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Preparedness of Czech Primary School Teachers for Inclusive Primary Education

Abstract: Preparedness of teachers to work with pupils with a need of supportive measures and especially with pupils who live and grow up in socially excluded localities, is very low. Quantitatively oriented research investigation⁸, carried out in 13 regions of the Czech Republic with the sample size of 2005 respondents, offers results that raise doubts towards the inclusively oriented primary education. The teachers are not ready for the phenomenon. This paper focuses on attitudinal constructs of the teachers which can be understood as evaluative relationship towards the observed phenomenon, whose form reflects the subjectively perceived preparedness. It concerned the orientation in the context of questions of social exclusion and school education, actual form of school environment and, ultimately, their own perception of school inclusion.

Keywords: preparedness, teacher, primary school, child and pupil with special educational needs, inclusive education, research, social exclusion.

⁸ Research Project ESF ECOP called "Sociological monitoring of educational inputs and outputs of children and pupils, including children and pupils with special educational needs in the Czech Republic" (CZ.1.07/1.2.00/47.0009).

I. Introduction, or the Origin of Our Research Topic

The current transformations in the Czech education system which are especially related to primary education pose many questions. The answer to these questions cannot be simply defined and finding the correct and accurate answers is not easy. It is rather impossible because if we want the answers to be unambiguous, we will omit important moments from the school environment which should be covered in the process of inclusion and for which the critical discussion among politicians, experts and teachers and even the parents supports common interests, sometimes even contradictory reactions and aims. A new frequently used term "inclusive education" connects all pupils into a collective educational process, therefore the class of pupils creates a new heterogeneous group. By the presented paper we do not contribute to the "infected" discussion. The aim is to point to the current situation of the (un)preparedness of primary school teachers for designing school inclusion in a practical sense.

The mentioned transformational changes interfere with the differently designed horizontal or vertical schematic processes of school policy. Various professional platforms from experts or fans and even from the parents' group that influence educational policy have been intensively and extensively (in terms of time) involved in individual process activities. The advisory and working bodies of the Government of the Czech Republic have a significant role in these matters, as well as variously formed working groups of individual departments of ministries. The question of mainstream education and the conception of inclusive education in narrower or broader sense is also dealt with by differently defined registered societies (formerly non-governmental organizations) in the Czech Republic. The individual problems of school practice which are subject to transformation have become the focus of the interest and represent an outcome of the particular results of long-term observed intentions, the results of empirical domestic or international research investigation, but they also incline to appeals and criticisms of the European or other global organizations involved in this topic. Here an

overview of a few key changes that are still in the process of being solved are required:

- diagnostic procedure influencing the transfer of pupils outside mainstream education,
- new diagnostic methods and procedures,
- reduction of types of primary schools, therefore, a change in the conception of integration and inclusion,
- support of a school counselling facility,
- competences of a school counselling facility,
- system of further education of pedagogical workers,
- system of supportive measures, their content and scope,
- qualification of teachers to perform their function,
- compulsory pre-school education in the minimum length of one school year,
- conception of pre-school education in preparatory class of the primary school,
- modification of curriculum documents in pre-school and primary education,
- number of pupils in class of integrative, respectively inclusive education.

We oriented our research intention in a different direction in the context of this paper. We dealt with pedagogical workers of primary schools who held various pedagogical positions (functions) in the observed period of time. They are definitely affected by the mentioned changes, but we did not set the mentioned school political problems within the research. The subject became the research question: *Are the pedagogical workers of primary schools prepared for an inclusive education?* This became our central research topic outside the whole research intention with the title *Sociological monitoring of educational inputs and outputs of children and pupils, including children and pupils with special educational needs in the Czech Republic (CZ.1.07/1.2.00/47.0009)* and it contains three research lines, corresponding with the key activities of the research (KA1, KA2, KA3).

Our presented paper is based on the results KA1 with a title *Sociological analysis focused on a comparison of achieved results of pupils with special educational needs in different types of schools*.

The major aim of the realised intention was the sociological monitoring of educational indicators in education of children and pupils, including children and pupils with special educational needs in all regions of the Czech Republic excluding the capital, Prague. More specifically, it was an analysis of objective sociological, pedagogical, special educational and psychological indicators in pre-school and compulsory education, and this with the application of a transdisciplinary approach, with the help of qualitatively and quantitatively oriented strategies. The transdisciplinary basis of the outputs of sociologically oriented research intention is underlined by the fact that the direct participants of our own realization were on one side knowledgeable experts in systemized sciences, such as sociology, pedagogy, social pedagogy, special education, psychology, social work, law, political science and others. On the other hand, participants directly from the environment participated in the process of data collection, so that the methodological cohesion of particular inputs, processes and outputs of empirical data was ensured. Subsequently, the data was subject to proper process activities according to the methodological standards of the chosen research orientation and it was published in the following outcomes: Kaleja and Zezulková, 2015a, Kaleja, Zezulková 2015b, Kaleja, 2015, Zezulková, 2015.

