

Everything's clear.

Quality and availability of education for
handicapped pupils in Poland.
Conclusions and recommendations

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Nought Kids Associations

Presentation outline

- Sources
- Context of activities
- Results
- Recommendations



Sources

- Existing data (legal documents, local strategies, official documents, statistical data).
- Qualitative research (38 in-depth interviews with parents, teachers and local officials).
- Ombudsman's activities (over 2200 mails in 2010, extensive professional counseling, several dozen interventions, meetings and expert debates).



The aims of the project

- Change the system of financing the education for kids with special needs and the attitudes of those involved in the system, and therefore:
- Improve the quality and availability of education for special needs children

Context of activities

- According to SIO [System of Education Information] about 160 thousand pupils in Poland are diagnosed as needing special education (2,4% of all students).
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- One in ten disabled children (11.7%) lives below the breadline (CSO data). The vast majority of students with disabilities will never work. Many of them will complete only a secondary school. Many of the professional carers are going to quit their jobs.
- Efficiency increase in education system activities will result not only in changing the quality of life of handicapped children and their families but also in multi-million savings for the state budget and local governments. Just one unemployed person costs the state almost 10 thousand Euro per year (data from Eurofound).

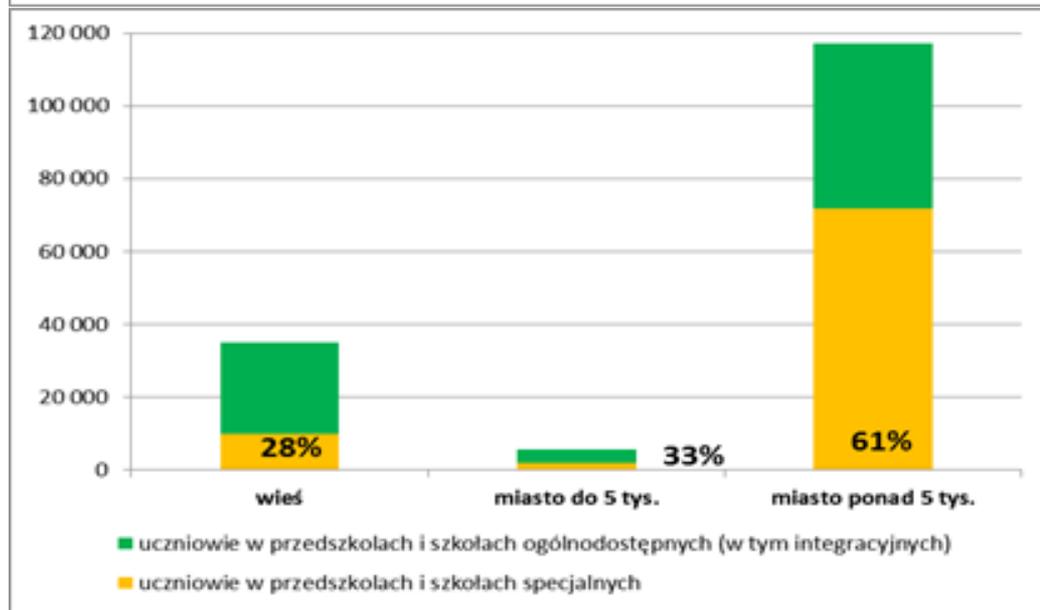
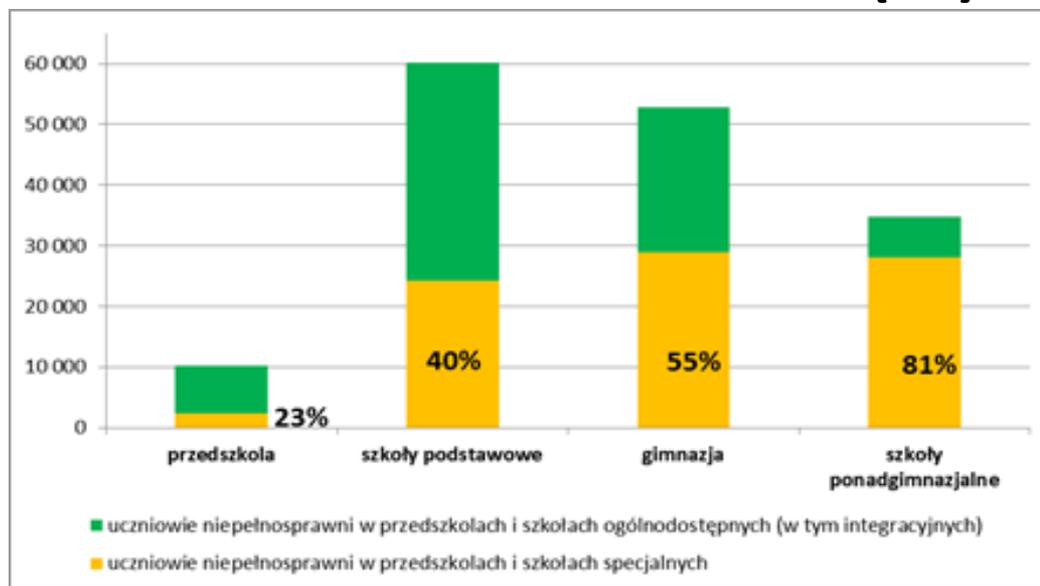


