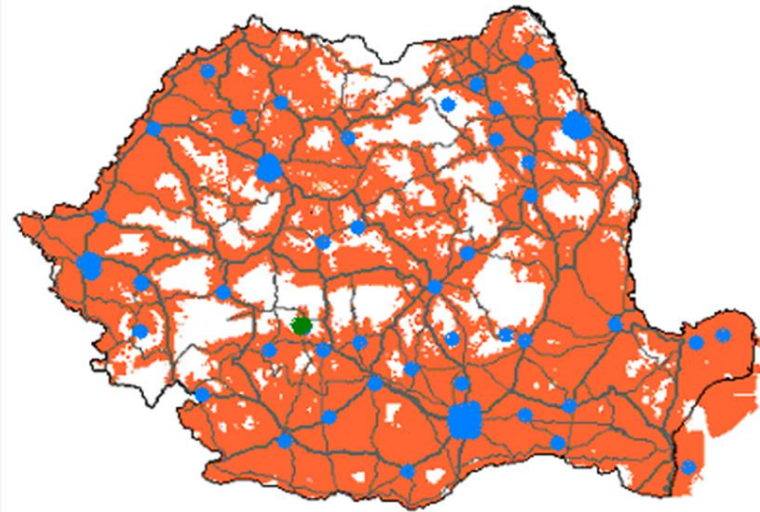


# The situation of Special Needs Education in Romania

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# Presentation structure



- **Background. After 1990...**
- **RENINCO involvement in SEN integration**
- **Educational Inclusion for SEN.**  
**Theoretical approach and piloting**
- **Legislative developments on SEN after 2000**
- **Some statistical data**
- **Lessons learnt and conclusions**

# Background. After 1990...



## Needs : Developments under pressure – 1990 - 1997

- *Improving the life of children in residential institutions and special schools*
- *Developing (new) training for professionals - psychology, pedagogy, sociology, social work...Diseminate **INFORMATION and TRAININGS***
- *Starting (new) research in special education...*

### The start:

- *An action-research on integrated community education for children with special needs took place (1993 – 1997), mainly in two towns (Timisoara and Cluj). The two pilot projects were focussed both on special classes and ordinary classes (**individual integration**) and thus had explored *two new ways for the education of children with disabilities - outside the special schools – and the idea of itinerant teachers.**
- **UNICEF, UNESCO and Education Ministry** involvement in SEN integration

# Steps to inclusion

- UN Convention on the Children Rights, 1990
- Seminar Handicap and Education, 1991
- The movement to INTEGRATION – RENINCO Association – 1993-1998
- UNICEF role – Inclusion from 1995 (training of trainers)
- Developing Integration Pilot Programs –(1993- 2000)
- 1995-2016 - Information and training materials on inclusive education
- 2003-2006 PHARE project for Inclusion – Ministry of Education,— National Movement for Inclusion

# Steps to inclusion

- **1995- 2016** - Developing practices for inclusive education (trainings, translations, elaboration of materials, workshops, conferences, etc.) – **UNICEF**
- **2000**, support teachers, schools counsellors and Resource Centres and Educational Assistance in each county
- **2002**, A new perspective in evaluation of children with disabilities (interministerial decision)
- **2002**, Curriculum for children with severe disabilities – RENINCO
- Translation and adaptation of International Classification of Health and Disability (**2006, 2011**)

## 1995 – The first Education Law after 1989

- Important new general education principles: democratic education, the differentiation of education, the pluralism in education, educational alternatives possible.
- It had a whole chapter on special education and had introduced the new concept of *special educational needs*...
- A wider range of educational opportunities for children with disabilities:
  - Special schools;
  - Special classes in ordinary schools
  - Individual integration in ordinary classes
- The school integration (integrated education) idea for children with disabilities is there...
- The *itinerant teacher* was introduced in the *Teachers Statute Law in 1997*...

# Major contribution of **professionals and civil society**

## RENINCO involvement in SEN integration

- **RENINCO** was at the beginning an **informal structure of collaboration** for seminars, meetings and experience sharing since **1994**, inside the framework of the two pilot projects – initiated and coordinated by the Ministry of Education, with UNICEF support.
- **RENINCO** became an **independent nonprofit organization** in March 1998, with **UNICEF** support
- **Autumn 1998** - the publication of the ***Integrated education for children with disabilities*** (**RENINCO** and **UNICEF**) – a reference for the following decade...
- **Many other** publications, translations, courses and small research focussed on integration... (1998-2007)- **UNICEF** support

# Educational Inclusion for SEN.

## a. Developing theoretical approach and piloting

- In June 1994, when the **UNESCO Salamanca conference** on special needs education has launched the **inclusive education vision worldwide** – the Romanian Education Ministry was represented and active afterwards.
- In Romania, initiated by the Education Ministry, due to UNICEF support, the **Salamanca Declaration was translated**, published and disseminated in **1995**.
- 1995- The inclusive education idea was introduced and has been used in parallel with integrated education...
- The **UNESCO pack on Special Needs in The classroom** was also translated, published and disseminated by the Education Ministry, with UNICEF support (1995-1996).
- **Some pilot projects** on developing inclusive school practices took place between **1996 and 2001**...



