of teachers depending on the presence of children with disabilities in school**



*Written question: In your opinion, if a family had a child with developmental problems, what should they better do ...?*

At the same time, the correlation between teachers' responses on the presence of children with special educational needs or children with disabilities in school and the statistics provided by institutions on the number of children with SEN is very weak. In both groups of institutions, depending on the number of children with SEN (under 4% from the total number of students and over 4% from the total number of students) more than 80% of the interviewed teachers stated that there are children with disabilities in their institution.

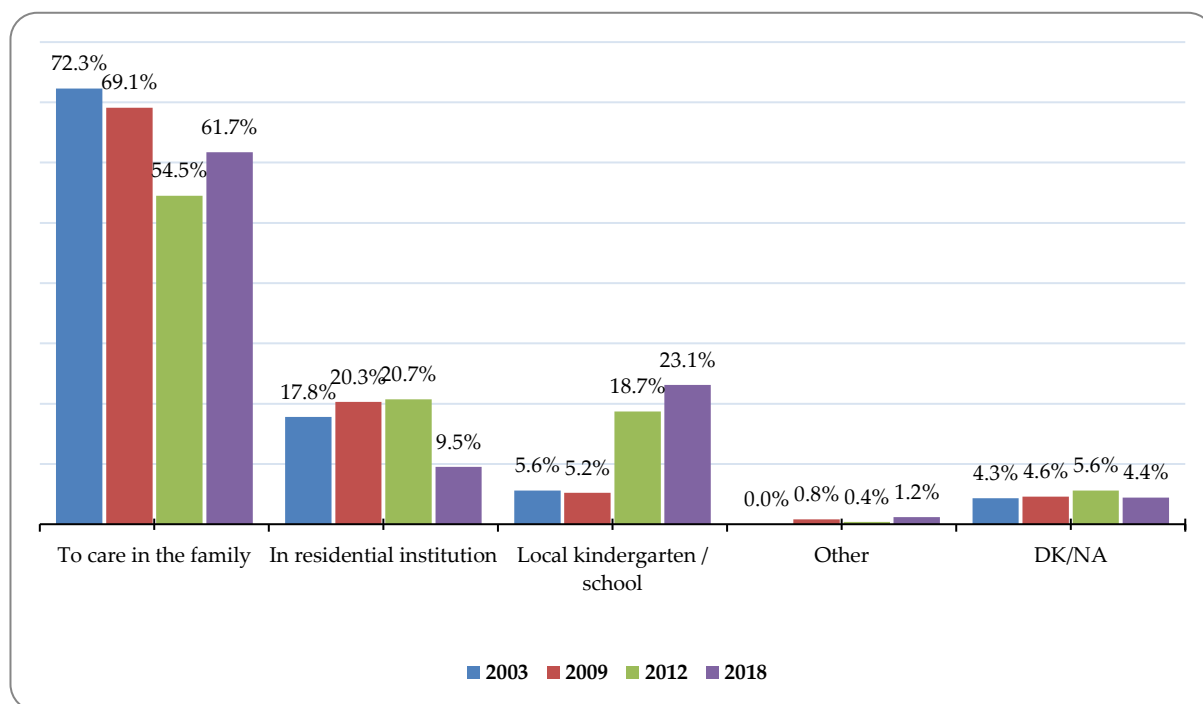
This indicator is part of the study „Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Families in Early Child Care and Development“ (conducted in 2003 and 2009), with the target group being 0-7 years old carers. This fact allows pointing out developments in the attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs.

Although, altogether, the inclusion of children with developmental problems in schools is supported by an obvious minority of respondents, the evolutions of perceptions are positive in the sense of accepting inclusive approaches. Significant numerical weights in 2003 and 2009 consisted of somewhat exclusive opinions, while the option to include this category of children in mainstream institutions was numerically negligible. Thus, the share of those who opt for these children to be cared for in the family decreased from 72,3% in 2003 to 69,1% in 2009, 54,5% in 2012 and then increased to 61,7% in 2018 (Figure 6).

The option to place these children in the residential system remains at the same level until 2012 –about 20%, and it is two times lower – 9,5% in 2018.

At the same time, one notices a significant increase of options to include children with developmental problems in mainstream schools, from 5,6% in 2003 and 5,2% in 2009 to 18,7% in 2012 and 23,1% in 2018.

**Figure 5. Options for placing children with developmental problems, in evolution: carers with children of 0-7 years old**



Students' views on the inclusion of the children with special needs in mainstream education institution remain scattered and there is an increasing degree of tolerance towards these children. Thus, in this study, compared to the 2012 study, the share of children who expressed their total agreement increased by 2 percentage points (p.p.) and the share of those who expressed their partial agreement on accepting special needs children in mainstream schools increased by 15 p.p. It is important to note that the share of pupils who have expressed total disagreement about inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools decreased from 36% in 2012 to 19% in 2018 (Table 2).

In 2009, 40% of students expressed their total agreement to a similar question („Can children with disabilities attend my school?“), 30% - partial agreement and 28% expressed their disagreement<sup>20</sup>.

Children from higher forms are more reserved. Thus, about 1/5 of the interviewed 9<sup>th</sup> grade students chose the option *I totally disagree*, recording a minimum reduction of only 9 p.p. of the respective answers compared to the 2012 study.

<sup>20</sup> Sociological survey “Basic Education in the Republic of Moldova”, Institute of Public Policies, 2008

**Table 2. Acceptance of children with disabilities in mainstream schools: by categories of students**

		2012			2018			Difference 2018-2012, p.p.		
		Totally agree	Partially agree	Totally disagree	Totally agree	Partially agree	Totally disagree	Totally agree	Partially agree	Totally disagree
Total		34%	30%	36%	36%	45%	19%	2	15	-17
Gender:	Male	33%	28%	39%	35%	46%	19%	1	19	-19
	Female	35%	31%	34%	37%	44%	19%	2	12	-15
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	34%	31%	35%	36%	45%	20%	2	14	-15
	Russian	34%	23%	42%	37%	46%	17%	3	23	-25
Residence area:	Urban	37%	29%	35%	35%	45%	19%	-2	17	-16
	Rural	33%	30%	37%	37%	44%	19%	4	14	-18
Year of study, grade:	VI grade	37%	26%	36%	36%	46%	17%	-1	19	-19
	VII grade	29%	33%	37%	39%	43%	19%	9	9	-19
	VIII grade	34%	25%	42%	34%	47%	19%	0	23	-23
	IX grade	36%	34%	30%	36%	44%	21%	-1	10	-9

*Written question: Do you think that children with disabilities (disabled) are to study in regular schools together with other children?*

Study data demonstrate many subtleties in accepting children with disabilities, and the respondents' statements should be treated with caution because the disability type determines the extent to which children with disabilities are considered to be eligible for education.

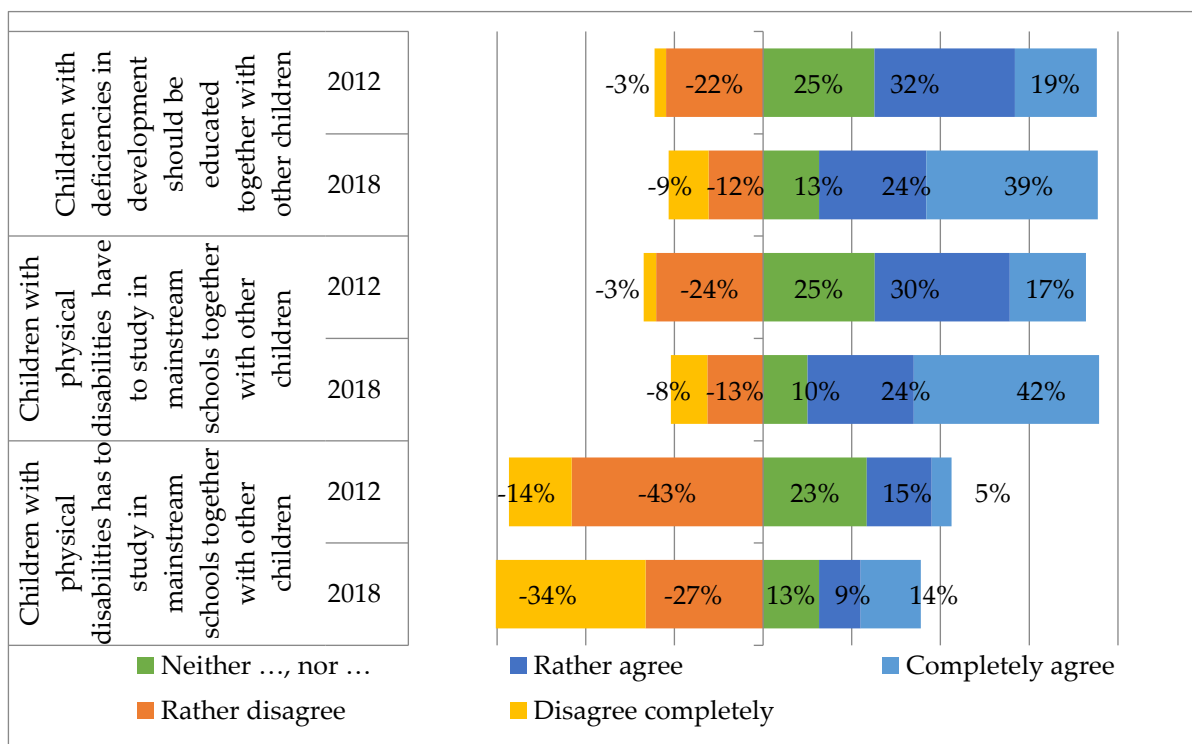
Overall, more than half of the carers and teachers expressed their complete or partial agreement regarding the statement that children with special educational needs (the wording „with developmental deficiencies” was used in the questionnaire) should get education together with other children, the tendencies being the same in both studies. At the same time, one notes an increase of about 12 p.p. in 2018 compared to 2012 of the share of respondents that have expressed their agreement in this context. Among carers, there was a diminution of those who, in comparison to the previous study, expressed an uncertain position – neither acceptance, nor disagreement. Those who oppose inclusion of children with special needs are in a numerical minority and constitute in both studies around ¼ of both carers and teachers (Figure 7).

There is a change in the emphasis on acceptance depending on the type of disability, which allows us to see that the declared general acceptance only concerns physical abilities. The idea of including children with mental disabilities involves a pronounced opposition, the opinions *Disagree, Rather disagree* constituted about 60% among carers and just over 70% among teachers. It is worth mentioning that in the current study about 1/3 of carers and teachers mentioned that they *Do not agree* with their inclusion, compared with 14% among carers and 30% teachers who had this opinion in 2012.



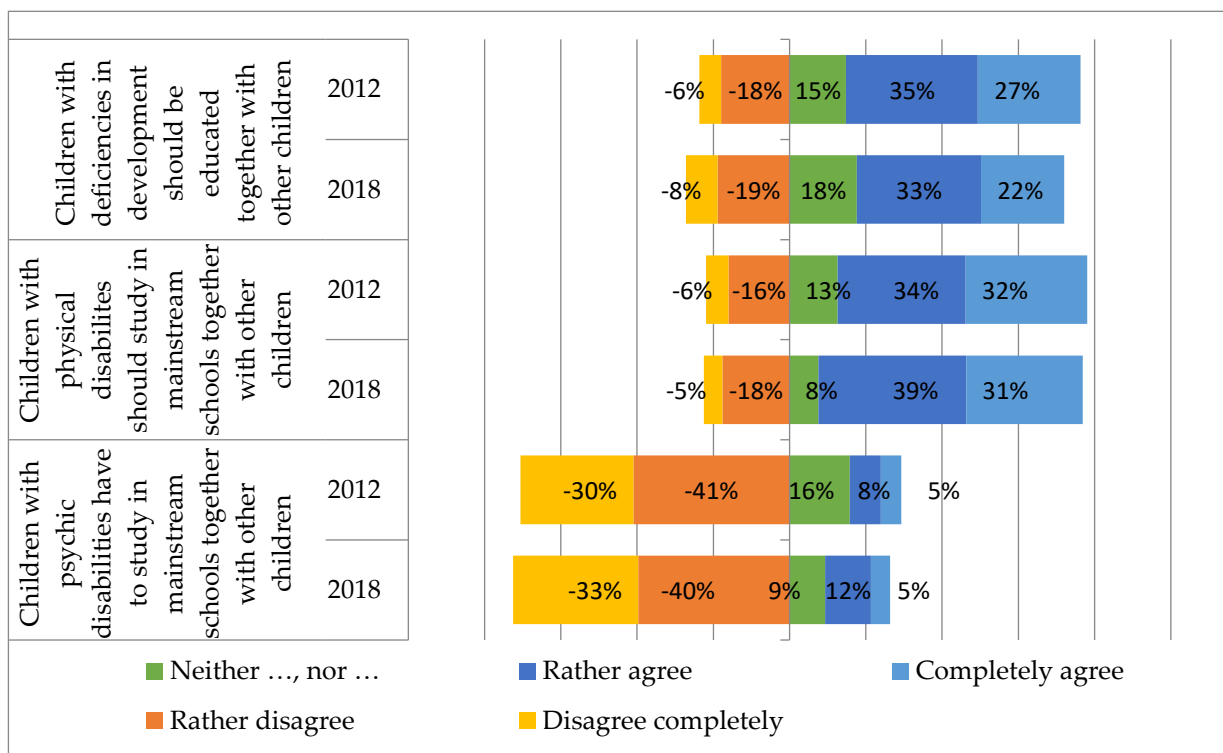
**Figure 6. General assessments concerning the inclusion of children with disabilities in the pre-university educational institutions**

a) Carers



*Written question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?(the statements are shown in the figure)*

b) Teachers



*Written question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?(the statements are shown in the figure)*

The majority of participants in the qualitative study have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with **physical disabilities**, as, in their view, the primary criterion of

acceptance to regular schools must be children's ability to learn to „think logically“. In the respondents' opinion, a child with locomotor disabilities (most often referred to in group discussions) does not affect the learning process and does not disturb the educational process. Also, the majority of the interviewees describe children with physical disabilities as having a quiet, „good“ behavior. In some discussions, compassionate complaints persist with reference to the fact that school rooms are often not adapted for this category of children.

### **Box 1. Attitudes toward integration of children with physical disabilities**

*„She [referring to a classmate of the child] is thinking right, she is studying well, she was born this way, she has a limping foot. She should not go to special centers.“ (F, 31 years old, mother of a student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„I think that children who are in wheelchairs, who have walking issues or simply physical disabilities, agree to be integrated in the community.“ (F, 29 years old, teacher of French language, 1 year of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„I think if the child has a physical disability, but he thinks right, it would not be a problem for the teacher, the fact that he cannot walk should not affect his learning, if he speaks and thinks normally. His logic is important, as if his thinking is not similar to the rest of the group, it is better to create a special class for this purpose.“ (F, 36 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„The children with health issues have to be integrated into the society, even if they are different from us. They are to study with us, because they do not harm others. They are good, have an adequate behavior, and should not be isolated... If they have a mental problem, a special school should be opened for them, so that everyone fits in, it is normal for them to be so.“ (F, 14 years old, student from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

Attitudes towards children with **mental disabilities** are less tolerant among parents and teachers participating in group discussions. The main concern of parents refers to the safety of their children, considering children with intellectual disabilities dangerous, in some cases. Even parents that have children with physical disabilities express the idea of placing children with mental disabilities in special schools, the argument being the well-being of children with SEN. Several parents believe that responsibility for education of a disabled child should be the responsibility of the family, and under the circumstances, the state needs to offer more support to them so that parents are able to provide appropriate care, according to children's needs. Some of the interviewed students said they would fear for their personal safety if they had to share the desk with a student with mental disability.

### **Box 2. Attitudes regarding the inclusion of children with psychiatric/mental disabilities**

*„The other parents were against the little girl with Down syndrome attending the same class as their children: “She is sick; what kind of learning will it be; look what she is doing during the lesson.” Parents did not accept her joining the class; they said that there are special schools: „let her return to where she was until now; she came 2 years ago“... Even now in meetings with parents they can say: „Why does she have to behave like this, my child is not attentive at the lesson, she is distracting him“.(F, 33 years old, mother of a child from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„For those with mental disabilities, maybe there should be special schools, because they are aggressive and dangerous for society. There are centers for blind people; maybe there should be centers for people with mental disabilities.“ (F, 51 years old, mother of a student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„If the child is sick I think he should stay at home with his mother. The state should pay more attention to that mother so that she is able to take care of him at home. The mother can come with him to the ground where children are playing.” (F, 35 years old, mother of a student from 9th grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

*„I really think that children with mental disabilities should be placed in special schools. For children with mental disabilities not to be upset by other children, they should study separately.” (F, 36 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents \_children with SEN)*

*„I am totally against children that have mental disabilities...I wrote a complaint at the police station just two weeks ago on a child with mental disability. He began to call me names in front of all the other children.” (F, 29 years old, teacher of French language, 1 year of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„If it is a physical disability, he is very quiet, but if it is a mental one, he can become aggressive and can hurt you somehow. I, for instance, would be extremely cautious if I had someone with mental disabilities sitting at the same desk with me.” (F, 14 years old, student 8th grade, rural, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

However, some of the interviewed parents from the qualitative study believe that any child has to be integrated in mainstream schools, irrespective of his disability, while others think it is possible to partially integrate the children with SEN. Some day centers and educational institutions opted for the partial inclusion of children with severe disabilities. Thus, these students go there only for a couple of hours per day or per week. Several parents have agreed to create a special group/class only for children with mental disabilities, so they will be able to interact with other children during breaks, at school events, on the playground, and this way they will not interrupt classes and *„will not disturb other children”*.

### **Box 3. Visions on integrating children with SEN**

*„If the children have a more severe degree of disability, groups must be formed; they should not be isolated, but the groups should be formed according to their degree of disability. The children with a foot or hand disability can be integrated; they are mentally healthy.” (F, 52 years old, mother of a student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

*„I think it is not worthwhile to establish a separate school for 3-4 children with mental disabilities in each rayon, but it is possible to create a special class in regular educational institutions. There are plenty of classrooms in schools; we just need a special teacher, a speech therapist for instance.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 3<sup>d</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„I think it does not matter if the child has Down syndrome or is autistic; I think they anyway need special education and their lifestyle is different, but still it must be the same as for regular children. They have to be integrated, it is not normal to exclude them from society.” (F, 35 years old, mother of a student from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

Students interviewed during group discussions noted that children with disabilities that attend school should receive psychological support and they are to be prepared that not all their colleagues will be friendly with them. At the same time, in the messages sent to teachers, students who participated in the group discussions emphasized that the children with SEN need first of all support, care, but also encouragement, trust, acceptance, motivation etc.

Some parents find themselves unprepared for the inclusion of children with SEN in regular classes, especially those with mental disabilities. They report that they do not know how to communicate with their children about the peculiarities of children with special educational needs, especially when they do not have sufficient knowledge about how to explain why a disabled child can behave in a different way, is inadequately perceived in the school environment, and why the other children cannot adopt such a behavior.

*„I would accept physical disabilities because children have to be tolerant to others. Those with mental disabilities – if I could explain to my child certain reactions in certain situations, so that he could understand that this is not a norm: „that this child behaves so, because he is sick,“ maybe I would accept. Let’s take the first grade - they learn from each other: one child brought a certain toy, tomorrow I will bring another toy; it is the exact same situation..” (F, 39 years old, mother of a student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

The interviewed specialists mentioned that the inclusion of children with mental disabilities is a more complex process that requires a greater effort from the teachers and the abdication of some typical practices that become inoperable for these students.

*„Mental disability itself requires an effort to adjust the contents and requires a greater effort from the teachers, who have to work on the curriculum, set individual tasks for these children – this is about contents and their adjustment. Another aspect is the behavior of children: it is not their fault at all, but their health situation generates certain behaviors for which we do not always have solutions. The teachers expect typical behaviors of children or, on the contrary, they make some pedagogical interventions suitable for typical children, which do not always suit these cases.” (9IA, public servant)*

Several respondents, especially teachers, make a difference between the level of disability of the child, classifying them as those with severe disabilities and those with mild disabilities. From their experience, children with mild intellectual disabilities can be integrated into regular classes, with teachers being able to give them the time to study, without affecting the rest of the students. Concerning the children with intellectual disabilities, teachers are more reserved, considering that they require more time, effort and attention.

*„In the past, these were children identified from the school environment, who were neglected until then and had some learning difficulties. Now children with severe disabilities started to come and the burden has increased. These aspects make them more reluctant.” (9IA, public servant)*

Among carers, 76% (27, 2% „certainly, yes” and 35,6% „probably yes”) accepted the integration of children with locomotor deficiencies in the mainstream institutions. Likewise, children with speech deficiencies are less rejected (Figure 8).

The most rejected group is the group of children with mental disabilities, rejected by more than 70% of the interviewed carers (71% in 2018 compared to 76% in 2012).

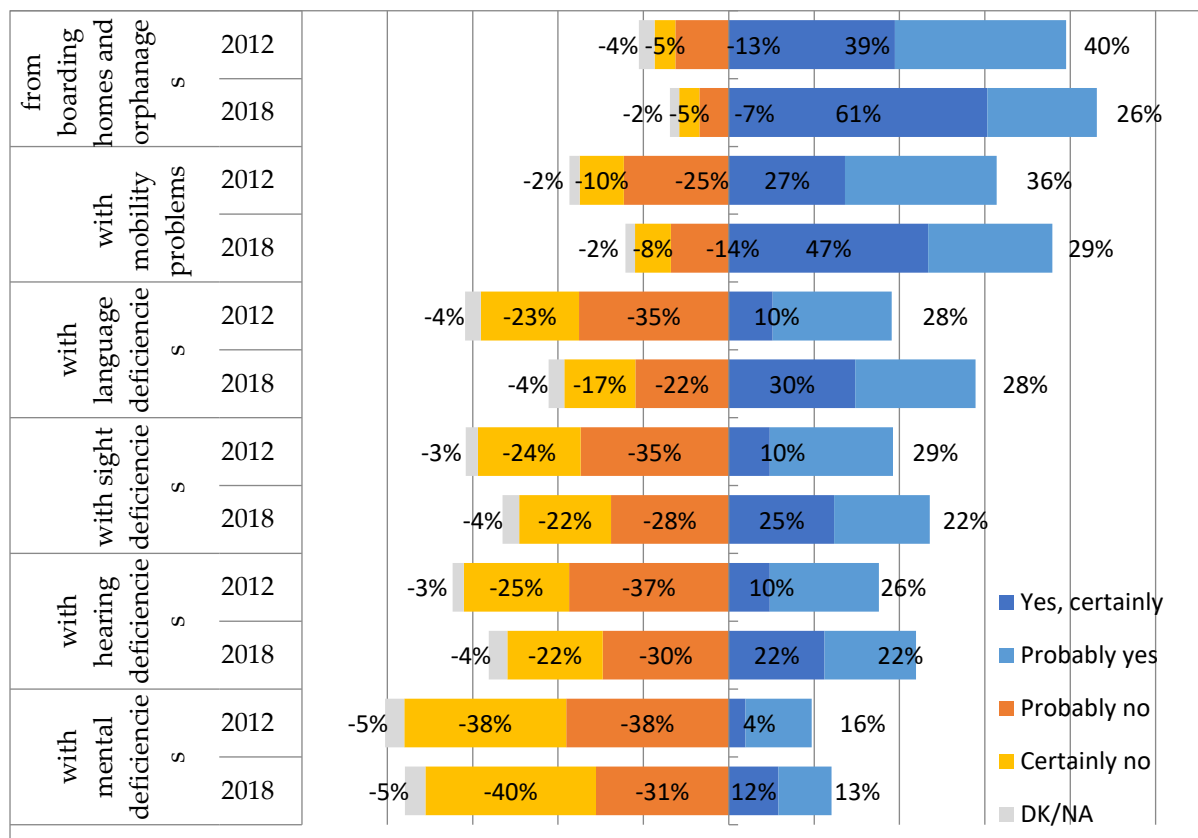
In case of teachers, one notes a decrease of 9 p.p. in relation to the previous study of accepting children with special educational needs (in the study „special requirements”) or with disabilities. Children with speech deficiencies follow with about 55% acceptance and 45% rejections. The other categories are predominantly rejected. Children with visual impairment got about 59% of rejections, hearing impairment - 63%, and mental impairment - about 80% of rejections.

Among students, the differentiation by type of disabilities is smaller, with positive trends pronounced on all types of disabilities compared to the previous study. However, over half of the students consider that children with mental disabilities should „surely not” or

„probably not” study in mainstream schools, along with other children. At the same time, the proportion of students who think that children with mental deficiencies have to study in mainstream schools, along with other children, has increased from 27% in 2012 to 45% in 2018.

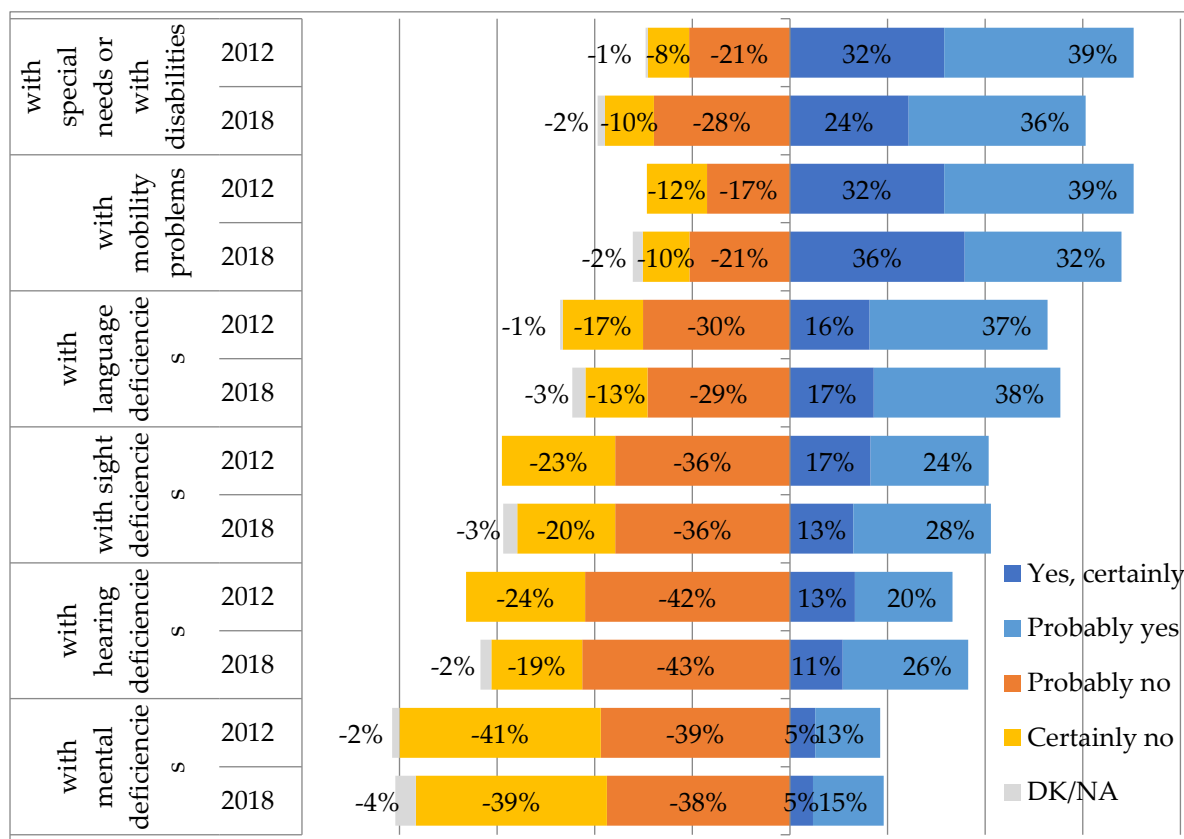
**Figure 7. Assessments on inclusion of children with various types of disabilities in the pre-university institution**

a) Carers



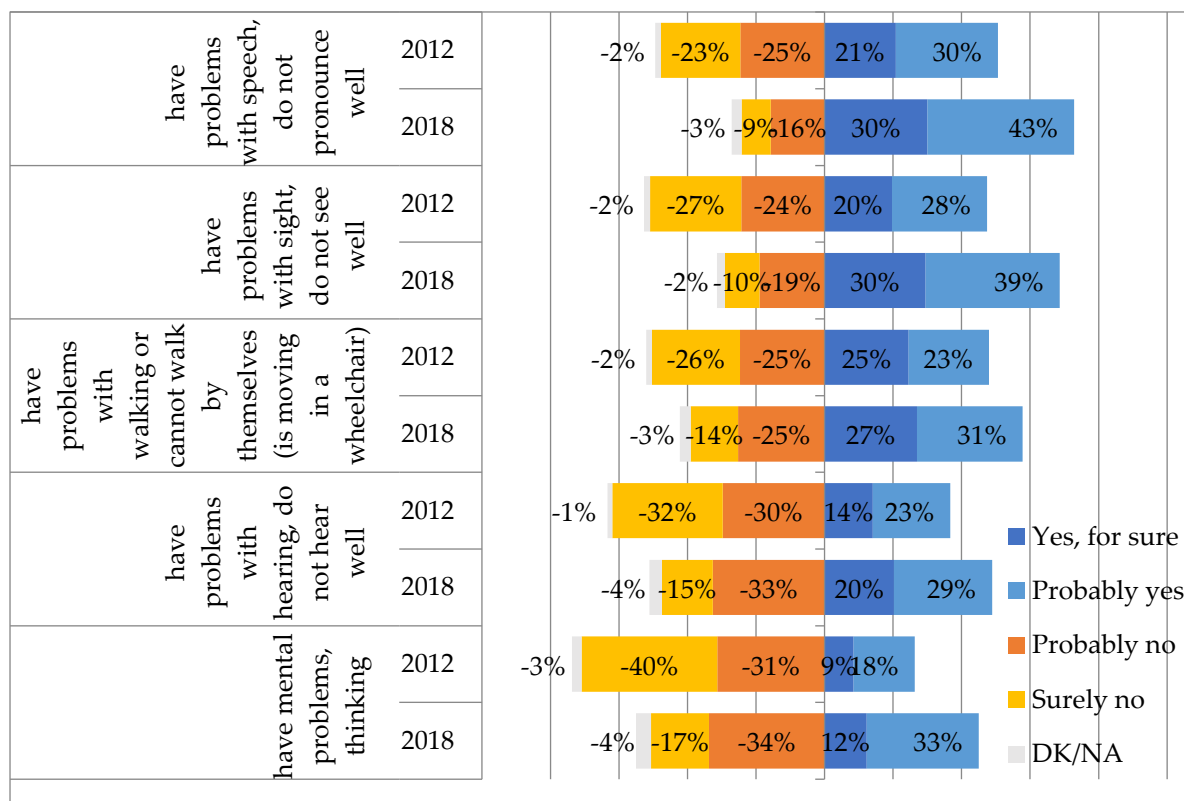
*Written Question: Do you think that (categories listed in the figure) have to study in mainstream schools/kindergartens, along with other children?*

b) Teachers



**Written Question:** Do you think that (categories listed in the figure) have to study in mainstream schools, along with other children?

c) Students



**Written Question:** Do you think that (categories listed in the figure) have to study in mainstream schools, along with other children?

A different approach to the inclusion of children with various disabilities is observed in the three groups of the respondents.

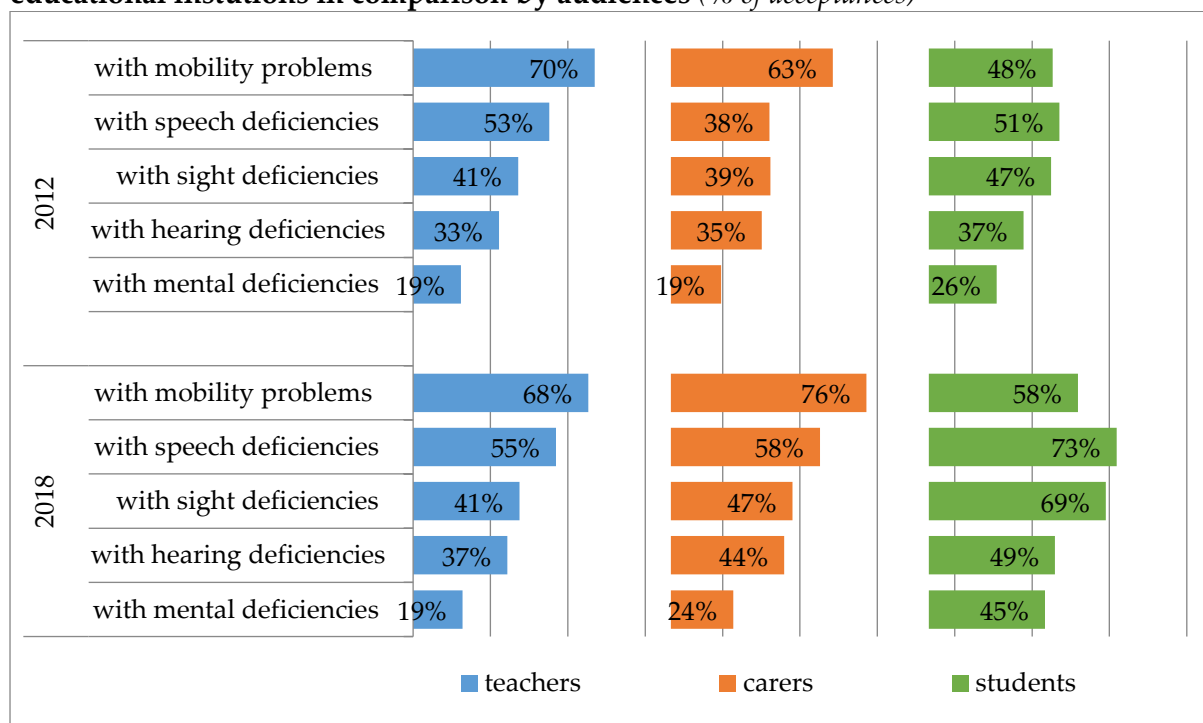
In this study, 76% of teachers (63% in 2012) and 68% of carers (70% in 2012) do not consider issues of mobility as barriers for inclusion, and 58% of carers (38% in 2012) and 55% of teachers (53% in 2012) do not consider speech disorders as barriers for inclusion.

Less accepted are children with mental disabilities, in both studies, only 20% carers and teachers accepting their inclusion (Figure 9).

At the same time, 73% of students accept the inclusion of children with speech disorders, (compared to 51% in 2012), 69% of students (compared to 47% in 2012) accept visually impaired children, and 45% of students (compared to 26% in 2012) accept the inclusion of children with mental disabilities in mainstream educational institutions. One also notices that teachers are the most reserved with reference to the inclusion of children with different disabilities.

