

Is inclusive education really included in the education? Lithuania's case.

Assoc. prof. Alvyra Galkienė



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What is inclusive education?

Scholars claim:

- Inclusion in education - a process of putting values into action (T. Booth et al., 2006)
- The community cares about everyone's personal success (L. Florian, 2015)
- Universal design for individual differences (D. Rose, 2000)



Council Conclusions on the European Council, 2017

- Upon agreement of Member State delegations in 2017, the Council of the European Union indicates that ensuring ***inclusive high quality education*** should be seen in a life-long perspective covering all aspects of education. It should be available and accessible to all learners of all ages, including those facing challenges, such as those with special needs or who have a disability, those originating from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, migrant backgrounds or geographically depressed areas or war-torn zones, regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.



Situation of pupils with disabilities in Lithuania

Increase in the number of pupils with special needs

+8,2%



2012

18 989 pupils

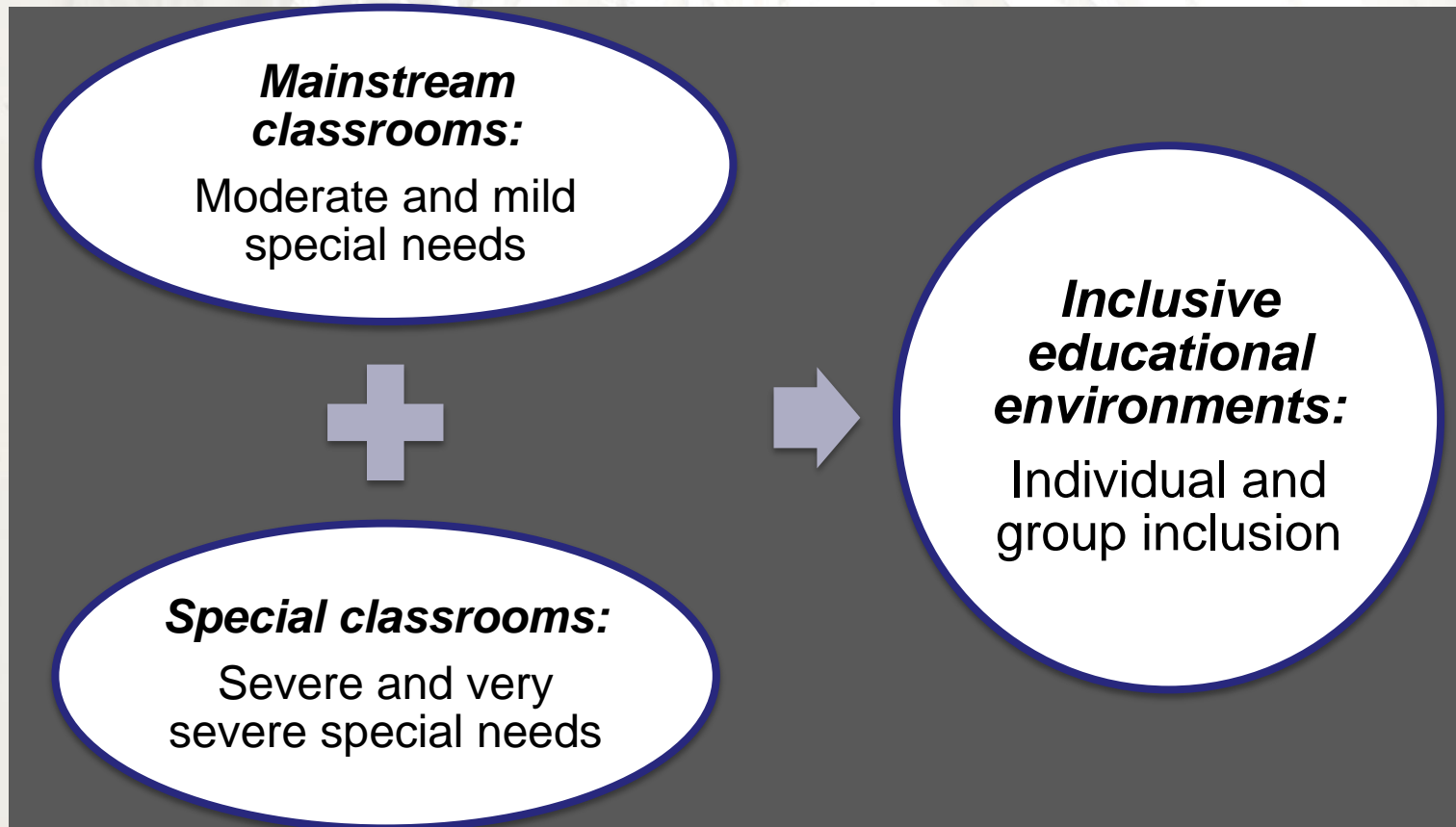


2016

20 690 pupils



Education in mainstream schools



Special classrooms

In 2016, 30 special classrooms were established. The total in Lithuania is 433.

Classrooms for pupils with intellectual disability,
Classrooms for pupils with complex disability,
Classrooms for pupils with behavioural disorders.



Specialists in mainstream schools

- In 2016, 4249 specialists worked in mainstream schools. Of which:
 - 21 tiflo-pedagogues
 - 34 surdo-pedagogues
 - 4194 special needs teachers
- Special needs teachers, psychologists, and social pedagogues work in all Lithuanian schools



Are schools ready for inclusive education?

