



Erasmus + Strategic Partnership for the Exchange of Good Practices
Development of support guidance system
for emotional and physical inclusive education for school
#InclusiveEducationMeetsGuidance
Project No: 2019-1-LV01-KA201-060361



Current situation analysis

report

**Centrul Județean De Resurse Și Asistență Educațională
Arad, Romania**

Support specialists have an important role in the schools especially for providing an inclusive dimension for school.

In Romania, the main types of support specialists are:

- School psychologists, also referred to as school counselors
- Speech and language therapists
- Professional support teachers
- School mediators
- Medical support

Depending on the number of children enrolled in the school, support specialists may be present on the school premises 5 days a week or shifting between more schools during one week. The first 3 categories of support specialists mentioned have teacher statute and are employed following the rule of the National Law of Education.

Arad County Centre for Resources and Educational Assistance coordinates the activity of *school psychologists, speech and language therapists* and *school mediators*. They all are employed by the Arad County for Resources and Educational Assistance but their activities takes place in schools and kindergartens across Arad County, rural and urban areas equally, covering the entirety of the school population.

School psychologists

For each 800 students there is one full didactic norm of school counselor. More often, one counselor attends a school population higher than that.

The full norm is 40 hours/week, of which 18 hours of psycho-pedagogical assistance activities in the school and 22 hours of preparatory activities, professional training and methodical activities.

A school counselor is not allowed to formally assess I.Q., to provide psycho-therapy in the school counseling office, to prescribe medication. They can, and are advised to – when needed, make recommendations for further investigation to specialists like clinical psychologists, medical specialists, psychiatry, social services or police department.



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Speech and language therapists

For each 500 children of pre-primary and primary level there is one full didactic norm of speech and language therapist. In a session, a SLT can simultaneously work with up to 4 children, grouped together by similar criteria (for example, the mispronunciation of the same sound or group of sounds). Sometimes, due to the large number of children, this can go higher, affecting the quality and the timely results of speech therapy. Children with special educational needs or with unique speech disorders are individually working with the therapist, on one-to-one sessions.

A speech and language therapist full didactic norm consists of 16 hours of direct didactic work and 24 hours of methodical activities. Similar to the school counselors, they collaborate externally with different public organizations and specialized services.

Itinerant teachers

These support specialists are coordinated by the Arad Educational Centre for Inclusive Education and they directly work with SEN children in mass schools, providing assistance and one-to-one tutoring for learning difficulties.

School mediators

School mediators are the link between the school and community. In CJRAE Arad there are 2 school mediators. One of them is responsible for the Roma population and the other one for the rest of the mediation related situation at our county level.

Current situation analysis

The current situation analysis was conducted on 62 responses of support specialists from CJRAE Arad, 46 responses from school teachers and 51 students aged 9-13.

Support specialists

62 teachers from Arad County for Resources and Educational Assistance responded to the questionnaire in Annex 1, targeted at identifying the strengths and also the needs of training.

The positive aspects/strengths mentioned by our staff referred to a variety of departments, as follows: communication, extracurricular activities, projects, management, competences, services, counseling/SLT offices.



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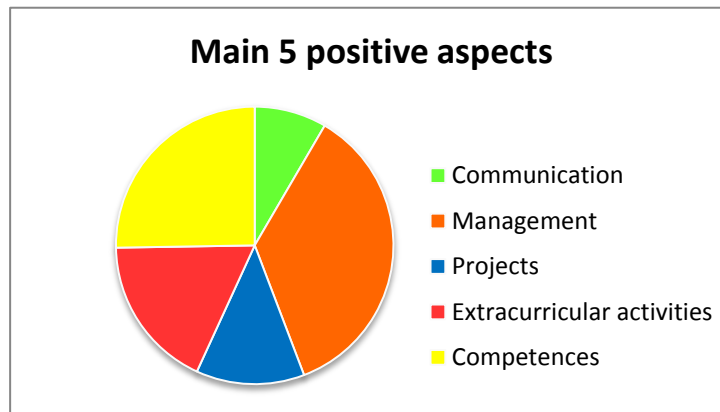


Figure 1 – Main strengths of CJRAE Arad

The most frequently mentioned reasons included in these categories can be seen in Table 1.