II. Who Is Affected by Inclusive Education and How

A child in the context of the educational trajectory is an individual attending pre-school education (kindergarten, a preparatory class of a primary school). In the context of the family environment, a child is a person who is generally considered a child. In the social context a child is considered an individual that has not reached adulthood (18 years of age). A pupil is an individual participating in a state-guaranteed nine-year compulsory school attendance and/or participating in secondary school education (ac-

ording to the Education Act). The educational law regulating the education of children, pupils and students except tertiary education was based on the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic until 2014 (sc. White Paper, 2001), while from the beginning of 2015 the scope of the education policy with its strategic priorities has been formulated in the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020. For a brief overview we will state only a few key changes of school practice, which are introduced by Strategy 2020, where the emphasis is placed on the following triad of areas in education.

1. Improvement of the quality of education, pedagogical competence of teachers and effective management of the educational system by:
 - innovation of educational programmes,
 - preparation of teachers for these changes (pre-gradual preparation and also further education),
 - completing the carrier system and standards of the teachers' profession,
 - rational equipment of schools with necessary educational means,
 - management of changes which will accompany these innovations, etc.

2. Development of the personality of the educated, and their equipment with positive human and civic attitudes by:
 - availability and permeability of all levels of schools for all social groups,
 - support of participation in early intervention and early phases of pre-school education, especially for children and pupils with a need of supportive measures, and also for their parents,
 - prevention of failure of students in education by the development of competences of teachers and cooperation of schools with functioning counselling services,
 - creation of space for inclusive, stimulating and motivational environment for learning throughout the whole life, etc.

3. Preparation for a job by:

- Increasing the availability and quality of pre-school education,
- Improvement of the 2nd level of education,
- support of secondary vocational education,
- adequate development of networks of schools and school facilities for long-term employability of graduates in the society and the labour market.

These areas of school practice are currently undergoing processes of defining and constructing the final binding form specific for the school environment. They influence the phenomenon of inclusive education in parallel, affecting the quality of social education, determining social equality and social justice, and thereby shifting the interpretation of questions of equal opportunities (for more see Kaleja, 2015, Kaleja & Zezulková E., 2015, Zezulková E., 2015).

The Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, regulates education in all regions in the Czech Republic and is in compliance with the Constitution of the Czech Republic (Act. No. 1/1993 Coll.) and with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms (Act no. 2/1993 Coll.). Special educational needs represent certain specifics in the educational trajectory of concerned persons, specified in relevant legal documents. A pre-school child, a pupil and a student with special educational needs is considered, according to effective education legislation, a person that needs the provision of supportive measures in order to fulfil their educational opportunities or to apply or exercise their rights on the basis of equality with others. The amendment of the Education Act no. 82/2015 Coll. further uses the term special educational needs, however, it abandons the original systematic categorisation of pre-school children, pupils and students with special educational needs according to *health disability, health disadvantage, social disadvantage*. Special educational needs of concerned individuals are saturated with supportive measures. Supportive measures mean necessary adjustments in education and education services corresponding to the state of health, cultural

environment or other living conditions of a pre-school child, a pupil or a student. Pre-school children, pupils and students with special educational needs have the right to free provision of supportive measures by the school and educational facility.

The last amendment of the Education Act (82/2015 Coll.) brought several expected changes. Special educational needs are more often specified in relation to fulfilling educational opportunities and application and also in relation to securing their own rights to equality in education through the application/implementation of supportive measures that take into consideration the state of health, cultural environment and living conditions of an individual. The horizontal classification of special educational needs was supplemented with a vertical perspective with five defined levels of support. The level of support is categorically connected with the organisational, pedagogical and financial aspect of integrative or rather inclusive processes. The combination of the usage of individual levels of support can be indicated by counselling facility depending on the type and level of the health disability of an individual.

Pre-school children and pupils from the environment of social exclusion can show signs of all the above mentioned categories of special educational needs if they go through the process of diagnostics in the counselling facility and if they are legitimately diagnosed with a disability or a disadvantage. The special educational needs of the concerned individuals are saturated with supportive measures. These represent a set of diverse strategies and approaches (methods, forms, means, tools, etc.) of education that take into consideration the specifics of a pre-school child, a pupil or a student with special educational needs and they do not represent limits in the education of others. These measures include the following:

- Provision of counselling services at school and outside of school, modification of the organisation, the content, the evaluation, the methods and the forms of education,
- modification of the conditions for commencing and terminating education,

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- the usage of compensatory tools, special textbooks and special educational tools,
 - modification of expected educational outcomes in the plan of curricular documents,
 - education according to the individual educational plan,
 - the usage of the position of a teacher's assistant or another pedagogical worker, interpreter into Czech sign language, transcriber, etc.,
 - provision of education and schooling services with respect to construction and technically adjusted buildings.