**It is necessary to mention that in all cases (types of disability), the degree of acceptance among carers and students is higher compared to the study from 2012. At the same time, the degree of acceptance among the interviewed teachers is approximately the same.**

**Figure 8. Acceptance of children with various types of disabilities in the pre-university educational institutions in comparison by audiences (% of acceptances)**



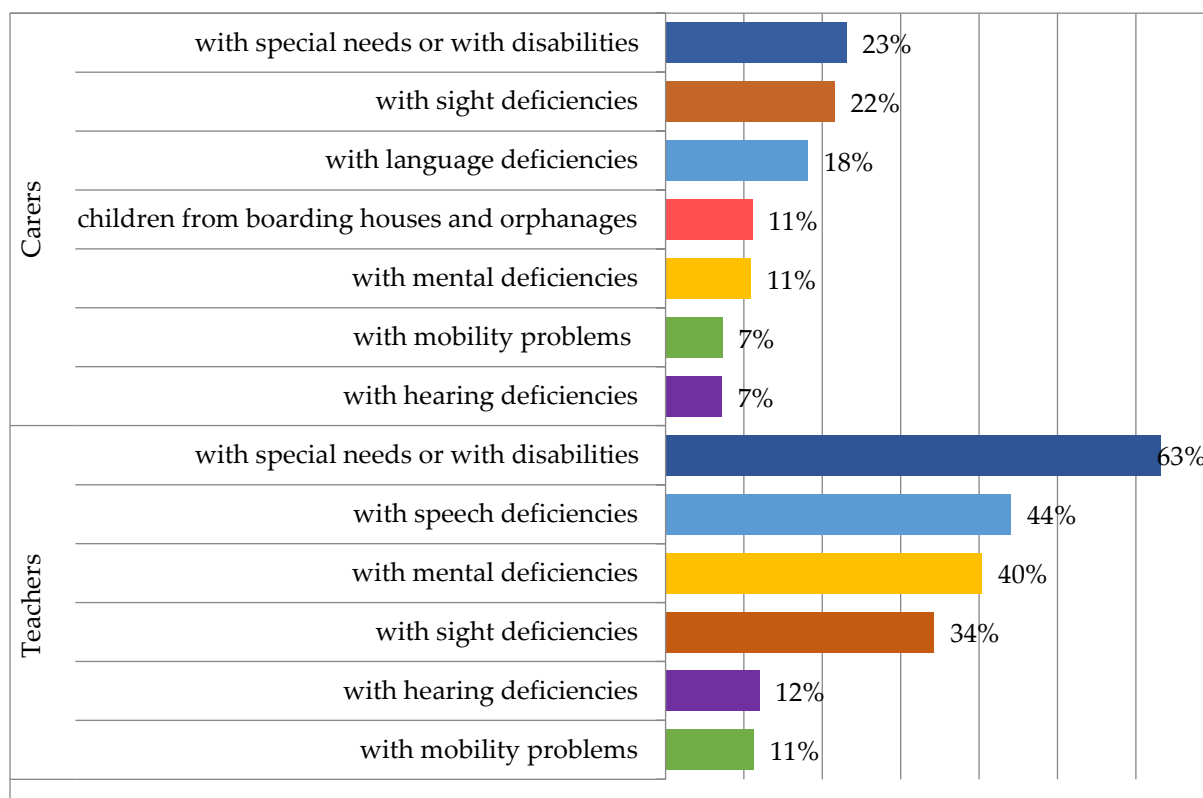
**Written question:** Do you think (categories listed in the figure) have to study in regular schools, along with other children? (Answers: Certainly Yes, Probably Yes)

The study assessed the inclusion of children with special needs and/or disabilities in mainstream schools. In the case of carers with children that have children with SEN in the class, 23% accept their inclusion, 22% accept children with visual impairment, 18% accept children with speech disorders, 11% accept children from boarding schools and orphanages and children with mental disabilities respectively (Figure 10).

About 2/3 of teachers have children with special education needs or disabilities in the classroom, 44% with speech disorders, 40% with mental disabilities, 34% with visual

impairment. Only a little over 10% of them have children with hearing impairment or mobility issues in classes.

**Figure 9. Inclusion of children with special needs in the pre-university educational institutions (% answers "Yes")**



*Written Question: for carers: Please tell if in your child's class there are children with ...*

*For teachers: Do you personally teach in classes where there are students....?*

The study also measured the acceptance of children with special needs in general and by types of disabilities, by projecting the situation at a personal level on the respondent. The respondents were asked if they accept the inclusion of children with special needs in their school/classroom. It can be noticed that in this case opinions on types of disability are different, with a level of acceptance higher for children with mobility issues and a decreased acceptance in case of mental disabilities. Likewise, one notices a high acceptance level (and increasing compared to the study from 2012) of the children from boarding houses and orphanages both among carers and children (Figure 11).

A higher level of acceptance is observed among carers – 86% of them (81% in 2012) would accept in their children's classroom children from boarding homes and orphanages, about 78% (63 in 2012) – children with mobility issues, 73% (55% in 2012) – with special needs or disabilities, a little over 65% (about 45% in 2012) would accept children with speech disorders, sight or hearing impairment and just 28% (23% in 2012) would accept children with mental disabilities.

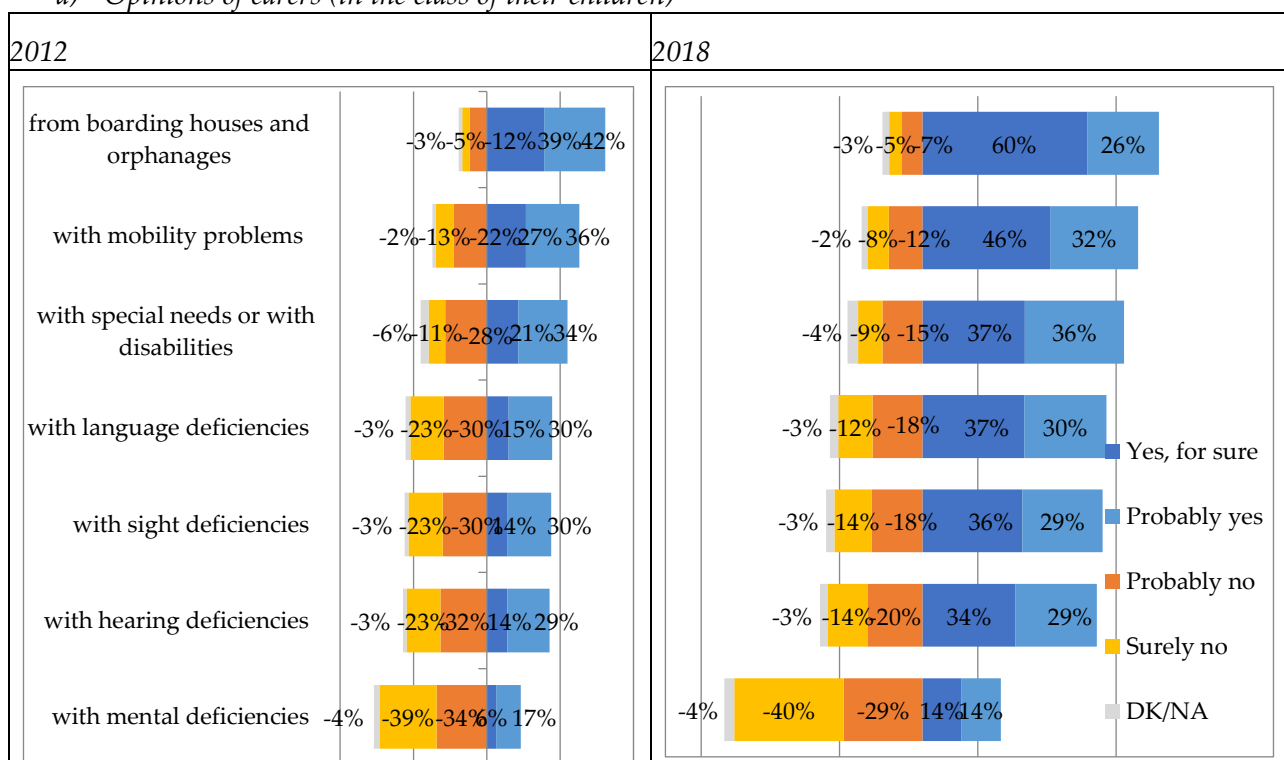
Teachers were asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of inclusion of children in classes where they teach to children with various types of disabilities. In all cases, the share of negative connotation answers prevails, except for cases of children with mobility issues, 44% of teachers believing they would create benefits, about 42% - disadvantages. The most pessimistic responses in this case also refer to children with mental disabilities, only 13% believe that inclusion would create some advantages, whereas most – 79%, - believe that this would only bring disadvantages, the data being about the same as in 2012.



In the case of students, the answer to the question of inclusion had the following suggested answers: „would be good for all,” „it would be bad for these children” and „it would be bad for all the children.” The study reports that the core concern reflected in responses is that inclusion would be particularly harmful to children with special needs (similar data to the study conducted in 2012), a more frequent response (weights range between 40%-50%) than the answers that inclusion of these children would harm other children (weights are under 10% in all cases, except mental disabilities). At the same time, in relation to the 2012 study, in all cases there is a tendency to increase the weights of answers „would be good for all”; the highest increase of those answers of about 14 p.p. is observed with reference to children with speech and sight impairments.

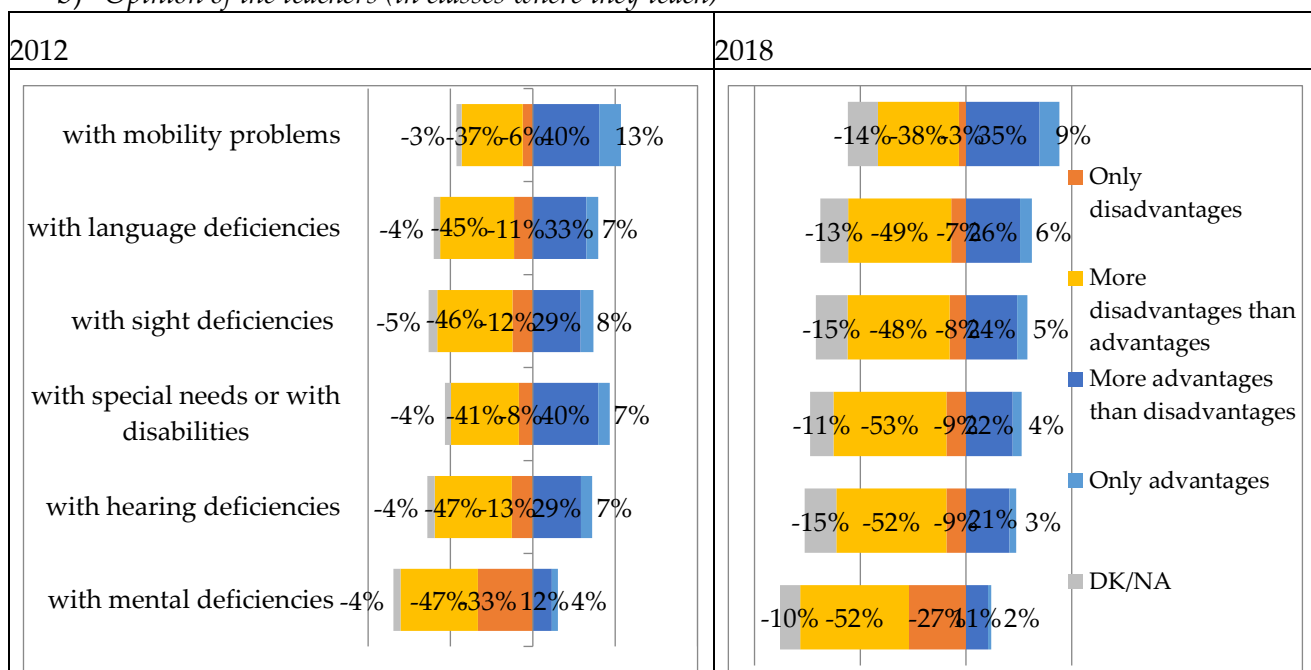
**Figure 10. Inclusion of children with various types of disabilities in their own (carers' children's, teachers', students') classrooms**

a) Opinions of carers (in the class of their children)



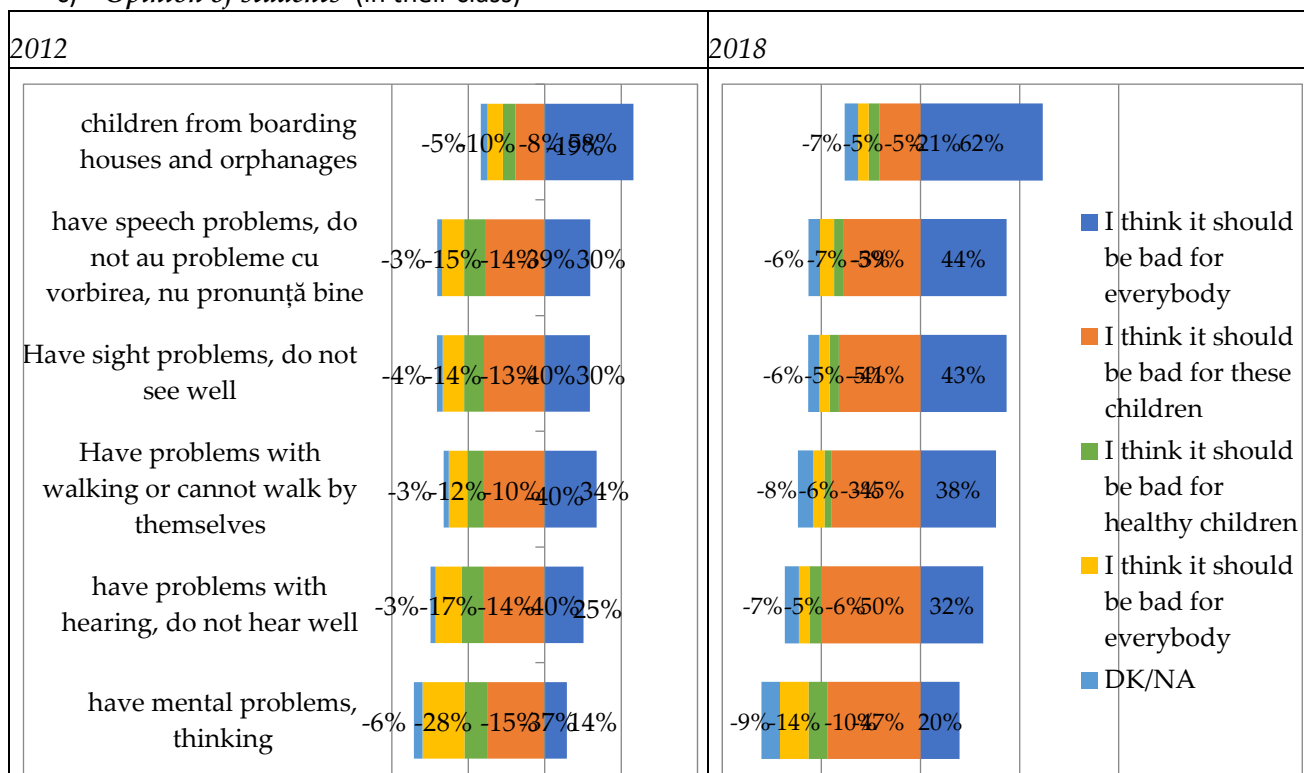
**Written Question:** Would you accept children (categories listed in the figure) to study in the same class with your child...?

b) Opinion of the teachers (in classes where they teach)



**Written Question:** Do you think that if in the classes you are teaching there would be students (categories are listed in the figure), this would create ... for other (healthy) children?

c) Opinion of students (in their class)



**Written question:** Do you think it would be good for children (the categories are listed in the figure) to study in your class?

### III. Inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream education: advantages and disadvantages

The reasons invoked for or against the inclusion of children with special educational needs or disabilities in mainstream schools are multiple, although they can be grouped into several major trends. At the same time, all three audiences usually refer to the same arguments. The qualitative study identified several advantages and disadvantages perceived by the respondents regarding inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools (Table 3).

**Table 3. Advantages and disadvantages of inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream educational institutions<sup>21</sup>**

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>For children with SEN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Socializing with peers;</li> <li>- Social adaptation;</li> <li>- Acquiring some skills, knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discrimination (abuse) of children with SEN;</li> <li>- In mainstream schools children with SEN do not acquire the necessary skills for life, compared to those who study in schools specially tailored for their needs;</li> <li>- Accidents and/or violence against students with SEN by other students.</li> </ul>
<b>For other children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forming tolerant attitudes and behaviors towards persons with disabilities;</li> <li>- Are more sociable, more empathic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disruption of classes (students are distracted, teachers have difficulties teaching), with particular reference to students with behavioral problems;</li> <li>- Other pupils may be disadvantaged, given that students with SEN require a special approach;</li> <li>- Accidents and/or violence of students with SEN to other students</li> <li>- Taking over inadequate behaviors from children with SEN and children with disabilities.</li> </ul>

#### a) Advantages

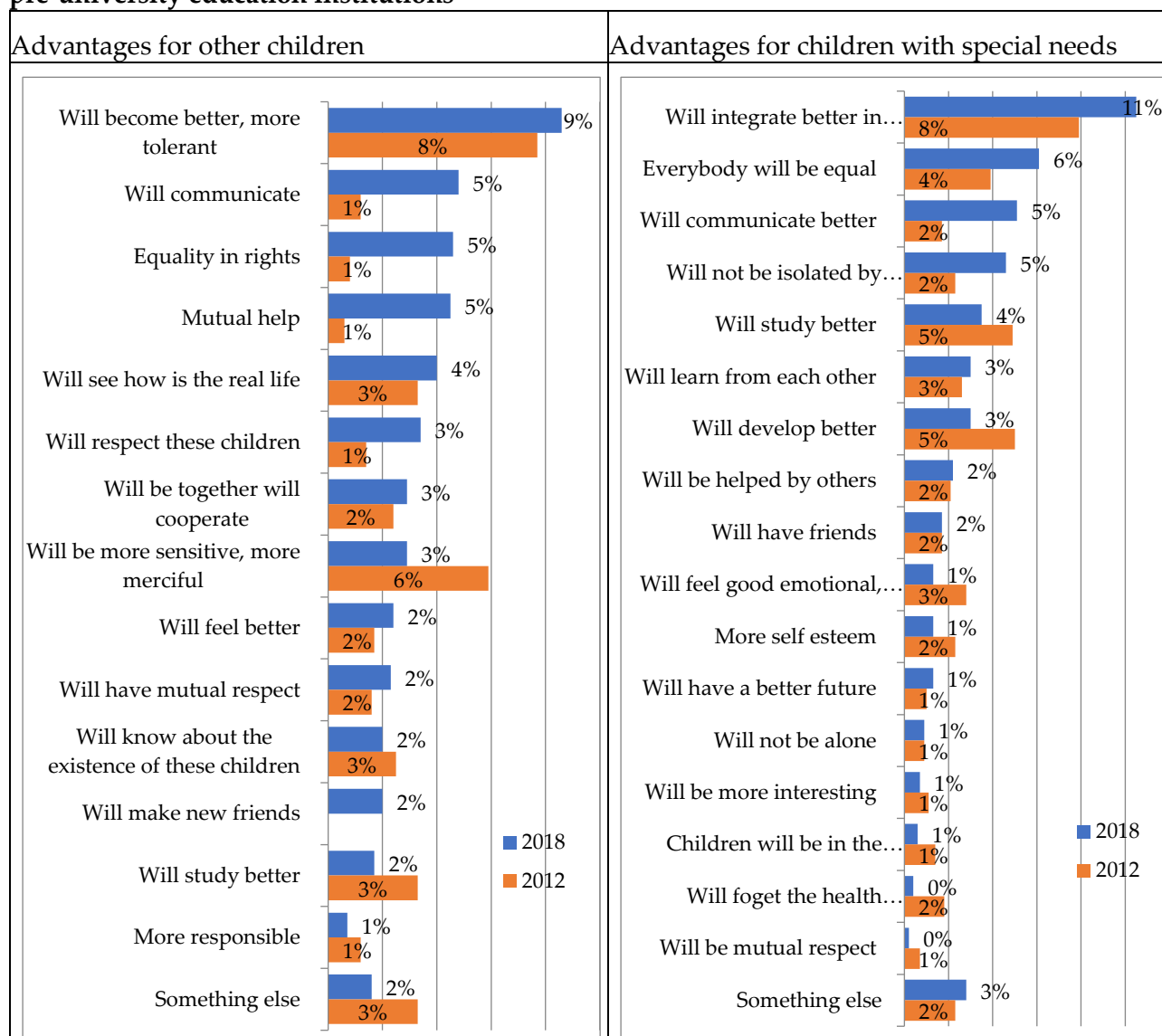
Carers who see and have been able to invoke some benefits of inclusion of children with special needs and disabilities mentioned that other children will become better, more tolerant persons, with 9% affirmative responses (increasing compared to 8% in 2012). Other benefits that cumulated 4%-5% are: communication, equality in rights, mutual help, real life perspective. Other options cumulated under 4% answers. About 8% of respondents (11% in

<sup>21</sup> This represents the opinion of the interviewed respondents in the group discussions.

2012) do not see any advantages for their children in the inclusion of children with special educational needs or disabilities (Figure 12).

The main advantage for children with special needs perceived by carers is that these children will integrate more easily in the society; one in ten respondents mentioned this advantage (8% in 2012). Between 4%-6% have cumulated such options as: equality, more communication, non-isolation from society. The other options accounted for less than 4% respondents (decreasing compared to 8% in 2012).

**Figure 11. Advantages, in the opinion of carers, of including children with special needs in pre-university education institutions**



*There are no advantages: 8% in 2018, 11% in 2012*

*DK/NA: 44 in 2018, 52% in 2012*

*There are no advantages: 4% in 2018, 8% in 2012*

*DK/NA: 47% in 2018, 46% in 2012*

**Written question:** *What do you think are the benefits of including children with special needs in mainstream schools? Please refer to advantages for other children./ Please refer to advantages for children with special needs*

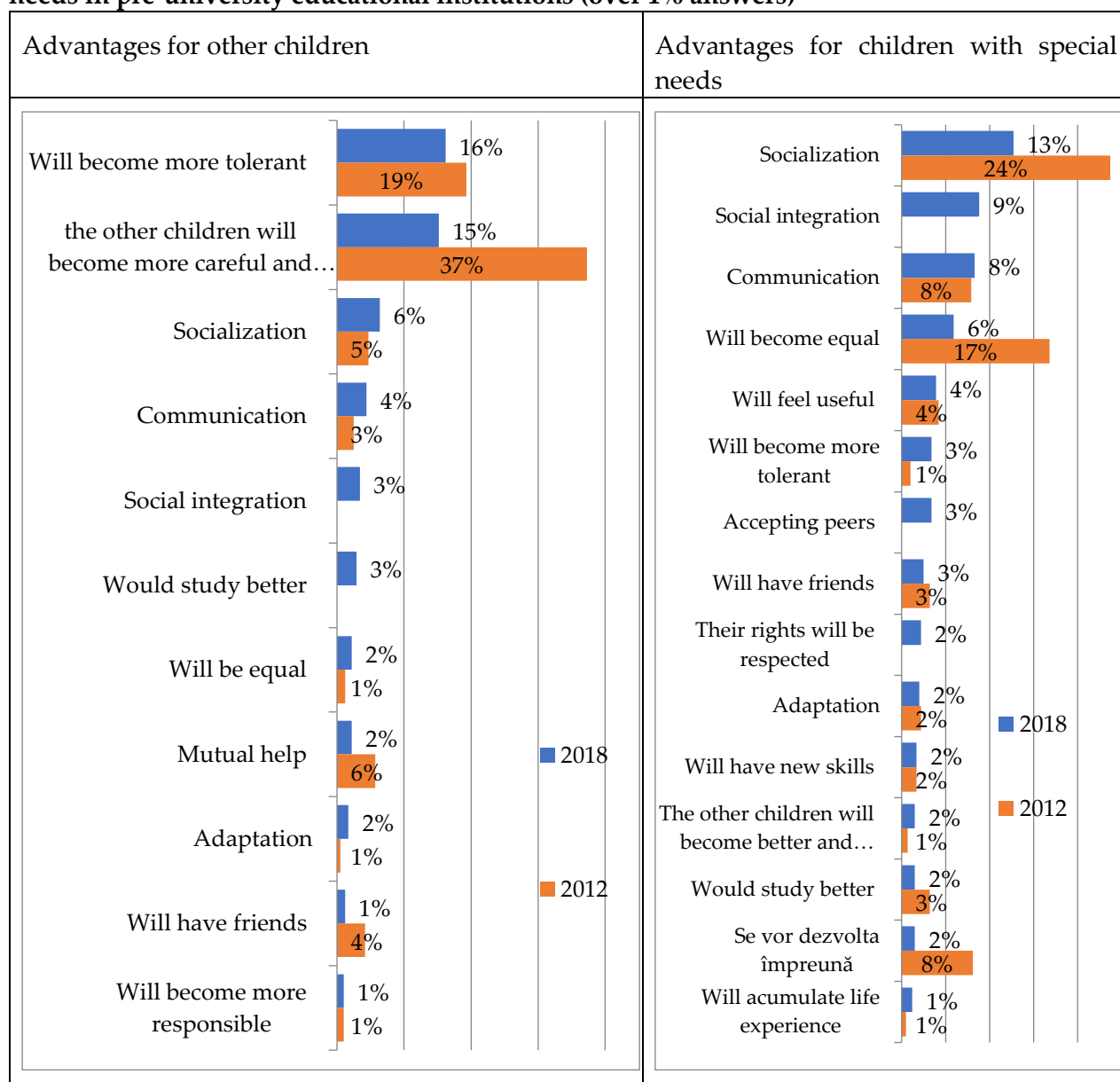
Teachers largely invoke the same things as advantages, just with different accents. Among the advantages for typical children the aspects related to tolerance are most often invoked: children will become more tolerant 16% (19% in 2012), more caring and better 15% (37% in 2012) (Figure 13).

Advantages for children with special needs refer to socialization - 12,7% (23,7% in 2012), social integration - 8,8% (in 2012 the equality feeling was 16,8%).

We note that 14% (12% in 2012) of teachers do not see any benefits for other children and 7% (7% in 2012) do not consider benefits for children with special needs as a result of their inclusion in mainstream schools.

It is important to mention the many advantages mentioned by the respondents, even if the share of answers is not representative. This fact relates to the psycho-socio-emotional but also educational benefits seen by the population that would result from the inclusion of special needs children in mainstream educational institutions.

**Figure 12. The advantages, in the opinion of teachers, of including children with special needs in pre-university educational institutions (over 1% answers)**



*Written Question: What do you think are the advantages of including children with special needs in mainstream schools? Please refer to the advantages for other children. / Please refer to advantages for children with special needs.*

Parents, teachers and students participating in group discussions believe that integration in educational institutions with other children of an early age, is beneficial to all children. If

children with SEN are integrated in kindergarten or at the latest in primary school, it is easier for them to fit into the group or class, the other students are getting used to the little ones, and it seems natural that their colleague is different from some children, and this facilitates the adaptation of the child with SEN.

#### **Box 4. Advantages of including children with disabilities from an early/preschool age**

*„Probably the class is so united because they are together since kindergarten.“ (F, 36 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„There is a need to develop some of the child’s abilities since kindergarten so that he could integrate. In the countryside they all come together from kindergarten, they are in a class. They know each other better in the village. The basis should be established in kindergarten.“ (F, 40 years old, teacher of Mathematics, 12 years of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„I also have a sick child [in the class], who is in the first grade. He misbehaves, he shouts; if we are talking about rain, he can shout: „ohhh, it’s raining!“. When he acts like this, I am talking to the other children and see that they accept him; they play with him... If they are from the first grade together, it is easier.“ (F, 45 years old, teacher of primary classes, 28 years of service, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„Those who were with him in the kindergarten were not avoiding him, but the new students, half of the class, were. They were not speaking at all by his side.“ (M, 14 years old, student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

*„The best thing is to be in a school with all children, because in time he gets adapted and communicates with various children.“ (M, 13 years old, student from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 2FG\_students\_6-7)*

*„There are happy cases, when children come from kindergarten, thus there is continuity. It is common knowledge in psychology: the earlier the intervention is, the higher is the result... the brain of a small child is like a sponge, even of the disabled, you put the sponge in water and it absorbs everything. The older the child gets, the malleability of this sponge decreases, it becomes rigid, as a sponge that was used and does not absorb so well anymore... We worked very closely with PASs in recent years, so that when they turn to communities to have discussions in kindergartens, medical and social services to identify all children with disabilities. At a young age, one cannot talk about learning difficulties yet, but an established disability is certain, you see it and motivate everyone to bring children to kindergartens.“ (9IA, public servant)*

Some specialists mentioned that children with SEN who have not attended preschool institutions must go through a period of adaptation till they are included in mainstream schools, due to the fact that socialization with other members of their age, presence of a large number of children cause strong emotions to them. Attending the Day Centers and/or Resource Centers for a period of time is a recommendation of some representatives of the civil society and PASs.

*„I believe that our schools should accept children with mental disabilities, but first they have to go through auxiliary schools/centers, for a period of training/integration into the group. After they overcome the challenge and I am not referring to their school achievements, but the ones related to his relational adaptation re facing the behavior that has to be normal. Then he needs to be integrated/transferred in a mainstream school... For instance, if the child did not attend kindergarten and if he was for 7 years in his home it is a big shock for him to attend school or to sit in his desk quietly. For an regular child it is still difficult, but for those who have not developed any behavioral habits it is more difficult.” (3IA, NGO)*

**Acquisition of knowledge and skills** - In a mainstream institution, children with SEN learn more easily, take over certain behaviors, practice SEN from their peers. Teachers prepared to support them in learning according to the individualized educational plan will provide essential support for the accumulation of knowledge and will guide the parents in this regard. This is also due to permanent learning in an educational setting, where the teacher and student are trained in educational activities.

*„The first 4 years of school I homeschooled my child, and in 5<sup>th</sup> grade I decided to go to school, because I see when the teacher comes home, and he is teaching for 2-3 hours, he wants to teach him a lot of information, and the child gets tired fast and I thought that even if he will go to school and he did not prepare for that day or he was not feeling well or he could not prepare, the teacher explains more than if when the teacher comes home, plus he listens to other children as well.” (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

**Communication/socializing with peers** – parents of children with SEN believe that for their children communication, relating with other children are the most important and social exclusion is harming both children with SEN and of children with disabilities, and the society overall. Children are getting used to their peers with SEN, become more sociable, emphatic, and demonstrate the feeling of care towards others.

*„For these children it is not important the material that they study, for them it is more important the communication they have in the group.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„If the child has bad grades and is excluded the child will remain permanently stupid, as he says.” (F, 33 years old, mother of a child from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„Children [with reference to children with intellectual disabilities] become different, are happier, visually, physiologically they change, their look is different.” (12IA, PAS)*

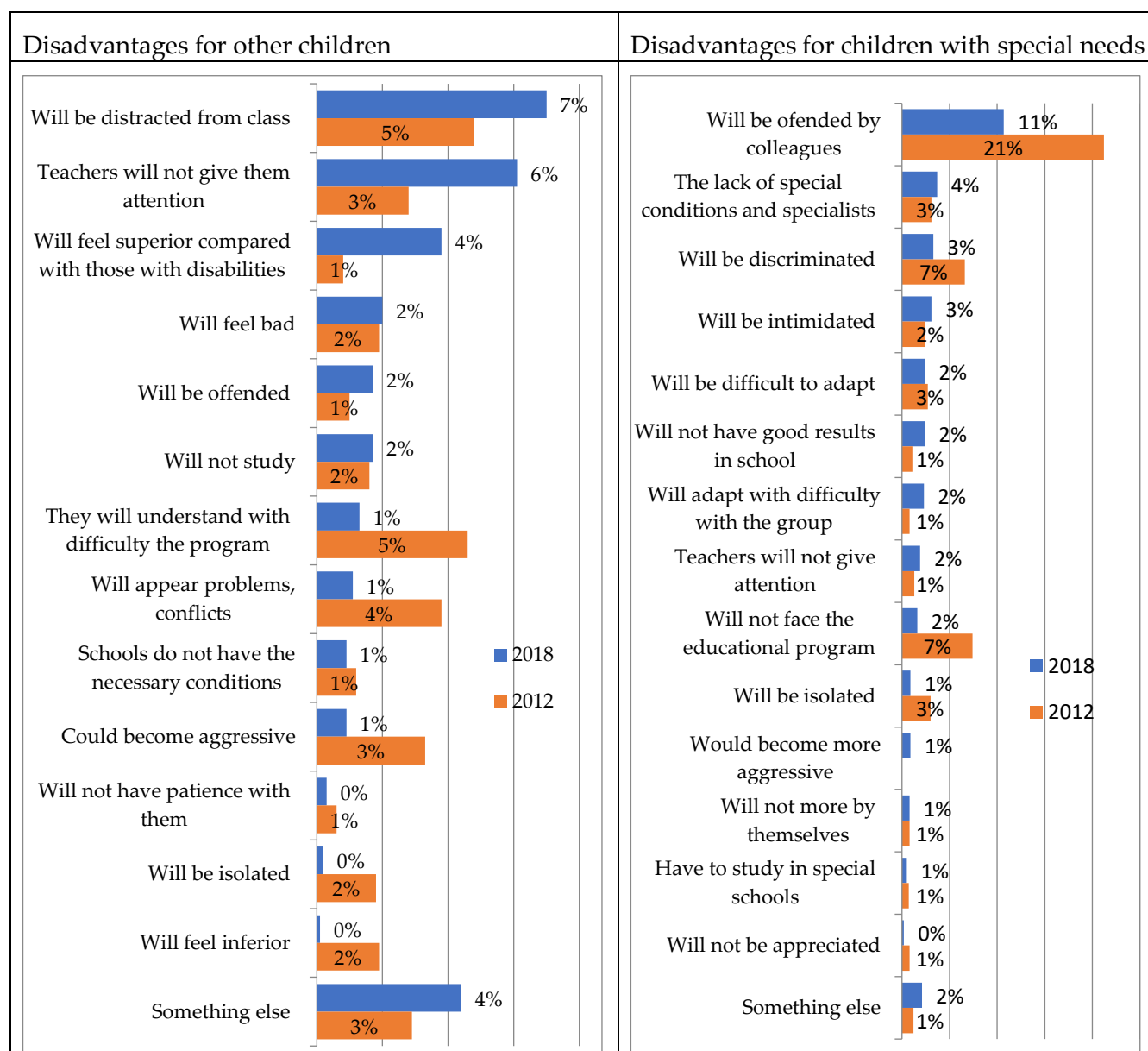
#### b) Disadvantages

The share of carers that support that there are no disadvantages for the inclusion of the children with SEN and of the children with disabilities for other children is growing and is of about 13% (7% in 2012), and 60% did not know how to invoke any disadvantage (Figure 14).

The most common problems are that children will be distracted from classes (7% in 2018, 5% in 2012), teachers will not pay attention (6% in 2018, 3% in 2012), other options cumulated under 4%.

As disadvantages for *children with SEN and children with disabilities* (the study used the term *special needs*), the main concern is related to the attitude of other children, 11% (21% in 2012) of carers state that children with special needs, SEN will be offended by colleagues, 4% (3% in 2012) are concerned of the lack of special conditions and specialists and about 3% of respondents expressed the fear that children with SEN will be discriminated, intimidated.

