

# THE SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION STATE OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

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**Abstract:** *In order to increase their quality of life, people with disabilities must succeed in founding a home and have a paid employment. This research was able to identify and study a significant percentage (93,7%) in the last series of graduates from the classes of the only special education school for professional training in Constanta. The process of social and professional integration, as well as the teachers' expectations concerning the success of this approach, is the subject of our study.*

**Key words:** *socio-professional integration, disabilities.*

## 1. Introduction

Concerns about socio-professional integration of the special vocational education graduates should hold an on-going interest for the specialists, in order to have feedback regarding their level of preparation for life and the level of inclusion in the society we live in.

Such investigative efforts are difficult to attain, because after graduation, former students are hard to identify and be researched. Such steps we undertook also in 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2010.

The courage to resume such a research has been given to us by the strong support of the management and teaching staff of the School Center for Inclusive Education (SCIE) "Albatros" Constanţa.

## 2. Objectives

1. Identifying and monitoring the state of social and professional integration of a large number of graduates coming from SCIE "Albatros".
2. Highlighting the level of social integration of graduates with disabilities from SCIE "Albatros".
3. Highlighting the professional integration specificity of the graduates with disabilities from SCIE "Albatros".

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### 3. Hypotheses

1. We assume that it would not be possible to identify and survey a significant percentage of graduates.
2. We assume that most of the graduates do not have a spouse or children.
3. We assume that most graduates are still living with their family (or other relatives) or receiving a form of social protection.
4. We assume that most graduates do not work in the profession they trained and qualified.
5. We assume that former head teachers do not have high expectations on the future socio-professional integration of graduates from SCIE "Albatros" Constanţa.

### 4. The Sample and the Organizing of the Research

The target group consists of disabled graduates (usually intellectual) from the special education classes, 2013, 2014 and 2015 series.

### 5. Material and Methods

#### 5.1. Biographical Method (anamnesis and catamnesis)

#### 5.2. Survey Method based on the questionnaire technique

The questionnaire of socio-professional integration (SPI) is an investigative tool we created that structures the anamnesis and catamnesis interview, obtaining relevant information about the state of the socio-professional and family integration of the special education graduates, series 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 – from School Center for Inclusive Education "Albatros" Constanţa.

The questionnaire designed by us was filled by the graduates' former head teachers. Some items involve an analysis of school documents, anamnesis and catamnesis interviews and also exposure of some personal and professional attitudes about their former students' possibilities of social and professional integration.

#### 5.3. Conversation Method

#### 5.4. Analysis of School Documents and Archives

### 6. Results, Conclusions and Discussion

#### 6.1. Identifying and Monitoring the Graduates

We notice that from 10 classes in the last three series of graduates from special education (not mainstream), 127 people have graduated and we studied 119 of them, in percentage meaning 93,7% (table 1). Thus, objective no. 1 has been achieved and hypothesis no. 1 is invalidated.

*The research group*

Table 1

No. class	Series/ Class	Total Graduate	Detected Graduates	%
	Total	127	119	93,7

Objective no. 1 may seem trivial, but it is hard to reach and even impossible for the researchers that do not have the school management and teachers' support. Although all schools have the task of monitoring graduates, teachers find it extremely difficult to keep in touch with them (contact addresses and phone numbers are changing, so this approach can be a considerable effort).

We believe that for a school reform concerning the training's effectiveness on life and work for the youth with disabilities, at least monitoring the graduates should be a priority.

## 6.2. Marital Situation of the Graduates

We have grouped above issues, because beliefs and even studies show that adults with disabilities are treated like children with disabilities at certain ages when adults without disabilities are finding life partners, they are having babies, they are no longer living with their parents, and they are having also a financial independency and are no longer receiving a parental support.

Thus, we present if they are married (or cohabitating), if they have children; if they are financially supported and/or assisted by family; if they are living with parents or relatives, in protected or social housing, independent housing (property or rented) (table 2).

*Marital status*

Table 2

Married	Cohabitating	No partner	Children	Total
21	7	91 (76.47%)	Without / with disabilities	119 (100%)
28 (23,52%)			15 / 1	
			16	

We take note that more than 2/3 of graduates do not have a life partner (76,47%). The young people are 22 – 28 years old, age when they should have a relationship and even children. From the talks with the head teachers, it was revealed that the married women were rather the ones that did not have any “visible” disabilities. Most of them have partners without disabilities, but also without a high professional training, but working in an area considered good. The ones that have children, they did not plan them. We also note that three of them are not allowed to work while the husbands are taking care of them financially so they can take care of the children and the house.

Another aspect is that only one out of 16 children has intellectual disabilities. Others, so far, are not diagnosed as having a disability.

Thus, hypothesis no. 2 has been verified to which the majority of graduates do not have a spouse or children.

This was harder to quantify as the Item was understood as “leaving on the parents or someone else's money”, without reference to subsidies, financial tax breaks due to enrollment in a degree of disability. Here, the 37% assisted are also financially supported by family, and up to 53% the financial support comes from governmental institutions or religious cults. However, we believe that the Item has not been well understood, having proof the responses to the items that relate to housing.

It is gratifying that 23,5% live independently and 40% (16,8% +23,5%) have a greater or lesser dependency, but no longer live with their parents. However, 60% live with their parents. Other information can be analyzed and interpreted more nuanced.