Collective education, equal education and social justice in education are terms that the professional public often connects with the concept of inclusive education. In collective education we face a heterogeneous class, while heterogeneity can be perceived variably, from different perspectives (e.g. age, ethnicity, the level of support etc.). The term equal education represents the equality in opportunities of concerned pupils with the emphasis on explicitly taking into consideration the disadvantaged input conditions that the pupils commence their educational path in. The equality of opportunities in this case cannot be measured by mathematical principles, it also cannot be connected with positive discrimination. The equality of opportunities requires the consideration of individual characteristics in comparison with other pupils from non-target groups with a clearly defined aim, which is the support of the personal development of pupil/s in all relevant spheres. Justice in education, even though it is a quickly changing topic in the context of time, place, situation, conditions of education etc., is, therefore, represented by all effective acts and regulations that adjust and guarantee the education of all groups of pupils. In this collective educational process pupils with special educational needs are also included. We do not emphasise their mutual difference, however, we take into consideration their disadvantage or their special educational needs with the aim of determining the level of support in their educational trajectory and setting the optimal supportive internal and external mechanisms in the intention of social justice. Inclusive

trends in education include a wide variety of strategies, activities and processes that are trying to realise justice on the level of quality, pragmatics and optimally outlined education of pupils with special educational needs, while other pupils are not disregarded. On the contrary, all the realised inclusive educational methods in the class must serve to everyone, must be beneficial for everyone. Segregation, marginalization or any methods having the character of exclusion are excluded (comp. Hájková, Strnadová, 2010, Pipeková, J., Vítková, 2014, Adamus, 2015, Bartoňová, B., Vítková, Vrubel, 2014, Lechta, 2010, Krupová, 2010 etc.). The predisposition for the prevention of the mechanisms of social exclusion in the school environment is undoubtedly becoming the internal (subjectively perceived) and qualified external (objectively measurable) preparedness of a teacher for the education of pupils in variously composed heterogeneous groups (for more see Kaleja, 2015).

The Czech Republic formally guarantees inclusion in education in acts, regulations and strategic documents. Within the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, according to article 24, which states: *“Education, according to which States, which are Contractual Parties, recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education with a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity.”*, the Czech Republic approved another Action Plan for Inclusive Education for the period 2016–2018 (Action Plan). According to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports it follows the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020 and the Long-term Policy Objectives of Education and Development of the Education System in the Czech Republic for the period 2015–2020. The Action Plan solves the support of equal opportunities and just access to quality education, including prevention and correction of the early termination of education. It mentions supportive measures, requires a register of the number of pupils in inclusive education and inspection system of diagnostics in counselling facilities. The Action Plan also pays extra attention especially to the binding tasks of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports towards the European Commission by determining three priority tasks:

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- Cancellation of the appendices to Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education for pupils with mild mental disability and revising the Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education. The support of pupils with mild mental disability will be implemented in its revised version.
 - Update of the implementing regulations of § 16 of the amendment of Education Act, which include the rules of the provision of the system of supportive measures.⁹ Their specific list and purpose of the supportive measures will be systematically determined in the annex to the regulation.
 - Application of already implemented diagnostic instruments and systems of diagnosis and the register of special educational needs for pre-school children from socially disadvantaged environment in order to identify supportive measures and also methodical documents for the work with these instruments.

The process of the creation of an inclusive and quality educational system is divided into five strategic paths¹⁰ in the Action Plan that create a mutually connected system:

- The sooner, the better (the necessity of early and efficient support of versatile development of every pre-school child and pupil from the family, the teacher, other experts).
- Inclusive education is beneficial for everyone (for the development of the potential of every pupil not only professional support is necessary but also positive attitudes of the pupil towards education and good climate in classes and schools).

⁹ Supportive measures are necessary adjustments in education and school services corresponding to the state of health, cultural environment or other living conditions of a pre-school child, a pupil or a student. Pre-school children, pupils and students with special educational needs have the right to free provision of supportive measures by the school and school facility.

¹⁰ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. *Five Key Messages For Inclusive Education*. Odense, Denmark 2014.