	Category	Strengths
1	Communication	Transparency; fast resolution solving; stimulating environment; support and guidance for staff; prompt information; good collaboration with school teachers;
2	Efficient management	Good internal management; Objectivity; Organizational growth; good collaboration with school managers and local stakeholders; Positive impact at county level; increasing the number of counsellors and speech and language therapists in Arad County;
3	International projects	Increasing skills; enhancing experiences and exchange of good practices; promoting internationalisation - are seen as highly positive aspects
4	Extracurricular activities	Community involvement; Positive image of CJRAE; non-formal learning for students and teachers – these activities refer to international conferences, trainings for students, mentorships, communication and promoting the profession, non-formal learning projects for our students
5	Competences	Motivated teachers; good initial training of staff; creativity; Young teachers with lots of growth potential; solving risk/crisis situations with professionalism

Table 1 – Reasons for strengths

The *needs and areas for improvement* provide a solid guideline for improvement, as a vast majority of CJRAE teachers responded to the questionnaire. The most mentioned need was the training need, as a form of continuous professional training (which appeared in 36 answers) followed by the management of human resources (in 26 answers) and enhancing the visibility of the organization (with 23 mentions). Table 2 gives an idea about the topics mentioned.



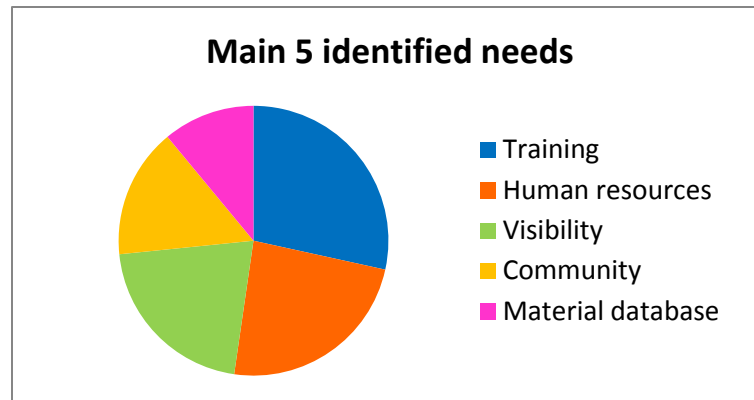


Figure 2 – Current needs, identified by CJRAE Arad staff

	Category	Needs
1	Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better collaboration between departments; - juridical clarifications for new teachers; - too many students for one support specialist (legal binding, not in the power of CJRAE to change); - team-building activities for CJRAE teachers/better collaboration;
2	Training needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - facilitating access to free of charge course, on topics of actual interest; - Tools and methods for counselling students in risk situations (substance abuse, risk of dropping out); - Exchange of good practices with the other Romanian CJRAEs; - innovative methods for counselling; - SEN students psychological and educational counselling; - mentorship programme for the beginner counsellors/speech and language therapists
4	Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organisational marketing; - promoting the professions (school psychologists/SLT), especially in the rural areas; - online visibility; - better communication with mass-media; - updated and modern website;
5	Material resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - standardized tests; - up-to-date methods and tools in the counselling/speech therapy offices; - educational software; - collective counselling room;
6	Community relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better involvement in school life; - more partnerships with schools, NGOs for addressing current student issues; - more parent workshops;

Table 2 – Needs of CJRAE support specialists





School teachers

A questionnaire for school teachers (see Annex II) was applied to 46 teachers working with the age group 9-14. A vast majority (43 teachers) considers the support specialists as necessary and very necessary in the school.

As seen in Figure 3, school teachers consider that the allocated time by the support specialists is either enough or too little, compared to the needs of the students.

