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ACCESSIBILITY TO FULL INCLUSION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP PERSONAL POTENTIAL

Abstract: Education is a fundamental right of children, and the state has an obligation to ensure its availability and create equal opportunities for all children, including children with special educational needs. In recent years, the education of such children has not/could not receive adequate attention from society and they are often isolated.

Significant changes in the educational field in Georgia began in 1994 at the initiative of the non-governmental sector, although the state could not pay due attention to this issue. Since 2004, the education of children with special educational needs has become a priority recognized by the state, which is connected with the start of systemic education reforms.

It is important that every child is given the opportunity to receive an education with peers that will support their social and emotional development.

The full involvement of the child, family and teacher (specialists) in the learning process is equally important. Through the communication between them, a new perspective is seen, namely, what is the possibility of developing personal potential through education.

In the modern education system of Georgia, the issue of the opportunity to receive education for children with special needs is very relevant. Multifaceted work on the issue is actively underway, however, it is desirable to work on improving the existing capabilities and to further refine the programs intended for them.

Key words: access to education; children's rights; a child with special needs.

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Introduction

Accessibility of full participation in the educational process

A child's participation in the educational process means that the child should be able to study in a general education school that is close to his or her

place of residence. The child should also receive knowledge through diverse and flexible learning programs that focus on academic and social skills.

He or she should be involved in a continuous process of education, which includes school, post-basic education, arts and vocational education, and

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higher education. The child should be given the opportunity to actively participate in all aspects of school and community life in order to maximize his or her potential and be a full-fledged learner.

The issue of children with special educational needs in Georgia is a topical and developing area. In the early 2000s, the idea of inclusive education gained traction, which was followed by a number of legislative and institutional changes. The state developed strategies to support inclusive education, as a result of which relevant services began to be introduced in public schools. The Ministry of Education and supporting structures are trying to create an environment where all students will have the opportunity to use their potential.

At the same time, there are still many obstacles in the current reality. The problem of the lack of qualified specialists and sufficient material and technical resources is particularly acute in the regions. Some schools do not have adapted infrastructure, which prevents full inclusion. Many families do not have information or do not use the services that are available to children with special needs. This prevents the early identification of the child's needs and the timely provision of appropriate support.¹

Against this background, various non-governmental organizations and international partners are actively helping the education system to expand its capabilities. Teacher training is underway, early development centers are being developed, and psychological and socially oriented support programs are being expanded. It is important that this process becomes continuous and systematic so that no one is left behind in education and the development of each child is encouraged in accordance with his or her abilities and needs. Despite these challenges, the Georgian government and non-governmental organizations are actively working to improve the situation. Of particular importance is the development of early intervention programs that help children and their families identify needs at an early stage and access appropriate services. Also, the introduction of inclusive practices in schools, such as equal teaching and the use of special technologies, promotes the full involvement and development of children.²

In Georgia, to the extent possible, full participation of students in the educational process is promoted (e.g. access to resources, supportive learning environments, inclusive teaching methods). However, this is a long-term process and, of course, it cannot be fully and harmoniously conducted. There are certain barriers to full inclusion, such as socio-economic factors, physical or learning disabilities, discrimination. Awareness should be raised even

more in preschool, school and higher education institutions. It is important to regularly familiarize yourself with existing research, conduct new ones and analyze them. This is a prerequisite for planning effective strategies in the future. In this regard, if we compare existing and previous data, recent statistics really create a basis for optimism.

Example: Tbilisi Public School No. 200 – This school is one of the first in Georgia where children with special educational needs study in general classes. Students are supported by special educators, psychologists and speech therapists who work individually with each child. The school also has resource rooms where children can go for additional help if necessary.

Personal Potential Development

Here we define what personal potential means in an educational context. Inclusive education means the opportunity to develop without limitations. It promotes equal opportunities for all students to learn, participate, and achieve academic and social success in a supportive environment. Inclusive education values diversity and recognizes the unique strengths and contributions of each individual. It is desirable to further strengthen cooperation. More communication between teachers, students, families, and community members, as well as promote cooperation to create a better inclusive learning environment.

Modern educational opportunities can help individuals discover and develop their talents, skills, and strengths.

It is worth noting that there are examples of successful educational programs and initiatives in Georgia that have enabled individuals with special needs to use their full potential. Periodically, in Tbilisi and the regions, exhibitions and sales of works by young people with special needs are held. In addition, they are employed in various institutions (supermarkets, gas stations, service organizations, etc.). This is a kind of encouragement and a motivating factor for their further activities.

The intersection of full engagement and personal potential

➤ It is important to better understand the relationship between full engagement in the learning process and the impact on personal development.

➤ It is desirable to regularly discuss how inclusive educational practices can enhance opportunities for personal growth and achievement.

¹ Georgian Special Education Institute (GSEI) – located in Tbilisi, Georgia, is engaged in research and educational activities in the field of education of children with special needs.

² "House of Care" – an organization in Tbilisi that provides children with special needs, including housing and educational services.

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➤ Public awareness of the benefits of inclusive education in terms of promoting diversity, equity and inclusion

Challenges and Solutions

With the involvement of specialists, common challenges are identified. The state has a special role in achieving full inclusion of society as well as in developing the personal potential of individuals, in receiving quality education.

It is with the support of the state that practical strategies can be proposed. Their solutions play a leading role in solving challenges (e.g., teacher training, community involvement).

Legal and policy frameworks

Many countries, including Georgia, have laws and policies that mandate or support inclusive education as a means of ensuring equal opportunities and rights for all students.

Georgia has a Children's Rights Code and the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4613854?p](https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4613854?publication=6)

[ublication=6](https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1399901?publication=0)), which is a comprehensive document (<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1399901?publication=0>) on children's rights.

Conclusion

Inclusive education promotes the fundamental rights of all people, including the right to education. It combats discrimination, exclusion and segregation on the basis of disability, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status or other factors.

Inclusive education can be more cost-effective in the long run. It reduces the need for specialized services and facilities in the future.

It is important to have a continuous call to action from specialists, recommendations for further research and initiatives to promote equal access to education and maximize opportunities for personal growth.

In short, promoting inclusive education is not just an educational practice; it is a reflection of social values and values in equality, diversity and education.

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