**Figure 13. Disadvantages of including children with special needs in pre-university educational institutions in the opinion of carers**



No disadvantages: 13% in 2018, 7% in 2012

DK/NA: 55% in 2018, 60% in 2012

No disadvantages: 8% in 2018, 4% in 2012

DK/NA: 55% in 2018, 43% in 2012

**Written Question:** What do you think are the disadvantages of including children with special needs in mainstream schools? Please refer to the disadvantages for other children./Please refer to disadvantages for children with special needs.

Group discussions also insisted most on the *disruption of classes*, referring especially to students with mental disabilities. A large number of respondents are concerned about the inclusion of children with SEN in schools, often associating it with the decrease in the quality of teaching. On one hand, the school curriculum is overloaded, the number of children in



classes is high and, on the other hand, children with SEN „are interfering during classes”, and the teachers, in their opinion, do not succeed to teach all the material for the other children. Parents, teachers and interviewed children are of the opinion that typical students are not given enough time because the teacher has to be concerned with children with disabilities, whether they have to give individual time in the lesson or most often manage a behavioral situation and other pupils are bored during classes or go home without learning anything new.

**Box 5. Inclusion of children with disabilities perceived as a disadvantage in the way of carrying out the classes**

*„The only disadvantage is that the lesson is not carried out the way it should be, for instance if he would get up, would walk around the classroom or would disturb other students and teachers, the lesson would not unfold the way it should be.” (F, 35 years old, mother of a child from 7th grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„Not anybody can control children with mental disabilities; they are noisy.” (M, 12 years old, student in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 2FG\_students\_6-7)*

*„He was interfering when the teacher was speaking, repeating and playing with his words. The teacher was not able to teach the lesson. He was laughing all the time.” (M, 14 years old, student in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

*„The lessons pass fast, the subjects are overloaded and the teacher should teach the lesson so that students could understand it. In a hurry, with a lot of material: it is difficult for a class to have such a child...” (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 7th grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„The regular children are in danger, but not those with disabilities. They are asking why we are spending the entire lesson with those with SEN and not with the rest. They are getting bored and play with their phones and all those gadgets.” (F, 58 years old, teacher of Romanian language and literature, 30 years of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„Instead of teaching us the lesson, they are distracted by them and time passes by, we don't catch a lot from the material. Sometimes they are calling the principal and everybody stops and we are losing precious time from the lesson. We go home without knowing the new material; we need to work at home extra in order to understand.” (M, 15 years old, student in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

*„They distract my attention and I am losing my time. Sometimes I forget what I want to say and I have to concentrate again at what I am explaining. Imagine I have 20 children at the lesson and another 6 I have to stay individually with to explain them in various ways. It is very difficult.” (F, 40 years old, teacher of Mathematics, 12 years of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

The interviewed specialists assure us that the presence of children with SEN in classes does not affect the academic results of the other children, taking into account the studies from the domain. Moreover, some experts state that this improves the relationships between children and increase their level of socializing.

*„At the academic level, if there are children with SEN in the class, there are no differences in the academic results of the children compared to classes where there are no children with SEN. On the contrary, there is an improvement of the abilities of children at the socialization level.” (6IA, NGO)*

Likewise, the qualitative study emphasized the concerns, mainly of adults (parents, teachers), regarding **violence and accidents caused by children with SEN and the ones targeted against them**. Several parents have expressed concern regarding safety and security of

children in classes where there are children with disabilities, especially children with mental disabilities, because some of them have aggressive behaviors compared to other peers and even teachers. On the other hand, there are also students who verbally or physically assault children with SEN, and they are not always capable to protect themselves and can react inadequately. Some parents are also worried about the behavior of children with disabilities in their communities, as there have been cases when they have abused their peers and no measures have been taken, in the opinion of respondents.

#### **Box 6. Concerns about the physical safety of the children**

*„We are afraid, she is a strong girl [the student with Down syndrome] and God forbid to push a child and it to fall on the edge of a desk and an accident to happen. Nobody is guilty. But we are the ones to suffer.“ (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

*„I would not accept such a child. I want to raise a healthy child, not one day someone to tell me that he died or that he was hit at school, this would be terrible. God forbid to have a sick child, even if I had a sick child, I would not allow him to go to school and do such a thing. I am also responsible for it. He did it, but I am the one responsible for it.“ (F, 35 years old, mother of a student from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

*„A 5<sup>th</sup> grade child asked something from another child, but the latter one did not want to share it. During the break, he took his compass and pierced his hand: „Look, he [child with SEN] pierced me“he told the master, but then said: „I did not want to do it; I just wanted to scare him“. (F, 67 years old, teacher of Geography/Biology, 43 years of service, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„I had such a child in the class; he was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, a very nervous child with mental disability. One day he came to school with a big knife and said that he would cut all of them. It was terrible. Who will be held responsible for his actions?!“ (F, 33 years old, teacher of History and Civic Education, 12 years of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

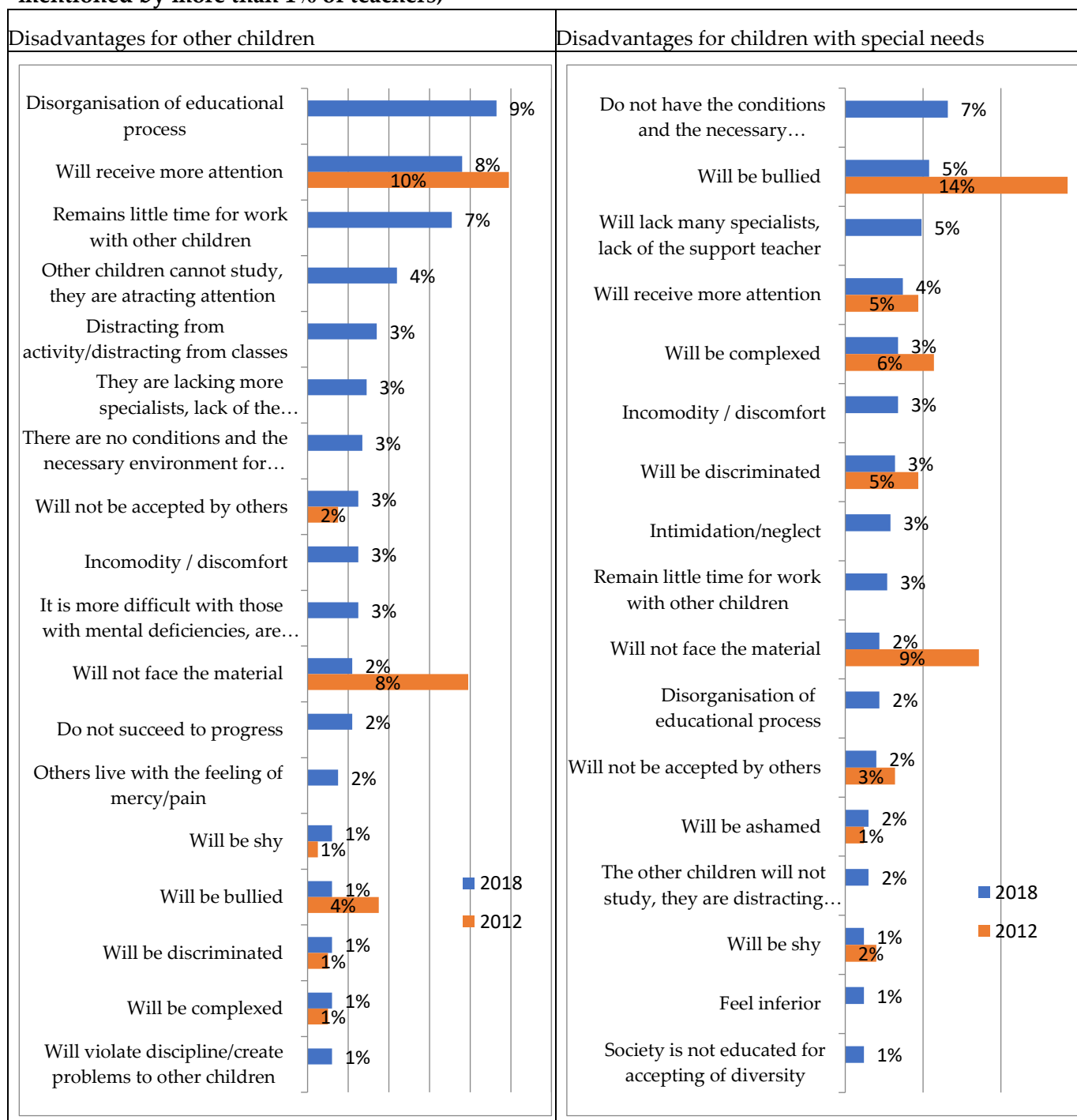
*„ At the IT class, the child [with disability] got up from the table and then pushed another fellow. The latter reacted to defend himself and challenged the student with disabilities, that took his knife and wanted to harm him. Other children were filming and I separated them. Then police came and registered what happened and asked me if I was not afraid for my life. I was not thinking about my life, but about the child with disability, because the law will be on his side anyway.“ (F, 40 years old, teacher of Mathematics, 12 years of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

Teachers are worried that the inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs will disrupt the educational process (9% answers), other children will receive less attention (8% answer in 2018, 10% in 2012), there will be little time to work with other children (7% in 2018, in 2012 this problem was not mentioned) (Figure 15).

The main concern of the teachers with regard to children with special educational needs are that these children do not have the conditions and environment necessary for development (7% answers in 2018, 3% in 2012), they will be humiliated and hurt (5% in 2018, 14% in 2012), but also the lack of specialists, the support teacher (5% answers in 2018, 3% in 2012).

A number of disadvantages have been highlighted by respondents, some of which have accumulated less than 1% answers, but come to indicate some factors that require a specific approach.

**Figure 14. Disadvantages of the inclusion of children with special needs in the pre-university educational institutions in the opinion of teachers (disadvantages that were mentioned by more than 1% of teachers)**



No disadvantages: 4% in 2018, 22% in 2012

No disadvantages: 4% in 2018, 11% in 2012

DK/NA: 33% in 2018, 20% in 2012

DK/NA: 38% in 2018, 22% in 2012

**Written Question:** What do you think are the disadvantages of including children with special needs in regular schools? Please refer to the disadvantages for other children/Please refer to the disadvantages for children with special needs.

The qualitative study also identified other disadvantages perceived by parents and teachers for children due to the fact that the actors directly and indirectly involved in the educational process are not trained to respond to the challenges of the inclusion. Thus, **children feel discriminated** that they have to study more than children with SEN, when they actually want

to cut out, draw etc. Likewise, in the family, children often ask why a child with SEN is exempted from multiple tasks and does not have to worry about homework and they have to. On the other hand, there are children with SEN who are aware that they cannot get bad grades and that they have to be provided the opportunity to do other activities, easier than the rest of the class and, in the opinion of some teachers, they are abusing. In group discussions, several teachers have mentioned that they consider discriminatory that a child who comes with no homework done receives a negative grade and a child with SEN is not penalized in this case. The interviewed students also reported cases when their colleagues were angry when the teacher carried out individual tests for children with SEN, emphasizing that they were easier and the grading scale differed. These findings reveal insufficient teachers' training to teach differently on the basis of the child's potential and to address the perceptions and attitudes of the parents and students about teaching and evaluating students with SEN.

### Box 7. Disadvantage of other classmates

*„The children make comparison between themselves: that the easiest way is to be lazy, the most comfortable is to be lazy and somehow they compare themselves: „Why do I have to get tired, to bring my books, to work, to study, to go to bed late, and that child is only sitting and does nothing”.“ (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„They [children with SEN] are aware that you have to give them simpler tasks: „Do not give me something like him, give me something different”. They are aware of this fact, you have to give them something more specific, much easier than the rest, and the other children, in their turn, ask us to give them easier tasks, because they see the first ones have easy tasks.” (F, 30 years old, teacher of Romanian and Universal History, 6 years of service, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„This is the problem that they were told from the start that nobody is allowed to put them low grades and that there are to be assessed with grade 5 and more. They stick to this idea and manipulate the teachers. The others think it is discriminatory when a regular child is penalized for coming with no homework.” (F, 33 years old, 12 years of service, urban, 6FG\_teacher\_highschool)*

*„If he colored a picture and I put him a 7 mark, then a child that has difficulty to study comes and asks me why he has the same grade if he colored.” (F, 23 years old, teacher of Biology, 3 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„Teachers prepared easier tests for them. Some children, who did not understand this, were angry with the teachers.” (F, 13 years old, student from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 2FG\_students\_6-7)*

Another concern expressed by the participants at the study refers to taking **certain behavioral patterns** from children with SEN, especially in kindergarten and primary school. Some students have described situations where other students start to laugh and behave disturbingly during classes, copying some behaviors of the children with disabilities.

*„The first – aggressiveness, the second – that healthy children could copy some of the negative behavior of these children. Because they do not understand all these things.” (F, 39 years old, mother of a student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

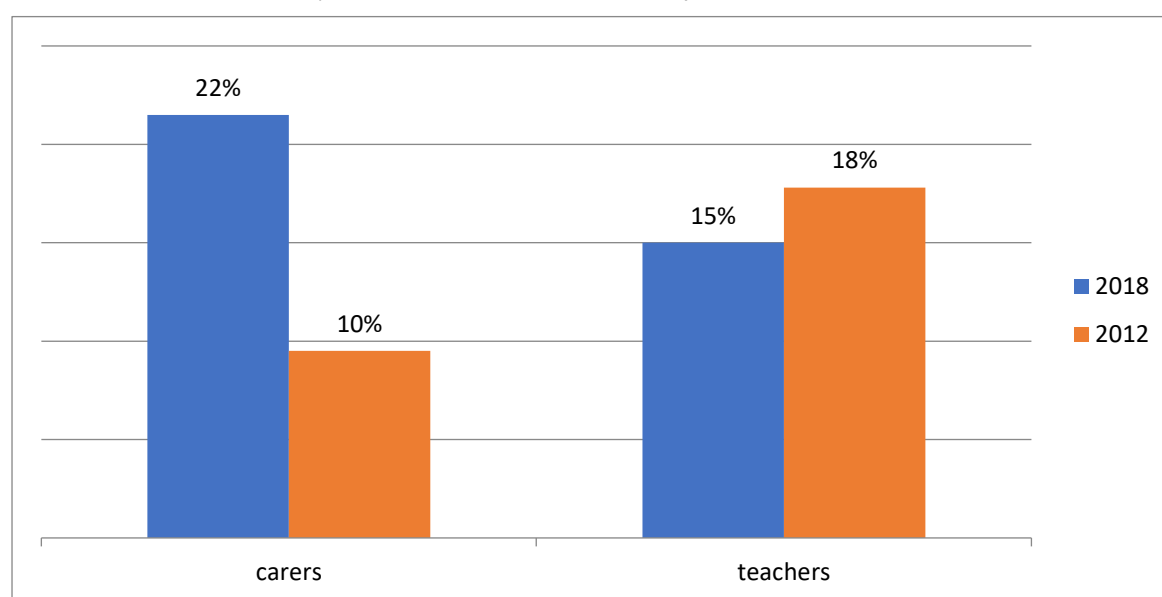
*„He is talking nonsense during the lessons and he screams like a madman... And that child is attracting the kids around him like a magnet and makes all the children look bad.” (M, 14 years old, student in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

#### IV. Assessing the level of training of the educational institutions for the inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special education needs

When discussing the disadvantages of inclusion, the concerns expressed by teachers regarding the degree of preparedness (in the way respondents define this concept) of mainstream schools for the inclusion of children with special education needs are also confirmed in the assessments to a question that addresses directly this subject. Only 15% of the teachers included in the study (18% in 2012) think that mainstream schools are ready for integrating children with special educational needs (Figure 16).

More optimistic in this regard are the interviewed carers, about 1/5 (one out of 10 in 2012), are confident that mainstream educational institutions are prepared to cope with the inclusion of children with special educational needs.

**Figure 15. The level of preparation of mainstream schools for the integration of children with special needs (% of Yes answers, schools are ready)**



**Written Question:** Do you think that regular schools are ready to integrate children with special schools?

*Do you think mainstream schools are ready to integrate children with special needs?*

There is a decrease in the share of teachers who consider that schools are prepared compared to 2012 study (total with about 3 p.p.). This is particularly evident in the case of male teachers (18 p.p. reduction), Russian-speaking teachers (12 p.p. reduction), primary school teachers (8 p.p. decrease), rural (7 p.p. ), as well as teachers with over 20 years of service (6 p.p. reduction in the share of positive statements).

Among carers, on the contrary, the share of those who consider that mainstream schools are prepared for the integration of these children has doubled compared to the previous study (22% in 2018 compared to 10% in 2012).

In the group discussions and in-depth interviews, when it was discussed about preparation of educational institutions for school inclusion of children with SEN, three main issues were addressed: infrastructure, technical and material endowment and human resources.

- a) Infrastructure

In recent years progress has been made in adapting school infrastructure to the needs of children with disabilities. However, physical barriers continue to be a problem for school inclusion of children with disabilities. Schools, mostly those in the rural area, which are not equipped with access roads for people with motor disabilities, chose to create the resource center outside the educational institution. Thus, children in wheelchairs have access only to the center, not to the school itself, but have the opportunity to interact with their peers during breaks. Some educational institutions, including district centers, are not equipped with a bathroom in the institution, which is a major impediment for children with locomotor difficulties, which in order not to disturb the teachers or the personal assistant, choose to wear diapers when they are in the educational institution.

*„He cannot move and is in a wheelchair and this multifunctional center is situated in the same yard with school and at this center he learns a poem, writes something the way he can. But he cannot go to school because there are no ramps for wheelchairs and the school is not adapted for that.” (F, 33 years old, mother of a student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„There is no toilet in the school where he is studying, that is why he is wearing diapers at school. He is not wearing them at home. That’s how he feels he does not bother anyone.” (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

A large number of participants at the group discussions mentioned that most of the schools are partially adapted for children with disabilities. Thus, even if the educational institution is equipped with a ramp at the entrance, it does not facilitate the movement of students in wheelchairs from one floor to another. Most often, children with motor disability ask the help of their personal assistant or colleagues to lift the stairs and they give up moving from one floor to another if it is not acute necessity. For instance, a parent’s child stated about his child’s decision not to eat at the school canteen so he would not have to call someone’s help every time to take him to another floor, which made him feel uncomfortable.

#### **Box 8. Partial adaptation of school infrastructure**

*„You can enter the school only at the first floor, but you cannot go to the second floor with the wheelchair. If you enter the school you see it is adapted. The primary classes are all on the first floor.” (F, 41 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„There is a ramp, but only at the main entrance, so you could enter, but then, if we have 3 floors in the school, the child in the wheelchair cannot climb the stairs.” (F, 14 years old, student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

*„At the beginning he was eating at school at noontime, because he had to eat something warm, but we had to refuse because during lunchtime, he was at the second floor and it was not comfortable. He felt uncomfortable, because he had to be helped by colleagues and his personal assistant so he could go up and down the stairs and he was not feeling good, there are no conditions in school for such transportation.” (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Likewise, there are some schools that are adapted according to all the needs of a child with disabilities, which according to parents’ vision participating at the qualitative study represent the following endowment: ramps, elevator, adapted bathrooms, resource centers and specialists.

*„Our school was adapted for children with disabilities by FISM: washrooms, ramps, a sort of elevator to take them to the third floor. There are specialists in here. It is a center for children with disabilities.” (F, 49 years old, mother of a student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

b) Technical and material provision of institutions

In the majority of educational institutions that are connected to the participants at the group discussions and individual interviews, there is a Resource Center for children with disabilities. Many of the respondents know about the existence, endowment and purpose of the resource center, assigning positive qualifiers such as „good“, „arranged“, „beautiful“.

**Box 9. Opinions regarding endowment of Resource Centers**

*„There is a special classroom in our school for children that are different. There are many toys, they have more simple classes, special... A type of center within school.“* (F, 41 years old, mother of a student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)

*„It is warm and good at the center. There is internet and one can watch cartoons. After they finish classes, the activities end, if there is time they watch something, because they are staying till 4pm.“* (F, 39 years old, teacher of Fine Arts/Support teacher, 8 years of service, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)

*„There is a classroom for SEN in our school; they are taking them from classes for 2 hours. There is a trained specialist. The classroom is nice.“* (F, 42 years old, mother of a student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)

At the same time, both parents and students interviewed in the qualitative study mentioned that not all teachers like the center's activity. On one hand, there are teachers that do not see positive changes in academic performance or behavior of children with SEN, and as a result do not understand the usefulness of this resource center. On the other hand, there are teachers who are dissatisfied with the activities of the students at the center, invoking gaps in the development of the abilities of the child with SEN. Many actors involved in the educational process only perceive classical teaching and learning and do not understand that play, interaction are as well forms of education.

*„I talked to other teachers and they state that: „We do not see any effect from this center.“ Children have books there, they are reading, writing, do their homework, the ones that have mental disability, but they say that there is no effect. Anyway, is good there is a center like this.“* (F, 42 years old, mother of a student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)

*„There is a resource center in my school, but children do not go there to study, but they play. Many teachers are against this thing. They are not developing; they are playing during classes and playing there as well.“* (F, 14 years old, student from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 4FG\_students\_8-9)

Another aspect of the Resource Center activity is the access of all children to its resources. Several civil society representatives have found that the approach to allow access to these centers only to children with SEN is wrong. These resources should be for the benefit of all the students, and those with SEN are to be guided by teaching support.

*„We see resource centers as community resources, which would not stigmatize children. Children with or without SEN shall be able to go there and do activities together, because children socializing is very important. Access is not just for the child with special needs. We noticed that different districts followed different models in the context of the resource centers.“* (8IA, NGO)

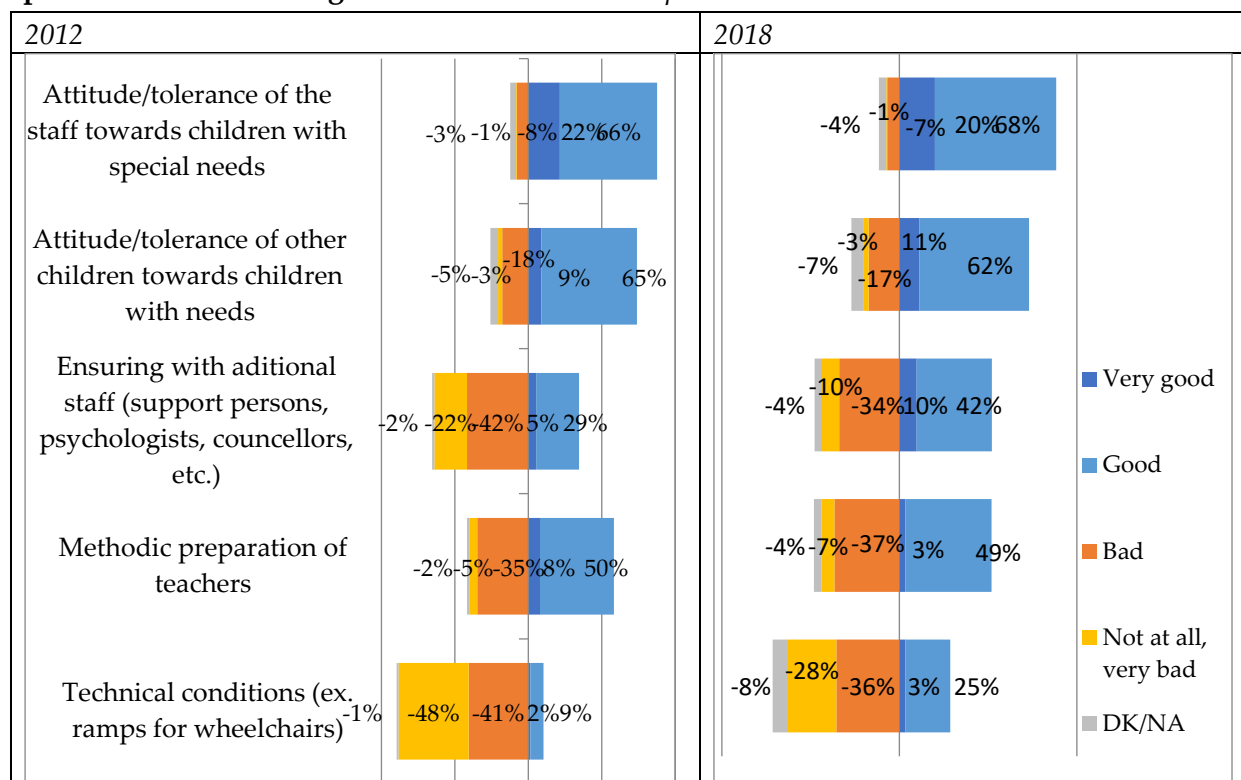
*„We have the situation when the list of children with SEN is on the door of the Resource Center. Is this normal?! Is this the way we promote inclusion?! If we say that it is for all children, then it has to be for all children, so we have a problem at this chapter.“* (10IA, NGO)

Several teachers, participants in the focus group, expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of didactic support for working with students with SEN. Accordingly, teachers acquire books, notebooks and other school supplies for children with disabilities by themselves, considering that they need other textbooks, and they do not have the school supplies.

*„We do not have teaching support for children with disabilities. I have to buy the book myself; I teach all the students from the first grade by the Math manual, while using the kindergarten textbook with the children with special needs. We do not have any materials and it is very hard. These children have no pen, no pencil; I have to provide them.” (F, 40 years old, teacher of Mathematics, 12 years of service, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

A discrepancy in perceptions can be seen in the above-mentioned disadvantages and appraisals with respect to the basic aspects of children’s inclusion in schools. On the one hand, the main disadvantages mentioned by the teachers were related to intolerant attitude of students towards children with special needs. On the other hand, the tolerance of staff and other children is considered to be the most appropriate way for schools to address the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The outstanding problems are of technical nature, primarily in the mainstream schools lacking the necessary technical conditions (ex. ramps for wheelchairs), and schools are not provided with additional necessary staff. The teaching staff is also desirable to be trained from a methodical point of view. Thus, 28% of respondents (10% in 2012) appreciate the technical conditions as good and very good, and half (for about 35 percent in 2012) positively appreciate the additional staffing and methodological training of teachers. It should be noted that in all cases there is a growing trend of positive appreciations (Figure 17).

**Figure 16. The level of preparation of mainstream schools for integration of children with special needs concerning the issues ...: Teachers’ opinion**

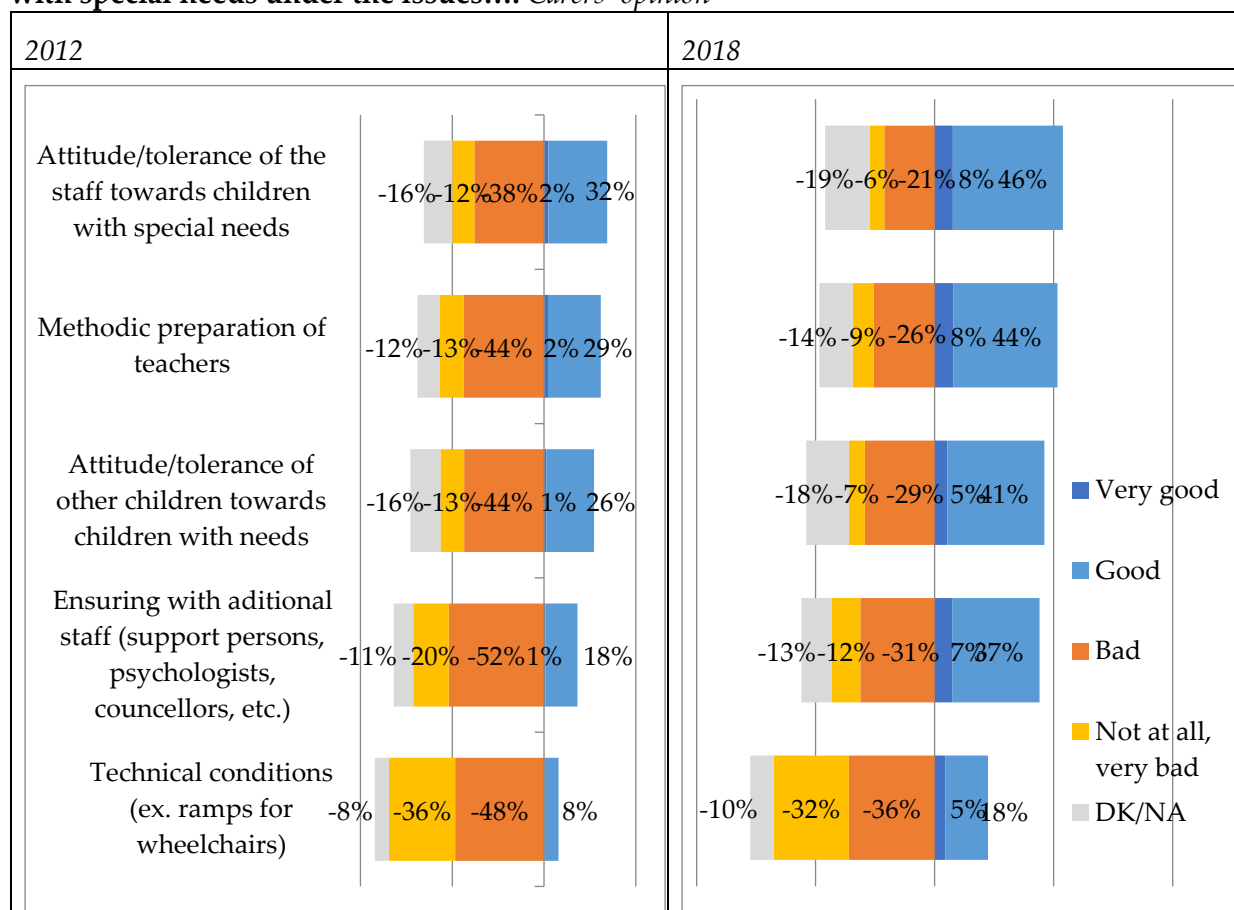


*Written Question: How prepared for integration of children with special needs are mainstream schools in terms of...*



The top issues for carers are roughly the same, with more pronounced increases in positive ratings compared to 2012, ranging from 26 p.p. in the case of additional staff and 15 p.p. in terms of technical conditions. At the same time, it is noted that overall, carers in all aspects seem to be more reserved than teachers (Figure 18).

**Figure 17. The level of preparation of mainstream schools for the integration of children with special needs under the issues...: Carers' opinion**



**Written Question:** How prepared for the integration of children with special needs are the mainstream schools in terms of...

Less than half (43% in 2012) have received specific training to integrate children with special educational needs into schools. This indicator answers several questions about the differences in perceptions and attitudes of different categories of teachers towards the integration of special needs children, as there is a fragmented inclusion of teachers in such training.

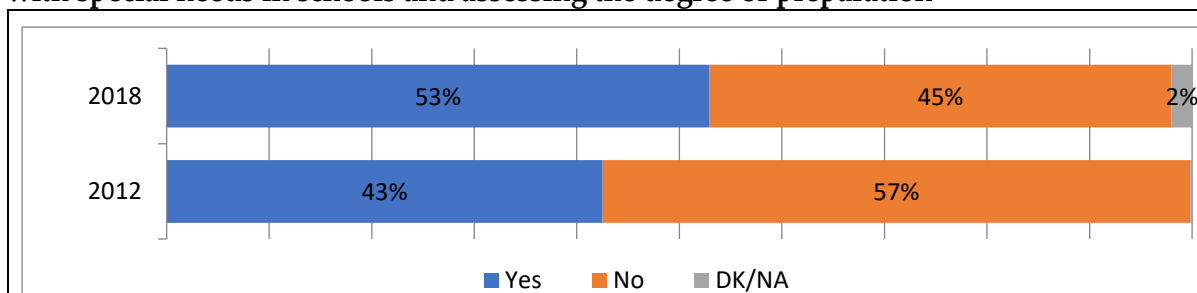
Several teachers participating in group discussion said that they had participated in training on school inclusion of children with SEN. Most teachers appreciated the seminars as useful, noting that they were supported in developing individualized educational plans.

*„The methodist from the rayon carried out a practical seminar for all teachers and told us: „if the child has a degree of mental deficiency, give him the main notions: why is it a tree, the fruit comes from the flower.” Such trainings were made for all the teachers on the subjects. He told us that the modified curriculum should contain the essentials and showed us that the visual image should be stronger. Then I did not have any problems in creating the individual plans.” (F, 67 years old, teacher of Geography/Biology, 43 years of service, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

As in the 2012 study, Russian-speaking teachers are less included in the training programs. Thus, only 28,6% of Russian-speaking teachers (10,7% in 2012) compared to 58,6% Romanian-

speaking teachers (49,7% in 2012) benefited from special training. However, there is an increase in the share of teachers in both categories who benefited from inclusive education in 2018 compared to 2012 (Figure 19).

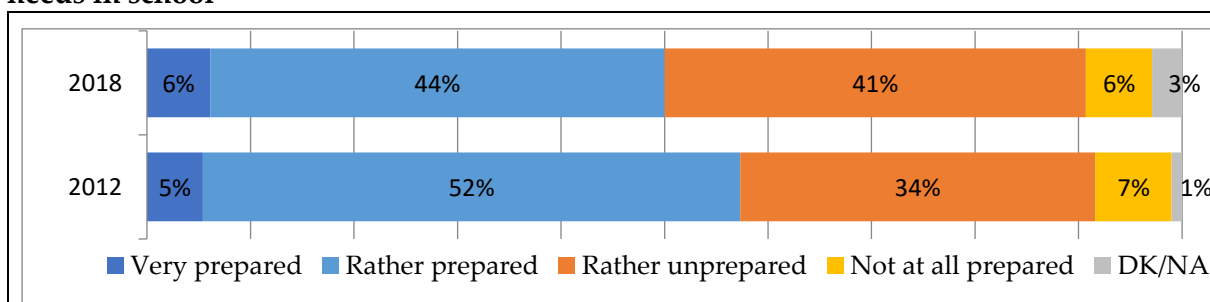
**Figure 18. The share of teachers who participated in training on the integration of children with special needs in schools and assessing the degree of preparation**



*Written Question: Have you attended any special training to integrate children with special needs in school?*

In assessing the level of training attributed by the interviewed teachers, we find that almost half are considered unprepared (41% - rather unprepared, 6% - not at all prepared). It is alarming that this share is increasing compared to 2012 (34% - rather unprepared, 7% - not at all prepared) (Figure 20). In 2009 about 73% of teachers and 67% of regular school teachers said they did not have any information on psycho-pedagogical strategies for learning different categories of children with special education needs<sup>22</sup>.

**Figure 19. Assessing the level of preparedness for the integration of children with special needs in school**



*Written Question: As a teacher, how prepared do you think you are for integrating children with special needs in school?*

Some specialists mentioned that the length of lessons for students with SEN should be less than 45 minutes, especially for those with intellectual disabilities or concentration problems. Several specialists mentioned that the optimum duration should be 15-20 minutes, others said that an activity with pupils with SEN should last not more than 30 minutes, and this period should be adapted depending on the child. According to some respondents, in some schools this period is possible due to the fact that the student can go to the resource center where the support teacher is present.