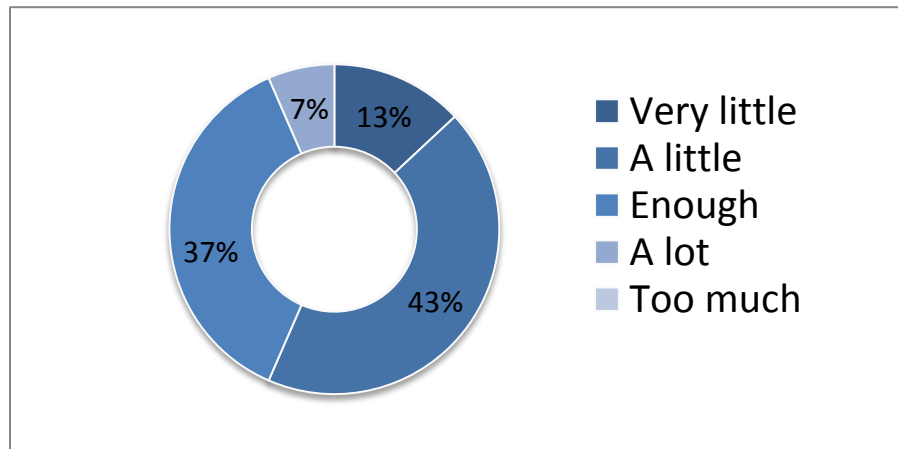


Figure 3 - Allocated time/real needs of students

School teachers mentioned the main benefits and roles, as they see it, of support specialists in their school. Figure 4 shows the frequency of each mentioned aspect.

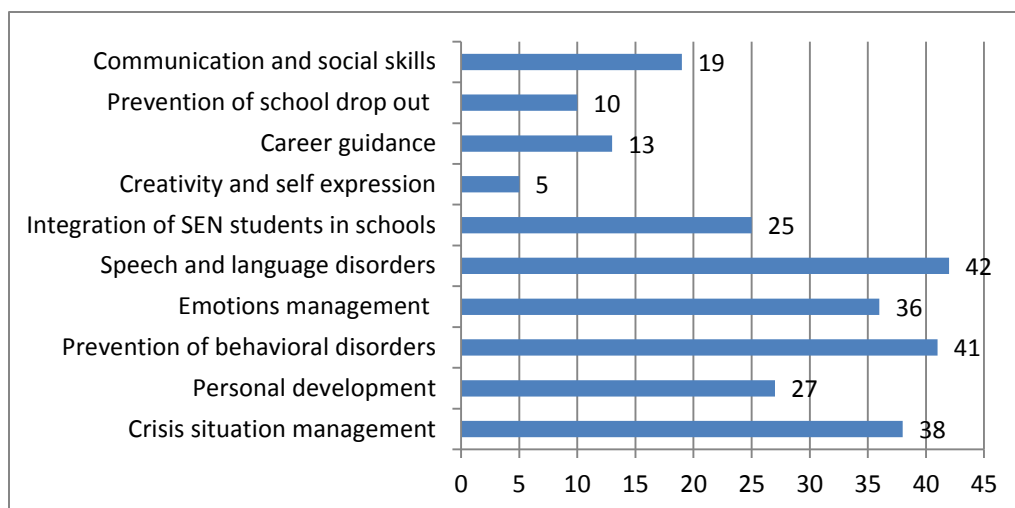


Figure 4 - Benefits and roles of school counselors/speech and language therapists





Two of the questions were targeted at areas for analyzing needs and area for improvement regarding the support system. Their concerns and needs focused on the following topics:

1. Better and more efficient collaboration with the school teachers
2. Joint educational projects
3. More working hours dedicated to psycho-pedagogical assistance
4. More hours in the same school
5. More involvement in supporting the special educational needs students and their teachers
6. Individual assessment of the students, helping teachers know the students better
7. Teacher counseling, teacher training on topics like inclusion, classroom management, support for specific cases
8. Provision of useful tools to the teachers – questionnaires, worksheets, guides, e-learning materials
9. More exchange of information, better communication, conflict resolution,
10. Individual and sustained approach offered for the students with behavioral problems. Clear programmes, objectives, multidisciplinary approach.
11. Regular collective activities, discussions, workshops with each classroom – on topics like bullying, group cohesion, games, personal development,
12. Parent workshops.

Figure 5 shows that 37% of the school teachers consider their schools ready to provide an inclusive environment to children with all types of special educational needs, while 52 percent declare that they are only partially prepared and 11% that are not equipped to be an inclusive school.