- There are 70 study programs training pedagogues.
- Study programs of pre-school and primary teacher training include separate subjects focusing on inclusive education strategies.
- Study programs of subject teacher training do not include a separate subject of the kind.



Factors Promoting School Transformation Towards Educational Inclusion

Research question

In educators' view, what education reality factors promote inclusive education development in mainstream schools?



Research methods

Data collection:

- Written survey of teachers working in Lithuanian mainstream schools.



Questions for consideration

Two open questions were presented for teacher's consideration:

1. Is it meaningful to introduce inclusive education in Lithuanian schools, and if so, why?
2. What conditions must be met for inclusive education to become a natural reality at your school?



Research participants

355 teachers working at rural and urban schools in various Lithuanian regions.



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Discussion of research results



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Education system characteristics during the Soviet period:

- System unification and centralization;
- Ideologization and politization;
- Disciplining and indoctrination;
- Shaping collective consciousness;
- Unification of teaching methods;
- Widely spread institutionalization;
- Artificial homogenization of society.



Genesis of school transformation in Lithuania.

- The ideas of educational inclusion were brought forward by humanist education scientists at the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet regime.
- In 1989, The National School Conception was published.
- The fundamental goal of the mainstream school was declared: *to recognize human being as an absolute value, to cherish his physical and mental nature and to create conditions for his individuality to unfold.*