- Highly qualified professionals (the quality of work of pedagogical workers is one of the most important aspects influencing the results of pupils and determining the quality of the educational system as a whole).
- Supportive systems and the mechanisms of financing (counselling in schools, in school counselling facilities including career counselling, etc.).
- Reliable data (the creation of strategies on the basis of verifiable data is a necessary precondition for a long-term development of the systems of inclusive education – ensuring equal opportunities, internal differentiation and individualisation of education, adaptation during the transition between the levels of education, the usage of formative and summative evaluation of children, etc.).

The perception of pre-school children and pupils with special educational needs gets closer to fulfilling the Convention¹¹ on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which defines: “... *disability is an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in the society on an equal basis with others.*” A similar point of view can be applied also on disadvantages connected with different living conditions.

The research by Kaleja (2013) outlines the gaps in the educational paths of target groups: motivation, support, current condition of education, purpose and aim of education. The results say that only 12 % of pupils connect the education with their future professional success in the labour market, then that 14 % of pupils state that they are bored at school, they have nothing to do and that no one pays sufficient attention to them. Discipline problems are subjectively stated by a total of 14 %. Furthermore, 76 % of pupils do not like Czech language classes and mathematics at

¹¹ The notice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the negotiation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, no. 10/2010 Coll. of international agreements. For the content of the Convention see: <http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/10774/umluva_CJ_rev.pdf>

school (Kaleja, M. 2014), perhaps because they are not successful in these subjects. This is also shown by the national sociological analysis GAC from 2009. Approximately 22 % of pupils of primary schools subjectively declare that they are not successful at school. In other words they come to school with the belief that they are not good and that they have to sit through the lessons. This can be considered alarming for the pedagogical practice. On the other hand, the mentioned limits can show the way to proceed, what to use and what to build on. For example: 73 % of pupils state in the research that the parents care about their education. This is also confirmed in the research of Alice Petrasová and Štefan Porubský (2013). They further state that the teacher is the person who helps them at school (84 %), so they are aware of his / her authority, they like him / her and they trust him / her. 42 % of pupils state that they are successful in some subjects and that they thrive.

Globally, we can summarize the consequences of social exclusion in the socio-economic, cultural and political dimensions. The Roma language is considered the mother tongue or the native language of Roma pupils, if their parents or their relatives use it to communicate with them. The actual declaration of the Roma language as the mother tongue of Roma pupils and their parents is greatly influenced by several factors. Červenka et al (2009, p. 48) says: "...and lastly, a native language is also influenced by the attitude the users have towards their own language, or towards the whole culture where the language belongs. Roma people, who currently do not have active knowledge of their language and who did not learn the language from their parents, may still – thanks to their positive attitude towards the Roma culture, claim the Roma language as their mother tongue and view their lack of the knowledge of their language as a deficit. On the other hand, some Roma people, who see a great value and benefit in the integration into the non-Roma environment, may be suppressing their knowledge of the Roma language and claim the Czech language as their mother tongue in order to demonstrate a symbol of integration. This is not to say that "integration" is incompatible with active participation in the Roma community or with using the Roma language actively." Šotolová (2008) focuses in her work on the Roma and Czech language in terms of

the interference between both languages and in individual language levels (phonetic, phonological, lexical-semantic, morphologic and syntactic, pragmatic). She also specifies the determination of mother tongue with particular linguistic peculiarities used by Roma pupils.

The question of the social and psychological maturity of Roma children is scrutinized by Ferejenčík (1995), who claims that Roma children who attend the first grade are, in terms of cognitive, emotional and social aspects, poorly prepared. They are not familiar with the basic skills necessary to succeed in school. According to Fontana (1997) a child coming from a fluent and expressive language environment has an advantage over a child whose parents cannot be regarded as well-equipped in terms of language skills. Portik (2003) adds that speech plays a key role in the development of behaviour which can be described as intelligent. Therefore, parents with low language skills are not able to teach their children correct communication methods which would correct their behaviour. Portik (2003) also states that sometimes young students who attend primary schools are evaluated by teachers as less gifted. The primary cause of their disability is the fact that they come from an unmotivated speech environment.

At the beginning of 2015 the Government of the Czech Republic adopted the *Strategy for Roma Integration till 2020* and in it the government set the following primary goals for the area of education: "*Decreasing the differences in education between majority society and the Roma people through ensuring equal access of Roma people to quality education on all levels.*" These are subsequently categorised into specific goals:

- Increasing the access of Roma children to quality pre-school education and care,
- removing the practice of incorrect placement of Roma children into education with lower educational ambitions,
- ensuring basic conditions for the development of the inclusion of Roma pupils in the main educational stream and the development of inclusive education,
- removing the segregation of Roma children in education on all levels,

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- supporting Roma people in achieving secondary and tertiary education,
 - supporting the addition of education in Roma adults and lifelong education.