The fact that 60% still live with their parents to which we add the ones helped by the community (the County Council) – 16,8%, with protected housing and social housing, altogether 76,8%, means that more than 2/3 are dependent of their parental housing or the State housing, recording a higher or lower depending tutelage (table 3).

*Housing situation of the graduates*

Table 3

Living with parents/relatives	Protected housing	Social housing	Living Independently
71 (60%)	6 (5,04%)	14 (11,76%)	28 (23,5%)
	20 (16,8%)		
	91 (76,8%)		

This percentage of 76,8% is consistent with the percentage of those alone (76,47%). Similarly, those with a partner (married / cohabitating) – 23,52% is consistent with the percentage of those living independently (23,5%). Without carrying out a statistical comparison (test of accordance) however, we can say that the relationship is directly proportional between those who have a spouse and housing independence (from their parents or the state).

Thus, hypothesis no.3 is validated if we look through a perspective concerning tutelage dependence (either parents or state institutions) – 76,8% being in custody. If we look only from the perspective of living with their parents (60%), this percentage is high, but not exceeding 2/3. We lean towards the first option because some graduates were in the State's custody since childhood, so the criteria must be the tutelage.

### 6.3. The Professional Integration State of Graduates from SCIE "Albatros" Constanţa

We can observe in table 4 that the ratio between those working and those not working is almost equal, 50,42% / 49,57%, a report that we already found in 2000 when we studied the same aspects on the graduates from SCIE "Delfinul" Constanţa (Former Special School no. 1).

*The employment situation of graduates*

Table 4

Employed					Unemployed
Qualified			Unqualified	Occasional / seasonal	
the job in which they were trained	another job	maternity leave			
27 (22,68%)	9 (7,56%)	1 (0,84%)	18 (15,12%)	5 (4,2%)	59 (49,57%)
37 (31,09%)			23 (19,32%)		
60 (50,42%)					

Surprisingly, but also in terms of the proportion of those working in the profession in they qualified (22,68%), values are almost equal.

We should note a positive fact, compared to the previous research, that now the percentage of qualified jobs has risen (31%) than the ones unqualified (19,32%). Perhaps it would have been useful to also measure the number of people employed legally or undocumented! A working hypothesis that emerges from the profile and the jobs' specificity as well as the changes on the administrative-financial level of the society, we

believe that the number of legal employees has grown substantially. In the previous research, the percentage of undocumented employees was the majority on the level of people that were working in a different profession than they were qualified for.

Although the percentage of the ones employed temporary / seasonal is good, we expect to be higher considering the fact that most of the graduates are from urban areas and coastline. In the past, the seasonal tourism industry (in the summer) had a bigger percentage.

We specify the qualifications that succeed in being effective, but also the ones that fail to do so:

Textile industry Technician: many graduates are working legally, but not in the professions they have qualified. These jobs are: lawn worker, housekeeper, waiter aid, maintenance man, guard, and constructor;

Beautician and Hairdresser Stylist: most are beauticians, including with PFA (authorized physical people), then hairdresser, also with PFA – working at home, or employed. However even at these graduates, we find other jobs: boutique seller, guard, public servant, and supervisor – educator at the Placement Center;

Gastronomy Technician: the ones that are working on this field are helping cooks or waiters. Quite a lot of them are working in other fields such as: guard, boutique seller, at the car service, worker in a transport company, in constructions, electrical worker, and maintenance worker at the Mall.

Masseur Technician: usually working in nursing homes or are just volunteers. However these ones do not have proven deficiencies.

These data validate the hypothesis no. 4 which says that “most graduates do not work in the profession they qualified”, exactly 22,68%, but we also observe the equal ratio of those working and those not working, especially in the socio-economic context of our country.

#### **6.4. Former Head Teachers’ Vision on the Graduates’ Future Socio-Professional Integration**

The former head teachers consider that more than half of the graduates cannot become independent (N=63; 52,94%).

*The future of socio-professional integration in teachers’ vision*

Table 6

Total integrated	Integrated	Semi-integrated	Not integrated
45 (37,8%)	10 (8,4%)	18 (15,12%)	46 (38,65%)
55 (46,22%)		64 (53,78%)	

The responses to the item regarding the former head teachers’ vision on the graduates’ future socio-professional integration had certain variations which are grouped as follows (tab. 6):

Total integrated: they are working (not necessarily in the qualified field) and will live at his home with his own family;

Integrated: they will have to work, but the chances to establish a personal home is less than females and vice versa;

Semi-integrated: they will probably work occasionally, but the housing must be supported by their family or the State;

Not integrated: they will not work and they will require assistance from family or State.

We tried to obtain more nuanced answers, but we ended up obtaining similar results as the previous Item:

The independent / dependent ratio: 47,05% / 52,94%

The integrated / not integrated ratio: 46,2% / 53,48%.

Thus, hypothesis no. 5 is confirmed, the one stating that the former head teachers do not have high expectations concerning the SCIE "Albatros" Constanţa graduates' socio-professional future.

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Beyond the conclusions above, the biggest win is that the School Center's teachers realized the importance of constant and permanent monitoring of their graduates and we also have obtained the promise that this approach will be happening in the future, using a revised questionnaire, adapted to the school needs.

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