



UMCS
UNIWERSYTET MARII CURIE-SKŁODOWSKIEJ

Online Conference

Enhancing the Participation of and Ensuring the Right to Education for Children with Intellectual Disabilities



Programme and Abstracts

14 October 2026

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Organising universities

- Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden
- Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University, Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine
- Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Melitopol, Ukraine
- Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ternopil, Ukraine
- Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

The conference is organised within the project:

Enhancing the Participation of and Ensuring the Right to Education for Children with Intellectual Disabilities (EPERE)

Project information: <https://epere.kdpu.edu.ua>

Editor: Thomas Barow

Technical guidance (Zoom, simultaneous translations): Yevhen Topalov

Cover illustration: ChatGPT generated



Welcome

Dear colleagues,

There are moments when a simple thought gains particular significance. For Karl Grunewald (1921–2016), a leading figure in the reform of services for people with intellectual disabilities in Sweden, the way a society treats its most vulnerable members was a fundamental measure of its humanity. Grunewald's work contributed to the transformation from institutional care towards participation, equal living conditions and citizenship. This perspective continues to resonate today.



Few situations test our commitment to such principles more profoundly than war. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has now lasted longer than World War I. For children with intellectual disabilities and their families, prolonged war can mean displacement, interrupted schooling, damaged infrastructure, disrupted support and profound uncertainty. The right to education, therefore, concerns more than access to school: it also involves safety, belonging, participation and the possibility of being heard.

Our conference contributions approach these questions from a range of perspectives, bringing together research and experiences on participation, education and support in times of both stability and crisis. Together, they highlight the conditions that enable children and young people with intellectual disabilities to learn, participate and remain connected to their communities.

Together, this conference invites us to look beyond formal rights and ask how they can become reality in everyday educational life. I hope this conference will provide an opportunity to exchange research and experiences, to reflect together and to strengthen our shared commitment to education in which every child can participate, belong and be recognised.

A warm welcome to you all!

Thomas Barow

Professor of Education, Chair of the Organising Committee

Zoom, Simultaneous Translation, and Time Zones

The conference will take place exclusively online via Zoom. Please note that simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the conference. To enable simultaneous interpretation:

- In your meeting/webinar controls, click **Interpretation** .
- Click the language that you would like to hear.
- (Optional) To hear the interpreted language only, click **Mute Original Audio**.

Time Zones

Please note that all times listed in this programme are given in Central European Summer Time (CEST). In Ukraine, Eastern European Summer Time (EEST) is used, which is one hour ahead.

Zoom links

[Zoom Link](#) for the main session, keynotes and roundtable, 8.00–9.30, 11.20–12.00 and 14.50–15.40

Simultaneous interpretation: Yevhen Topalov

Conference ID: 885 9454 6882

Passcode: 919328

[Zoom Link](#) for the sessions 1A and 2A: 9.30–11.00 and 13.00–14.30

Simultaneous interpretation: Yevhen Topalov

Conference ID: 858 0908 1264

Passcode: 208533

[Zoom Link](#) for the sessions 1B and 2B: 9.30–11.00 and 13.00–14.30

Simultaneous interpretation: Alina Maslova

Conference ID: 851 0142 2155

Passcode: 408445

[Zoom Link](#) for the sessions 1C and 2C: 9.30–11.00 and 13.00–14.30

Simultaneous interpretation: Yuliia Lishchuk, Karina Krushelnytska

Conference ID: 867 8501 4032

Passcode: 849251

Conference Programme

8:00–8:10 Opening of the Conference and Organisational Information

Professor Thomas Barow, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

8:10–8:30 Welcome by the acting Head of School at the School of Humanities and Education

Professor Thomas Strandberg, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

8:30–9:10 Keynote 1

Rights, Recognition, and Reality: The UNCRPD and the Limits of Law in Advancing Inclusive Education

Professor Franziska Felder, Universität Zürich, Switzerland

9:10–9:30 Break

9:30–11:00 Parallel Session 1

11:00–11:20 Break

11:20–12:00 Keynote 2

Beyond Educational Reform: Everyday Lives, Care, and Citizenship of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Ukraine Since Independence

Senior Research Fellow Hanna Zaremba-Kosovych, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Lviv, Ukraine

12:00–13:00 Lunch Break

13:00–14:30 Parallel Session 2

14:30–14:50 Break

14:50–15:30 Roundtable

From Educational Inclusion to Social Participation

15:30–15:40 Summarising and Closing the Conference

Professor Thomas Barow, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

[Zoom Link](#) for the main session 8.00–9.30, 11.20–12.00 and 14.50–15.40

Conference ID: 885 9454 6882

Passcode: 919328

Please note: All times given are Central European Summer Time (CEST).