The strategy states that it also considers the following documents important in achieving the set goal: *Operation Programme for Research, Development and Education 2014–2020*, *Strategy Against Social Exclusion 2016–2020*, *Social Inclusion Strategy 2014–2020*, *Plan of measures for the execution of the verdict of the European Court for Human Rights D.H and Others vs the Czech Republic “Equal Opportunities” from 2012 and its updated version (Action Plan for the Verdict on Education of Roma Children, Pupils and Students for the period 2015–2017)*.

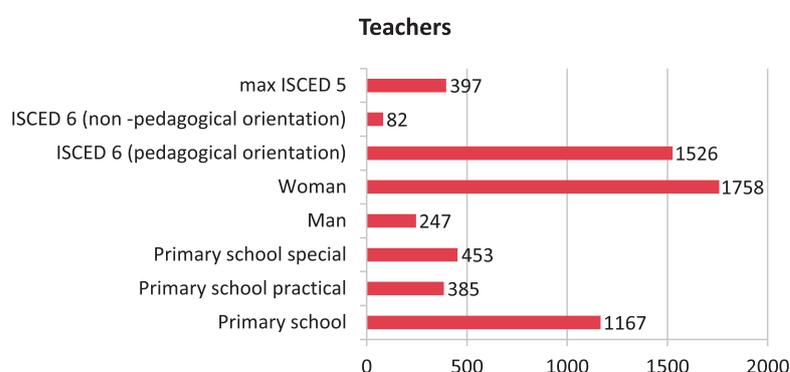
III. Research about the (Un)preparedness of Teachers for Inclusive Education

With respect to the set order from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and with respect to the subject-factual tendency of interdisciplinary approach we set the goal to *analyse the preparedness of teachers of primary schools in 13 regions of the Czech Republic* (Prague region was excluded), where we categorised the observed phenomenon into three research areas. Their partial components influence each other, they mingle and interact with each other. The areas are the following: the teacher’s orientation, the teacher’s field practice, teacher’s point of view of inclusion, in the context of our research they are considered the bearing pillars of the subjectively perceived preparedness of the teacher (N 2005) for the education of pre-school children and pupils of three target groups:¹²

¹² Legend: * = the minimum criterion for groups of children and pupils according to the order of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports – see research set = target group of children and pupils

- Pre-school children and pupils mentally within normal limits, children and pupils with mental disability *, pre-school children and pupils in mental subnorm * ,
- Pre-school children and pupils with special educational needs without a mental disability, pre-school children and pupils from the environment of social exclusion * ,
- Pre-school children and pupils from the ethnic majority society, children and pupils from an ethnic minority society.

**Figure 1. The Characteristics of Teachers of Primary Schools
– the participants in the study**



We point out that we researched the subjectively perceived preparedness of teachers. The concept took into consideration previously realised researches and their key findings for the researched phenomenon. In the research we took into consideration the variability of the procedures of individual steps, the actual procedures and the possibilities of the realisation of the research scheme. We took inspiration from the research of many experts (Petrasová, et al., 2012, Petrasová, Porubský, 2013, Rosinský, 2009, Rafael et al., 2011, Pinková, Slepíčková, Solárová, 2013 etc.). Therefore we chose the measurement of opinion and attitudinal constructs, where we chose the evaluation according to L. Tondl (1999). We already have experience with it from analysing the opinions and attitudes

of parents of Roma children towards education (Kaleja, 2011) and value constructs, where we analysed the required schemes – through the opinions and attitudes of pupils at the second level of primary schools (Kaleja, 2013). It is obvious that the structure of evaluation from the formal perspective has qualitative, quantitative, comparative, preferential and point aspects. For our research, we chose the quantitative concept of analysis. When we applied the same research concept to measure opinion and attitudinal constructs in parents (Kaleja, 2011) and subsequently in pupils (Kaleja, 2013), it was confirmed that teachers are an important determinant in the educational trajectory of children and pupils and that they play an important intentional and functional role in building their value schemes in education. It depends also on their opinions and attitudes to what extent and how the concerned ones (children and pupils) perceive education. So now we examined the preparedness of teachers for the education of these children and pupils.

For the research we created our own questionnaire containing necessary requirements. These are:

- content and functional adequacy of the items following the determined research goal,
- adequacy of the form of required answers,
- precision, intelligibility and unambiguity of the items for the chosen research set – here it was necessary to take into consideration that the research tool is meant for pedagogical workers of different types of schools, having different pedagogical positions in the workplace, with different lengths of pedagogical practice, with different levels and types of achieved education and working with different characteristics of children and pupils.

The verification of the above mentioned requirements of the research tool was done in two ways:

- The tool was properly consulted with experts in the realisation of similarly aimed research schemes,

- the tool was pilot tested on a sample of teachers (25) working at one primary school in the Moravian-Silesian Region.