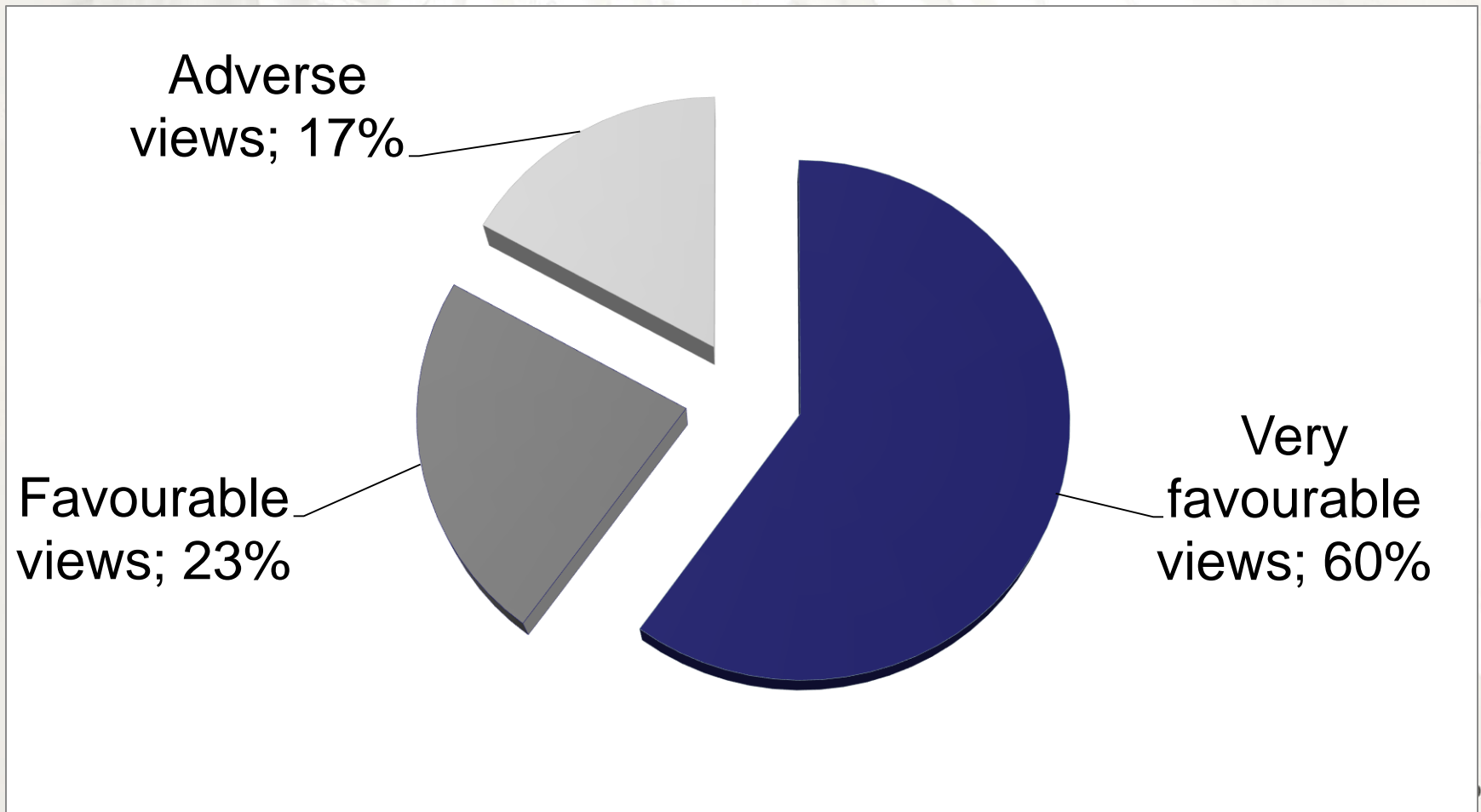


SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION IN TEACHERS' PERCEPTION



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Teachers' views regarding inclusive education