*„Not more than 30 minutes. This is different. It is not necessarily 30 minutes, we can jump for 5 minutes and then to sit down and write, then to sing a song and write again. Likewise there is a limit for writing, a normal child writes a page in 5 minutes while we write 2-3 lines.” (3IA, NGO)*

*„Sometimes he cannot stand not even 5 minutes. Other times he can stay up to 15 minutes during class. If last year I had problems because he had no place to go out, the support teacher was present during classes as well. Last year we had only 0,4 salary for the support teacher. This year we have*

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/moldova/educatia-de-baza.ro.pdf>, page 29

*0.5, and now the psychologist works. That is why the lady has more time and if he is bored, he goes out and goes to her. The other 3 children are at school, work with the class teacher, they do not have behavioral problems.”(13IA, school principal)*

c) Human resources

In the opinion of the interviewed parents and experts, the success of the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream educational institutions depends largely on the human factor. The majority of participants at the group discussions think that the school inclusion of students with SEN is determined by the attitudes and involvement of **teachers and managerial staff from educational institutions**.

**Box 10. The importance of the human factor in inclusive education**

*„One of the great problems we have depend on the human factor. There were teachers who put [student with SEN] him in the last row and did not care. And vice versa, teachers who were trying to integrate the childn into the activities of the class.” (8IA, public servant)*

*„Experience shows us, we have the same legislation, we have the same support in school A and in school B, but even fewer children with the same situation. In some cases even more complicated and in one school they state they cannot and in another school things go forward – the human factor. (9IA, public servant)*

*„An interesting example... they brought to school a child with hearing deficiencies who did not speak at all. What did the teacher do?! – she researched, she said it took a lot of time, she even spent her own money, because she bought the textbooks by herself. However, it was more than a year for the child to speak and to do homework, to integrate into the group, because at first stage the child did not understand, the hearing aid was not well adapted, she had also found a specialist. Again, it all depends on the person, on the human factor, how the person perceive things. We often do not want to get out of our comfort zone.” (10IA, NGO)*

Both parents and the interviewed experts state that *teacher training* is not appropriate for educating children with special educational needs. On one hand, they do not know how to plan 45 minutes to teach the material according to the general study program and to give time to children with SEN, on the other hand some teachers do not have the necessary patience to communicate with students. In the qualitative study it was mentioned that in the primary classes it is easier for the teacher to manage the education of children with SEN, but in the secondary school teachers encounter more difficulties. Several teachers believe it is a successful practice to empower students with disabilities to take their time so that they do not hinder classroom teaching-learning-evaluation process. Most teachers perceive teaching for students with learning problems as an additional activity that has been attributed to them and for which they have often been inadequately prepared to do it.

**Box 11. Opinion on teacher training in inclusive education**

*„Teachers, the staff of the institution often do not know what to do, how to behave, and naturally it is better to deny, to say that I do not want to have it in the class, that I will leave, I write my resignation tomorrow, only not to have this child in the class. The unknown makes you stiff and resilient in a way.” (10IA, NGO)*

*„It is really hard for teachers, they do not know what to do, they have to work with those children who want and can, but they have to deal with the rest of the class at the same time, it is very hard, they need them too to take them forward, and neither the others do not have to stay behind, it comes*

*very hard, they are not well prepared.” (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„I do not think teachers are prepared to work with children with special needs, they do not have the necessary patience with the normal ones to attend classes. There are cases when teachers and normal children behave aggressively, perhaps because they are already old. In our school there are teachers who are already in retirement and they no longer have the patience to stay with a child, they can raise their voice at the child, get angry or kick him out of the classroom... We have cases when the child drops the pen from the desk and comes home with a negative grade for this action.” (F, 36 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„The primary school teacher knew how to make him busy – 4 years, giving him something to do, occupation, activities. When he was working in the group, he already knew he needed something to draw. During break: „go and bring water, do that and that”. He had to be busy all the time. It is a bit more complicated in the secondary school, teachers do not know what to do.” (F, 47 years old, mother of a child from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

Some specialists and parents of students with SEN mentioned that teachers are in many cases initiators and provocateurs of parents' dissatisfaction because instead of calming down certain situations, managing crisis situations, they amplify by saying they will quit, if these children are not transferred from class or inform parents that the educational process is endangered.

*„Situations when children with disabilities were integrated in a class because a teacher said that she will quit if one of these children will be placed in her class and a new young girl who graduated faculty was hired, she wanted a job. Now after 2 months, she gathered the parents and wrote a petition where they were requesting that the children to have activities only in the resource center and they should pay additionally to the support teacher so that these children not to be in the same class with other children. Obviously the initiative belonged to the teacher, because parents often do not understand certain things and they react differently.” (10IA, NGO)*

Simultaneously, several respondents noted that teachers face several challenges in teaching regarding children with SEN.

*Difficult curriculum, emphasis put on academic content* – school curriculum is complex and teachers have to focus on content, on transmitting a large amount of information that students need to assimilate. Many teachers declare that they fail to fulfill curricular provisions, and the presence of students with SEN in the classroom is perceived as one that makes the process even more difficult. Respondents express the view that mainstream educational institutions are focusing on the development of academic skills at the expense of developing social skills in children.

#### **Box 12. Academic competence and inclusive education**

*„The program is overloaded, the teacher has to succeed with the other children to keep pace with the program and does not have the time to handle a special child.” (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„There is also a particular emphasis on academic competence. This often makes it difficult for us to understand that not every child needs advanced academic information, there are children who need something else. In fact, we come to school not only to have academic performance, but to learn about networking, communication, creating relationships, somewhere a civic experience. Many children with severe disabilities come for these aspects – socializing, communication, personal and interpersonal development and the perception of relationships that they further translate into their lives. It is often difficult to detach yourself when mathematics you have a very difficult curriculum*

*and to understand that with this child you have to work within the 4<sup>th</sup> grade limit and nothing more.”* (9IA, public servant)

*„Our school is conceived as an institution that has to give knowledge, which has to help creating genius minds, who must have academic performances and we do not follow the idea of educating people, and from here it is all starting.”* (10IA, NGO)

During the interviews, several specialist have stated that teachers are overall not against the inclusion of children with disabilities but they are concerned about the information they need to study and do not know how to do in situations when the ability to assimilate of students is low. Thus, teachers are centered on the curriculum and not on the student, an approach that makes inclusive education difficult.

*„I was talking to the English teacher and she said to me what can I teach him if he does not know. I was trying my best to make him greet in a foreign language, to know the colors, some shapes, some flowers, simple information. And he always forgets, There are his capabilities, but it was not for anyone to resist.”* (13IA, school principal)

*Number of students in the class* – many parents, including those with children with special educational needs, consider the number of students in the class as an important factor in inclusion of children with SEN. In their view, it is difficult for the teacher to give enough time for the qualitative training of 30 students, given that 1-2 students are with SEN. In their view, a student with SEN requires time and dedication. Teachers also noted that the number of children in the classroom is relevant in inclusive education, with a large number of students in the class reducing the teacher’s ability to work with students with SEN. Also, the number of children with disabilities in the classroom is decisive, according to the respondents, due to their capacities and needs are very different and the time and effort of the teacher in the preparation and conducting the lesson is proportional to the number of students with SEN.

*„There are 30 children, of which 1 is sick 29 healthy, but the teacher has to work for 45 minutes with healthy children, 29 children and a little girl who got up and the teacher said: „she got up during the lesson, interrupted the lesson and it took 10-15 minutes until I calm down everybody.”* (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 9th grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)

*„We are 6 in the class, the teacher manages to offer us attention. Still when there are classes of 30 students, it is not normal.”* (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade , rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)

*Filling in the documentation* – Most teachers have been dissatisfied with the additional reports they have to present on the situation of students with SEN, for instance, providing information for the personal file of the child with special education needs assisted by resource centers for inclusive education. Some of the teachers stated that they do not always understand the purpose of their work, so that continuity is not ensured in the provision of studies for children with disabilities and later on in the workplace. Several teachers are not accustomed to making several variants of different tests, emphasizing that they do not always have the knowledge of preparing individual assessments. Another aspect that has been elucidated in group discussions with teachers is the lack of support from the support teacher to fill in the documents. According to teachers, the support teacher could easily take over some of the teacher’s tasks, they also observe and supervise the educational evolution of children with SEN. It seems that teachers tend to perceive specific activities tailored to children with SEN as an extra effort, not an inherent part of the pedagogical activity.

### **Box 13. Teachers’ perceptions of additional workloads determined by inclusive education**

*„It is an enormous amount of work from our side, the paperwork, the plans, the documentation that has to be filled in. Even if we could see a result, to pursue a vocational school, but instead they all stay at home and are walking on the roads. So this is an effort that does not have a final result. They are living a life without a purpose, things did not change from the past at all.” (F, 45 years old, teacher of elementary school, 28 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„You have to prepare the tests in two variants to check if it goes if it does not they turn it back.” (F, 45 years old, teacher of elementary school, 28 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„When we ask from the support teacher the progress sheet or something else, she gives us some papers to fill in. She also works with those children, she does not notice how she took the child on September 1<sup>st</sup> and how the child is on 31<sup>st</sup> of May.” (F, 45 years old, teacher of elementary school 28 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„The support teacher goes [after he requests filling in the documentation], the people from social work come to ask us to fill in, to do something else. They go, the policeman comes and asks us to write the characteristics. We are universal, we write for everybody.” (F, 57 years old, teacher of geography/biology, 37 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

Some teachers have reported cases in which they prefer to refrain from completing the documentation, choosing to tutor individually after classes with the student who does not understand the information, but do not want to start the process for this child to be officially included among children with SEN.

*„I also prefer to work with the child additionally, because of too much documentation, than to allow him to go [at the resource center]. We are „sitting with papers over us”, instead of preparing for hours, we have to fulfill, color, do self-evaluation. Due to papers, I prefer to work with that child with SEN. I better work with that child a bit more, than to fill in those papers..” (F, 40 years old, teacher of elementary school, 7 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

According to the interviewees, teachers' dissatisfaction is also due to the *lack of remuneration* for additional work associated with the inclusion of students with SEN. Some teachers state that the salary supplement could be a motivation to carry out the tasks derived from working with students with special educational needs. Others, however, predominantly younger teachers, want to teach „with pleasure” and „normal” and additional remuneration cannot change the quality of interrupted hours due to the behaviors of children with SEN.

*„It is a lot to write, it is a lot of work and we are not paid and they do not have a reason to work.” (F, 39 years old, teacher of fine arts/support teacher, 8 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„I have 35 students in a class and I have to make 30 normal tests and the rest 5 I have to think how to adapt for that student. I am doing all this without any additional payment. I am not materialistic, but the attitude towards a teacher counts as well.” (F, 48 years old, teacher of Romanian language and literature, 30 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„In the end I want to be allowed to work and to enjoy when I enter the class. If they will pay me with 100 lei more just because I have X [boy with disabilities] in the class will he behave normal?! Is he not going to talk?! Is he not going to ruin my lesson?! Is he not going to distract my children?! It will continue to be like this from now on anyway.” (F, 65 years old, teacher of Romanian language and literature, 46 years of experience, rural, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

Some interviewees noted that they did not benefit from the supplement previously offered to teachers working in residential institutions, from their point of view it was natural for at least these resources to be directed to the teachers currently working with this category of children.

*„If so far these children were in residential schools, they were called auxiliary schools, where the teacher was remunerated with +20%, this remuneration was not given to the general school. I think it is not fair, because it is an additional job, a teacher is volunteering all his life, and this volunteering multiplies when children with SEN appear. I think that the responsible bodies should think about the motivation to attract teachers because the work done by the teacher has tripled.” (15IA, school principal)*

Some interviewed experts mentioned that the presence of a child with SEN should not be a reason for additional financial remuneration, perhaps there should be other forms of incentive, rewarding the effort. At the same time, the specialists emphasized that teachers should be paid fairly.

*„What calls for many teachers to be paid because they have such children and work with such children in the classroom. The international experience shows that it is not good to have a supplement because I have such children in class, I may have other stimuli: I have the competence to work with such children and then on the credit map, I accredit myself and give me a degree that will bring me points. I can have the same mentoring classes that I do not work in class in the teaching batch, but translate my competence to another teacher. Different forms of stimulation can be envisaged, but in this context wages must be decent.” (9IA, public servant)*

Several respondents believe that the teacher is a main pillar of school inclusion of children with disabilities, although all those individuals children interact have a role in this process. For both parents and students, the master is an influential person. Students in the classroom and their parents would more easily accept a child with SEN or a child transferred from another institution if it had support from the class master.

*„I think first of all they should talk to the teacher, because she would talk to the children and say it is not nice to make fun of them.” (F, 12 years old, student from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 2FG\_students\_6-7)*

*„From the master teacher, the way he presents the child in class, what is the attitude and what he tells the children, that you must accept him as ours. On one hand, it depends on the teacher who teaches his subjects, his attitude to the child, the way he includes him, the way he speaks to him. Also how the child will be presented, how the classroom will behave, is a very important role not only for children with special educational needs, but even the child transferred from another institution. It depends very much on the way he came, was introduced to the class by the teacher master.” (13IA, school principal)*

In group discussions, some parents, whose children have SEN classmates, mentioned that they have participated in inclusive education seminars and activities. The main topics discussed at these meetings were: tolerance, empathy and combating discrimination, and also the role of the family in accepting children with disabilities was emphasized. According to respondents, the discussions were organized in educational institutions and moderated by school psychologists or civil society representatives.

*„They work in school. It was a lesson, parents with the psychologist. He gave our case example in the classroom, how to correctly understand, how not to exclude such children, how to help them. He told us to tell children at home to help her, not to laugh at her that she is sitting under the table. „Let*

*it stay because she will get up, and you should not yepp at the teacher and ruin the whole lesson".*" (F, 51 years old, mother of a student from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)

Some parents who participated in the group discussions mentioned that the opinion of a **school psychologist** about the inclusion of children with disabilities in the classroom is important. Parents would like to talk with a psychologist about the impact of including children with SEN on the success and safety of other students.

*„I would take into account a psychologist who would say, as he would think. I would ask him if it is not dangerous for the other children. If that teacher could do the normal lesson having such a child in class. That would count for me.“* (F, 35 years old, mother of a student from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)

The presence of a school psychologist in the institution creates a sense of trust in the institution's ability to accomodate children with disabilities in the school environment. In their view, the psychologist solves conflicts and contributes to the well-being of children with SEN.

*„We have 2 psychologists in the school and if we have people with psychiatric disabilities in the class, after class they got o the psychologist and talk to him, there the child tells him about the day he spent at school if he had problems with anyone. If he had a conflict, then he asks at what time, in what day, what consequences did the conflict have, what did they do, thus psychologists calm them down and the children feel better. Yes, our school is ready to receive children with disabilities.“* (F, 12 years old, student from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 2FG\_students\_6-7)

Some teachers practice to sit in the same desk with a child with SEN, a student that is more responsible, who studies better. In some cases, **the desk colleague** offers support to the child's education with special requirements, in other cases the responsibility of the desk colleague is to provide „supervision“, to temper the „inadequate“ behavior of the student with disabilities. Several parents of SEN children stated in group discussions that they can rely on colleagues' help in providing assistance during their stay at the child's educational institution.

*„In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade there is a child with SEN and he sits next to a boy who always tells him to keep quiet. He takes care of him not to make noise and not to disturb the class. I understood that someone has put him as responsible to guide him. If that child speaks a bit louder than his classmate he always makes observations. And the child then keeps quiet.“* (F, 29 years old, teacher of French language, 1 year of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)

*„I take her to school and there some girls take care of her, they take her to the restroom, at the lessons... They told me not to waste my time because they will help her.“* (F, 39 years old, mother of a student from 12<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)

*„I shared the same desk with a child with SEN and he behaved normal. If he did not understand something I was helping him. The teacher puts him in the desk with students who study better.“* (F, 12 years old, student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 2FG\_students\_6-7)



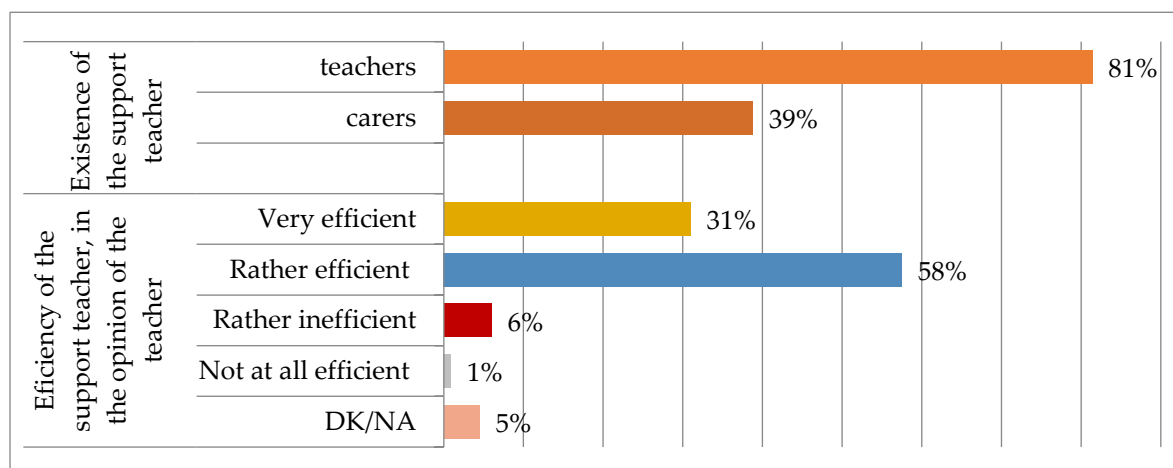
## V. Specialized Resources in Inclusive Education

### Support teacher

Most of the teachers, 81% of respondents to the study mentioned that there is a support teacher in their schools. 31% of them stated that ST are very efficient, and 58% rather efficient. At the same time, 7% of teachers did not see the efficiency of the support teachers activity (Figure 21).

Among carers, only 39% mentioned the existence of the support teacher.

**Figure 20. Existence of the support teacher for children with special needs and their efficiency in the opinion of the teachers**



*Written Question: From what you know in your school, is there a support teacher for children with special needs (disabilities)?*

Several parents who participated in group discussions have pointed out the need for a support teacher in the pre-school institutions that would provide support for education and children with SEN for early childhood inclusion, but also from the perspective of promoting some attitudes and behaviors adapted for the needs of these children.

*„The educator cannot leave everything, there is a need of a help, a specialist who would be involved ... a specialist who knows these cases and knows how to behave with these children.“ (F, 49 years old, mother of a student from 6th grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

The specialists pointed out that the support teacher remains a very important link between the parent-child-teacher relationship. The support teacher should be a support for the entire class, he should be perceived as a specialist working with all children, but not just those with SEN. At the same time, teachers expressed some dissatisfaction with the support staff. They have reported that there are situations in which it is felt that the support teacher attends the lesson to supervise teacher's teaching techniques. Others think that students are disturbed by the presence of the support teacher during class, as children draw more attention to what the support teacher discusses with the student with SEN than on the subject taught by the teacher. Several teachers participating in group discussions are of the opinion that support teachers should carry out educational activities with students with SEN after the classes.

In this context, it is necessary to conclude that some teachers tend to perceive wrong, the responsibility of the support teachers, considering that the latter must fully and without the teacher's involvement to carry out the specific activities individualized to the child with SEN. In reality, the achievement of the teaching staff's attributions mean: 1) assisting and assistance of the support teacher within the study process and 2) the interventions of the support teacher

does not mean the exclusion of the child with SEN from the study process, substituting this process with some other activities<sup>23</sup>.

*„If the support teacher attended the lesson, it would be good to sit by him and help him while I am writing on the blackboard, but in reality she is following us at the lesson and makes remarks that: „you did not do that or did not have it done“. There have been cases when I told her it would be better not to come at the lesson at all because she is interfering with what I do.” (F, 45 years old, primary school teacher, 28 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teacher\_secondary school)*

*„Why did they do that classroom equipped with everything it is needed, I do not know. Even if that support teacher comes during the class, all the children stare at him. He talks with the child with disabilities a bit louder. It would be good to take him out of the class, to have individual classes with the child. I am speaking something and the children stare at the lady who speaks louder with that child.” (F, 40 years old, mathematics teacher, 12 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

Some interviewed specialists stated that there are some preconceptions, a different interpretation of the role that support teacher has, both on the part of people who has this position and from the other teachers. On one hand, the support teacher focused only on students with SEN, and on the other hand a large part of the teachers are not receptive to the suggestions of the support teachers in relation to their didactic activity. In the opinion of specialists the support teachers and teachers need to work in a team and provide mutual support in the primary interest of the children.

*„Teachers, are usually accustomed to doing closed-door lessons and no one to give them feedback, they are not accustomed to such a thing. In the institutions where it is a support teacher, they have to work together. In the institutions we consider to be successful, teachers work together as a team, together with the teacher and the support teacher for all the children in the classroom. But in most schools there is a different perception and the support teacher usually stands next to the disabled child or SEN and they do some special activities. This is not real inclusion. It is necessary to promote additional support activities.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„Often their role [support teacher] is inappropriately perceived by other colleagues, because they perceive him either as a carer or we have some situations that I have seen with my own wywys: „take these children from here, they belong to you.” Said for the children with SEN. From the start, the approach is wrong and from the support teacher as well, because you go to lessons and you have to do things in such a way so that in class you could be perceived as a support for all the children, not just for the child with SEN. An expert from abroad once told us: “support teacher is like a shadow, he should not be perceived like an annex”, because here it starts.” (10IA, NGO)*

In the perception of some teachers, the inconsistency between the students' timetable and the role of the support teacher is an impediment for the activity of the resource centers. They point out that in some cases, especially when the support teacher also acts as a teacher in school, some students going to the resource center are forced to wait until the teacher finishes the lesson or goes home without taking care of the resource center.

*„I have noticed that our support teacher has 6 hours of biology or chemistry, elementary school has 4 hours and the child has to wait for the teacher till she finishes, he needs to stay or to go home. Those from the elementary school I do not see to go to the center and to do activities there.” (F, 45 years old, primary school teacher, 28 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

<sup>23</sup> [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/reglementari\\_cds\\_mv.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/reglementari_cds_mv.pdf)

## Service of Psychopedagogical Assistance (PAS)

Teachers, and especially the interviewed experts, mentioned the important role of PAS in the progress made in the field of schooling of children with SEN.

*„At the regional level PAS are a very successful structure that provides methodological assistance to educational institutions. We conducted a survey last year on the methodological assistance the PAS give to teachers, managers and they see their role as essential.” (6IA, NGO)*

Collaboration with PAS specialists is useful and appreciated by the majority of the teachers, but the lack of recommendations for teachers of subjects that are not considered to be main subjects (other than Romanian, mathematics) is an impediment in the opinion of teachers, in developing the individualized educational plan, although in PAS attributions there are no differences according to the subjects being taught. Likewise, teachers also reported in the group discussions that PAS specialists provide too general recommendations, that are not applicable in particular cases of working with students with SEN. On the other hand, specialists argue that each child with SEN has specific needs and the provision of models could be even detrimental to these children.

*„When people from the rayon come and evaluate them, PAS gives them recommendations on Romanian and mathematics, but also other subjects like history they do not give them landmarks. So teachers by themselves need to modify these points.” (F, 39 years old, teacher of fine arts/support teacher, 8 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teacher\_secondary school)*

*„They came from the rayonal resource center and say[PAS]: „Give him something to cut, draw”. How come a man [9th grade] to draw, what does he want to draw?! Sure he does not want, he wants to play! He turns to a colleague, to another and distracts everyone.” (F, 57 years old, teacher of geography/ biology, 37 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

The specialists interviewed stated that collaboration between PAS representatives and teachers should be stepped up. PAS specialists are focused on disability-specific learning methods and techniques, but they cannot have specific knowledge of each discipline, and in this respect teachers need to get more involved and understand that they are best placed to develop and adapt the program and assessments to students' needs, both in terms of their knowledge in the field in which they work and in terms of knowing the students for whom they develop individualized educational plans. At the same time, individualized learning plans are functional tools for working with students with SEN, if they were developed according to the requirements, they will be an important support for the support teacher.

*„I have noticed there is a lot less effective collaboration between a teacher – specialist for a subject and PAS. PAS is responsible for children with SEN and inclusion, but they do not have a specialist for mathematics, physics, Romanian, it is necessary a better cooperation between methodists and PAS, for instance to cooperate more efficiently in assisting for an individual math test for a child with visual impairment. PAS specialists know that writing has to be different with bigger letters, but they have no clue about mathematics. Closer collaboration is needed.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„A teacher will tell you that the individual plan is a proble if it is done for the sake of the plan. If this document is lucrative and you are knowingly completing it for a specific child, and you complement it in such a way as to help you in what you do in the classroom, it is not just a peper you need to complete. This is your working tool, which day by day helps you. Here is the big difference when you say that we have so many writing papers, a teacher who knows how to do it, and how the teacher helps him every day at work he does not see it as a problem.” (9IA, public servant)*

In the opinion of some specialists, the PAS activity regulation should be reviewed so that some of the responsibilities are taken over by educational institutions and multidisciplinary teams so that PAS representatives can focus more on monitoring and enhancing the quality of educational services offered to children with SEN.

*„The rules of activity of the psycho-pedagogical insurance services should be reviewed, because they have too many tasks, focusing on reviewing cases. There are simpler cases that the external multidisciplinary team could do, PAS should be involved in the difficult cases... PAS can pay more attention to delivery of services, so to stress the complex evaluation, methodological assistance, psycho-pedagogical assistance, and what it is connected to the psycho-pedagogical assistance the PAS has given a very low percentage for this, maximum 15% from their time, and this is a fundamental activity.” (10IA, NGO)*

*„A problem is the attributions that PAS has, as a workload... I consider it exaggerated. I would see PAS as a methodological service within the educational direction, as a methodological service.” (12IA, PAS)*

Another issue, discussed in focus groups with teachers and afterwards approached in the discussions with experts, relates to managing situations where the number of children with SEN within the educational institution is diminished or, on the contrary, is artificially increased. Both situations are dangerous, and one of the PAS responsibilities is to diminish/combat these situations. Those who do not declare children with SEN want to avoid additional work, formalities, files, adapted/modified curriculum etc. And those who try to increase their number do so for financial benefits and the opportunity to hire a support teacher. Some specialists admit that such situations may arise, isolated cases, others believe it is impossible to pass the PAS filter, because specialists from this institution carefully monitor each case.

#### **Box 14. Opinions on identifying/ declaring students with SEN**

*„Poor management, because the formula that is now in education, depending on the number of children with special needs, you receive 2% in the school budget for inclusion, and then the more children you have, the higher percentage you receive for school. At the same time, you ask for more money because you have checked that there are more children, although this should be somehow made by PAS as a filter, unless things are done together, I do not know, because one of the PAS responsibilities is to certify that the school really has the number of children with special needs.” (8IA, NGO)*

*„This [artificially increase of the number of students with SEN] is not a problem per system, that problem has been solved by creating these PASs that make complex assessment, come up with recommendations, assess and re-evaluate. They do their job quite well, but it is questionable on a case-by-case basis... after the evaluation of all PAS in the country I have a very good impression on the role of these specialists in whom was invested heavily.” (10IA, NGO)*

*„There is not so much money coming into the school, on the contrary, problems are created, they need a support teacher, there is need for equipment, a specialist, modified plan, a changed curriculum. There is a need for a daily sheet for the child with SEN, we need to work extra and there is no extra salary added to this additional work. It can be viceversa these children to not be considered as children with SEN.” (12IA, PAS)*

#### **Personal Assistant**

The personal assistant service is most often provided by a family member of the CES child, predominantly female (mother, grandmother). Depending on the child's health and mobility,

the personal assistant can only accompany him/her for school travel and breaks, in some situations personal assistant can attend the lessons together with children daily Attendance at classes is perceived differently by teachers, some appreciate the effort of parents, and in some cases teachers refuse to attend the asistant, motivating that they do not feel comfortable carrying out the lesson in the presence of a personal assistant. Teachers Teachers who encourage personal assistants to attend classes are of the opinion that a personal assistant is welcomed, because the teacher cannot always give the necessary attention to the student with SEN and often does not know how to intervene in critical (health, behavior, needs, etc.). In some classes where there are children with SEN who have a difficult behavior to manage, the parents of the other students insisted that they should be accompanied, so that there is an adult person to supervise the situation.

**Box 15. The importance of personal assistance services in school inclusion**

*„As a rule, he is always with me, I accompany him to school, in the morning until he resists, if he does not resist, we go home, but usually he resistes to stay at all the lessons till 3 pm.“ (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„I asked to be a personal assistand and they said that the teacher is not feeling comfortable, the teacher said she does not need me.“ (F, 33 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„I go to school with him, because he is still small to overcome all these obstacles, we measure blood glucose all the time, go with him every day to school, stay up till noon and return home. The teacher accepted everything, she said it would be even better because she cannot monitor all the time how the child behaves in order to avoid crises.“ (F, 31 years old, mother of a child from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents with SEN)*

*„He could go to the restroom and to make other children dirty, he could name the teacher with bad words. There was a big mess. The teacher did not stand this: „I have to carry out the lesson but I cannot, I am crying at the end of the lesson, I cannot stand it anymore.“ The question was discussed, I told them I am not against, they can come to class, but with his mother. He was afraid of his mother, if his mother was present, he was quiet, listening, writing something. If his mother was not present everything transformed in a disaster.“ (F, 35 years old, mother of a student from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

*„In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade there is a very sick little girl, she has a leg impairment, she goes to school with her grandmother, her grandma takes care of her. She brings her to school, leaves her for the lessons, waits for her after the door, every hour.“ (F, 33 years old, mother of a student from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

Some parents of children with SEN reported in the qualitative study that the manager of the institution insisted that the student with motor deficiencies should be accompanied by a personal assistant to avoid liability in the event of an accident, given that the infrastructure of the educational institution is not adapted. From the inability to accompany the child to school, some parents hire a personal assistant who provides daily support to the student with disability.

*„I hired a personal assistant who goes to school every day. When I did not have a personal assistant, the school principal came at my workplace and took my hand and told me: go to school now, I do not want to go to jail because of you, I told her I was at work and could not go. After that I hired a personal assistand and now she is bothered: maybe he will not come to school for one or two days, or maybe one or two lessons not to assist...“ (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

## VI. The role of parents in children's inclusion

In most cases, parents of children with SEN are primarily worried about the comfort and health of children. Sometimes, parents prefer to keep their child at home because they believe that better conditions adapted to their disability will be ensured in their homes, parents know the child's needs and believe that they can protect him from accidents. However, sometimes determined by the reduced number of children in the educational institution, managers insist on bringing the child in the kindergarten or school, assuring parents that the child will be given the necessary care and supervision.

*„I did not want to let my little girl attend kindergarten. God forbids someone to push her and to fall down, she was after surgery, and her husband was afraid that if she fell down, she could be disabled for life and we paid a lot of money for that surgery. But the manager of the kindergarten came home and asked us to allow her to attend, because there are not enough children in the kindergarten and they assured me they would take care of her.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

In addition to concerns about child safety, parents have concerns about the child's relationships with others. Some parents chose a day center in favor of a mainstream school, thinking that at the center the child will integrate more easily and will be less discriminated.

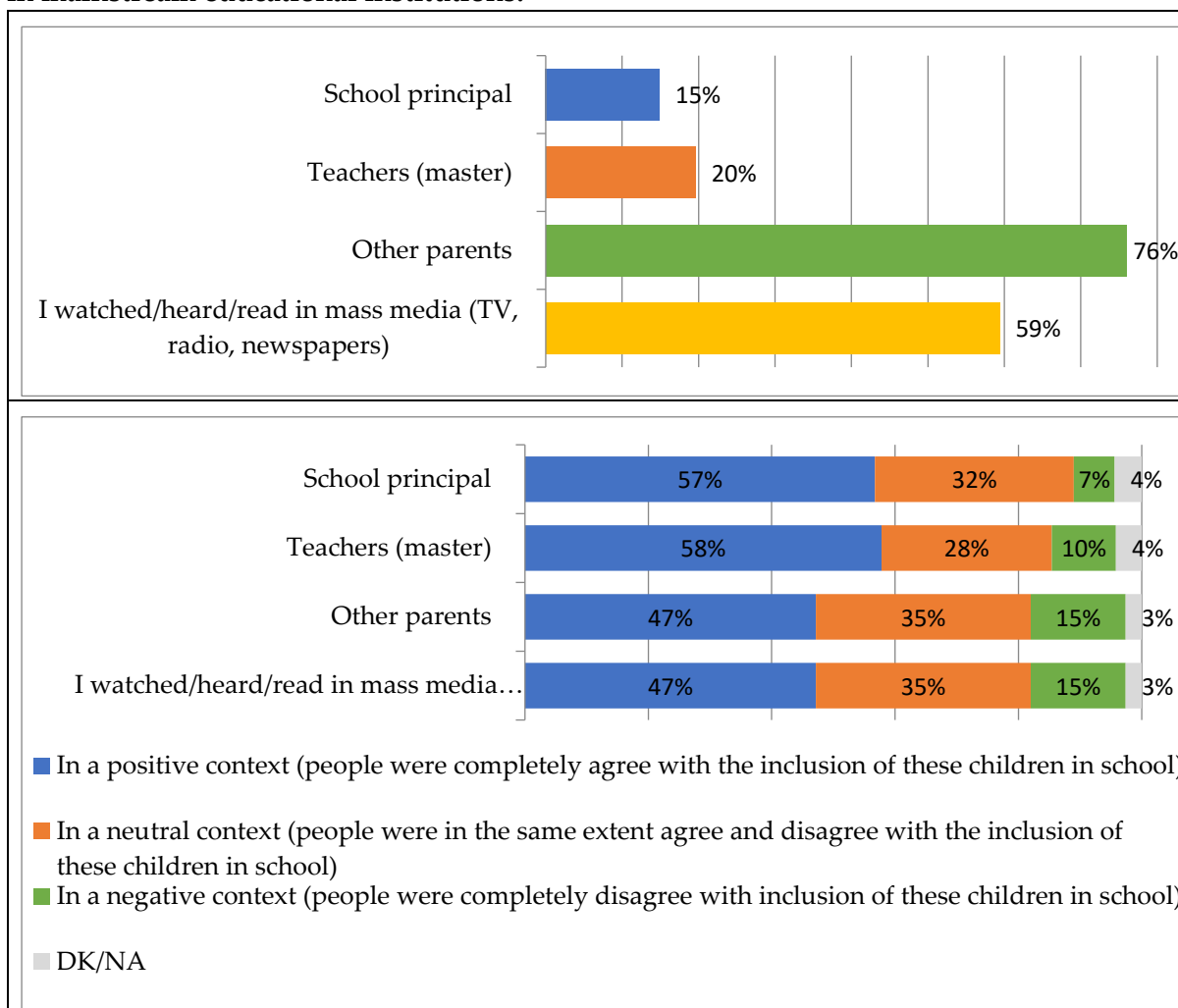
*„Till the 5<sup>th</sup> grade we went to the „Dorinta” day center, then to school. I decided so because then [10 years ago] we were not accepted, I was afraid not to make fun of him, this i show I felt, I attended the seminars.” (F, 39 years old, mother of a child from 12<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

The qualitative study reveals gaps in informing parents about the activity of resource centers and the possibility for the child to have an adapted/modified curriculum. The interviewed teachers believe that parents perceive the individualized educational plan as a disability, as a stigma of the child, which makes them reserved for the assessment of children to include them among children with SEN to benefit from support. In the respondents' view, the advantages of the modified curriculum should be highlighted and presented to parents in order to facilitate the learning process of the child with SEN.