# Educational Inclusion for SEN.

## b. Publications, workshops, courses...

UNICEF and other partners developed the publications based from **local experiences**

- Publication of the **booklet and video** *Developing inclusive practices in schools* (1999, UNICEF and Education Ministry). The definition of the inclusive education from here was taken and stipulated in a Romanian Government Decision from 2005.
- *Including the excluded. Meeting Diversity in education – a Case Study from Romania*, published by UNESCO, in 2001;
- *Contribution on Open File on Inclusive Education, UNESCO*, 2001

# Educational Inclusion for SEN.

## c. Publications, studies...

- Publication of the **UNESCO Guide (2001)** *Understanding and responding to children needs in the classroom* (in Romanian, 2002, UNICEF)
- Publication by RENINCO and UNICEF of a *Guide for Support Teachers (2005)*
- *A study on Support Teachers in 8 counties of Romania, 2005-2006* - undertaken by RENINCO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, with UNICEF support (included in a book from 2008);
- A **RENINCO project with OECD and Romanian Education Ministry** on data collection for SEN in schools (2006-2007)
- **A study on Good practices in inclusive education'** - included in the **2008 book on inclusion**
- **Steps towards inclusive education** (UNICEF and RENINCO publication, 2008) –ex. curriculum for severe disabilities

# Educational Inclusion for SEN.

## d.Publications, projects, courses

- **Several training courses on inclusive education** initiated by the **Education Ministry** took place all over Romania –**2000 – 2007** (in various PHARE and other European projects)
- **PETI** – The project on inclusive early education – developed by MECTS
- **Training of trainers for ‘inclusive kindergartens’ – 2009** and **Inclusive networks with kindergartens 2010-2011**(RENINCO, UNICEF and MECTS);,
- **RENINCO publications** from **2010** (with UNICEF support and cooperation with Education Ministry):
  - The educational inclusion of children with special needs
  - Premises for inclusive education in kindergartens
- **Models and ways of educational support in inclusive contexts (2011, RENINCO with French Embassy support)**

# Educational Inclusion for SEN...publication



- *Inclusive education in the kindergarten: dimensions, challenges and solutions, 2012, RENINCO, MEN & UNICEF*
- *Promoting inclusive education in primary education, 2013, RENINCO, UNICEF, MEN*
- *Best practices in kindergarten inclusive education, 2015, RENINCO, UNICEF, MEN*
- *Education for all and for everyone. Access and participation to education of children with disabilities and/or SEN...2015, (ISE, UNICEF, RENINCO) – a research report*
- **2016** – three RENINCO publications with **EEA (Norwegian) funds** (Multidisciplinary intervention methodology for SEN, a Research report on discrimination for SEN, a Multimedia kit for schools on SEN)...

# LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 2000



- 2001 – The first methodology on itinerant and support teachers
- 2005 - a Government Decision on special education issues – the concept of SEN defined and the notion of *integrated special education...*

## New educational structures preparing inclusion:

- - County resource centres for educational assistance
- - School centres for inclusive education...
- The Education Law 2011 – in line with previous developments...
- An integrated approach on assessment and intervention for children with disabilities – 2016 (three ministries)...

# **The County (and Bucharest) Resource Centers for Educational Assistance (after 2**

## **Main activities**



- **The psycho-pedagogical assistance, offered to all children in need – the school counselor work**
- **The logopedic (speech therapy) intervention, inside kindergartens and primary schools**
- **Involving the school mediator, to make the connection between schools and families or communities**
- **Methodological coordination for the School Centres of Inclusive Education...**

# Some statistical data

- The number of children in special schools has continuously declined, between the school year 1998/1999 – 55.237 pupils – and last years (the school year 2014-2015 -25.514 ).
- In the school year 2013-2014 there were 32.060 children with SEN in ordinary schools/inclusive settings (ISE, UNICEF, RENINCO, 2015)
- The number of itinerant and support teachers has increased; only between 2001 and 2006 their number has increased by 1.000).

# Some lessons learnt and conclusions



- *There were (and still are) many barriers towards the implementation of an inclusive vision in education...*
- *Training of all teachers on special needs and inclusion, on child centred pedagogy, together with research on this field and the strengthening of resource (support) units for learning in ordinary schools are key issues...*
- *Developing strong partnerships, involving all stakeholders (parents, teachers, managers, NGOs etc) and lobbying the authorities are also vital and... continuous challenges!*



# Challenges for the future

## Policy and Legislation

- Clarity, coherence, continuity
- Less competitive
- More cooperative practices on school education

### Local policy

- Collaboration and networking with others schools
- Working in team
- Multidisciplinary team for disability
- Training on the job!
- Best practices
- Parents empowerment

# Challenges for the future

## Culture

- **Cooperation and collaboration** with and between parents, professionals, children
- Changes in **social stereotypes and attitudes**
- **Empowerment** and participation of parents
- Positive attitude on **differences and particularities** of development or environments
- **Tolerance and understanding for human value and dignity**
- Value the **individuality**
- **Building more on children self esteem**

# Challenges for the future

## Educational practices

- **School reorganisation and management**, of every day programme
- **Planning individual activities**,
- **Differenciation and individualisation** of methodologies,
- **Alternatives means and tools**, assistive technology and augmentative communication
- **Early intervention**
- **Children** participation and valorisation of all **progress**
- **Professional partnership**, parents partnership,
- **Curriculum transformation** - flexibility and adaptation

All greetings, from parents, professionals, children  
and young people  
from ROMANIA