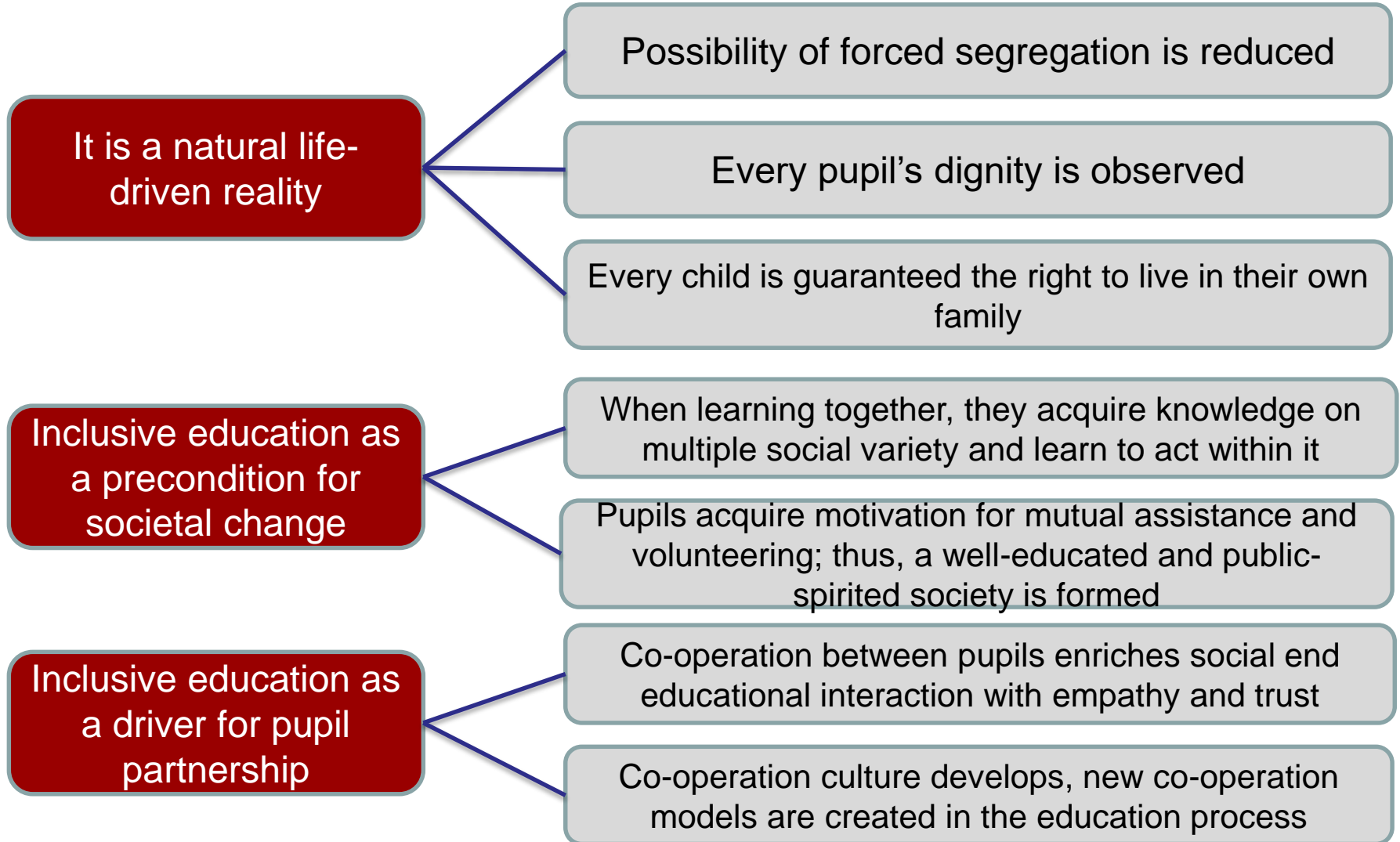


CATEGORY:
**Inclusive Education as a
Precondition for Society's
Harmonious Development**