*„Many parents are unaware of the resource center and the support teacher. Unfortunately, without parents' consent, children do not go to the center. Here it is necessary to work with the family, the media to work in the social field, to bring to the knowledge of the parents that there is nothing wrong here and there can be children who seem healthy or have modified curriculum only for one subject, for instance, many oral subjects are easy for him but not mathematics.” (F, 39 years old, teacher of fine arts/ support teacher, 8 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

In the quantitative study, caregivers were asked to comment on sources of information concerning the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education institutions. About 15% carers discussed with the school principal, and 20% - with the teachers (class master), in both cases the discussions took place in a positive context for about 58% of the respondents. Discussions with other parents had 76% respondents, about 59% of carers heard about the inclusion, the positive context was mentioned in both cases by 47% respondents, 35% in both cases had a neutral context. It is important to note that the negative aspects were mentioned by weights ranging between 7% and 15% (Figure 22).

**Figure 21. Sources of information of carers on the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream educational institutions.**



**Written Question:** Did you discuss with someone on the inclusion of children with special needs (disabilities) in mainstream educational institutions?

### Coping Strategies

Parents' attitude and insistence on the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools is essential. In the view of the parents of children with disabilities, their main contribution is the moral support of the child and the instilling confidence in their own forces. Many parents think that if the child feels good in the family, it will be easier for them to integrate into society.

*„We do not feel like we are different, we have just passed different tests and he does not feel that, in a way he feels like everyone, because I have explained him since he was a little child, there are children where you can see the disease, and there are children where you cannot see the disease, it is inside, and we all have something within us, it is just you can see it more visible in some people, while not at all in others and the words I cannot does not exist, there is only I do not want to. We grew with this moto and I am very satisfied.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Most often, mothers are more concerned with the education of the child with SEN, giving up their professional aspirations and personal development. Mothers in their turn, need support from other family members. An involvement from both parents is very important, including to ensure a favorable psychological climate in the family.

*„My husband was very insistent, that I have to give up to everything and I need to go with my son to school and I could not tell him I am not going, in a way, I am coming home nowadays and sometimes I say that I give up, I am tired to go to school, but he encourages me: who goes to school to study one more time in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, or in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and teachers tell me: You have the opportunity to study again.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

In the group discussion were given cases where parents intervened to simplify, adapt the learning process to the child's possibilities. Some parents have insisted that children with motor deficiencies to be allowed to use the computer during classes and for preparing their homework.

*„We had a deal with our teachers that for the objects of: geography, history, Romanian language, where we have to write, they allowed us with the laptop, in the morning he puts the laptop on the desk and he writes, because he does not manage to write by hand.” (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Other parents mentioned that they negotiated with teachers to make some adjustments, exceptions for students with SEN.

*„The girl who is in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade writes with her left hand, the right side is affected, at school they insisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to write with the right hand, I was going and talking to the teachers not to insist, because she cannot, and they kept telling me: no, she has to write with her right hand, and we talked a lot with them until they accepted to write with the right hand.” (F, 39 years old, mother of a child from 12<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Several interviewed parents reported about changes in their life rhythms when they started attending an educational institution. Some parents chose to become personal assistant of their children and accompany their children to school daily, attending classes with them.

*„My son in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade was staying during the lesson for 20 minutes, he could not stay for long time because we did not attend kindergartem, I stayed with him 20 minutes, I took him out in the hallway, I was staying with him so he could rest a bit, and I was bringing him to the next lesson... I am with him every day, I put the backpack and I go to that class, because I did not ask from the administration to create for us special conditions because we are not unusual or special, I told him so, we have to adapt to the school, not vice versa, because if you want to be like other people, you need to fight in life, so you can be like everybody else.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Several parents who participated in group discussions reported that they had to persuade school managers to accept the child with SEN in that educational institution. The fears of managers often refer to child safety and the institution's inability to provide the child with a safe and secure environment for learning. In some cases, parents offered a bribe to include the child with SEN in the kindergarten, although it was enrolled in the institution's waiting list.

*„When we were supposed to go to kindergarten, the principal told us she is not really thrilled to accept us, because they do not really accept children with a disability, she does not want to be responsible for the child, because the kindergarten is for healthy children. I proved her that my child is healthy, I brought her the certificate from the doctor that the child is healthy, just he has a degree of disability because he has some difficulties with the foot. He does not have anything serious, you do not have to carry him or with the wheelchair, just the fact that he always stumbles and falls because one foot is longer than the other. The manager of the kindergarten has given some thoughts, and we gave some money (bribe) and they accepted the girl in the end. One does nothing without money. She*



*told me there are no places available, but we were scheduled with a ticket from the Ministry of Education, we were in a queue.” (F, 36 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

The insistence of parents of children with SEN, in their view, gives children trust and is an additional source of motivation to advance in school activities as well as in social integration.

*„The people from PAS told me that he does not need to know the multiplication table, that I should give him the computer, but I disagree, when you go to the shop, you do not take the computer, you need to know how to do calculations, how much a bread costs and I will study with him this every single day till he knows.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Parents of children with SEN and teachers involved in group discussions think that the education of children with disabilities is primarily the family, but not all parents get involved or can get involved, and teachers admit that they do not have enough time during classes to make progress with children who have learning difficulties and without the dedication of parents this process is virtually impossible. Another aspect is that the family should be concerned about socializing the child with disabilities prior to schooling, by attending pre-school institutions. Children with SEN must be in the environment of their peers to know how to interact with them.

#### **Box 16. The role of family in inclusive education**

*„I told them: „the little girl knows the letters, that is good, but she needs to work at home bit by bit, so she could joint two syllables”. I explain them how to work at home: „but I do not have time, my mother does not have time, but why You are not working with her?”, „but I have 34 in the classroom, I try little by little, but it is not enough”. (F, 31 years old, teacher of elementary school, 3 years of experience, urban, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„The problem comes from the families. Nobody tells this child that he needs friends, and if you behave well, maybe the others will accept you. Then, they become aggressive, with vulgar/uncensored language, come and behave ugly, then they are even more marginalized. With the idea [of school inclusion], some rules must also come, some courses for each of us to know how to accept them.” (F, 25 years old, teacher of Romanian language and literature, 1,5 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„I think parents are to be blamed, because they left him and did not work with him, because my mother blames the teachers, he had to tell me suddenly that he cannot, but they told me this at the end of the academic year, they told me he cannot. Well, the teacher told you, but did you work with him at home, did you see what he knows when he was doing his homework?!” (F, 48 years old, mother of a child from 12<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„As was previously the case with these children, parents fear that their child will be injured or hurt. Some parents are happy because their child is not discriminated against. Some parents even insisted that the child to be included in normal school, saying he trusts his child and knows he will meet the demands, and the parent was right even if those in the department say they did not really think so.” (3IA, NGO)*

The interviewed specialists mentioned that there are parents who, at early childhood (kindergartem, elementary school) refuse to assess the children, making it difficult for them to accept that their child would require this... Some parents refuse to investigate the child

from the medical point of view to avoid labeling the child by diagnosing and later the intervention of PAS.

*„It is the parents' unwillingness to evaluate the child. We had many problems of this type when the parent categorically did not accept, because he perceived it as a kind of label, did not perceive it as a help for the child. We tried to leave this phrase and we did not use it anymore, when we organized activities we did not go on the idea of parents with SEN or parents of normative children „God forbids“, all parents together.” (10IA, NGO)*

*„There are cases when the parent sees deviations in the child, but he does not recognize it. We have cases when we notice that he has spoken to his parents and his mother does not want to admit because he is ashamed, he feels a shame towards society, feels intimidated, incompetent, does not want to know... there are parents who insist, who want their children to learn, because they understand. This barrier is still present at certain parents. Then there is about establishing the diagnosis, and only after that the PAS specialists to work.” (12IA, PAS)*

## VII. Contribution of the civil society to inclusive education

It should be noted that although the role of civil society in inclusive education has not been the subject of this research, in many contexts it has been mentioned the major contribution of civil society and donors in promoting inclusive education. Thus, some of the areas in which civil society representatives were involved, such as civil servants, PAS members, school managers, teachers are:

- Deinstitutionalization of children from boarding schools and providing support for their integration into the family and community;
- Implementation of pilot project on inclusive education;
- Initiation and provision of services which were later taken over by the state institutions;
- Training for teachers, managerial staff and PAS specialists;
- Continuous professional training for specialists, including in-depth training in 3 areas: children with autism, children with vision problems and children with hearing problems;
- Dissemination of information through publications and support through methodological guides;
- Raising awareness of parents through various activities;
- Seminars and courses with the participation of foreign experts (Romania, Austria, Sweden etc.) ;
- Establishing common partnerships and activities, especially for local NGOs;
- Endowment of resource centers and partial adaptation of the infrastructure of educational institutions;
- Ensuring children with disabilities with necessary equipment to facilitate their inclusion (wheelchair, precursor, hearing aid etc.);
- Community support services, day care centers, specialized services: physical therapy, massage, speech therapy, psycho-pedagogical assistance, melotherapy, etc.;
- Attracting fund through charity fairs with and for children with disabilities;
- Social theater;
- Creation of mutual support groups.

*„In those places where the non-governmental sector came and provided support, things have evolved faster. In the context of deinstitutionalization, it is similar to the development of social services, it is the same. Wherever there have been investments, support from non-governmental sector, things have evolved faster. Social services such as inclusion have recorded a varied development.”(8IA, NGO)*

### Case study 1. Day center „Come and See”<sup>24</sup>, Orhei

The day center „Come and see”, Orhei has been operating since 2011. Since its inception 75 children with disabilities have benefited from this. There are currently 27 beneficiaries of different services aged 3 to 25 years. The center offers kinesitherapy and massage, speech therapy, services of psychopedagogy and melotherapy.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ComeandSeeMoldova/about/>

*„For the age group 3-16 years old we work with educational inclusion, if the child did not attend school we are working at this chapter also. At 16-25 years old the training for the most independent life is the same for youth. ” – In order to achieve these goals they are created several local partnerships. Working with local educational institutions, PAS, public administration, boarding-house etc.*

*„We are the ones who give this impetus to parents that children have to go to kindergartens and mainstream schools. For instance, parents are addressing to us that the child is not accepted in the kindergarten, we are contacting the psycho-pedagogical direction and we say that a mother has addressed with such a case, depending on what problems she addressed either with kindergarten, or school and if this child is not for our center, I refer to the fact that the intellectual level is much higher.*

*There are sometimes some leaks of the parents and if this child will be with us, we will learn together, but for what he must lose such a chance and try this inclusion if he has greater capacities. We have 4-5 children who are already with the total inclusion and they do not come to our center anymore. They have adapted very well at school, they are at the program that is adapted to them, and they do not come to us at the center. This year we now have 8 beneficiaries with partial inclusion. They go twice a week to school. We wrote an appeal to the District Council and they offered us transport. The transport arrives on Tuesday, takes them from the center, they eat a meal here and then leave for two and a half hours at the school adapted for such children to which they have been assigned by the Direction. These are done twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, then bring them to us.*

*We have not decided, in fact our children are having an assessment every year in August from PAS. They decide whether this child is totally or partially inclusive... Children feel important and do not feel discriminated. For them it is a joy when the car is coming that is taking them to school, it is an age-old fulfillment. He enjoys seeing teachers and colleagues. If at the beginning he was sitting with force at the desk, there were various reactions at all 8 children and now they enjoy the mathematics lessons, they get involved during the lessons to answer. They have become more open, more friendly. They are not afraid of this and are not held to expression.”*

At the same time, some interviewed specialists said there should be more cooperation and coordination of civil society projects. It has also been mentioned that some projects are not coordinated in the initial stages with the relevant ministry or with other concerned institutions (mayorality, educational institutions etc.), and then insist on the necessity of their involvement and contribution, and sometimes it leads to doubling activities or promoting approaches that go against the inclusive education agenda.

*„Many donors work directly with NGOs without involving public authorities. NGOs initiate projects and present the results of Ministries, mayors or Public Authorities. When you look is not what we need, it was not necessary to invest in such a project.” (71A, public servant)*

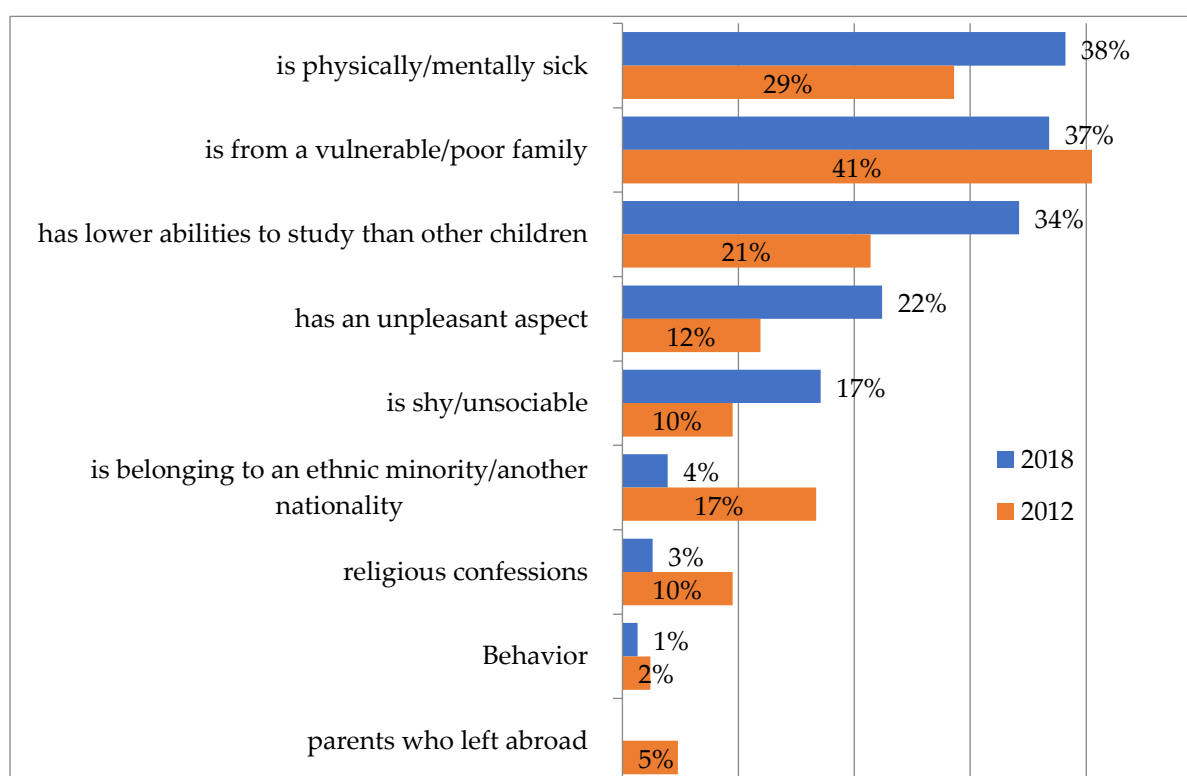
Another challenge is the cooperation between NGOs that are active in the field and their subsequent representation at ministerial level and other relevant institutions. It is necessary to create a coalition of NGOs that are active in the field of inclusive education.

## VIII. Discrimination of students with SEN

Study data suggests that there is discrimination (in any form). Almost 1/5 reported cases of discrimination in the institutions in which they operate, with an increase of 8 p.p. compared to 2012, when 10% of teachers considered that there was discrimination in schools. In the opinion of teachers, it is noted that a higher level (compared to other categories) of the incidence of cases of discrimination is registered especially in high schools (about 25% in 2018, 14% in 2012). At the same time, there is an increase in the cases of discrimination registered in schools over 10 p.p. in relation to the study conducted in 2012, declared especially by the teachers, the teachers with less than 20 years of experience, those in the high schools, the urban environment.

The causes of discrimination in schools are multiple. Physical or mental disabilities (38% according to the current study in 2018, 29% according to 2012) and the social vulnerability of the victim's family (37% in 2018, 41% in 2012) remain the first places. Other causes include reduced learning abilities, ethnic or religious affiliation, unpleasant outward appearance (Figure 23).

**Figure 22. Causes of discrimination reported by teachers**



*Written Question: Were there cases of discrimination (of any type) in the school where you work?*

In the group discussions the respondents reported several situations of discrimination of children with disabilities in the educational institutions.

a) **By colleagues** – they are perceived to be the ones who most often show discriminatory behavior towards students with SEN. Often this behavior is noticed when they do not interact with children with disabilities, or refuse to stay with them in the same desk. Several teachers admit that they do not have enough knowledge to intervene in the management of such situations, some even perceive cases of isolation of children with SEN as natural.

*„There is no problem, it is simply has its own occupation, the class group is more distant from it, but overall we cannot say it is problematic.“ (F, 30 years old, history teacher, 6 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„Children avoid her, most of them maginalize her. She usuallys sits in her desk with a girl and one day that little girl was not at school and I sat her down with another girl in a desk where her desk colleague started crying. I understand that I cannot place anyone near this child... If the student sits with his colleague in the same desk and he gets up because he does not want to stay with this child, what can we do here?!“ (F, 23 years old, teacher of Romanian language and literature, 1 year of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

In the group discussions, cases of discrimination were identified because of the behavior considered inadequate at school by students with SEN. Some teachers justify inadequate behaviors of pupils in relation to children with SEN, even if the parents of the child with SEN and the management of the educational institution reiterate that some behaviors perceived by others as unacceptable are common outbreaks of children with SEN in certain situations.

*„I had a case when the child felt the physiological need and urinated on the chair. And his mother came and said it is normal. The administration also said it was normal because it is a child with SEN... Well, how do they want this child not to be discriminated ?! Or she gets undressed in the classroom, goes in front of the class and undresses. Is it normal?! I believe it is an extraordinarily big error the inclusion of these children.“ (F, 33 years old, teacher of history and civic education, 12 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

Another form of discrimination against students with SEN is teasing them from colleagues. The qualitative study has elucidated situations where colleagues intentionally tease a child with disabilities to have fun and to make him do certain actions perceived as funny by others.

*„Children with SEN are excluded from the rest of the children, are marginalized and do not get in touch with children. If he comes in contact with them just to make jokes tot hem... There is another child who cannot see, only a few percents. He has glasses with very thick lenses, because of that children marginalized him. They try to make a scene in the classroom and take the glasses of this child and start playing with them. While this child does not see anything without them and is shaking. Meanwhile the rest are laughing and make fun of it.“ (F, 23 years old, teacher of biology, 3 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

Children with disabilities, especially physical, are affected by their colleagues' opinions, refusing to wear certain devices, adapted shoes etc. recommended by doctors when peers are making jokes at their expense.

*„Once, when he was younger, I put the reclinator on the back and a child said he look like a horse and my son did not want to wear it because the children are laughing... He is already big and he wants shoes that are fashionable too and I have to buy him regular shoes and then pun a thicker sole. I think somebody made fun of him again.“ (F, 36 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„These children are geting upset very fast and cannot control and some take advantage of them. There are other students that film and distribute on the internet.“ (M, 13 years old, student in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 2FG\_students\_6-7)*

## b) By the teachers/school/kindergarten administration

Discrimination by teachers of children with SEN has been a widely discussed topic in the qualitative study. There are situations when classmates easily support children with learning difficulties and teachers are more reserved to include children with SEN. The most frequently cited reason concerns the disruption of classes by the students with SEN and the need to dedicate a period of time from the lesson to those children and that is perceived as unfair with other children. On one hand, teachers do not fully understand the meaning of school inclusion of disabled students, on the other hand, due to the gaps in conducting the educational process with pupils with SEN in the classroom, some teachers have nervous outcomes and are offending or purely ignoring the child with SEN. Some students reported about situations where teachers are promoting social exclusion of children with SEN, nothing in front of other students that „*the place of children with SEN is in a special school*”.

### Box 17. Discrimination of students with SEN by teachers

*„He is naughty in the class, he is not interested in lessons, but he likes to play with the boys, he is good with the girls. The class group accepts him, I do not because he makes a lot of noise during lessons. I put him next to me to read, so that I can work with other children. I loose my time with him, but I have no choice.”* (F, 57 years old, teacher of geography/ biology, 37 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)

*„Here the teacher is guilty too, during the lesson, he takes him out of the class and tells him to play outside... The teacher went outside and I told him to find him outside and I ask him: Why are you outside? Miss teacher told me to go and play and he was playing on the outside sports arena.”* (F, 33 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)

*„There was a case, when the teacher, I cannot say she called him names but she said: „You are with paralsy, why do you need to learn? And since that moment he did not liked the teacher anymore.”* (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)

*„The mathematics teacher says: „If you are so sick, you have to learn at a certain school, what are you doing here, if you are here then behave appropriately”.* (F, 12 years old, student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 2FG\_students\_6-7)

Teachers participating in group discussions, claim that sometimes the children in schools, mostly the grown up ones, manipulate children with SEN, requiring them to show deviant behavior such as stealing money from other students.

*„These children fall easily under the influence of older children and are used by them, we have observed that at school. At the Physical Education class the older ones send them to search in the pockets of those who search money from parents, they tell them: „go and look for that one in his pockets and give me the money”.* (F, 67 years old, teacher of geography/biology, 43 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)

Some teachers who teach in classes where there are students with SEN have shown in group discussions the wish to give up classes where children with difficult behavior study. Students participating in the qualitative study also voiced concern about teacher who refuse to teach due to the existence of children with SEN. According to students, teachers are disturbed by the behavior that some students with SEN have during classes.

*„For example, I have a disabled child in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and I have no patience to finalize the semester and next year I will refuse this class. I agree to have a lower salary, but I do not want to have lessons*

*with this class anymore.” (F, 40 years old, teacher of mathematics, 12 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_high school)*

*„The teachers are disturbed. Three teachers already gave up teaching to our class.” (M, 14 years old, student from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 4FG\_students\_8-9)*

On the other hand, parents believe that not all teachers can exercise their role as a teacher in a classroom with children with SEN. In the view of parents who have children with SEN, teachers need better training in this area, and if they have visions that are contrary to social inclusion, parents consider that the teacher should be replaced by a competent teacher able to work with children with SEN too.

*„Here the teacher has to work, not just work, but, in a way, if that specific teacher does not accept the child, it means she needs to give up teaching to the class, another teacher who can accept it, because not anybody can work under such conditions.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Discrimination of students with SEN by educational institution managers is a less common practice, but some principals try to convince parents that their institution is not suitable for the child. A more particular case was reported by a parent of a child with SEN, who at 7 years old was transferred from first grade back to the pre-school educational institution.

*„The principal told me to have a check up of my child, I went to the psychiatrist, we went in Chisinau and they established this diagnosis: moderate mental retardation. I come to school, the principal told me again that his diagnose was incorrect, that I need to consult more specialists. They returned my child back to the kindergarten, with all the paperwork and my child stayed another year in kindergarten and then on the second year, he went to school again in the first grade.” (F, 33 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Parents of children with SEN, participating in group discussions, reported on the discrimination of children with disabilities by teachers. Sometimes, the teachers blame children with SEN for aggression, even if they show a quiet behavior, sometimes they try to exclude the disabled student from the class with the help of the other parents, invoking the disruption of lessons due to the noise caused by the latter.

*„Teachers made a list and collected signatures from all parents against my son, that he was bad, that he was making noise at the lesson, they did not talk to me, but instead secretly gathered signatures.” (F, 33 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

*„When we came here in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, for instance, the master could not adapt with the little girl who had a hand that was not developed and was stating at the parental meetings that the little girl was pushing the other girls, that she was beating them, but how could she do that, I was there all the time and saw that she was a good girl.” (F, 45 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

### **c) By other parents**

Most often, parents of other children are opposed to inclusion if the child with disabilities causes disturbance in classes and is perceived to act against other students. Some parents are concerned about the children safety if the student's behavior with SEN is perceived as inadequate..

*„When the little boy had his crisis then the parents said: „ take him to a mental hospital because he is disturbing other children”.” (F, 45 years old, teacher of elementary school, 28 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*



*„In kindergarten, educators treat all children the same, but there are cases between parents when at a matinee a little girl with Down, you know that children with Down have different syndromes, some of them are obedient, others do not understand, they said she could walk and after the matinee they said that the parents could not bring her because she was interfering. Not all of them think this way, it was just an opinion” (F, 51 years old, mother of a child from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

There are parents who influence their children in their relationship with colleagues with SEN. In some cases, parents urge children not to interact with children with SEN.

*„There are parents who think differently and children are trained from home. Parents at home say: „that child is crazy, stay away from him”.” (F, 31 years old, teacher of elementary school, 3 years of experience, urban, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„When my daughter was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, she had a very good friend and at one point, my daughter told me that her friend is avoiding her and then we find out that her mother was telling her: I do not want to see you around that disabled girl!” (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)*

Some interviewed experts mentioned that, in order to avoid discrimination against children with SEN and other unpleasant situations it is important that there should exist a training of all actors involved in the integration of children with SEN in mainstream institutions, so that each participant to be prepared and able to manage the emerging situations.

*„There are risks when we integrate the child without preparing the environment, but such situations are many, we have situations of this kind, it is not my style to point on who is responsible. I know situations when auxiliary schools were closed, children were transferred in the community school, without directly preparing the environment, without having to talk to the students, not to mention the teachers, they simply enrolled in school, thus there is a risk for all parties. For teachers, in those conditions not knowing how to behave, they often do actions against the law, because every child has the right to education, and, in the long run we must not violate this right, aggressiveness, we know because there have been cases in our experience. On the students’ part, conflict situations, harassment and here we do not have any strategies, how to work and what to do.”(10IA, NGO)*

The data of the qualitative study reveals a correlation between the behavior of children with disabilities and children with SEN and their acceptance by parents, teachers, colleagues.

**Disruption of classes** – this is the most common interference reported during group discussions. Both parents, teachers and pupils believe that a student with SEN that disrupts the class should study in special classes or schools, and students with disabilities, whose behavior does not differ or does not make any noise, does not disturb the teacher and the class, must be integrated. The manifestation of a different behavior is also agreed by the teachers, as students often distract and lose the thread of the discussions, nor by the students, who cannot concentrate on the lesson, in turn.

#### **Box 18. Accepting children with SEN in relation to behavior**

*„If he is quiet, he does not disturb anyone, does not get up from his desk, does not cry etc, does not hug without a reason. In my boy’s class there is a little boy with an epileptic syndrome and he is shy, good, he is looking and does not disturb other people... If he is aggressive and the whole class has to look at him during the lesson and distract his attention, it is already a problem” (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)*

*„The condition is not to bother physically, not to make any noise. If the child is quiet he/she can participate in class, afterwards he can go to the specialist to do his homework separately.“* (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 7<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)

*„One day I teach children a new topic from mathematics, where that child is undressing and then dressing again. Imagine the chaos. Everybody begins to make noise and to laugh.“* (F, 40 years old, teacher of mathematics, 12 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)

*„If it does not affect others during the lessons, why he should not stay in this class to study with the group. If he does not behave appropriately during classes, yes, he should go to a special school“*

*„If they are so good and quiet, they can also join us in the classroom, but if they are not, if they get up, exit the classroom, then no. They are bothering us and they need to go to special schools.“* (F, 14 years old, student from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 4FG\_students\_8-9)

In the group discussion, the majority of parents think that a child with SEN, which is aggressive and its behavior is a potential danger for other students and teachers, should not be in a regular class. The same opinion are the majority of parents who have spoken for inclusion. During group discussions, several respondents reported cases where children with disabilities had a violent behavior towards their peers.

*„All children are equal, it does not matter that he has a disability, a child remains a child. And he must not be ignored, only if he is aggressive – yes, a bit more special.“* (F, 33 years old, mother of a student from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 1FG\_parents\_6-7)

*„We have a girl with Down syndrome in the classroom, I have had cases when my girl was eating she was hitting her in the belly. She is strong, more aggressive, she behaves very badly, she can take the broom for sweeping and hit the heads of the children.“* (F, 37 years old, mother of a student from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)

Teachers participating in group discussions think that students with SEN, mainly those from the last grades, *„do not need education“*, and teachers do not have the necessary knowledge to persuade them to study. Another impediment in the study process is the teacher's fear of communicating with adolescents who show inappropriate behavior. Their fears are based on the argument that even the local policeman cannot intervene with a solution. In the view of teachers, these students could do better if they would work with a psychologist.

*„We have now in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade a healthy, strong boy, with SEN, who steals every night, going in the houses, drinking. Now imagine in what situation we are during lessons, we are afraid to talk to him, police cannot do anything.“* (F, 57 years old, teacher of geography/biology, 37 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)

*„A boy brought from the boarding school, is still with SEN, he seems to have his own world, if he wants he writes, if not, he does not. If you make an observation, he answers brutally, he is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. If he does not like something, he takes his books and states that he does not need these lessons and leaves. He buys cigarettes and smokes, then we search him in the restrooms and we bring him to class: „Why are you bringing me here, I do not need this.““* (F, 67 years old, teacher of geography/biology, 43 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school )

*„Children who are dangerous may indeed have to be in boarding schools, where policeman and a psychologist is permanently with them.“* (F, 67 years old, teacher of geography/biology, 43 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)

## Students with behavioral problems

At the same time, both parents and students mentioned in group discussions that there are children without disabilities, but which also cause disorder during classes. Due to noise, other students cannot study and therefore have lower grades in evaluations.

*„The boy is alone with his grandmother, the school started, but he does not attend. He came at the first class, then the master teacher has to search for him. He does not have a disability and still disrupts the class.” (F, 47 years old, mother of a student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)*

*„I cannot study at school because he is disturbing us. These children are not with SEN, but are mean, and because I did not understand the new topics I had bad grades at evaluations.” (F, 12 years old, student from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 2FG\_students\_6-7)*

The interviewed experts have confirmed that children with behavioral problems with those with disabilities are often confused. Specialists draw attention that it is a stereotype that the problem of behavior is present in the case of mental disability, because there are children with serious behavioral problems that do not have a mental disability. The confrontation of these two concepts is detrimental to both groups of students because intervention must be specific.

Some of the teachers admit that they are taking the children with behavioral problems from the class in order to be able to conduct the lesson. Some have mentioned that they understand that this is not a solution and they are concerned about their physical safety when they were not present at the lesson they were officially supposed to be attending and lately parents are asking the manager of the institution or to the teaching support staff so that they intervene with solutions. The study found that in some situations even PAS specialists recommend that these students should be temporarily out of the class with a specialist.

*„There was not a very big issue [health], the child was hiperactive, he was violent, he was screaming and we found the solution, he is spending time at the center near the psychologist.” (12IA, PAS)*

## Children with high academic performance

In several group discussions, teachers have stated that in addition to students with learning difficulties, there should be paid greater attention to high-performance students who also have special educational needs. The specialists mentioned that in the Code of Education there are distinct groups of children with special educational needs and those with superior performances. According to UNESCO's classification, they need an individualized approach

The interviewed experts mentioned that although there is often a discussion about the need to allocate resources to the gifted children, there are no specific programs for this category of pupils. On the other hand, some specialists noted that both parents and teachers are willing to support, work with this category of children, and in large part also to take on the necessary expenses for the academic performance.

## IX. Opinions on the education of children in special schools/boarding houses

This study did not aim to compare the school situation of children in residential institutions and in mainstream schools, but this issue was addressed in different contexts, especially by respondents who are more reluctant to include children with SENs. They argue that in special schools, children with SEN develop some practical skills that are useful to them during their lifetime, but in mainstream schools, children have to learn mathematics and Romanian literature and other disciplines with a complicated program, which in the opinion of the teachers cannot provide children with the necessary skills for life and these children are deprived of the opportunity to receive a training tailored to the type of disability. Some interviewed specialists noted that some deinstitutionalized children noticed the lack of extra-curricular activities in the schools they are currently attending.

### Box19. Special schools perceived as environments for developing practical abilities for children with SEN

*„In the past when these special schools existed, I think it was better. And for them, how they were studying with them handicrafting they could graduate some studies and to have a profession. To be prepared for life and in common schools they cannot get these skills anymore, and it is becoming more difficult for them.” (F, 48 years old, teacher of Romanian language and literature, 30 years of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„The lack of extracurricular activities is also one of the problems, because when we were researching the children, they said that the auxiliary schools had the certain extracurricular activities... and in our schools these activities basically do not exist. It is not about the fact that they marginalize these children even more, but about the fact that they influence all children and, in particular, the group of these children. They could socialize more and move this integration process much easier, becoming part of the group or the class.” (8IA, public servant)*

*„Some representatives of NGOs state that at the boarding school the children were inhibited, but as far as I know there was not such a problem. In special schools emphasis was placed on the formation of skills to exist, on forming the social skills.” (14IA, PAS)*

*„We cannot offer these children a vocational orientation... if in the auxiliary schools it was paid more attention to the learning of these children in the practical field, we have classes of handicraft, drawing, but every child has its own specificity. The teacher does not have enough time to offer each child the necessary time in those 45 minutes, they fail to have achieve the goals.” (15IA, school principal)*

However, the representatives of the civil society active in the field of educational inclusion of children with SEN, mentioned that education in special schools is a legacy from the soviet period, and this form of social inclusion of people with SEN did not represent a functional mechanism to ensure an independent life of people with disabilities.

*„My question about specials schools: „How many of your graduates are employed?” There was total silence and this is an indicator, but in the conditions in which you claim that you have formed some skills, that would mean that a small percentage but they should be employed in the workforce. When they say that no one is hired, then I do not see the final result.” (10IA, NGO)*

Most students participating in group discussions mentioned that children with SEN should study in a separate school, mainly for their own well-being. In their view, children with disabilities will not be discriminated against in special schools as they will be in an

environment where all children have disabilities and in a mainstream school, children with SEN are „*ignored, alone, discriminated*“. Some parents of children with disabilities also believe that a school specializing on a particular disability would be a more desirable environment for their child.

#### **Box 20. Opinions on the advantages of special schools for children with SEN**

*„If it was a special school, and I am not talking only about my child but about other children as well, they were feeling more free, more open, they were behaving differently, they were receiving the information in a different way, while here they see that there are children smarter than them and only they are answering, here they are shy.“* (F, 43 years old, mother of a child from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 7FG\_parents\_children with SEN)

*„In a special school, because in an regular school you do not know how well the teachers, the people around him, the colleagues will accept the child. So, it is better at a special school where they are carefully working with him.“* (M, 12 years old, student from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 2FG\_students\_6-7)

*„I still think I would take him to a special school, because nobody would want his child to be ignored in a certain way, because that hurts and everyone else will always consider them to be inferior. Probably in an environment where there will be more, they will be understood, will be in the same situation and will not be able to fight with each other.“* (F, 14 years old, student from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 4FG\_students\_8-9)

*„These children often sit alone, but I believe and I tried to talk tot hem. I believe that children who understand what problems they have or how they feel, they feel lonely, nobody understands them. They do not have to be in this class group, this is how they feel and I think it is not right.“* (F, 14 years old, student from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, urban, 4FG\_students\_8-9)

In the context of inclusive education, some teachers are convinced that schools tailored to the specificity of the children’s disability are more appropriate and effective for students with disabilities. Parents are happy and grateful for the progress their children make in these specific situations.