Statistical data(1)

- Majority of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are taught in special institutions.
- More than 30% of all disabled pupils taught in special schools are slightly handicapped, and as such could be/should be taught in general education system
- In two thirds of schools in 2011 there was not a single student with a disability certificate
- There are big discrepancies between towns and countryside as well as the various stages of education.



Statistical data (2)



 Wszystko jasne

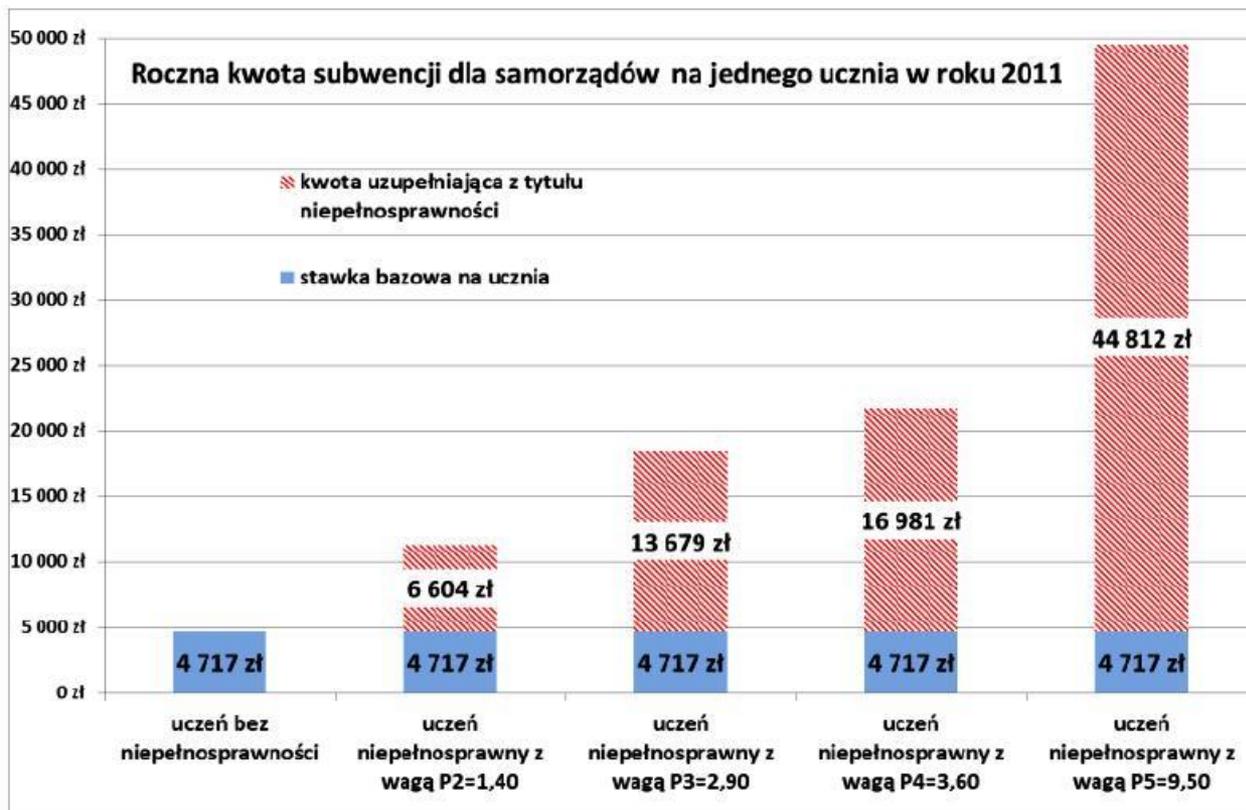
Dostępność i jakość edukacji dla uczniów niepełnosprawnych

Financing Education(1)

- The Ministry of Education decides (annually) on how to share the educational part of the general subsidy for a given financial year.
- The amount of subsidy for a handicapped pupil is increased by an additional amount which depends on the degree of disability. Theoretically, the subsidy is to serve a principle that “*money follows a pupil*”. In practice, it follows him/ her only to the local government, not the school he/ she attends.
- Local governments are entirely free to spend funds from the education subsidy. They often lump the money together, which doesn't allow to meet the increased educational needs of a handicapped pupil who's been awarded the money in the first place.