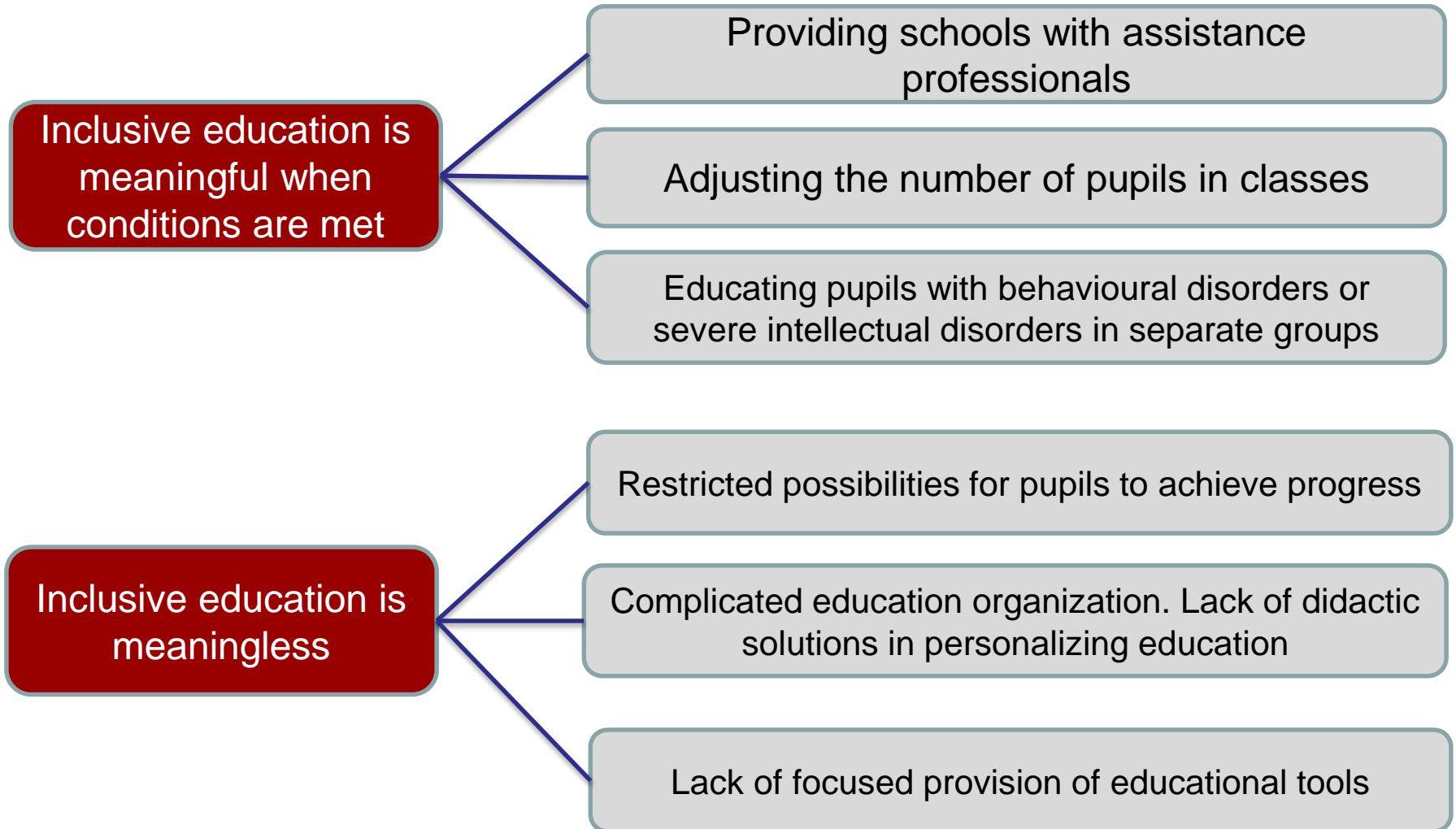


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Inclusive education as a precondition for society's harmonious development



Conditions, under which Inclusive education is meaningful



CONCLUSIONS

**Social and educational preconditions
for inclusive education to become
reality in schools**



Value-based attitudes

- *Research results show that the value of recognizing the variety of pupils in the educational process is a fundamental factor that encourages the school transformation towards inclusive education.*
- 83% of teachers that took part in the research emphasize exceptional value of inclusive education.



Political decisions (1)

- The values of inclusive education should penetrate into education policy because:
 - When education policy aims at creating conditions for the success of pupils with different abilities at school, conditions are built for the practical implementation of inclusive education (providing the process with specialists, tools, methodical material, adapting physical environment etc.)



Political decisions (2)

- However, when the values of inclusive education, provided for in education policy, remain at the level of legal statements without creating conditions for their practical realization, tension arises within communities of teachers, which hinders smooth system transformation process.



Barriers impeding school transformation towards inclusive education (1)

Research results show that the teachers' arguments denying the worthiness of inclusive education or the possibility to implement it:

- are based purely on didactic problems and their consequences;
- the worthiness of education is linked to high academic results. Social and pedagogical interaction and its consequences in this case do not come up as a value.






Barriers impeding school transformation towards inclusive education (2)

- The results of this research allow to claim that focusing educational aims and goals purely on academic success leads towards grouping pupils according to their academic skills and towards segregated education.



Summarizing: from differentiation towards participation

| Education model | Values | Current prevailing beliefs |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
|  <p>SEGREGATION: categorizing, institutionalization</p> | Standardized skills, correction | Institutionalization in cases of severe disorders |
|  <p>INTEGRATION: merging two education systems</p> | Differenciation, being together | Separate tasks in classroom; separate classrooms at school; part of learning time in rooms of specialists |
|  <p>INCLUSION: Flexible education system, favourable for every pupil's participation</p> | Fully-fledged participation | Single approach but separate level of its realization in different countries |



Thank you for your attention

galkiene@gmail.com



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