*„In our class there was a boy with autism and someone recommended them a special school for autistic children here in Chisinau... You know, they changed it to the special school. We have maltered the curriculum and wanted to work with him. In that school his mother is always with him, and she told us that he was very happy, he was given exercises, went on excursions. The chid is very happy there, communicates with children, tells how beautiful is there.“* (F, 67 years old, teacher of geography/biology, 43 years of experience, rural, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)

*„These child must form a group of 3-5 children to have occupations with the teacher individually. I know a woman who has a child with deafness and she told me „I brought him to Chisinau [Special School for Hypocoic Children and Tardy Deafness] every day from Monday till Friday I bring hom home and I really see progress“. Now the boy is in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and someone asked me why I do not bring him back to the villat and I told him: „I see progress. Everyone is like him, they brought them good, high-performance hearing ands and it fits very well“.“* (F, 42 years old, mother of a student from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rural, 3FG\_parents\_8-9)

Some specialists noted that the reorganization of residential institutions needs to be analyzed very well both in terms of social impact and cost-effectiveness. Several civil society representatives mentioned that it is better to focus resources on community integration of

children, forming family-type services than reorganizing those institutions that require resources for infrastructure and maintaining the institution's functionality.

*„A lesson learned later for us was that such transformations, reorganizations are expensive. Residential institutions in our country are usually old, large buildings, they require large investments. One of the lessons learned from this process, in addition to school inclusion, was that the most cost-effective options are to liquidate institutions and invest money in school, children, families and services.” (8IA, NGO)*

A problem with deinstitutionalization is the case of children with severe disabilities. Besides the need for the carer, the dedication of the family members, some of these children need the daily administration of some medications, carrying out procedures by a medical worker. Also, in these situations, the family must be prepared to manage crisis situations, aggravation of clinical manifestations.

### **Alternative forms of childcare**

Some specialists have noted that they are for deinstitutionalization and believe that the child must be in the family. At the same time, several interviewees have been worried about the situation of children reintegrated into disadvantaged families. In many cases, representatives of civil society, donors, were involved in creating a child-friendly environment. Still, this support is temporary and many families will not know or will not be able to manage the situation further.

*„There are situations in disadvantaged families where no food can be provided, nor can the child be supervised. No one assures him a normal life, where he can quietly sleep in a normal family where he is fed, greeted. For families who do not keep their children there they get involved and keep them at home beside them, but there are situations where we cannot offer these children a clean bed or a normal diet. It seems to us that we hide behind the screen that it is very good that these schools have been closed, but what is the continuity?! What is the situation for children who are returned in the families?!... For some children who are not insured and are in families at risk, it would be good to be there. I do not think they are happy when they see their parents only under the influence of alcohol and without a warm meal at home. They are not insured with anything these children.” (11IA, PAS)*

In the caretaker study, admission was also tested for accepting children from residential institutions. It is observed that their level of acceptance is more pronounced than in the case of special needs children, about 86% of caregivers provided positive feedback (26% answered „yes, safe” and 61% „probably yes”).

### **Case study: Boarding house, Orhei**

In the Republic of Moldova there are two boarding-house institutions for children with mental deficiencies, one for boys in Orhei and another one for girls in Hancesti. The purpose of the boarding houses is to ensure the child's growth and development by providing psycho-pedagogical and socio-medical assistance in order to facilitate the process of reintegration into the family environment and for the purpose of community and social inclusion of this child.<sup>25</sup>

In the Hancesti institution we were told that access will be made only with the agreement of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, and, during the study we did not receive

---

<sup>25</sup> Assessment of the situation of children placed in boarding houses for children with mental deficiencies Orhei and Hancesti in a process of deinstitutionalization” – Special Report, Ombudsman, Chişinău, 2017

this confirmation, therefore, the qualitative study was carried out only at the boarding school in Orhei. Representatives of Hancesti boarding-house offered us only the required data regarding beneficiaries (Table 4). In the moment we conducted the study, there were 469 beneficiaries in both institutions and among them 100 were children (7-17 years old) or 21% from the total of beneficiaries. In th Boarding House Orhei the share of children in the total beneficiaries was of 20% and in Hancesti 22%.

**Table 4. Data on beneficiaries of boarding-houses**

	<b>Boarding House Orhei</b>	<b>Boarding House Hancești</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total nr of beneficiaries	203	266	469
Total number employed	170	188	358
From the technical staff	29	42	71
Nr. of beneficiaries, children 0-17 years old	41	59	100
Children 0-6 years old	-	-	0
Children 7-15 years old	27	33	60
Children 16-17 years old	14	26	40

Source: *Data offered by the administration of institutions*

Government Decision Nr. 784, from 09.07.2007<sup>26</sup>, for the approval of the National Strategy and Action Plan on the reform of the residential child care system for the years 2007-2012 emphasized the need to create and develop community social services in order to facilitate the deinstitutionalization proccs. The reform also provides for the development of existing services in residential institutions in order to accelerate the child’s development process and its preparation for social inclusion.

In this context, the Orhei Boarding House has been reorganized for several years. In the last 5 years, 303 people have been deinstitutionalized from this institution (see Annex 4). However, the process of de-institutionalization is becoming more and more difficult since only children with severe disabilities remain in the institution (all 41 who were in the institution at the time of the study), most of them being immobilized in bed. If the reintegration of some children with severe family disabilities is possible in the opinion of some representatives of the institution, the specialists are reserved for the school inclusion of these children.

*„Those with more developed skills have been deinstitutionalised and those with more severe degrees have remained. Reintegrated into families were the best, because there are families that could, but do not have the medical knowledge to provide medical assistance, because many of them have epilepsy and crises happen very often, with them you have to be 24h out of 24... 30 children are immobilized out of 41, but they are not i the wheelchair, they sit horizontally in bed. Because of this, they really do not have the possibility to be integrated or to be in an educational inclusion school. Those who could, they already came out. We are left with those who mostly do not hear, see.” (1IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

*„I do not think anyone from this group can go to school, their cases are too difficult. There were other children many years ago who went to school. There were educators who took care of them and went to the special school. These children [who remained in the institution] no longer learn anything. They are the hardest to be taught. They cannot learn anything. There are some who do not speak at al land it is very difficult.” (5IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

<sup>26</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=324556&lang=1>

In recent years, there have been several changes to the way this institution operates. Among the most important being:

- There are no longer institutionalized children, for them alternative forms of placement are sought. The last children placed in the Orhei Boarding House were in 2016, out of five children, one of whom had previously been in this institution. It is worrying that after this child left the boarding house he returned to this institution;

*„Last year we did not receive any children, so in 2017 no children. In 2016 we received 4 children from Chisinau center and one child from Vatra, the one from Vatra has a difficult history behind. He was previously with us, he went to the auxiliary school in Văsoca (Soroca), he studied there until the school closed. After that they tried to integrate him into his biological family, the family did not accept him, because they are a vulnerable family. He was in the Vatra until there was something else that happened and they reassigned him, the boy came back to us, and after a few days he turned 18.” (2IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

- Switching from group activities to individual ones, organized on centers. The individual activities are perceived as more effective in terms of children’s progress in the formation of certain skills as they are oriented to the possibilities and needs of each child.

*„Within the boarding house there are 11 centers of activity and each center has its own beneficiaries. Before the pedagogical staff came and spent the activities in group, groups are composed from 8-10-12 persons... The activities have a different duration if the beneficiary did not get tired, if he is quiet and these activities do not last more than 20-30 minute. Before the teachers were working in a group, but if some of the beneficiaries was excited and began to cry, you understand that the activity was interrupted... When the centers were opened, the teachers had the task of assessing the child, the young person and to see their level of development to later see an individualized plan... If we talk about the quota of beneficiaries we have at the moment, yes, they are very serious: with cerebral palsy, with mental retardation, with physican non-development, anyway, much work is done on domains. I will show you some individual plans, every day we work on a certain domain of development: cognitive, social and motoric.” (1IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

*„My children are less developed, I work with them more on general/fine motor development... We and all children have results since they have opened centers. Before we were working with a unique program, there was only one plan for all children. And sometimes I had results, other times I did not, there were all children in the group and when you carry out an activity, each one reacts differently and it is very difficult to work. Since these centers, we have better results. I work with ludotherapy – activity through game... For instance, a child comes to the activity, but his left side of the foot and wrist is not working. He can already put the balls from a box in a glass, it is a very detailed work. We have a lot where each circle has to be put into the cottage. He began to do the pyramid, and we even had open activities. Another boy, did not speak much not too long ago, but now he has a great vocabulary for me and he started to do a few steps with support. He is in a wheelchair and the diagnosis is very difficult. He does not move at all but already started to hold the ball in his hand since the moment we started to do fine motoric exercises. We support him, and we can see that the child has the desire to do it.” (4IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

- Reintegration of children into family and society, including by identifying alternative forms where family integration is not possible, such as community homes. Young people who grew up in the boarding school are looking for ways of social inclusion and are supported in this respect in order to develop skills for living in the community.



*„Because we are in a process of transformation, we want to develop some skills that will help them to reintegrate more easily into society, especially those children that are on our virtual waiting list. We have two open houses and two houses purchased where the beneficiaries will be located in July ... when they are in a home they have certain responsibilities, they accept them with difficulty, they expect that the support person to do everything as it happens here, that nurses must wash, arrange, iron.” (1IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

*„We were told to attract attention with such beneficiaries that are coming out in the society, and namely about shops, pharmacies, money, signatures; and to know their personal data. Currently we are working in this area more specific..” (4IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

Children raised in this institution, become adults and we try to reintegrate them in the family or, as the case may be, in community homes. A specialist who visited a family-type home says young people are in the community, but, in fact, they are still isolated from other members of the community.

*„When I went to visit every one was busy with something, some of them outside others inside the house. They are not taken to society through the village, for instance, for a walk or a shop. Only through the yard with the social assistant and the nurse who lives with them... Even if they want to go out I think it will be difficult for them because the house is purchased in a region of the remote village where roads are bad and if it rains then it is very difficult to go there. In other homes I have not been and I cannot say what conditions do they have.” (4IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

The representatives of the Orhei Boarding House, mentioned that after deinstitutionalization of the beneficiaries they no longer monitor their situation. I know sporadic information about their situation, usually offered by representatives of civil society that have facilitated social integration and monitors these cases further.

The support provided by international organizations and local partners is highly appreciated by interviewed employees. The institution is equipped and adapted to the needs of beneficiaries, however most of the respondents consider that children lack first of all love and warmth of parenthood, the family environment.

*„Talking with our beneficiaries the ones that we can talk to, the majority of them are longing for their family, they want to see their mother, to know how she is, know something about the family. They often come and ask: „How is my family, tell me”, we are talking about their families based on the information from the file... We have a child whose brother is in prison and he expects him to come out and visit, he is talking about him. He lives with the thought that someone from the family will come, they are lacking familiar affection, though they have food, good conditions here. Love is what it is lacking.” (1IA, Boarding-House, Orhei)*

*„I think it would be better for a child to be home next to his mother, but his parents refused to take him home..It would be good to take him home at least for the holidays, maybe once in three months.” (5IA, Bording-House, Orhei)*

The case of each beneficiary in the institution has been evaluated from the perspective of the possibilities of family reintegration with the support of Keystone Moldova.

*„We have analyzed them all, we do not have any children who can be reintegrated into the family. We have a boy who is an adult, doing analyses and working with the direction of social care from the locality where he comes from and most probably in half of year will be reintegrated into his biological family. Because parents are repairing the apartment where they will live and they do not have the financial means to finish the repairment faster and requested a bit of time, but they want to take him*

*hime... We have done many assessments and written demands in the localities and we do not have the possibility to reintegrate the rest in the family. All social surveys come with recommendations to stay in the given institution." (2IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

The involvement of civil society through continuous methodological support, international experiences in the field, including the practices of foreign volunteers, reinforced the beliefs of the institution's employees that each child, if it is individually approached, will learn and make progress in relation to his or her own knowledge and skills. Thus, some children manage to overcome themselves and mentors admit that these progresses are in some situations beyond their expectations.

*„We had a nice experience with experts from abroad. We had a project with the Swedes, even with the pedagogues. We were thinking: „how can a boy with cerebral palsy draw?“, the gentleman showed us how he could, fixed his paper on the table, he had the colors in front of him, the brush in this hand and with the help of his pedagogue he was drawing?! Do you know what positive emotions he had when drawing?! Then the part where he drew was cut, framed and hunged on the wall near him and he was happy that he managed to have his own work done. We had a good experience in Holland, namely working with disabled children. At the moment we have many volunteers from Ireland, America that come here." (2IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

Basically, all employees in the institution provide support for the care of the immobilized childre, for instance, they are involved in feeding them. Children with severe disabilities, like all children, need an individual approach tailored to their needs. But in their case, the support should be specialized so that the intervention exploits the potential of each child. In the opinion of specialists, no matter the environment in which these children will live, they require special care.

*„They cannot stand for more than 20 minutes, and here is where the support person has to get him out of the classroom. His attention for more than 20-25 minutes cannot be concentrated, sometimes even 15 minutes, that is why he is good to be with him a person that he knows very well, even the father." (2IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

*„There [the community house] is the same thing only it turns into a home. I do not think they can live by themselves, the children in my group need to have carers." (5IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

Also, community services are needed to facilitate the family and social integration of people with severe disabilities. Parents benefit from psychological counseling and training on crisis management, including from a medical point of view, generated by the specific diagnosis of the child. At the same time, it is also necessary to support the specialists about the working methods for the development of these children's abilities, but, last but not least the families also require financial allocations to meet the needs of care for the persons with special needs. The existence of community day centers would be very useful so that parents can continue their professional activity and their usual lives.

*„The center has a limited number of places, the demands are much higher and the parents who have succeeded and registered at this center are really happy. I know parents waiting for a place to attend the center. It is a support for them, the baby is taken from 8am till 4pm and the parent activates freely, goes to work,takes his child home at night. The child is trained, also fed, plays outside except the activities that he has." (1IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

Another challenge for living in the community is the poor infrastructure, which is largely unadjusted, including many public institutions having a partially adapted or totally inadequate infrastructure for people with mobility difficulties.

*„We are also confronted with this problem when going to a center or a store, at the Philharmonic and the National Palace are many stairs and we have to take the wheelchair in our hands or ask the people around us for help in moving to the given place. So in schools, in order for the infrastructure to be ready, the ramps. We have boys you look at and you would not say they have locomotor problems, but they hardly raise their legs or move with difficulty, this child needs a straight road. An elevator is compulsory, if the school is with 2- 3 floors, how to climb the next floors, ramps?!“ (2IA, Boarding House, Orhei)*

## X. Expert Opinions on Inclusive Education: Realities and Recommendations

Representatives of state institutions and civil society active in the field have greatly appreciated the progress made by the Republic of Moldova on the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools. In this context, it was mentioned:

- The existence of legislation promoting the access of all children to basic education;
- The inclusion of a significant share of children with disabilities in common educational settings;
- The development of specialized services in educational institutions (Resource Centers);
- The creation of psycho-pedagogical assistance structures (RCPA/PAS);
- Promoting inclusive education, changing perceptions and attitudes about students with disabilities and students with SEN.

### Box 21. Experts' opinions on progress in inclusive education in Moldova

*„The first years were very difficult on students' attitudes towards these children. Each of them had different stereotypes, jargons towards the disabled persons. Even the teachers were retained, scared, somehow indifferent. Now it is totally different, no one does, and the students are friendly.” (3IA, NGO)*

*„At the policy level, on paper, everything is good and we are still working on the level of statistical data we have at national level, the situation is very good. Only about 15% of children, those with severe, multiple, sensory disabilities are not integrated, and for this field, much more effort is needed, more resources... I think this reform is irreversible. The existence of the residential system with the mainstream school is interwoven. The evolution within the residential system is to continue the reform, to reorganize the institutions. As far as I know, the intention is to leave 1-2 institutions, only for serious children, the problem at the moment is – children with complex emotional needs, notion at the global level, children with deviant behavior.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„Reported to what was years ago it is a progress now, this fact proves to me once again that communication, not only the general public, the communication that is targeted, so to speak, children, parents, school and the broad public is very important because we have this system of values left and it is not easy to erase it. Since the soviet era, when a child with disabilities has to be hidden, it is a shame, must be isolated somewhere in the forest, placed in institutions and we do not have anything to do with him. Or if it is a child with problems in school, it is necessarily recommended for institutionalization, because they have to be very good children in school. There has been a lot of communication since 2010, a period of 4-5 years, it was a consistent campaign.” (8IA, NGO)*

*„We have psycho-pedagogical assistance services at district level, which must intervene with support in difficult cases. Their role is to provide this methodological support... I consider it today as a model service. Unfortunately, the workload is too big and they do not succeed and in this case they need to revise their activity rules.” (10IA, NGO)*

*„After 5 years of inclusive education it is already more stable, already the initial and complex assessment is more stable, the world already understands this process. For each process a period has to pass. In the years when auxiliary schools were formed, it was a tragedy to bring the child to special institutions, but we were convinced that they would eat and sleep there, and now viceversa we convince them that it is better at home.” (14IA, PAS)*

However, in the opinion of specialists, there are still more challenges to the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools. Among the most important are:

- Changing opinions, perceptions and attitudes about school inclusion of children with SEN by promoting positive examples of school inclusion;

*„Here, as many positive examples as possible, the media often focus on the negative and this factor influences society. Still, we have many positive examples that deserve to be promoted and I think the situation will change. In addition to all these trainings and work with teachers, working with specialists in the field, with parents and others must influence changing the attitude.” (7IA, public servant)*

*„At the level of attitude, at the level of the desire to develop and see the situation, because in school A, where things do not progress, the teachers see a problem in the child, which he tried to remove by doing no effort, in most cases that he has to study here. I ask the teachers when it happens, the parents and the parents of the regular children, because we have different cases: „where do we go?“, and we all stop here because they all want to take it, but they do not know where, although their place is here with the other children. In school B where things go in the same context, where the teacher sees in the child not a problem but a challenge: „I can teach this child something“ I am asking or I self develop and I more forward.” (9IA, public servant)*

- The shift from quantitative indicators (the percentage of pupils with SEN attending an educational institution) to qualitative indicators (the progress that these students are able to make);

*„If in the previous years it was important to us that this year there were so many children in schools, that we have so many support teachers, that we have so many CRs, or that we have so many psycho-pedagogical services, I would say that our challenge now is quality, that this mechanism really generates quality for all children.” (9IA, public servant)*

*„The concrete examples where we have faced, where the teacher of mathematics tells us in a friendly way: „I have 20-25 children in my classroom, I have an exam for mathematics for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I have some themes according to the curriculum. What do I do?! The support teacher is not present at every class. When do I have time to do on the basis of the modified curriculum that was developed?!” Plus we have the situation now that in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade there are 3 children with mental disabilities in the same class.” (12IA, PAS)*

- Practical implementation of child-centered education and capitalizing on the particularities of each child would face the inclusion of children with disabilities. The teacher should provide pupils with tasks according to their possibilities and ensure that each student has increases in their own knowledge and skills.

*„All children are doing a project together, but each has a task depending on their capabilities, but they all work on the same task, they have the same purpose, no one does something special. Teachers who have been working with this new approach for a long time already have the necessary materials for different levels and in these classes children work more independently, have more responsibility and knowledge about the learning process. There are not just students who consume, they have different tasks, but everybody understands where they have to go. This refers not only to children with disabilities, but to all children. The teacher makes an individual work plan for each child from class.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„If the teacher perceives child centered education, it is not necessarily to talk about the child with SEN, a performing approach for all children. If we look at this, it will be much easier to understand the disabled child and how we make a more individualized process for them.” (9IA, public servant)*

- Focusing on training and assisting teachers in accordance with the needs of pupils with SEN with whom they work or are going to work;

*„PAS representatives often go to educational institutions, but they do not have the physical capacity to go in essence and work with each individual teacher. They mostly work with the support teacher, with the multidisciplinary committee, I think they do not have time to work with each teacher.” (6IA, NGO)*

- Developing mentoring and experience exchange programs. Specialists mentioned that remuneration mechanisms, incentives for teachers, mentors should be found to motivate them to work with children with disabilities and children with special educational needs;

In the opinion of the interviewed specialists there must be willingness and openness on the part of the teachers to work with students with SEN and to change their attitude towards the inclusion of children with SEN. At the same time, they should be offered methodological help and the justifications for the lack of teaching material should not be an impediment to the schooling of children with SEN. Each teacher, if he really wants, can find solutions for adapting the educational process to the needs of the students.

*„If we ask teachers, they most often say they need teaching materials, but I think it is not someone else’s task to develop teaching materials. I think they need more guidance on how to make the necessary adaptations to existing teaching materials. They often have neither basic materials to make anything nor school supplied that they do not have. I think it is still a matter of attitude and somebody has to tell them that it is not as hard as it seems, to sit down with them and make some copies.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„The code provides mentoring, but it is not a remuneration mechanism. It would be some support to develop support forms, to translate teachers’ skills from one to another because the best ones are when I come to you in school and see children together trying to develop a plan. See that the quality increases substantially after this intervention.” (9IA, public servant)*

- Support for teachers, especially when there are more children in a class with SEN;

*„Another problem is the number of children with SEN in class. If there are many, for instance 4-5, then it is imperative to have a support teacher all the time in the classroom. Even a teacher who has experience and knowledge can not cope with this situation alone.” (6IA, NGO)*

- The need to provide lunch for children with SEN. If some institutions have managed from their own resources or in collaboration with LPA, to provide food to these children, for other schools this is a barrier in carrying out the activities after classes, in the Resource Centers;

*„It has not been resolved to feed the children with SEN. The child has just finished classes, how long can he sit there if he has not eaten anything?!” (10 IA, NGO)*

- Class/lesson management changes to make it more interactive and engaging for all students, including those with SEN.

*„A class that listens is not exactly the one that is arranged in the form of a theater and the teacher talks for 45 minutes and absolutely everything is right and quiet, which is not always possible even for a typical child, because we all have different temperaments. If a typical child imposes you to the maximum, a child with mental disabilities will not be able to engage in activities that would be of interest to him, to get involved.” (9IA, public servant)*

- Ensuring the continuity of the educational path of students with SEN. In this respect, it is necessary to adapt the infrastructure of vocational schools, which are totally

unfriendly to children with SEN, but also to raise awareness and train the teachers in these institutions. This process is already initiated and needs to be continued. Some donors are open to providing support, and international practices of partial qualifications of people with SEN could be a good example of being taken up and adapted to the national context;

*„Still, the school staff are somewhat accustomed to the idea of social inclusion, at the moment we are working with vocational schools and here we start practically from scratch. It is not considered normal for a child, even with physical disability, to be considered acceptable. They are not accustomed to children with disabilities... More children who have graduated the 9<sup>th</sup> grade return home and stay home without continuing their studies or engaging further. This is a big problem and we support the ministry in this direction.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„The child has graduated 9<sup>th</sup> grade and what happens to him?! This is the key issue that has been discussed for years, not from now on, and we do not know what to do. It is very important to think that here is a legal and normative framework, methodologically on this segment. As far as professional schools are concerned, I was talking to children with intellectual disabilities, what he does when he graduated from an individual program or where he goes on. No one hires him to work and you realize what is going on. In vocational schools they accept from 16 years old, he does not have 16 yet and somehow it is not covered... There are very good practices with regard to countries with partial qualifications, such as a child with intellectual disability, he can only learn to cut vegetables, he can just do that and then he learns and that can be useful when he is an employee. Here are a lot of questions and there is a need for expertise, including from abroad, because you have to analyze your practices and you have to adapt them for us. I started from the infrastructure, this is a very serious situation. We have vocational schools that have been equipped with expensive equipments and it is not used because they do not know how to use it. We have institutions that have very old equipment that is at risk.” (10IA, NGO)*

- Infrastructure issues that are theoretically easier to solve, however, are an important impediment to ensuring continuity of studies for children with SEN. The physical adaptation of buildings to ensure their access is very important..

*„A child with locomotor disabilities, as success in the child's activity was good from the category good and very good on grades 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> she finished secondary school, she was living with her grandparents and she wanted to study at a college very much, but she faced many problems at registration, we called the principal of the institution, they did not receive her through the main door where there were many adolescents, but they received her through the back, she did not stay in the line, because she was in a wheelchair. Thus, they offered her a dorm room, the room was at the first floor, but the classrooms were placed at three different floors. The boys from the group took her in turns and carried her in their arms. When they were fed up with this, because everyone has his problems. The girl is successful, she likes it, she works well, but initially they were all in a psychological crisis. This was the situation, we have started, but it was not continuity. These institutions are not prepared, the girl is a good student, but she did not have all the conditions.” (12IA, PAS)*

- Taking over the commitment by state institutions to develop inclusive education by providing the necessary human and financial resources. Assurance with specialists depending on children's needs.;

*„You cannot force someone to work 80 hours/week, motivating that this is for children. The state must allocate the money and human resources needed to cover the demand, we cannot rely on the fact that someone will volunteer... For instance, if a boarding school closes, the cost per student is very*

*high, much higher than in the institutions of general education. The money that till then were allocated to the boarding house should not be lost somewhere in the general budget, but should be redirected. If the child in the boarding school is transferred to a mainstream school, the money for maintenance must be redirected to the child. This is not happening now.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„We have a teacher in a certain number of children, perhaps we should see the need of the child not the number of children, but we can allocate resources strictly to the needs of each child. This is the most correct approach.” (9IA, public servant)*

*„We need specialists. For example, in speech therapy, because we have children with pronounced problems, at some point we need kinethotherapy. However, it is necessary that the remuneration to be made per child.” (15IA, school principal)*

- Providing access to psychological services, if the institution does not have a school psychologist (small number of students, lack of teachers) to identify possibilities to provide these services when needed;

*„In every institution there must be a psychologist, in every institution there must be a speech specialist regardless of the number of children in the institution. Nowadays, the psychologist needs all the educational institutions starting with the kindergarten. We only have a psychologist in high schools, but isn't the psychological assistance is needed also for children from the first grade and fifth grade or for the child of 6 years old?! It has to be so everywhere that the role is great. At least at the educational direction there must be a psychologist.” (12IA, PAS)*

- Effective continuing education in the field of child-centered education, especially for teachers, with practical and organized issues by people working in the field;

*„For example, the Institute of Educational Sciences does a lot of teacher training, but it would be good to have guests from outside the institution with experience in inclusion, because people who work there do not think they are the most suitable people they do the same training for 20 years, do not adapt the trainings at all, people come and sleep at the training.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„The training should be at the level, the teachers, to go to training courses, learn or even the students to learn this adaptation process. Because nobody knows anything. These are just some benchmarks, but so they can be sure what they need to adapt is not yet implemented in the university institutions, if a young specialist comes he says he does not know what to do.”(14IA, PAS)*

- Inclusive education must be part of parenting education, specifically PAS specialists insisted on this aspect;

*„This action plan for parental education but also with very concrete costs should be done and not to be covered by donors again. I believe that parenting education must be a very important component of this inclusion dimension, we greatly invest in teachers, generally in inclusive education services, but somehow the parent stays in the shadow.” (10IA, NGO)*

*„I recently received the guide for children with autism, very good... Some guides for parents with real situations, not nominated, but real because some of these parents will find themselves. Maybe some training with the mayors, because they are the ones who run in the locality and if he does not come to work with the parent, there must be a cooperation.” (12IA, PAS)*

*„It is a strategy for parental formation, parental education. This is a very good strategy, it is in its place. We did some activities with parents where it was discovered that parents did not know their role, they are reluctant to come to school.... They are ashamed because they are always talked about bad things, because at school they only talk about grades, deviant behavior and so on.” (14IA, PAS)*



- Re-conceptualizing the function of a personal assistant perceived as a carer, but the person who performs this function must be trained, prepared to provide support in the training process. Every child with severe disabilities must have a personal assistant to provide the necessary support for care, but also to assist in the learning process;

*„If I have a child with severe autism in the class who shouts, interrupts the class and there is no one who understands it and no one who has the ability to manage his behavior, yes, it disturbs and can be a danger to other children... It is the personal assistant in Moldova, but he has the basic care function, only the physiological needs can cover them... if we refer to children who have multiple, severe, non-interacting disabilities, obviously there is a need for a specialist who has medical studies, who understands what needs the child has.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„This regulation did not make it very clear that the personal assistant was also for the children they were striving to perform only for adults for a period of time but now, a year ago was implemented if it was possible for children to have their own personal assistance. This is largely the problem of the service provider, because they do not form personal assistants and people do not perceive it as a profession, they perceive it like before that they are mother or father...” (10IA, NGO)*

*„The parent who has such a child [Down syndrome], he has to be educated, he must be given the rights as a personal assistant, be near the child at least in kindergarten and in primary classes, until the child integrates and acquires some skills of independence to go on... Every child [with severe disability] if is integrated, has to find sources for someone to be with him, either the parent or the support teacher. It is good that they are more quiet as children, who stay in the classroom, but they are given only 10 minutes of the lesson. This is the reality! Teachers are having difficulties, they have to address their parents to work, not necessarily the parent of the disabled child.” (12IA, PAS)*

- Assisting children with SEN and their families in the area they need. It is not enough just that the child is brought to school, the family must receive psychological, social and medical support, if necessary. Intersectorial approach of support;

*„The multidisciplinary team needs to see who the problem is, intervene and then bring this child to school. When it comes to the problem from one to the other, it is clear that things will degrade. Each one must with its component that has not worked and has not been invested and services are needed not only at the educational level. We also need social services for this category of children/citizens, medical services. And when all these services will have a national coverage, they will work together in cooperation and there will be better results.” (7IA, public servant)*

*„Our financing system that exists today is very inflexible (rigid) per system. We have allocations in: health, education, social assistance. Our children’s needs have already been demonstrated to be intersectorial, and this possibility of reallocating resources is very difficult, often impossible at the same time. We can have a support framework, a resource center in the school, teachers are ready to get involved, the school is open and we can have the situation when we cannot bring the child to school because he does not have a personal assistant because he needs it of such service, or the personal assistant is a service from social assistance, there are queues, they primarily look at older people in need of such assistance.” (9IA, public servant)*

- Changing the way the pre-school institutions are financed according to the example of schools – „money follow the child”, and „the kindergarten decides what is the priority for them” and also in the kindergarten are allocated resources for children with SEN;

*„In general education we have the funding per pupil and it is managed in such a way that the money that is allocated for the child’s education is for the child, which is not the case in early education, they come to the town hall and the city hall manages this money and considers the most important: to*

*have a good speech therapist in the kindergarten or to repair a wall. It is far from fair to put a parallel between the two needs, that is why the financing formula provided strictly as in general education the allocation of the 2% for inclusive education which today is insufficient somewhere, but anyway they solve certain problems.” (7IA, public servant)*

*„In case of kindergartens, we do not have a financing formula per child, and this is the key issue. If in the case of schools there is an inclusive education fund covering the development of inclusive education services, in the case of kindergartened this does not exist.” (10IA, NGO)*

- Ensuring inclusive education at pre-school level through a clear mechanism for identifying and referring children with SEN;

*„Now in the case of kindergartens, here is the big problem because kindergartens initially understood that money will be given specially for children with SEN, long lists with children with SEN, when they actually understood that funding would not be ready, they did not refer cases. A lot of kindergartens that do not refer to cases even if they have children with SEN, even with disabilities, do not refer to psycho-pedagogical assistance simply because it means a lot of documents that you need to accomplish, you have to call this service and why to create so many problems.” (10IA, NGO)*

### **Box 22. Suggestions for an inclusive education**

*„First of all, it is the accessibility of these educational institutions and I do not refer here only to carts because those with hearing/sight problems still need accessibility. The second problem is educational problems that I think it should be more tailored programs depending on the needs/abilities of these children. Working with teachers to know how to train these children. Assistance with support teachers. Adapting resource centers. Working with the child’s family and with the families of others in the class because parents often dislike children in their class. We need to work with all these stereotypes.” (7IA, public servant)*

*„Things go as long as the non-governmental sector comes and provides support. When you withdraw a bit and focus on other topics that you consider to be more stringent, the state does not fully take over, I do not know whether the responsibility. I do not know how to say. As a structure, we seem to have a republican center for psycho-pedagogical assistance, which should provide methodological support for PASs. It seems like we have PAS that should provide methodological support to schools or resource centers. It is as if teachers have been trained to accept inclusion and somewhere things are not going... Here the created system should be reevaluated, adapted, improved, because it has everything absolutely created as a composition.” (8IA, NGO)*

*„It is much more effective and whether this coordination occurs between kindergarten and school. In the kindergartens we worked with, we organized joint sessions with the school and we saw what children were coming for next year, the teacher who was going to take the children, was meeting them, children were visiting the school.” (10IA, NGO)*

Several PAS specialists have noted that there are some issues regarding the diagnosis and especially the treatment of mentally retarded children, given that psychiatric assessment is often superficial (from a single visit without consulting other people from the child’s entourage). Another factor is the lack of pediatric training of psychiatrists.

*„There are still issues when the child came from the psychiatrist with the mental retardation diagnosis, we did not fall into the SEN category and here we have a big question mark, as this diagnosis has been established for the child. We have encountered such situations, we have said it is a crime on our part if we are to enter the SEN category only because the doctor has established a diagnosis. All the specialists saw him, he was evaluated, and the child had no problem.” (12IA, PAS)*

### **„Restrictions” on inclusive education in Chisinau**

The qualitative research revealed that in institutions from Chisinau municipality, do not accept children with SEN. At the same time, there is the perception that in the municipality of Chisinau most of the schools are less adapted for children with SEN compared to other localities. According to the respondents of the qualitative study, this is due to the desire of the administration of the schools in the capital to remain with impeccable reputation, and children with special educational needs in their opinion „spoils the statistics and the image of school”. Most of the interviewed specialists mentioned this or stated that they know this phenomenon, providing the following explanations:

- Some institutions in Chisinau are over-requested, they are considered elite and thus refuse or do not have this preoccupation to become inclusive;
- There are some models of inclusive education in Chisinau, and this has led parents with children with SEN to choose especially these institutions;
- The cooperation of multidisciplinary teams in facilitating the school inclusion of children is more efficient in rayons than in the Chisinau municipality;
- Activities on inclusive education civil society have been more focused in recent years outside the capital.