Both ways of verifying the reliability and validity of the questionnaire brought several key observations that we had to take into consideration even before the actual administration of the questionnaire and the collection of relevant data. The questionnaire, among others, was also investigating chosen determining features (*categorising information*), on their basis the classification of the obtained empirical data was done. The determining features were:

- the type of primary school where the teacher works (primary school, practical school, special school),
- the length of pedagogical practice (up to 5, up to 10, over 10 years),
- the degree and type of achieved education (secondary, university of pedagogical type, university of non-pedagogical type),
- the position of the teacher at the workplace (teacher, teacher's assistant, other pedagogical worker),
- the characteristics of the pupils they work with (pupils with bordering level, pupils with a mental disability, with a combined disability, pupils mentally within normal limits, pupils from a socially excluded locality, pupils from an ethnic majority society, pupils from an ethnic minority society, pupils with special educational needs without a mental disability).

IV. Interpretation of Key Findings and Basic Recommendations for Practice

The main research question mentioned above was differentiated into individual research questions (RQ1–RQ3), whose formulation was sorted out later and their wording is compact with research spheres of the subjectively designed preparedness:

RQ1: What is the orientation of teachers of primary schools in key topics intervening into the concept of social exclusion and education?

- *Nearly 92 % of teachers consider the concepts of disadvantage and social exclusion as synonymous, although in reality they are not.*
- *Almost 84 % of teachers believe that exclusively Roma people live in socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic, however, according to known sociological analyses it is not true.*
- *Nearly 67 % of teachers think that the pupils with social disadvantages should be educated according to the curriculum for pupils with a mental disability.*
- *Almost 96 % of teachers assume that pupils with social disadvantages have a mental disability.*

Social disadvantage cannot be perceived as a synonym for social exclusion. The individual terms have a broader and narrower definition, hence the connotative and denotative background in which they differ significantly. Outside the sociological platform of individual phenomena, both problematic questions are entered by various disciplines always with its' own professional perspective. The difference between disadvantage and exclusion is also obvious, among other things, in particular school regulations which deal with the education of children and pupils, including children and pupils with special educational needs. From the above it is absolutely obvious that the addressed teachers use both terms interchangeably and they perceive them similarly. It is, therefore, questionable, whether they feel a need to understand the given issue and on the basis of understanding and also modifying their own attitudinal constructs to the affected children and pupils.

According to the last sociological analysis (GAC 2015) the Czech Republic currently records a total of 606 socially excluded localities, where approximately 95 to 115 thousand inhabitants live. From the perspective of ethnic origin, Roma people dominate. However, the estimation is that 10 to 15 % of inhabitants of these localities are people from the majority society. Their life strategies are very close to the life strategies of socially

excluded Roma people. Therefore, it is about an existential problem closely connected with a character of life strategies, not the problem of ethnic origin. From various nationwide researches it transpires that most members of the majority society do not wish to have Roma neighbours, they do not want to live with Roma people, considering them to be misfits, etc. The society perceives Roma people very negatively and this is the picture of Roma ethnicity not only in the Czech Republic, but also elsewhere in the world (e.g. Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, etc.). The problem from the perspective of certain discrepancies, ambiguities and methodological imprecision is factual sociological non-differentiation. In reality if we ask about Roma people in similar findings (in the context of education, living, employment), the society thinks that we are asking about Roma people, who are characterized by socially excluded localities or localities endangered by social exclusion. In other words, similarly oriented research with findings about the society and its relationship with Roma people have such characteristics. However, it has to be emphasized that the phenomenon of social exclusion has several aspects. It represents the current state of social exclusion as well as dispositions towards this phenomenon: (a) Each Roma person does not have to be socially excluded in the society; (b) each Roma person (with respect to ethnicity) has more characteristics compared to the majority society to be easily socially excluded for certain significant ones.

If these socially excluded pupils were diagnosed with an intellectual disability, they would belong to the category of pupils with a health disability, whose education would be then legitimately realized according to the curriculum for pupils with a mental disability. The research did not focus on the fact whether all pupils with social disadvantage have been diagnosed with an intellectual disability, but within logical intentions and objective indicators, such as general prevalence in population, the presumption can be disproved, or considered irrelevant. By the adoption of a new education policy with curricular principles and in accordance with the then *National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic* (sc. White Paper, 2001, from 2015 it is a document called *Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020*) and with the

adoption of a new education act (561/2004 Coll., as amended) new documents have been created in two levels (state and school). They replace the former "Standards of Education" containing the innovative structure and a new title "National Programme for Education". The pupils at the border level are educated in the mainstream education.