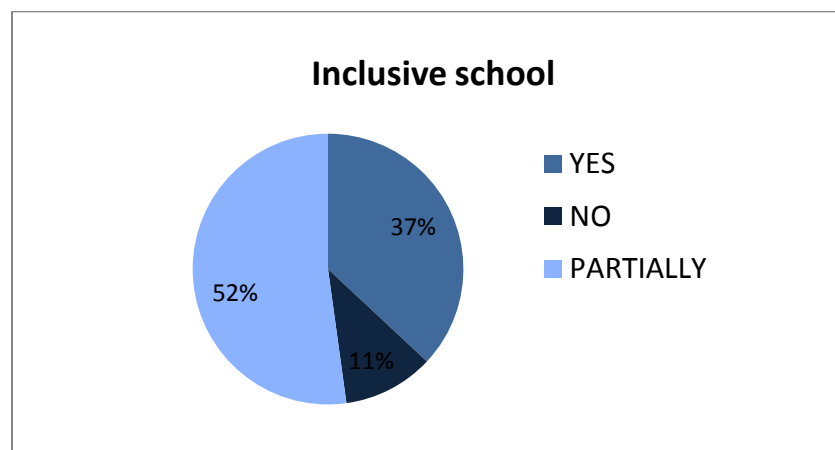


Figure 5 – Is your school inclusive?





Students

A number of 51 students responded to the questionnaire in Annex III. All students mentioned that they knew about the existence of support specialists in school, and 45 of them responded that they knew the person who is school counselor/SLT in the school.

Concerning the **role** of school counselor, as perceived by the students, they mentioned the following ideas:

- to guide us
- to help us know each other and how to socialize
- to provide counseling for problematic children
- to give counseling for those who are depressed, unmotivated, to bullies
- to help students and teachers express themselves and talk about their problems
- to help children know themselves better
- to help us with personal problems/to listen to us
- to help children calm down

All the students mentioned that the role of the speech therapist is mainly to „help us speak/pronounce correctly“. Only 5 of them wrote about reading/writing/math difficulties, referring to dyslexia/dysgraphia/dyscalculia.

Out of the 33 students who interacted with the school counselor or the speech and language therapist, 20 said they enjoyed the activity very much, 8 that it was okay and 3 of them declared they didn't like it at all.

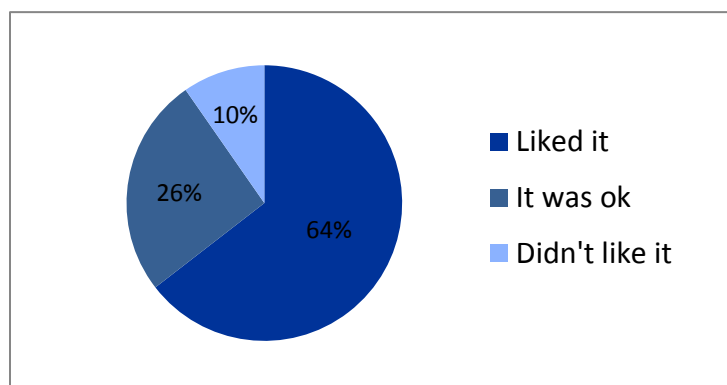


Figure 6 – Student opinion on activities with the school counselor/speech and language therapist





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As a conclusion, the needs for improving the support system focus on the following areas:

- **Professional development and training** – providing the teachers and the support specialists with knowledge, tools and methods to better accommodate the needs of all students
- **Quality over quantity** – school counselors and speech and language therapists are often overwhelmed by the needs for intervention and fail to efficiently plan and revise their beneficiary lists, which negatively affects the results of counseling and speech therapy processes.
- **Presence** – allocating enough time for need analysis in the school enhances the impact of the activity, keeps the support specialist in contact with the beneficiaries.
- **Visibility** – linked with the presence in the educational organization, making visible the results of work, better presenting the profession and the services provided, could be a very useful strategy to make ourselves available to the students and schools.





Annex I

Dear Colleagues

In the purpose to optimize the activity of our institution, please complete the questionnaire below.

I. List 2 strengths of the activity of the school counselor

1).....because.....

2).....because.....

II. List 2 aspects of the activity of the school counselor that you think it should be improved:

1).....

2).....

III. List 2 possible “threats” (challenges, difficulties) that result from the school counselors relationship with the environment (community) in which he / she works:

1).....because.....