#### **Box 23. „Restrictions” on inclusive education in Chisinau**

*„Most teachers and directors do not want children with SEN to be included among other children. They believe it must be special. The first argument – their school status at the first level, the second – the teachers do not agree because they have to work very hard, the third - the parents do not like, do not have possibilities or do not know what is the difference and how they say: „they ruin their future”.” (F, 31 years old, teacher of elementary school, 3 years of experience, urban, 5FG\_teachers\_secondary school)*

*„Now there is competition between high schools, we have good results and it is very offensive that we are forced to move from one class to another.” (F, 29 years old, teacher of French language, 1 year of experience, urban, 6FG\_teachers\_highschool)*

*„There is a problem in Chisinau because there is competition and the educational institutions that are considered to be elite are more reserved in accepting children with disabilities. In other districts, there are institutions that are, and they are dealing with, and there is no attitude that prohibits the enrolling of children with disabilities... In my opinion, it was better regulated and implemented the intersectorial collaboration between the social services and the ones from the educational domain, in the districts and this is still a positive practice.” (6IA, NGO)*

*„School inclusion also targets the social component, not just education. Support should be offered in common. There is a great deal of resistance from what I know, in fact Chisinau is the biggest quake in the context of inclusion. If we speak at the republic level, resource centers developed in the rayons etc with PASs, Chisinau is the last one. There is also this component that we have only very good schools with very good children and we want to save our efforts.” (8IA, NGO)*

*„The ping-pong with these children is the largest in Chisinau, because here we have elite institutions, here we have the possibility not to accept a child, we have the opportunity if not here, there, we have parents who start looking for certain opportunities . There are schools where everything is regulated, and they do not receive children with disabilities or access is difficult.”(9IA, public servant)*

## XI. Other aspects

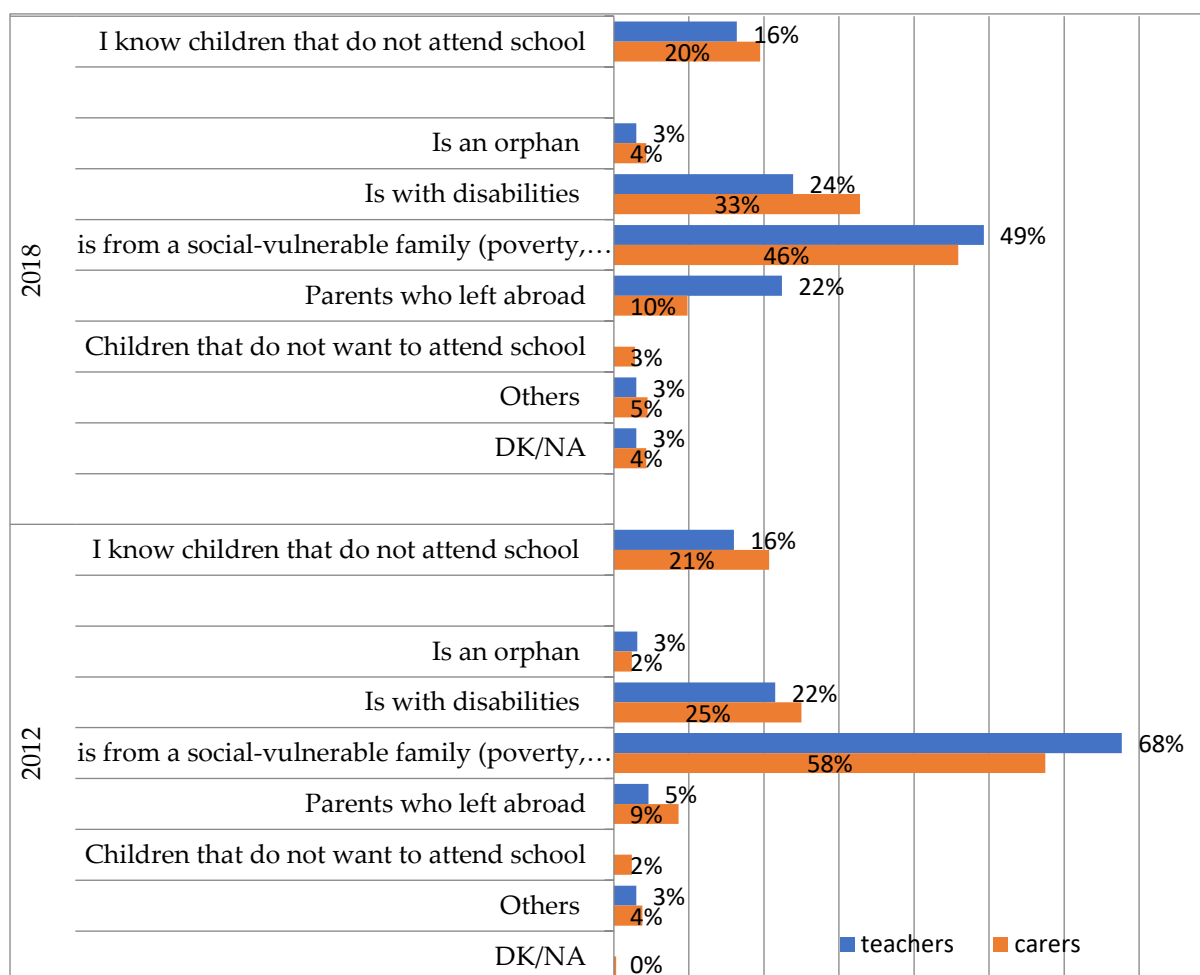
Next, there is a presentation of the data for a number of additional measured issues related to the subject of analysis.

### School dropout

In the last decade, enrollment rates in primary and secondary education are decreasing. Based on the data collected it is estimated that 0,4% of households have children aged 7-15 years old that are not enrolled in school. The study shows that 80-90 percent of the decreasing levels of enrollment in education are the determinants of poverty and special needs of children with disabilities.

Also, like in the 2012 study, 20% of caregivers and 16% of interviewed teachers know at least one child who is not attending school, being the appropriate age for primary or secondary school. The reasons given by the respondents are mainly poverty and the fact that the child is disabled. A third factor is migration of labor force. Thus, 22% of the cases of children who do not attend school reported by the teachers and 10% of those reported by carers have parents abroad (Figure 24).

**Figure 23. Share of respondents who know cases of school failure and causes of abandonment**



*Written Question: Do you know any school-age child who does not attend school?*

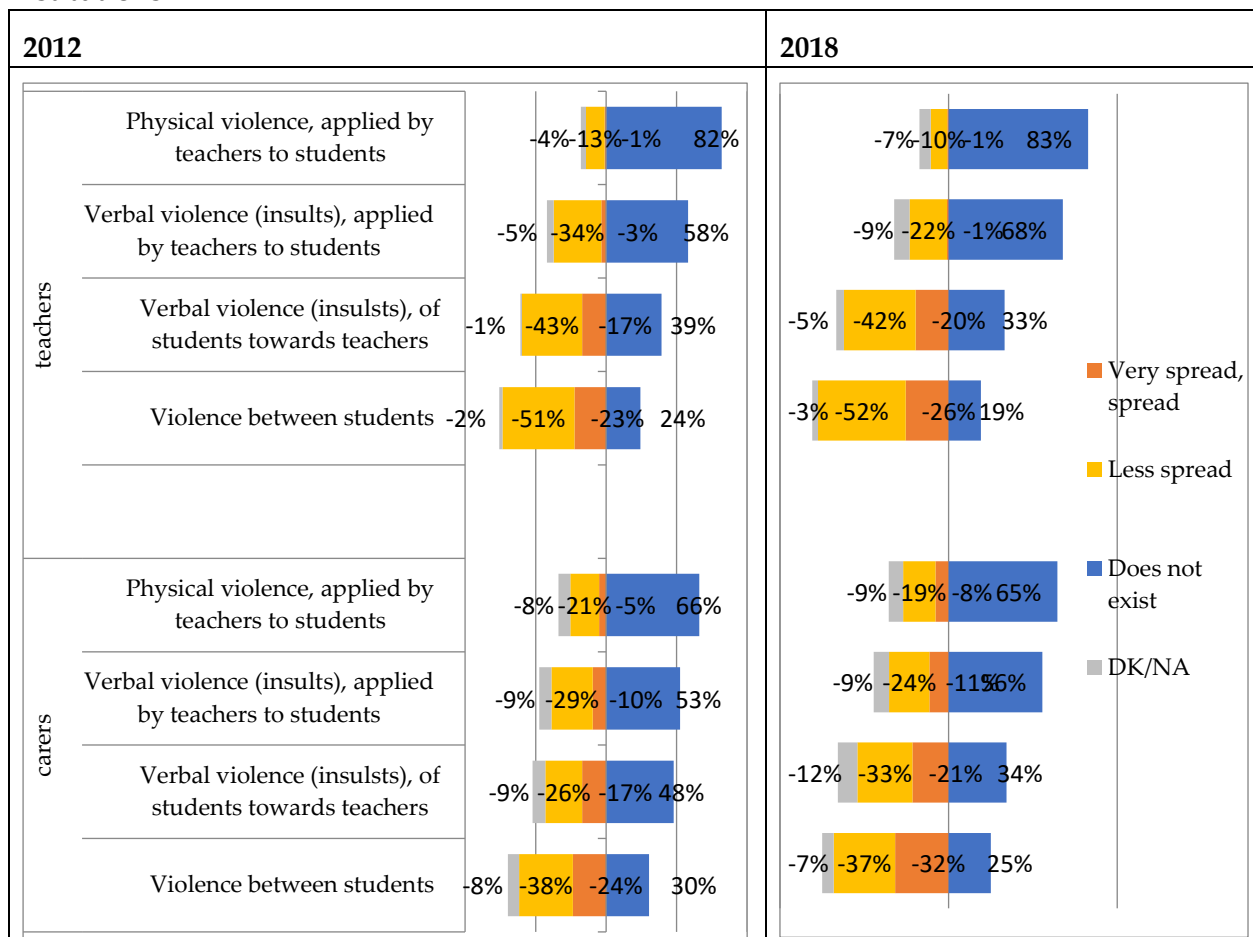
## Violence

The phenomenon of violence in educational institutional in the Republic of Moldova is a reality, both as a perception, but also as a concrete experience. Speaking of the perceptions of teachers and carers, physical violence among students is prevalent (in the current study, about 80% of affirmative answers among teachers and nearly 70% among carers), but also the verbal violence applied by students to teachers (over 70% among teachers and over 50% among carers) (Figure 25).

At the same time, although with a lower incidence, violence against teachers is also widespread, as confirmed by the teaching staff included in the study. About 10% of teachers believe that physical violence by teachers towards students is scarcely spread in schools (13% in 2012), another 1% sat that this phenomenon is very widespread. Such opinions also expressed 19% less widespread (21% in 2012) and 8% respectively (5% in 2012) opinions offered by parents.

The incidence of verbal violence among teachers is higher, 22% of teachers (34% in 2012) believe that the phenomenon is little spread, 1% (3% in 2012) that it is very widespread. An almost similar level is also perceived by caregivers with 24% opinions that is little spread and 11% very widespread.

**Figure 24. The appreciation by carers and teachers of the degree of violence in educational institutions**

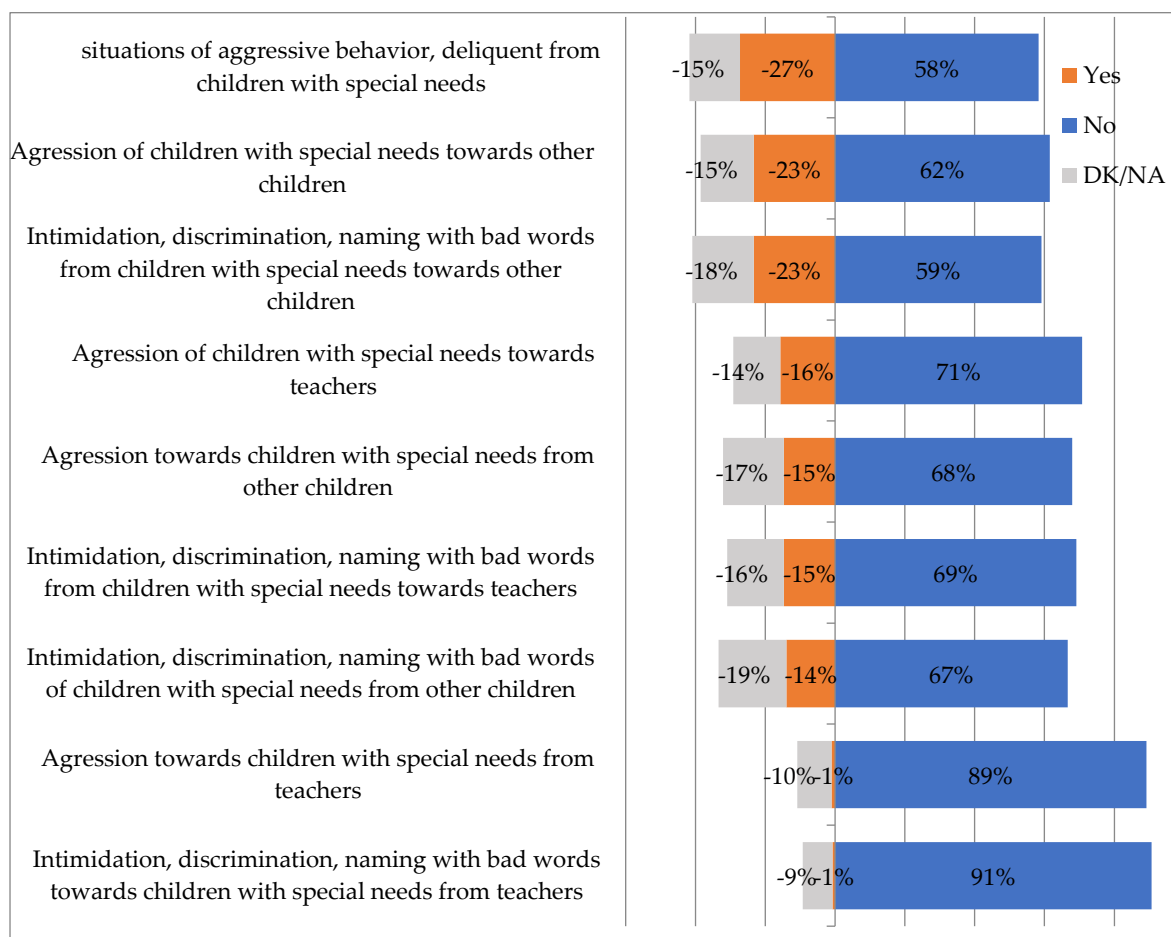


*Written Question: How widespread is it in the educational institutions in your community (village/city)? (the categories are listed in the figure)*

About 1/5 of the teachers mentioned that they met in schools where they are active in various situations of aggressions, intimidation and discrimination situations with regard to children

with special needs, such as *Situation of aggressive behavior from the children with special needs* 27% affirmative answers, *Agression of children with special needs towards other children and Intimidation, discrimination, naming with bad words from the children with special needs towards other children* by 23% respectively (Figure 26). There are reported cases of aggression, intimidation and discrimination from children with special needs towards teachers with about 15% of responses, but also cases from other children towards those with special requirements, as well as about 15% affirmative answers. Only about 1% of such cases were mentioned in relation to the aggressions of the teachers towards the children.

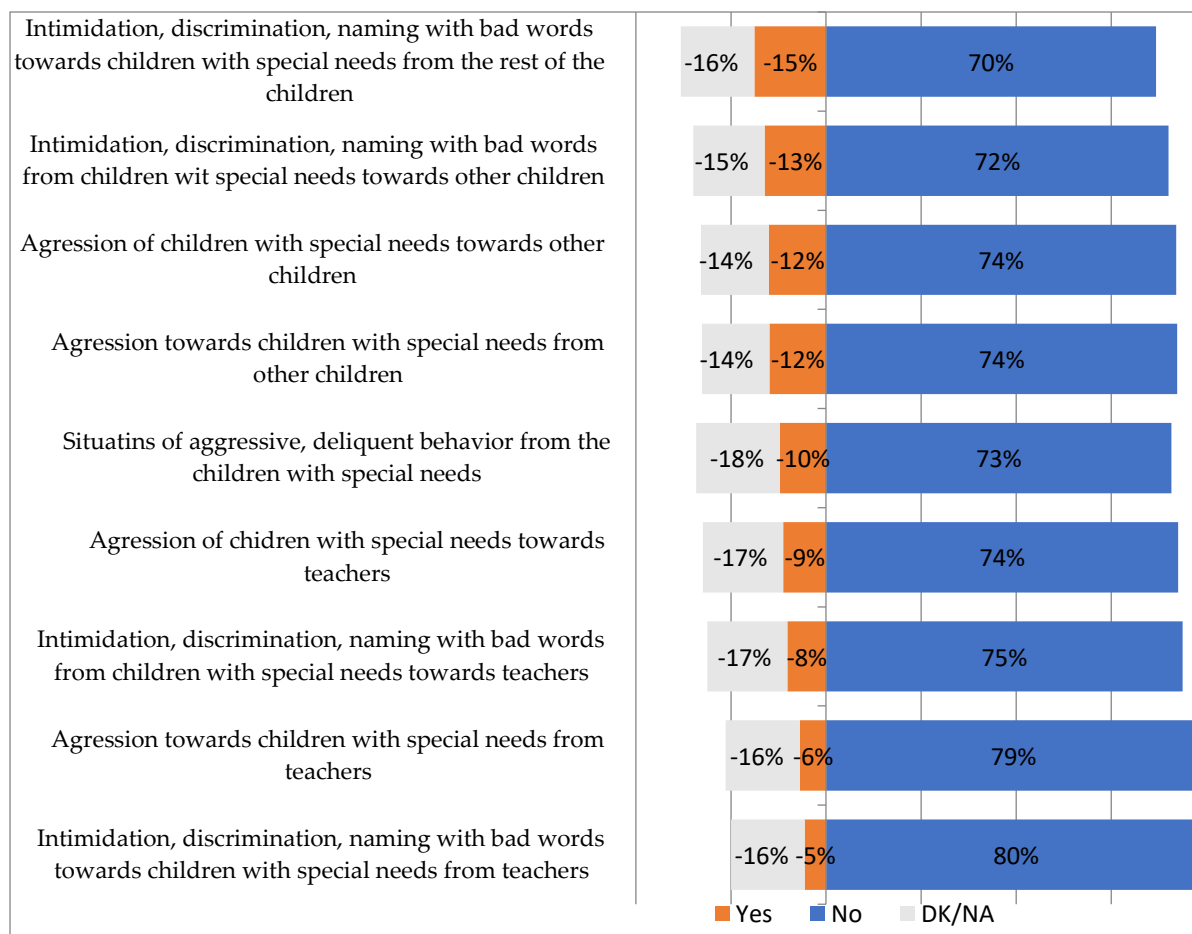
**Figure 25. The degree of aggression, intimidation and discrimination in educational institutions: appraisals of teachers**



**Written Question:** *As you know (heard/seen), did the following cases occur in your school...(the statements are listed in the figure)*

Approximately the same tendencies are also observed in the case of carers with reference to the cases of aggression, intimidation and discrimination observed by students, but the proportion of affirmative responses in this context is slightly lower. In case of carers, proportions less pronounced of about 5% of cases of aggression, intimidation and discrimination by teachers towards children with special needs are observed. (Figure 27).

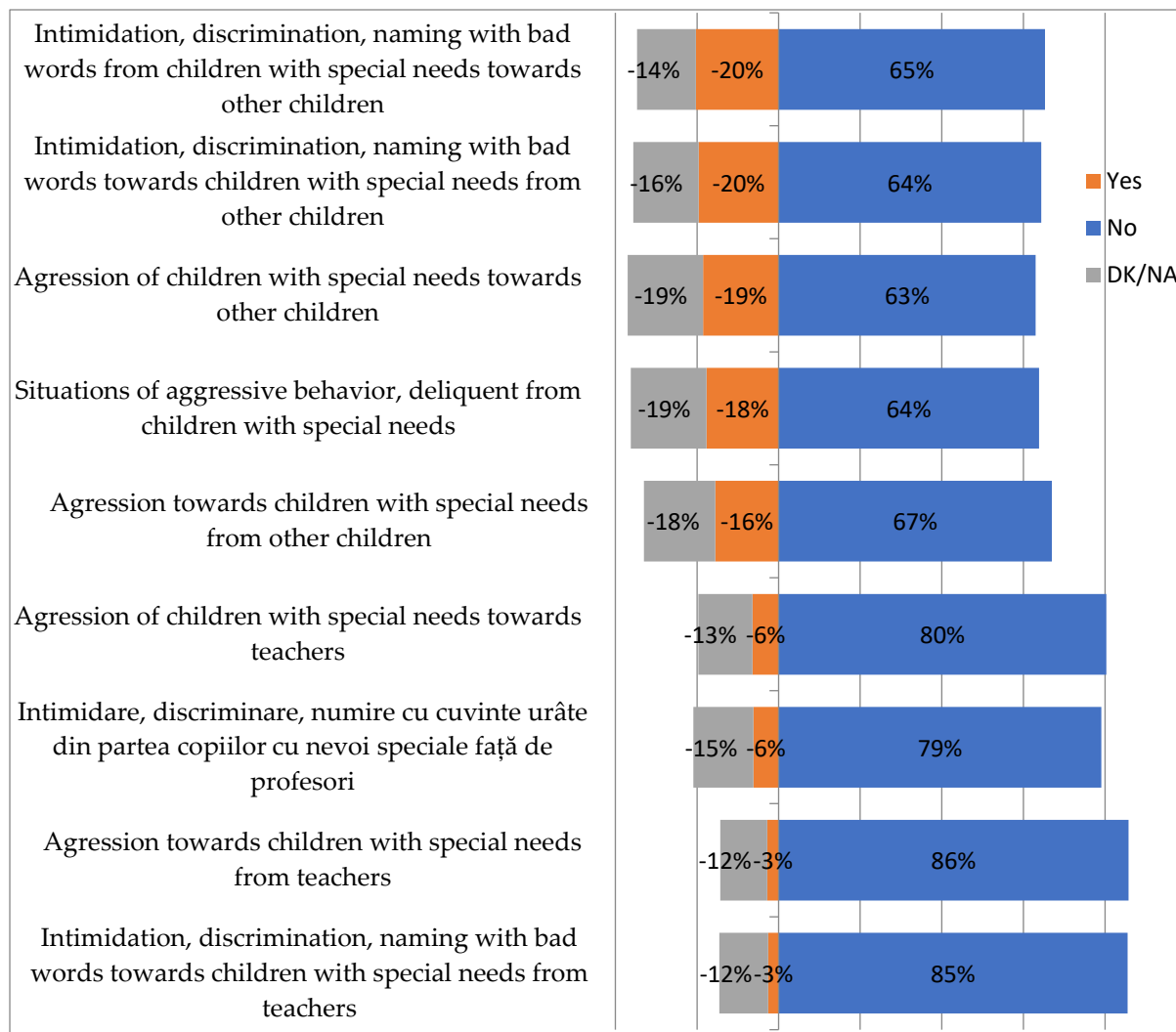
**Figure 26. The presence of aggression, intimidation and discrimination in educational institutions: assessments of carers**



**Written Question:** As you know (heard/seen), did the following cases occur in your school...(the statements are listed in the figure)

Student opinions on bullying, intimidation and discrimination against children with special needs are scattered. About 1/5 of the interviewed students mentioned the presence of aggression, intimidation and mutual discrimination cases, both with regard to children with special needs and on their part. Also, about 6% mentioned the cases of aggression, intimidation and discrimination from children with special requirements to teachers and also cases were mentioned by teachers even if their share is small, only 3% (Figure 28).

**Figure 27. The degree of aggression, intimidation and discrimination in educational institutions: assessments of students**



**Written Question:** As you know (heard/seen), did the following cases occur in your school... (the statements are listed in the figure)



## CONCLUSIONS

### *Attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special educational needs*

- ✓ The attitude of the public regarding the inclusion of children with special needs in general education institutions remains an exclusive one. Still, most of the carers and teachers choose to care for these children in the family or in residential institutions.
- ✓ At the same time, comparatively with the previous studies, slight improvements are registered in the case of **carers**, in the 2018 study they chose to include these children in mainstream institutions 23%, compared to 17% in 2012 and 20% in 2009.
- ✓ **Teachers** are more open to the integration of children with special needs in mainstream institutions, but there is a decrease in their weight compared to the previous study (41% in 2018 compared to 47% in 2012), although in their case their exclusive attitudes are quite widespread, 24% of the interviewed teachers (31,4% in 2012) believe that these children should be cared for in the family and 24% (13% in 2012) opt for their placement in residential institutions.
- ✓ Opinions of **students** on the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream educational institutions remain scattered, and there is an increase in the degree of tolerance towards students with SEN. In relation to the previous study, the share of those who categorically expressed their disagreement about the inclusion of children with SEN has almost halved, with 19% of respondents, compared to 36% registered in 2012.
- ✓ The study notes the continued persistence of the difference in attitudes towards children with physical disabilities and those with mental disabilities, namely, an opening for the inclusion of children with physical disabilities and a reluctance to include children with intellectual disabilities. At the same time, children with physical disabilities are more sympathetic about the lack of adaptation of the educational institutions' spaces for the type of disability, with emphasis on the children with intellectual disabilities emphasizing the inadequate behavior during the classes and disturbing the teaching-learning process. Inclusive education is often associated with lower quality studies.
- ✓ It is necessary to mention that in all cases (types of disability) the degree of acceptance among carers and students is higher compared to the study conducted in 2012. At the same time among the interviewed teachers the degree of acceptance is roughly the same.
- ✓ Often the behavior problems are confused with mental disability. This aspect is present among parents, teachers, and amongst specialists. It is not understood that the approach, intervention and recovery of these children is different.

### *Advantages and disadvantages of inclusion*

- ✓ Respondents noted a number of benefits of inclusive education for both children with SENs and their peers. Children with SENs will socialize, interact with others, learn/take over some skills, and will fit more easily into society. The other students will be more tolerant and more empathetic, will communicate more, will learn the notion of equality of rights, mutual help.

- ✓ Inclusion of children with disabilities in kindergartens is perceived as an important factor, facilitating their school adaptation. Inclusion from an early age is beneficial for both children with disabilities and their peers.
- ✓ There are two basic aspects of inclusive education that concern respondents: the first is the decline in the quality of the learning process, caused by the disruption of classes, the reduction of the time of the teacher can give to pupils, and, consequently, the perceived decrease in the quality of the studies. The second concerns the safety of children with both SENs and others. There are also concerns about the well-being of children with SENs in regular schools in terms of adapting these institutions and student discrimination. Parents are also worried about their children being able to take some inappropriate behaviors from children with SENs.

*The degree of training of educational institutions for inclusion of children with SENs*

- ✓ Only 15% of the teachers enrolled in the study (18% in 2012) believe that mainstream schools are prepared to integrate children with special needs. The share of parents who believe this is higher – 22% and significantly increased compared to the previous study (10% in 2012).
- ✓ In assessing the level of training attributed to the interviewed teachers, almost half are considered unprepared (41%, rather unprepared, 6% not at all trained), and what is alarming, this share is increasing compared with 2012 (34% rather unprepared, 7% - not at all prepared). However, more than half of the teachers (53%) mentioned that they attended training on the integration of special needs children in school.
- ✓ At the same time, in the more detailed assessments of the changes, such as the tolerance of the staff and pupils towards students with SENs, the provision of supplementary personnel for their employment as well as the technical conditions, the appreciations are more positive than in 2012.
- ✓ However, the infrastructure of the educational institutions has been partially adapted by building the ramps, but it remains problematic in the vast majority of institutions to move from one floor to another and to adapt the sanitary blocks.
- ✓ Some parents admit that they are unprepared for inclusion of children with SENs in their usual classes; they report that they do not know how to communicate with their children about the particularities of dealing with children with special needs.
- ✓ The school from Moldova focuses on academic content and teachers are following this principle. In relation to students with SENs, the main goal should be their own progress and communication and relational aspects, and it is difficult for the teachers to detach themselves from the academic content.
- ✓ By including children with SENs, many teachers and managers believe that teachers have been assigned new responsibilities, activities for which they are not remunerated and should intervene in this regard. Some specialists believe that teachers should not be extra paid for the presence of children with SENs, but other forms of remuneration should be found. At the same time, they stressed that teachers should be paid fairly for their work.

- ✓ In many institutions in Chisinau there is a reticence regarding the inclusion of children with SEN. The main reasons mentioned by the specialists are:
  - An over-solicitor of some institutions, a large number of students;
  - The existence of models of inclusive education, which determines parents with children with SENs to opt for these institutions;
  - Difficulties in cooperating of multidisciplinary teams in facilitating inclusion;
  - In recent years inclusive education civil society activities have been present more outside the capital.

#### *Specialized resources in inclusive education*

- ✓ According to the study data, we conclude that most institutions have ST (81% of teachers have confirmed their presence in their institution), and their activity is relatively highly appreciated.
- ✓ There are also aspects of ST activity that dislike other teachers, or even erroneous perceptions about ST attributions:
  - The exclusive character of ST attributions - ST would have been perceived that is only working with children with SENs, ignoring the rest of the students.
  - Suspected involvement of ST – attendance at more hours to oversee teaching techniques than to assist children with SEN.
  - Disruption of classes – children would draw more attention to what the support teacher discusses with the student with SENs, than on the topic taught by the teacher.
  - Incorrect perception of the concept of inclusion and activity of the ST – this is seen by some teachers not as a teacher’s partner in assisting the child with SENs but as a unit of staff who, outside the study process, must exercise its attributions in helping children with SENs.
- ✓ The PAS activity is perceived positively as an important actor in the progress made in the field of schooling of children with SENs.
- ✓ Among the weak points highlighted would be:
  - Incomplete involvement of PAS – perceptions that PAS is less involved in helping teachers with subjects that are not considered important (other than Romanian, mathematics).
  - The general character of PAS’s recommendations, which are not applicable in particular cases of working with students with SENs. On the other hand, specialists argue that each child with SENs has specific needs and the provision of models could be even detrimental to these children.
  - Some specialists are drawing attention to the broad spectrum of tasks that PAS currently entails, some of which, as well as private activities, are better attributed to the institution. PAS can focus more on monitoring and enhancing the quality of educational services offered to children with SENs.

- ✓ The personal assistant service, most often provided by a familiar member of the child with SENs. Attendance at classes is perceived differently by teachers. Some teachers refuse to receive the assistant to the classes, stating that they do not feel comfortable conducting the lessons in the presence of their personal assistant. Those who encourage it to do so because the teacher cannot always give the necessary attention to the student with SENs and often do not know how to intervene in critical situations.

### *General Assessments*

- ✓ Significant progress has been made over inclusive education in recent years:
  - Legislation provides access for all children to basic education;
  - A significant proportion of children with disabilities were included in common educational environments;
  - School institutions receive financial support for inclusive education;
  - Psycho-pedagogical assistance structures (RCPA/PAS) and specialized services within the educational institutions were created: the support teacher and resource centers.
- ✓ The study identified the following major challenges for inclusive education in Moldova:
  - Ensuring the conditions for inclusion of children with SENs in educational institutions;
  - The need to shift from quantitative indicators (the percentage of pupils with SENs attending an educational institution) to qualitative indicators (the progress that these students manage to make);
  - The assumption by state institutions of inclusive education by providing human and financial resources depending on children's needs;
  - The need to ensure the continuity of the educational path of students with SENs.
- ✓ And, obviously, the general shortcomings of the education system at present, such as staff shortages and fluctuations, the aging of the teaching staff, the inadequate salary levels of staff and the endowment of institutions, also have difficulties in implementing inclusive education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Continue training and information efforts:
  - Further promotion of the concept of inclusive education with emphasis on:
    - The human character of the approach;
    - The fact that benefits from the implementation do not have only children with SENs, but also the other involved parties (students, teachers, parents);
    - Combating prejudices in general towards children with SEN and in particular intellectual deficiencies;
      - The fact that potential cases of negative impact on the learning process due to the inclusion of children with SENs are due to the transition to the implementation of the concept (marked by inappropriate perceptions and approaches as well as incomplete conditions), and does not signify the lack of an inclusive approach.
    - Inclusive education must be part of parental education programs.
  - Continuing and stepping up the training of the staff in the education system on the particularities of inclusive education, namely:
    - Teacher training on the particularities of work with children with SENs;
    - Combating perceptions that the regular teaching staff should be deprived of the additional effort of classifying a child with SENs;
    - Promoting the idea that the individualized approach should be applied to all students, not in particular, and only to children with SEN;
    - Explaining the interdisciplinary and inter-institutional character of inclusive education as well as the attributions of teachers, ST, PAS, personal assistants, psychologists, speech therapists in implementing inclusive education.
- ✓ Continue efforts to adequately endow the institutions.
- ✓ Periodic re-evaluation of the attributions of different actors at community and institution level and their possible adjustment (by studying success and failure to integrate children with SEN)
- ✓ Developing systems for monitoring and evaluating the inclusive education process by complementing the quantitative indicators (the percentage of students with SEN attending an educational institution) with qualitative indicators (the progress these students are able to make);
- ✓ The general reform of the education system, nowadays resulting in the elimination of the general deficiencies (deficit and fluctuation of staff, the aging of the teaching staff, the inadequate salary level of the staff and the endowment of the institutions) are also necessary conditions for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

A fi mai diferit de ceilalti, nu înseamnă a fi mai rău. Înțelegându-ți posibilitățile, șansele și forțele, poți realiza cu mult mai mult decât ceilalți. Limitele ce te opresc în a fi ca ceilalți sunt doar în mintea ta. Nu asculta ce spun alții, nu poți fi exact ca toți, nu trebuie să fii așa. Cel mai important e să te simți liber așa cum ești, să-ți fie bine așa.