According to the valid legislation, pupils with social disadvantages and their special educational needs belong to the group of pupils in need of supportive measures. They are not, however, related to the diagnosis of intellectual disability. The pupils diagnosed with a mental disability belong to the category of health disability. Therefore we are talking about two completely heterogeneous groups of pupils who are entitled to different support of their educational needs. The differentiation involved in the educational process can be, among other things, seen in didactic, methodological and other (special) pedagogical approaches, which are used by the teachers.

RQ2: What is (the actual) terrain practice of teachers of primary schools in education of pupils of target groups?

- *Of the questioned teachers, 74 % state that during the school educational process it is suitable to approach the pupils of Roma ethnicity head on and that there is no need for the application of any other specific approach.*
- *Of the questioned teachers, 87 % confirm that during the process of school education it is suitable to approach the pupils with mental disability head on and that there is no need for the application of any other specific approach.*

The school education of Roma pupils is specific and requires taking into consideration the preconditions for education with which the pupil commence his / her educational trajectory. The school or teachers working with these pupils should know the socio-educative characteristics of Roma pupils from the environment of social exclusion, because it is these characteristics that by their nature determine the course themselves, the

factors of education and subsequently the aim of the educational path itself. It is not necessary to emphasize the specifics of school education, including the importance of pre-school preparation, school maturity and preparedness, possible educational or upbringing difficulties, educational needs, methods and models of management of the educational process, and also the necessary active cooperation with the family, or cooperation with the non-profit sector. We have written about the other questions about education elsewhere (see Kaleja, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2011 etc.) and experts have been dealing with this pedagogical phenomenon for several decades (cf. Šotolová, 2011, Portik, 2003, Kyuchukov, 2009, Horňák, 2005, Bartoňová, 2009, Balvín, et al. 2001, Petrasová, 2013, 2012 etc.). Even in recent years the issue of the education of Roma pupils, especially from the environment of social exclusion, has become the subject of interest of several European professional organizations (e.g. UNESCO, Open Society Institute, Roma Education Fund, European Training Foundation, or the European Roma and Travellers Forum, etc.) and it is also the focus of interest of the European Commission for Education of the Council of Europe.

Mental disability is a developmental disorder of the integration of mental functions, affecting the person in all personality parts, where the cognitive part is affected the most significantly. The cognitive processes are endogenous dominant mechanisms, which enable cognition in the broadest meaning of its sense. Therefore, the mental disability means for the person a lifelong disadvantage and it manifests itself at the cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural level. The character of the school education of pupils with a mental disability has to take into consideration the level of intellectual disability. It is the level that indicates the degree and possibilities of cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural processes. All existing national (Zezulková, 2011, 2013, 2015, Adamus, P. 2014, 2015, Pipeková, 2010, Švarcová, 2003, Kaleja, 2014, Bartoňová, Vítková, 2013, Valenta, Michalík, Lečbych, et al., 2012 etc.) as well as foreign studies (Vančová, 2014, Algozzine, Ysseldyk, 2006, Beirne-Smith, Patton, Kim, 2005 etc.) point to the specifics of home and school education.

RQ3: *How is the realization of inclusion perceived by teachers of primary schools in the context of pupils from the target groups?*

- *Of the questioned teachers up to 84 % admit that they are not well oriented in special educational methods of work with pupils with special educational needs.*
- *Of the questioned teachers up to 85 % admit that they are not oriented in defined supported measures for pupils with special educational needs.*
- *Of questioned teachers up to 71 % confirm that they do not know the conditions stated in the curriculum for primary education of pupils with special educational needs.*
- *Of the questioned teachers up to 87 % say that not even their colleagues at work know the conditions stated in the curriculum for primary education of pupils with special educational needs.*
- *Of questioned teachers 95 % mention that school where they work does not use all conditions for the successful education of pupils with social disadvantages stated by the curriculum of the Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education.*
- *Of questioned teachers 94 % declare that school where they work does not apply all conditions for successful education of pupils with mental disability stated by the curriculum of Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education.*

We did not monitor whether absolutely everyone in the current period worked with pupils with special educational needs. However, within the scope of integrative or inclusive educational tendencies, each qualified teacher should be able to at least know these methods. In the undergraduate preparation the teachers learned the basics of special education, in which the topics of integration or inclusion of pupils of target groups were mentioned. The system of the further education of pedagogical workers offers rather wide variety of educational events focused on specifics in the education of pupils with the need of various supportive measures. Continuous self-education of teachers is natural in their

profession. Self-education of teachers in the questions of integration / inclusion of chosen groups of pupils with special educational needs, especially those who are educated by these teachers in the current period, should be required by the management of the school.