2).....because.....

IV. How do you see the school counselors’ activity in school over 5 years?

1).....because.....

2).....because.....

Thank you!





Dear Colleagues,

In the purpose to optimize the activity of our institution, please complete the questionnaire below.

I. List 2 strengths of the speech teacher's activity:

1).....because.....

2).....because.....

II. List 2 aspects of the speech teacher's activity that you think should be improved:

1).....

2).....

III. List 2 possible “threats” (challenges, difficulties) that result from the relationships of the speech teacher with the environment (community) in which he/ she works:

1).....because.....

2).....because.....

IV. How do you see the speech therapist activity in school over 5 years?

1).....because.....

2).....because.....

Thank you!





Annex II

**Questionnaire
 regarding the psycho-educational support system in school**

Please take a few moments to answer some questions regarding the psycho-pedagogical support system in your school. This study is part of an Erasmus+ project in which CJRAE Arad is a partner and will include information from the 3 participating countries: Latvia, Finland and Romania. Some of the questions refer both to school counselors/speech and language therapists (coordinated by CJRAE Arad) and itinerant teachers (coordinated by CSEI Arad)

1. In your school organisation, do you benefit from the following services?

➤ Psycho-pedagogical counseling

YES

NO

➤ Speech and language therapy

YES

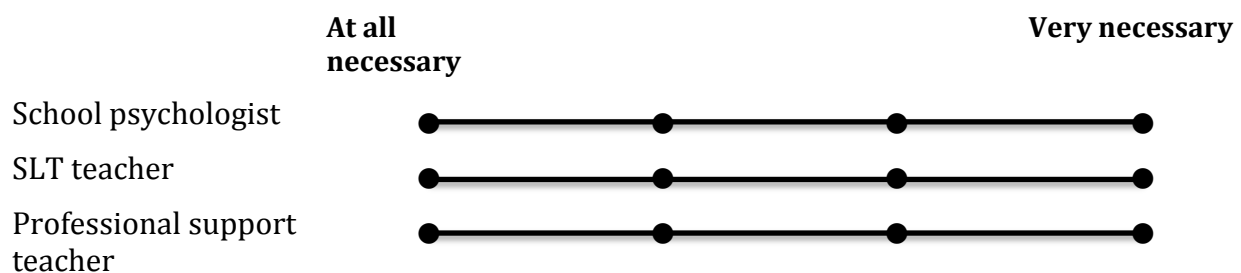
NO

➤ Support services from a professional support teacher

YES

NO

2. How necessary do you consider these services are in your school?



3. What do you think about the rate between the time given to your students by the support specialist and their actual needs?

Very little	Little	Sufficient	A lot	Too much
○	○	○	○	○





4. In your opinion, which are the benefits of having a school psychologist in your school?

- Crisis situation management
- Personal development
- Management of the student groups
- Vocational counseling and career guidance
- Prevention of behavior disorders
- Prevention of school drop out
- Development of communication skills
- Development of children's creativity and artistic expression
- Emotions management
- Prevention of speech and language disorders
- Integration of SEN children in mass education schools
- Adapted curricula

5. How do you think that school counselors can help you in your activities?

6. Do you consider your school ready to offer inclusion to all categories of children with special educational needs?

- YES
- NO
- PARTIALLY
- I DON'T KNOW

7. Please suggest 3 aspect for improvement? In what way?

Thank you!





Annex III

Questionnaire regarding the psycho-educational support system in school

Please take a few moments to answer some questions regarding the psycho-pedagogical support system in your school. This study is part of an Erasmus+ project in which CJRAE Arad is a partner and will include information from the 3 participating countries: Latvia, Finland and Romania.

1. Do you know about a psychologist office/ speech and language therapy office in your school?

- YES
- NO
- I DON'T KNOW

2. Do you know who the school counselor/speech and language therapist is?

- YES
- NO
- I DON'T KNOW

3. Do you know the role of...

The school counselor

The speech and
language therapist





4. Did you ever had.....

Counseling

- YES
 NO

Speech and language therapy

- YES
 NO

5. How did you feel about the activity?

- I didn't like it at all
 It was ok
 I enjoyed it very much

6. What did you like most?

Thank you!