*„To be different from others does not mean to be bad, by understanding your possibilities, chances and forces you can do much more than others. The limits that stop you in being like others are just in your mind. Do not listen to others, you cannot be like everybody, you do not have to be like them. The most important is to feel free the way you are, so you could feel good this way”*

Source: Student, 8<sup>th</sup> grade

### *List of documents subject to analysis in the study*

#### *Normative Documents*

Code of Education of Republic of Moldova

Strategy of Education 2020

Program of development of inclusive education in Republic of Moldova for the years 2011-2020

Action Plan for the years 2015-2017 for the implementation of the Development Program of inclusive education in Republic of Moldova for the years 2011-2020

Action Plan for the years 2018 – 2020 for the implementation of the Development Program of Inclusive Education in Republic of Moldova for the years 2011 – 2020 (Project)

LAW Nr. 60 on social inclusion of the person with disabilities from 30.03.2012

Strategy on the child protection for the years 2014-2020

Strategy and National Plan of Reforming the residential of caring the child for the years 2007-2012

Methodology on the organization and functioning of the Resource Center for Inclusive Education from the educational institution, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

METHODOLOGICAL REPORTS on the activity of the support teacher in the general educational institutions, 2018

*Studies and materials*

Inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational institution, UNICEF, Chişinău 2012

Knowledge, attitudes and practices of families in the area of care and early development of children, UNICEF, 2009

Main education from the perspective of child-friendly school, UNICEF, Chişinău 2009

Guide for teachers: Socio-educational inclusion of children with disabilities in kindergarten, Maria Vrânceanu, Viorica Pelivan

Course Unit: Inclusive Education, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of Republic of Moldova, Lumos, Chişinău 2017

Inclusion of students with SENs in community schools, Sociological study, Ludmila Malcoci, Inga Chistruga-Sinchevici, Chişinău 2015

Sociological study "Main Education in Republic of Moldova", Institute of Public Policies, 2008

## List of figures

<b>Figure 2. Access to the educational system (pre-university) of various categories of children</b> .....	16
<b>Figure 3. Equal treatment of students in institutions: assessment of students</b> .....	18
<b>Figure 4. Placing children with problems in development: assessments of carers and teachers</b> .....	20
<b>Figure 5. Options for placing children with developmental problems: assessments of teachers depending on the presence of children with disabilities in school</b> .....	22
<b>Figure 6. Options for placing children with developmental problems, in evolution: carers with children of 0-7 years old</b> .....	23
<b>Figure 7. General assessments concerning the inclusion of children with disabilities in the pre-university educational institutions</b> .....	25
<b>Figure 8. Assessments on inclusion of children with various types of disabilities in the pre-university institution</b> .....	29
<b>Figure 9. Acceptance of children with various types of disabilities in the pre-university educational institutions in comparison by audiences (% of acceptances)</b> .....	31
<b>Figure 10. Inclusion of children with special needs in the pre-university educational institutions (% answers "Yes")</b> .....	32
<b>Figure 11. Inclusion of children with various types of disabilities in their own (carers' children's, teachers', students') classrooms</b> .....	33
<b>Figure 12. Advantages, in the opinion of carers, of including children with special needs in pre-university education institutions</b> .....	36
<b>Figure 13. The advantages, in the opinion of teachers, of including children with special needs in pre-university educational institutions (over 1% answers)</b> .....	37
<b>Figure 14. Disadvantages of including children with special needs in pre-university educational institutions in the opinion of carers</b> .....	40
<b>Figure 15. Disadvantages of the inclusion of children with special needs in the pre-university educational institutions in the opinion of teachers (disadvantages that were mentioned by more than 1% of teachers)</b> .....	43
<b>Figure 16. The level of preparation of mainstream schools for the integration of children with special needs (% of Yes answers, schools are ready)</b> .....	45
<b>Figure 17. The level of preparation of mainstream schools for integration of children with special needs concerning the issues ...: Teachers' opinion</b> .....	48
<b>Figure 18. The level of preparation of mainstream schools for the integration of children with special needs under the issues...: Carers' opinion</b> .....	49
<b>Figure 19. The share of teachers who participated in training on the integration of children with special needs in schools and assessing the degree of preparation</b> .....	50
<b>Figure 20. Assessing the level of preparedness for the integration of children with special needs in school</b> .....	50
<b>Figure 21. Existence of the support teacher for children with special needs and their efficiency in the opinion of the teachers</b> .....	57



<b>Figure 22. Sources of information of carers on the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream educational institutions.</b> .....	63
<b>Figure 23. Causes of discrimination reported by teachers</b> .....	69
<b>Figure 24. Share of respondents who know cases of school failure and causes of abandonment</b> .....	92
<b>Figure 25. The appreciation by carers and teachers of the degree of violence in educational institutions</b> .....	93
<b>Figure 26. The degree of aggression, intimidation and discrimination in educational institutions: appraisals of teachers</b> .....	94
<b>Figure 27. The presence of aggression, intimidation and discrimination in educational institutions: assessments of carers</b> .....	95
<b>Figure 28. The degree of aggression, intimidation and discrimination in educational institutions: assessents of students</b> .....	96

*List of tables*

<b>Table 1. Equal treatment of students in the institutions: by categories of students</b> .....	19
<b>Table 2. Acceptance of children with disabilities in mainstream schools: by categories of students</b> .....	24
<b>Table 3. Advantages and disadvantages of inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream educational institutions</b> .....	35
<b>Table 4. Data on beneficiaries of boarding-houses</b> .....	79

## ANNEXES

### *Annex 1. Profile of the study respondents*

**Table 5. Structure of sample among teachers**

		Number	%
Total		408	100%
Share of children with SENs:	Less than 4%	203	50%
	More than 4%	205	50%
Cycle:	Elementary school	74	18%
	Secondary school	204	50%
	Highschool classes	130	32%
Class masters:	Yes	264	65%
	No	144	35%
Work experience:	10 years or less	75	19%
	11-20 years old	99	25%
	More than 20 years old	228	57%
Sex of respondent:	Male	49	12%
	Female	359	88%
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	331	81%
	Russian	77	19%
Residence environment:	Urban	169	41%
	Rural	239	59%

**Table 6. Structure of sample among students**

		Number	%
Total		611	100%
Share of children with CES:	Less than 4%	325	53%
	More than 4%	286	47%
Sex of the respondent:	Male	255	42%
	Female	356	58%
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	469	77%
	Russian	142	23%
Residence environment:	Urban	284	47%
	Rural	327	54%
Year of studies, class:	6th grade	149	24%
	7th grade	143	23%
	8th grade	154	25%
	9th grade	165	27%

**Table 7. Structure of sample among carers**

		Number	%
	Total	1298	100%
Number of children under 18 years old in the household:	One child	500	39%
	Two children	574	44%
	Three children and more	224	17%
Children under 7 years old in the household:	Not more than 7 years old	711	55%
	There are children under 7 years old	588	45%
Children of 7-15 years old in the household:	No children of 7-15 years old	246	19%
	There are children of 7-15 years old	1053	81%
Children of 16-18 years old in the household:	No children of 16-18 years old	1103	85%
	There are children of 16-18 years old	196	15%
Age of mother of children:	18-30 years old	331	26%
	31-40 years old	689	54%
	40+ years old	257	20%
Age of father of children:	18-30 years old	162	14%
	31-40 years old	595	50%
	40+ years old	438	37%
Education of the children's mother:	Incomplete secondary education <sup>27</sup>	283	22%
	Secondary education	229	18%
	Vocational secondary education	246	19%
	Secondary education (including college)	517	41%
Education of the children's father:	Incomplete secondary education	248	21%
	Secondary education	214	18%
	Vocational secondary education	325	28%
	Secondary education (including college)	393	33%
Sex of the respondent:	male	256	20%
	female	1043	80%
Residence environment:	urban	503	39%
	rural	796	61%
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Russian	1087	84%
	Russian	212	16%
Socio-economic statute:	Low	412	32%
	Average	402	31%
	High	485	37%

<sup>27</sup> Secondary education or less, including primary school or without education

## Annex 2. Tables

**Table 1. Level of access in the educational system (preuniversity) of various children categories: by categories of carers**

		Average value of the summary synthetic coefficient <sup>28</sup> max. 7, min (-7)
Total:		4.4
Number of children under 18 years old:	One child	4.0
	Two children	4.7
	Three children and more	4.9
Children under 7 years old in the household:	No children under 7 years old	4.5
	There are children under 7 years old	4.4
Children of 7-15 years old in household:	No children of 7-15 years old	4.0
	There are children of 7-15 years old	4.6
Children of 16-18 years old in the household:	No children of 16-18 years old	4.4
	There are children of 16-18 years old	4.5
Age of the children's mother:	18-30 years old	4.4
	31-40 years old	4.6
	40+ years old	4.1
Age of children's father:	18-30 years old	4.1
	31-40 years old	4.5
	40+ years old	4.4
Education of children's mother:	Incomplete secondary education	4.9
	Secondary education	4.7
	Vocational secondary education	4.7
	Secondary education (including college)	3.7
Education of children's father:	Incomplete secondary education	4.8
	Secondary education	4.6
	Vocational secondary education	4.8
	Secondary education (including college)	3.5
Sex of the respondent:	male	4.5
	female	4.4
Residence environment:	urban	3.7
	rural	4.9
Language of communication:	Romanian	4.6
	Russian	3.9
Socio-economic statute:	low	4.8
	average	4.6
	high	3.9

**Table 2. Options for placing children with problems in development: on categories of carers**

<sup>28</sup> Represent the sum of answers for the 7 compared categories (see diagram 1), where to the answers that for certain (have free access) is attributed the value 1, more than yes than it is not attributed the value 0,5, more it is no than yes as a value (-0,5) and no, for sure the value (-1). The coefficient can vary in the limit 7 and (-7). The equal average value with 7 would mean that all respondents assessed at all categories that children „for sure they have free access”, and the value (-7) would mean that all respondents have appreciated at all categories that children „for sure does not have free access”.

		To care in the family	To place in an institution (boarding house, house for children)	To give him to the kindergarten / school from the locality	Others	DK/NA
<b>Total 2012</b>		54,9%	22,6%	17,2%	,4%	4,8%
<b>Total 2018</b>		61,7%	9,5%	23,1%	1,2%	4,4%
<b>Number of children under 18 years old:</b>	One child	57,6%	9,9%	25,9%	1,2%	5,4%
	Two children	62,7%	9,4%	23,3%	1,1%	3,4%
	Three children or more	68,1%	8,9%	16,6%	1,5%	4,9%
<b>Children under 7 years old in the household:</b>	No children under 7 years old	62,1%	9,8%	22,9%	1,1%	4,1%
	There are children under 7 years old	61,2%	9,2%	23,4%	1,4%	4,9%
<b>Children of 7-15 years old in household:</b>	No children of 7-15 years old	54,3%	7,5%	31,4%	2,2%	4,6%
	There are children of 7-15 years old	63,4%	10,0%	21,2%	1,0%	4,4%
<b>Children of 16-18 years old in the household:</b>	No children of 16-18 years old	60,6%	9,4%	24,2%	1,2%	4,7%
	There are children of 16-18 years old	67,7%	10,2%	17,4%	1,6%	3,1%
<b>Age of the children's mother:</b>	18-30 years old	60,1%	7,5%	26,4%	1,6%	4,4%
	31-40 years old	61,4%	11,1%	22,1%	0,9%	4,5%
	40+ years old	65,0%	8,2%	21,3%	1,6%	3,9%
<b>Age of children's father:</b>	18-30 years old	64,0%	6,4%	21,3%	1,4%	6,9%
	31-40 years old	61,4%	10,7%	23,4%	0,9%	3,5%
	40+ years old	61,7%	9,7%	22,1%	1,7%	4,8%
<b>Education of children's mother:</b>	Incomplete secondary education	69,0%	8,0%	19,3%	0,4%	3,2%
	Secondary education	66,5%	6,8%	20,3%	1,0%	5,4%
	Vocational secondary education	64,1%	8,9%	20,6%	2,2%	4,1%
	Secondary education (including college)	54,9%	11,8%	27,6%	1,4%	4,3%
<b>Education of children's father:</b>	Incomplete secondary education	65,7%	9,8%	19,5%	1,8%	3,2%
	Secondary education	67,4%	7,1%	18,3%	0,5%	6,7%
	Vocational secondary education	60,1%	11,1%	22,2%	1,3%	5,2%
	Secondary education (including college)	57,7%	10,9%	27,2%	1,3%	2,9%
<b>Sex of the respondent:</b>	male	61,9%	10,7%	18,7%	1,2%	7,5%
	female	61,6%	9,2%	24,2%	1,2%	3,7%
<b>Residence environment:</b>	urban	59,5%	9,2%	25,8%	1,0%	4,5%
	rural	63,1%	9,7%	21,4%	1,4%	4,4%
<b>Language of communication:</b>	Romanian	62,5%	8,9%	23,1%	1,1%	4,5%
	Russian	57,8%	12,7%	23,4%	2,1%	4,0%
	low	68,0%	6,9%	19,5%	1,0%	4,6%

		To care in the family	To place in an institution (boarding house, house for children)	To give him to the kindergarten / school from the locality	Others	DK/NA
<b>Socio-economic statute:</b>	average	57,3%	11,9%	25,1%	1,2%	4,5%
	high	60,0%	9,8%	24,6%	1,4%	4,2%

**Table 3. Options for placement of children with developmental problems: by categories of teachers**

		To care in the family	To place in an institution (boarding house, house for children)	To enroll in kindergarten/school from locality	Others	DK/NA
<b>Total 2013</b>		<b>31,4%</b>	<b>13,3%</b>	<b>46,7%</b>	<b>4,0%</b>	<b>4,7%</b>
<b>Total 2018</b>		<b>24,0%</b>	<b>24,3%</b>	<b>40,7%</b>	<b>1,7%</b>	<b>9,3%</b>
<b>The share of children with SENs:</b>	<b>Less than 4%</b>	25,6%	24,1%	38,4%	1,5%	10,3%
	<b>More than 4%</b>	22,4%	24,4%	42,9%	2,0%	8,3%
<b>Teachers:</b>	<b>Elementary school</b>	33,8%	20,3%	37,8%	2,8%	5,4%
	<b>Secondary school</b>	23,0%	23,0%	44,6%	1,5%	7,8%
	<b>Highschool</b>	20,0%	28,5%	36,2%	1,5%	13,8%
<b>Are you a teacher master:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	26,5%	26,9%	37,5%	1,6%	7,6%
	<b>No</b>	19,4%	19,4%	46,5%	2,1%	12,5%
<b>Work experience:</b>	<b>1-10 years old</b>	20,0%	32,0%	34,7%	0,0%	13,3%
	<b>11-20 years old</b>	19,2%	23,2%	41,4%	4,0%	12,1%
	<b>More than 20 years old</b>	26,8%	22,8%	42,1%	1,3%	7,0%
<b>Sex:</b>	<b>Male</b>	16,3%	30,6%	42,9%	0,0%	10,2%
	<b>Female</b>	25,1%	23,4%	40,4%	2,0%	9,2%
<b>Language of communication:</b>	<b>Moldovan/Romanian</b>	17,8%	26,3%	45,0%	1,8%	9,1%
	<b>Russian</b>	50,6%	15,6%	22,1%	1,3%	10,4%
<b>Residence area:</b>	<b>Urban</b>	30,8%	23,1%	30,8%	2,4%	13,0%
	<b>Rural</b>	19,2%	25,1%	47,7%	1,2%	6,7%

**Table 4. Indexes<sup>29</sup> of general assessment on inclusion of children with disabilities in preuniversity educational institutions : by categories of carers**

		Children with development deficiencies (in general)	Children with physical deficiencies	Children with psychiatric deficiencies	The average index
<b>Total:</b>		<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>-0.24</b>	<b>0.15</b>
Number of children under 18 years old:	One child	0.19	0.16	-0.25	0.09
	Two children	0.23	0.18	-0.24	0.17
	Three children and more	0.21	0.21	-0.23	0.20
Children under 7 years old in the household:	No children under 7 years old	0.21	0.15	-0.25	0.11
	There are children under 7 years old	0.21	0.20	-0.23	0.18
Children of 7-15 years old in household:	No children of 7-15 years old	0.24	0.22	-0.22	0.23
	There are children of 7-15 years old	0.20	0.16	-0.25	0.11
Children of 16-18 years old in the household:	No children of 16-18 years old	0.21	0.17	-0.24	0.14
	There are children of 16-18 years old	0.22	0.20	-0.23	0.19
Age of the children's mother:	18-30 years old	0.21	0.20	-0.24	0.17
	31-40 years old	0.20	0.17	-0.26	0.12
	40+ years old	0.21	0.14	-0.21	0.14
Age of children's father:	18-30 years old	0.20	0.20	-0.25	0.16
	31-40 years old	0.20	0.16	-0.24	0.12
	40+ years old	0.20	0.17	-0.25	0.13
Education of children's mother:	Incomplete secondary education	0.16	0.14	-0.26	0.04
	Secondary education	0.28	0.18	-0.19	0.28
	Vocational secondary education	0.14	0.15	-0.31	-0.02
	Secondary education (including college)	0.22	0.22	-0.22	0.22
Education of children's father:	Incomplete secondary education	0.19	0.15	-0.26	0.08
	Secondary education	0.25	0.16	-0.22	0.19
	Vocational secondary education	0.18	0.16	-0.27	0.08
	Secondary education (including college)	0.20	0.20	-0.21	0.19
Sex of the respondent:	male	0.19	0.14	-0.22	0.10
	female	0.21	0.19	-0.24	0.16
Residence environment:	urban	0.23	0.22	-0.17	0.28
	rural	0.20	0.15	-0.28	0.07
Language of communication:	Romanian	0.20	0.16	-0.26	0.11
	Russian	0.22	0.22	-0.17	0.28
Socio-economic statute:	low	0.23	0.17	-0.22	0.18
	average	0.17	0.15	-0.28	0.04
	high	0.22	0.21	-0.22	0.22

**Table 5. Indexes<sup>2</sup> of general assessment on inclusion of children with disabilities in the pre-university educational institutions: by categories of teachers**

<sup>29</sup> Represents the average of answers, where for answers completely agree (that children with deficiencies to educate together with other children) are attributed the value 1, rather agree is attributed the value 0,5, neither ..., nor ... value 0, rather I do not agree the value (-0,5) and they do not agree the value (-1). Coefficient can vary in the limit 3 and (-3). The average value equal with 3 would mean that all respondents for all types of deficiencies are completely agree that children with deficiencies to be educated together with other children and the value (-3) would mean that all respondents are categorically against for all types of deficiencies.



		Children with deficiencies in development (in general)	Children with physical deficiencies	Children with psychiatric disabilities	Average Index
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>-0.41</b>	<b>0.24</b>
Cycle:	Elementary school	0.28	0.37	-0.38	0.27
	Secondary school	0.32	0.42	-0.41	0.32
	High school	0.28	0.24	-0.42	0.10
Master teacher:	Yes	0.27	0.32	-0.42	0.18
	No	0.34	0.40	-0.39	0.35
Work experience:	Under 10 years old	0.28	0.30	-0.36	0.21
	11-20 years old	0.21	0.28	-0.46	0.04
	More than 20 years old	0.33	0.39	-0.40	0.32
Sex:	Male	0.33	0.25	-0.44	0.14
	Female	0.29	0.36	-0.40	0.25
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	0.35	0.41	-0.42	0.34
	Russian	0.05	0.07	-0.36	-0.24
Residence area:	Urban	0.24	0.29	-0.49	0.05
	Rural	0.33	0.38	-0.36	0.35

**Table 6. Indexes<sup>30</sup> of acceptance of children with disabilities in the class of their own children: by categories of carers**

		Average
<b>Total:</b>		<b>0.15</b>
Number of children under 18 years old:	One child	-0.01
	Two children	0.24
	Three children and more	0.31
Children under 7 years old in the household:	No children under 7 years old	0.01
	There are children under 7 years old	0.28
Children of 7-15 years old in household:	No children of 7-15 years old	0.16
	There are children of 7-15 years old	0.15
Children of 16-18 years old in the household:	No children of 16-18 years old	0.15
	There are children of 16-18 years old	0.15
Age of the children's mother:	18-30 years old	0.00
	31-40 years old	0.40
	40+ years old	0.11
	18-30 years old	0.07
Age of the children's father:	31-40 years old	0.14
	40+ years old	0.37
	18-30 years old	0.22
	31-40 years old	0.16
Sex of the respondent:	male	0.04
	female	0.18
Residence environment:	urban	0.54
	rural	-0.06
Language of communication:	Romanian	0.10
	Russian	0.35
Socio-economic statute:	low	-0.05
	average	0.09
	high	0.41

<sup>30</sup> Represents the average of answers, where answers „yes, for sure” (would accept that children with deficiencies to educate in the classroom where the children of respondents are studying) is attributed the value 1, „probably yes” is attributed the value 0,5, „probably no” value (-0,5) and „definitely no” the value (-1). The coefficient can vary in the limit 7 and (-7). The equal average value with 7 would mean that all respondents are sure accept that children with deficiencies of all types (plus children from the residential system) can educate together with other children, and the value (-7) would mean that all respondents categorically do not accept.

**Table 7. Indexes<sup>31</sup> of general assessment on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the classes where they teach: by categories of teachers**

		Media
<b>Total</b>		<b>-0.79</b>
Cycle:	Elementary school	-0.57
	Secondary school	-0.66
	High school	-1.10
Master teacher:	Yes	-0.74
	No	-0.88
Work experience:	Under 10 years old	-0.72
	11-20 years old	-1.18
	More than 20 years old	-0.67
Sex:	Male	-0.95
	Female	-0.76
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	-0.61
	Russian	-1.58
Residence area:	Urban	-0.78
	Rural	-0.79

<sup>31</sup> Represents the average of answers, where answers „only advantages” (as a result of including children with deficiencies in the class where the respondent teachers) is attributed the value 1, „more advantages than disadvantages” is attributed the value 0,5, „more disadvantages than advantages” the value (-0,5) and „only disadvantages” the value (-1). The coefficient can vary in the limit 6 and (-6). The average value equal with 6 would mean that all respondents see only advantages as a result of inclusion of children with deficiencies of all types, and the value (-6) would mean that all respondents see only disadvantages.

**Table 8. Indexes<sup>32</sup> of assessment on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the class where they are studying: by categories of students**

		Media
<b>Total</b>		<b>-0.49</b>
Genul:	Male	-0.37
	Female	-0.60
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	-0.38
	Russian	-1.07
Residence area:	Urban	-0.29
	Rural	-0.61
Year of studies, grade:	6th grade	-0.59
	7th grade	-0.44
	8th grade	-0.96
	9th grade	-0.02

**Table 9. Level of preparation of mainstream school for the integration of children with special needs: by categories of teachers**

		2012			2018		
		Yes	No	DK/NA	Yes	No	DK/NA
<b>Total</b>		<b>17,8%</b>	<b>78,5%</b>	<b>3,7%</b>	<b>15,0%</b>	<b>73,5%</b>	<b>11,5%</b>
Cycle:	Elementary school	18,8%	77,1%	4,2%	10,8%	82,4%	6,8%
	Secondary school	15,6%	82,1%	2,3%	15,7%	72,1%	12,3%
	High school	19,9%	75,0%	5,1%	16,2%	70,8%	13,1%
Master teacher:	Yes	17,2%	78,8%	4,0%	12,9%	76,5%	10,6%
	No	19,1%	77,9%	3,1%	18,8%	68,1%	13,2%
Work experience:	Under 10 years old	18,8%	76,0%	5,2%	22,7%	70,7%	6,7%
	11-20 years old	20,2%	73,8%	6,0%	18,2%	68,7%	13,1%
	More than 20 years old	16,4%	81,3%	2,2%	10,5%	77,2%	12,3%
Sex:	Male	18,3%	78,3%	3,3%	0,0%	87,8%	12,2%
	Female	17,7%	78,6%	3,8%	17,0%	71,6%	11,4%
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	16,4%	80,6%	3,0%	15,7%	72,5%	11,8%
	Russian	24,0%	69,3%	6,7%	11,7%	77,9%	10,4%
Residence area:	Urban	12,7%	82,7%	4,7%	16,0%	71,0%	13,0%
	Rural	20,8%	76,1%	3,1%	14,2%	75,3%	10,5%

<sup>32</sup> Represents the average of answers, where for the answers „believe that it could be good for all children” (as a result of inclusion of children with deficiencies in the class where the respondents studies) is attributed the value 1, „I believe that it would be bad for these children” or „I believe that it would be bad for healthy children” is attributed the value -0,5, „I believe that it would be bad for all children” the value (-1). The coefficient can vary in the limit 6 and (-6). The average value equals with 6 would mean that all the respondents see advantages as a result of inclusion of children with deficiencies of all types plus children from the residential institutions, and the value (-6) would mean that all respondents see only disadvantages.

**Table 10. Training of teachers for integration of children with special needs in school: by categories of teachers**

		Yes	No	DK/NA
<b>Total</b>		42.5%	57.3%	.2%
Cycle:	Elementary school	45.8%	54.2%	
	Secondary school	38.7%	61.3%	
	High school	44.9%	54.4%	.7%
Master teacher:	Yes	42.7%	56.9%	.4%
	No	42.0%	58.0%	
Work experience:	Under 10 years old	39.6%	60.4%	
	11-20 years old	33.3%	66.7%	
	More than 20 years old	47.1%	52.4%	.4%
Sex:	Male	26.7%	73.3%	
	Female	45.2%	54.5%	.3%
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	49.7%	50.0%	.3%
	Russian	10.7%	89.3%	
Residence area:	Urban	43.3%	56.0%	.7%
	Rural	42.0%	58.0%	

**Table 11. Incidence of cases of discrimination in school where the respondent works: by categories of teachers**

		2012	2018	increase 2018 compared to 2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	10,4%	<b>18,6%</b>	8,2%
Cycle:	Elementary school	7,3%	14,9%	7,6%
	Secondary school	9,2%	16,2%	7,0%
	Highschool	14,0%	24,6%	10,6%
Teacher masters:	Yes	9,1%	22,0%	12,9%
	No	13,0%	12,5%	-0,5%
Work experience:	under 10 years old	13,5%	29,3%	15,8%
	11-20 old	7,1%	17,2%	10,1%
	More than 20 years old	10,2%	15,8%	5,6%
Sex:	Male	11,7%	10,2%	-1,5%
	Female	10,1%	19,8%	9,7%
Language of communication:	Moldovan/Romanian	9,7%	19,0%	9,3%
	Russian	13,3%	16,9%	3,6%
Residence environment:	Urban	8,0%	18,3%	10,3%
	Rural	11,8%	18,8%	7,0%

**Table 12. Advantages of of inclusion of children with special needs in the pre-university educational institution according to teachers**

For other children	2018	2012	For children with special needs	2018	2012
Will become more tolerant	16,2%	19,3%	Socialization	12,7%	23,7%
The other children will become better and more caring	15,2%	37,3%	Social integration	8,8%	
Socialization	6,4%	4,7%	Communication	8,3%	7,9%
Communication	4,4%	2,5%	Will be equal	5,9%	16,8%
Social integration	3,4%		Will feel useful	3,9%	4,2%
Would study better	2,9%		Will become more tolerant	3,4%	1,0%
Will be equal	2,2%	1,2%	Acceptance of peers	3,4%	
Mutual help	2,2%	5,7%	Will have friends	2,5%	3,2%
Adaptation	1,7%	0,5%	The rights will be respected	2,2%	
Will have friends	1,2%	4,2%	Adaptation	2,0%	2,2%
Will become more responsible	1,0%	1,0%	Will have new skills	1,7%	1,7%
Will not be discriminated	0,7%		The other children will become more caring and better	1,5%	0,7%
A better future	0,7%		Would study better	1,5%	3,2%
Will feel better	0,7%		Will develop together	1,5%	8,1%
Will feel useful	0,7%		Will acumulate life experience	1,2%	0,5%
The rights will be respected	0,7%		Will feel better	1,0%	1,5%
Afectivity	0,5%	0,5%	Mutual help	1,0%	4,4%
Will have new skills	0,5%		Will affirm in the society	1,0%	1,5%
Will understand how happy they are	0,5%	1,7%	Will understand how happy they are	1,0%	
Will increase the number of students in the school	0,5%		Self esteem	0,7%	5,2%
Will be more optimistic	0,5%	1,0%	Will not be discriminated	0,7%	
Are formed as personalities	0,5%		Will be motivated	0,7%	1,5%
Are more receptive, more human	0,5%		Would try to become ideal	0,7%	3,5%
Acceptance of peers	0,5%		Have models of behavior in the society	0,7%	
Will be motivated	0,2%	1,0%	Will form as personalities	0,7%	
Example for others	0,2%	0,7%	Would feel, protected, valuable	0,7%	
Will acumulate life experience	0,2%	1,7%	Will receive a more qualitative training	0,5%	
Will develop together	0,2%	4,2%	Will become more responsible	0,5%	
Will respect each other	0,2%	1,7%	Will respect each other	0,2%	0,7%
Experience		0,5%	Will become independent	0,2%	0,7%
			Will be offered more attention	0,2%	0,5%
			A better future		0,7%
			Example for others		0,7%
Others	1,4%	1,0%	Something else	1,0%	1,6%
There are no advantages	13,7%	12,3%	There are no advantages	7,1%	7,4%
DK/NA	24,8%	12,1%	DK/NA	27,5%	10,1%

**Table 13. Disadvantages of including children with special needs in the pre-university educational institutions in the opinion of teachers**

<b>For other children</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>For children with special needs</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2012</b>
Disorganisation of educational process	9,3%		They do not conditions and the necessary environment for development	6,6%	
Will receive more attention	7,6%	9,9%	Will be bullied	5,4%	14,3%
Remains little time for work with other children	7,1%		They are lacking a lot of specialists, the lack of support teachers	4,9%	
Other children cannot study, they are distracting their attention	4,4%		Will receive little attention	3,7%	4,7%
Withdrawing from activity/ withdrawing from classes	3,4%		Will be complexed	3,4%	5,7%
Lacking a lot of specialists, the lack of the teaching staff	2,9%		Incomodity / discomfort	3,4%	
They do not conditions and the necessary environment for development	2,7%		Will be discriminated	3,2%	4,7%
Will not be accepted by others	2,5%	1,5%	Intimidation/neglect	2,9%	
Incomodity / discomfort	2,5%		Remain little time for the work with other children	2,7%	
Will be more difficult with those that have mental deficiencies, are more aggressive	2,5%		Will not be able to learn the information	2,2%	8,6%
Will not be able to learn the information	2,2%	7,9%	Disorganisation of the educational process	2,2%	
Will not succeed to progress	2,2%		Will not be accepted by others	2,0%	3,2%
The others live with the feeling of mercy/pain	1,5%		Will be ashamed of them	1,5%	1,2%
Will feel shy	1,2%	0,5%	The other children cannot study, they are disrupting them	1,5%	
Will be bullied	1,2%	3,5%	Will feel shy	1,2%	2,0%
Will be discriminated	1,2%	1,0%	Feel inferior	1,2%	
Will be complexed	1,2%	1,0%	The society is not educated for accepting the diversity	1,2%	
Is not respecting discipline/ creates problems to other children	1,2%		Do not manage to progress	1,0%	
Intimidation/neglect	1,0%		Will be lonely	0,7%	3,5%
Is adapted with difficulty, some are not integrated	1,0%		Will not be understood	0,7%	1,5%
Are permanently disturbed/ lessons lessons are disrupted	0,7%		Will not be equal	0,7%	
The principle of individuality, is not always respected, has	0,7%		Will not be free	0,5%	1,0%
Will not be understood	0,5%	0,5%	Need a special program	0,5%	1,2%
Will not be receptive	0,5%	0,7%	Will not feel well	0,5%	4,4%
Will not feel good	0,5%	3,7%	Do not have certain skills	0,5%	
Techers are not trained	0,5%		The principle of individuality, is not always respected, has	0,5%	
Do not have certain skills	0,5%		Disrespects discipline / creates problems to other children	0,5%	
The society is not educated for accepting diversity	0,5%		Are marginalized	0,5%	

<b>For other children</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>For children with special needs</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2012</b>
Complication of the teaching process	0,2%	1,0%	Complication of the teaching process	0,2%	0,5%
Will be disturbing	0,2%	3,0%	Will decrease the interest for studies	0,2%	0,7%
Are not prepared psychologically	0,2%	4,4%	Will loose time during classes	0,2%	0,7%
Schools are not prepared	0,2%	0,5%	Will see the negative face of the world	0,2%	1,0%
Will decrease the interest for education	0,2%	2,5%	Will not communicate with each others	0,2%	0,5%
Will loose time during classes	0,2%	3,7%	Less time for answer		1,0%
Disorganization of class	0,2%	1,2%	Will manage		1,5%
Will be ashamed of themselves	0,2%	0,5%	Will not manage physically		1,5%
Less time for answer		5,2%	Are not prepared psychologically		1,0%
Will not be able to focus		3,7%	Schools are not ready		7,2%
Will have more responsibilities		0,7%	Teachers are not trained		1,2%
Will not be respected		1,2%	Will adapt with difficulty		1,0%
Will not communicate with each others		1,0%			
Conflicts		1,0%			
Something else	1,2%	2,1%	Something else	1,6%	2,6%
There are no disadvantages	3,7%	21,5%	There are no disadvantages	3,9%	11,4%
DK/NA	33,3%	19,5%	DK/NA	37,7%	21,5%



### Annex 3. Design of the qualitative research

Table 1. Design of the group discussion

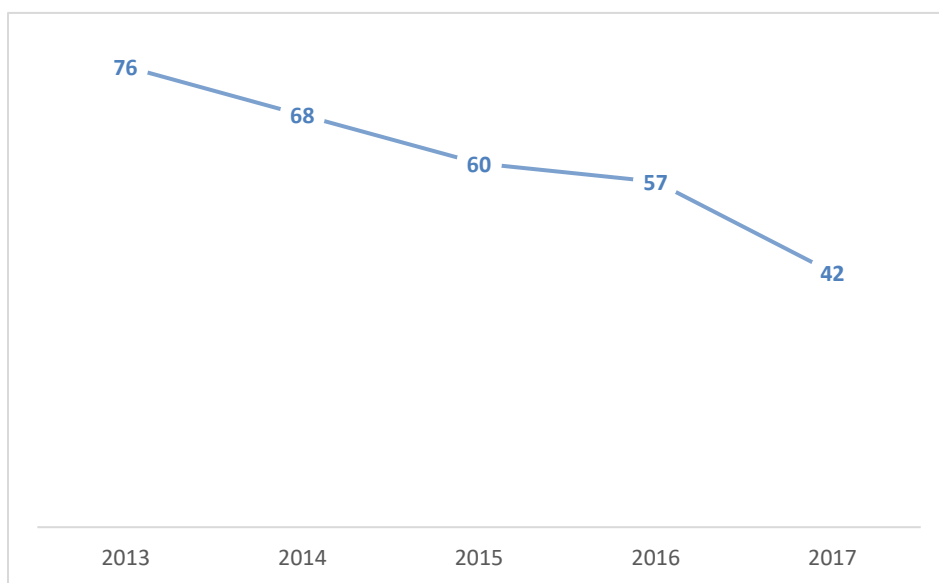
Nr.	Category of respondents	Number of respondents	Data of conducting
<b>Focus groups</b>			
1 FG	Parents of whose children study in the 6-7 grades	8 respondents	17.02.2018
2 FG	Students, 6-7 grades	7 respondents	17.02.2018
3 FG	Parents, whose children study in the 8-9 grades	9 respondents	17.02.2018
4 FG	Students, 8-9 grades	9 respondents	17.02.2018
5 FG	Teachers, secondary school	8 respondents	18.02.2018
6 FG	Teachers, high school	11 respondents	18.02.2018
7 FG	Parents whose children have SENs	9 respondents	25.02.2018
	<b>Total</b>	<b>61 respondents</b>	

Table 2. Design of the in depth interviews with specialists

	Category of respondents	Nr. of interviews (IA)	Description
1	Factors of governmental decision	2	Interviews with the representatives of Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection and RCPA were carried out an.
2	Factors of decision from the local entities, relevant in the area of education	3	Were interviewed three specialists of PAS.
3	Managers of educational institutions	2	Were carried out two interviews with managers of the educational institutions, one from institutions being equipped for children with SENs, another not.
4	Representatives of the civil society	4	Were interviewed representatives of NGOs that work in the domain of education. The selected NGOs: Keystone, Partnership for Every Child, KulturKontakt and Day Center „Come and see”.
5	Boarding house for children with mental deficiencies, Orhei	4	Were carried out interviews with specialists of the boarding house.
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15 IA</b>	

*Annex 4. Nuber of children (0-18 years old) deinstitutionalized from the Boarding House, Orhei, years 2013-2017*

**Figure 1.** Number of children (0-18 years old) deinstitutionalized from the Boarding House Orhei, years 2013-2017



Source: *Elaborated by authors based on the data offered by the administration of the institution*