Measures in the education of children and pupils with special educational needs are legislatively defined in particular documents and they should serve to directly support the successful education of concerned children and pupils. The teacher should be able to be knowledgeable in them. Especially the ones who are affected by its application in their pedagogical practice. Ignorance and lack of orientation in these binding documents do not support the question of subjective preparedness to performance of pedagogical profession. Regardless of the approbation of the teacher, the child and pupil with special educational needs requires quality standards and the quality approach of all pedagogical workers (guaranteed to him / her by the state), who has direct or indirect influence on his / her trajectory. Special educational needs only emphasize the quality standard and quality approach, they have to adequately take into account those socio-educative peculiarities of children and pupils.

The curriculum documents at the state or school level are binding for the field of school education and for all of the pedagogical workers of school. They lead to key competences which should be achieved by the children and pupils. The key competences focus on effective learning (strategies and preconditions for lifelong education), effectively and normatively constructed models of behaviour in given problematic situations, effectively chosen ways of communication in wider and also broader sense of the meaning, forming intrapersonal beneficial and socially appropriate relations and last but not least they also focus on forming the human personality to responsible citizenship. The pedagogical worker should be aware of this fact during the whole time of the performance of his / her profession. He / she should appropriately and purposefully construct processes and strategies of education, so that his / her chosen individual steps of educational processes lead to a maximal development of all children and pupils, with whom he / she comes in touch during the education. He / she applies the principle of differentiated

education and principle of individual approach to children and pupils regardless of their differences.

Ignorance of the conditions of the school education of pre-school children and pupils with special educational needs by teachers of primary schools can be an indicator of insufficient engagement of teachers, their lack of interest, inappropriate organization of competences at work, internal or external motivation or possibly insufficient control from the management of the school and other relevant circumstances. However, all the mentioned determinants can have a significant influence on the course itself and the result of the educational trajectory of concerned students.

V. Conclusion

If we focus on the scope of barriers in the education of target groups of children and pupils with special educational needs (especially from the environment of social exclusion), we could define many reserves of both internal and external origin. We have extracted the key problematic elements, which we have dealt with in a long time (Kaleja, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015) and which have completely demonstrable direct impacts on the educational trajectory not only of our target groups of children and pupils: *environment, family and school (with emphasis on the teachers) and educational and upbringing process.*

In the environment we want to emphasize physical, environmental and social conditions of the phenomenon of social exclusion, which indicate the character of education, motivation, need and the means of their saturation. Already before and then during the educational trajectory of children and pupils we should, within the scope of our possibilities, eliminate all processes supporting segregation, ghettoization and stigmatization. The children and pupils do not benefit from these processes. The processes do not offer children and pupils sufficient stimuli to education, they do not lead them to see the value of it, and they offer them inadequate models, which they gain during socialization and social edu-

cation. With respect to their ontogenetic characteristics, they are not able to critically evaluate them. They were born into such formed environment, they live in it in long term, or they move. Under all circumstances, such an environment is not a positive one for the psycho-socio development of any child.

The attitudes of parents to education are important. It is shown in the famous publications mentioned in the research. Parents build on their own experience, some of them are not able to sufficiently motivate their children to education. Lifestyle shows children the way, the parents hardly overcome the right change in their life. Their cooperation with school is time restricted. Research says that in case of apparent failures of children and behavioural problems arising from failures in the educational process (Kaleja, 2011, 2014) the parents do not want to cooperate with the school, the cooperation fluctuates and they start to perceive school only as a formal institution where the child has to go.

The school performs many necessary functions supporting socialization processes. Also the research shows that approximately one third of teachers has a negative experience with Roma pupils, their competences and approaches are significantly limited. This is related to the peculiarities of children and pupils from the environment of social exclusion (Kaleja, 2013). An active pedagogical monitoring is sometimes missed, teachers do not participate more than is necessary. They are not sufficiently motivated, sometimes they even face problems endangering their existence at the schools where they work. The cooperation with family and vice versa is determined by a whole number of factors. In some cases motivation and support in education from the teachers to pupils do not reflect specific peculiarities and do not take into consideration their needs. The educational upbringing process shows reserves in some cases. The dynamics of lessons, adequacy of content and aims of educational processes and pragmatic side of the process are not always optimally chosen.

The preparedness of the teacher in terms of the education of children and pupils with different characteristics, not only with a need of supportive measures, children and pupils from environments of social

exclusion or children and pupils from different cultural environments requires the fulfilment of certain criteria on the objective and subjective level. The first one represents formal requirements, usually fulfilled by necessary qualifications, the second one represents how the teachers themselves perceive their preparedness. Thus, the paper points to their own declaration of the low, subjectively perceived preparedness of teachers for the inclusive education of children and pupils.

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