Financing Education(2)



waga P2: upośledzenie umysłowe w stopniu lekkim, niedostosowanie społeczne, zaburzenia zachowania, zagrożenie uzależnieniem, zagrożenie niedostosowaniem społecznym, choroby przewlekłe

waga P3: niewidomi i słabowidzący, niepełnosprawność ruchowa, zaburzenia psychiczne

waga P4: niesłyszący i słabosłyszący, upośledzenie umysłowe w stopniu umiarkowanym lub znacznym

waga P5: upośledzenie umysłowe w stopniu głębokim (obowiązek szkolny lub obowiązek nauki realizowany poprzez uczestnictwo w zajęciach rewalidacyjno-wychowawczych), niepełnosprawności sprzężone oraz autyzm



Conclusions (1)

- There is a huge lack of knowledge among the representatives of governments, school principals, teachers and parents as to the existing provisions on the education of students with SEN.
- There is widespread belief among the representatives of the education system that there is no chance for **real support** for students with disabilities in public institutions.
- There is usually a uniformed, minimal level of support for each child, regardless of the child's real needs.
- Both teachers and rep. of local government rather opposite the idea of inclusive education.



Conclusions (2)

- A personal, parental intervention is always needed in order to receive an individualized support and the actual implementation of the recommendations included in the disability certificate.
- However, parents fighting to **respect the right** to education are accused of claiming attitude and disruptive behaviour; they also feel left alone in their struggle.
- Education authorities often limit their activities to checking the documents without talking to parents or evaluating the effects of support.



Conclusions (3)

- In the absence of implementation of recommendations and violations of law the Ministry of National Education suggests reporting the matter to the court.
- This solution is purely theoretical, because in practice the parents do not collect the appropriate documentation, do not have adequate knowledge, and above all - do not want to waste their child's life who'd have to attend an inimical institution.
- There are no statutory penalties for failure to implement the certificate's recommendations, apart from the post-visitation suggestions (to eliminate the deficiencies) made in the course of a regular pedagogical supervision.



Conclusions (4)

- The most common solutions the parents go for, in the absence of implementation of the recommendations are:
 - Withdrawal from work and taking up the role of a counselor/ assistant teacher/ mentor for their child
 - Financing “volunteers” visiting the institution the child attends or/ and additional activities outside the institution, from their own pocket.
 - Transferring the child to a special or integration institution.
 - Giving up on the struggle for support (resignation increases with the child’s age).
- The most common excuses used by local governments and institutions:
 - „We do not have funds for additional support (*the child may stay with us but there is no chance to implement the recommendations*)”
 - „We do not have the necessary conditions for granting support” (meaning: *please transfer the child to another school - special or integration*)



Summary

- The existing support system for pupils with disabilities does not meet expectations of:
 - Disabled children and their carers
 - Other children and their carers
 - Teachers and school principals
 - Local authorities
- As a result, **the system does not fulfill the purpose for which it was designed**; the representatives of the Ministry of Education are also aware of the fact.
- The new regulations and further duties imposed on local governments and educational institutions will not change the situation. It will merely lead to increase of the bureaucracy and the deepening of the gap between the theory and practice



Recommendations

- Better access to institutions issuing disability certificates
- Creating a comprehensive support system for students with disabilities and their families based on the MNE's recommendations for SEN students
- Monitoring and evaluation of existing solutions. Mediators' support in case of conflicts.
- Linking the additional funds obtained according to the disability weight subsidies (slide 9) with the institution a child attends.



Thank you for your attention

Appendix

- Assumptions for the case study (slide 5):
 - The average salary in 2012 - 3624 PLN (as envisaged by the state budget)
 - Salary increase in *The State's Long-term Financial Plan for 2011-2014*, and 5% increase per year since then
 - Inflation as noticed above, then 3% per year.
 - The costs of unpaid social security contributions by a full-time employee (before the 2% increase in pension contributions)
 - Income tax 18%, excluding tax deductions for families
 - The evaluation of the 520 zloty carer's allowance every 3 years only by the cumulative inflation.