Keynote speakers

Franziska Felder is a Full Professor of Inclusion and Diversity at the Institute of Education at the University of Zurich (since 2022). From 2020 to 2022, she was Professor of Inclusive Education and Disability Research at the University of Vienna. Her research spans inclusive education, the history of special education, care ethics, and epistemic justice, engaging with philosophical, historical, and empirical approaches. She is particularly interested in the theoretical foundations of inclusion and the conditions under which disabled persons can participate as full members of society and educational institutions. Felder leads the SNF-funded research project *Disability Struggle*, conducted together with Michèle Hofmann, which investigates the history of the disability movement in Switzerland from 1981 onwards, combining oral history with archival and intellectual-historical methods. Among her publications are *The Ethics of Inclusive Education* (Routledge, 2022) and the co-edited volume *Disability Law and Human Rights: Theory and Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), edited together with Laura Davy and Rosemary Kayess.



Hanna Zaremba-Kosovych is a sociologist and Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology, Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. She received her PhD in Sociology from the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 2018. Her research focuses on disability studies, intellectual disability, social justice, care, and the everyday lives of people with disabilities in Ukraine. She has conducted research on disability rights activism, deinstitutionalisation, inclusive practices, family care, and the impact of Russia's full-scale invasion on people with disabilities and their families. Her current research explores the everyday experiences and perceptions of social justice among people with intellectual disabilities in Ukraine from the late Soviet period to the present. Zaremba-Kosovych has held research positions at Indiana University Bloomington, the University of St. Gallen, and has collaborated with organisations including Fight for Right and SafeBirth. She is a Fellow of the Virtual Ukraine Institute for Advanced Study (VUIAS) for 2025–2026. She is a co-author of the book *History Is Not Without Us: The Formation of the Movement for the Rights of People with Disabilities in Ukraine* (2023).



Keynote 1

Rights, Recognition, and Reality: The UNCPRD and the Limits of Law in Advancing Inclusive Education

*Professor Franziska Felder*¹

¹ Universität Zürich, Switzerland

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) represents a landmark achievement in rendering disability visible as a matter of justice and in affirming the autonomy of disabled people worldwide. Yet the gap between rights as formally proclaimed and rights as substantively enjoyed remains wide. In times of war, rising right-wing populism, and severe fiscal constraint, the rights of disabled persons are frequently undermined, hollowed out, or openly contested. For many individuals, these rights remain either inaccessible altogether or purely formal. Even if they are acknowledged in principle, they often remain unrealised in practice.

This keynote takes this sobering diagnosis as its starting point but moves in a different direction. Drawing on philosophy of law and political philosophy, it first asks what rights are and what conditions must be met for a claim to count as a right at all. This analysis reveals a structural problem: rights, even robustly formulated ones, are subject to qualifications, competing claims, and institutional preconditions that limit their reach. As a result, not every meaningful form of inclusion can be adequately captured or guaranteed by a rights framework alone.

In response, the keynote proposes a broader and more differentiated understanding of inclusion, developed in Felder (2022), which distinguishes four dimensions: inclusion as structural incorporation, inclusion as participation in resources, inclusion as social integration, and inclusion as felt belonging. The paper then examines how these dimensions relate to the rights envisioned by the UNCPRD, and what political and institutional measures would be required to advance genuine societal inclusion and inclusive education.

Reference

Felder, F. (2022). *The ethics of inclusive education: presenting a new theoretical framework*. Routledge.

Keynote 2

Beyond Educational Reform: Everyday Lives, Care, and Citizenship of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Ukraine Since Independence

Senior Research Fellow Hanna Zaremba-Kosovych¹

¹ National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Lviv, Ukraine

Since Ukraine gained independence in 1991, the lives of people with intellectual disabilities have been shaped by profound social, political, and institutional transformations. These have included the gradual decline of Soviet systems of segregation and institutional care, the emergence of parental activism, the expansion of inclusive education, the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and ongoing efforts toward deinstitutionalisation and community-based support. Yet policy and legislative reforms provide only a partial understanding of these transformations. Their significance becomes particularly visible in the everyday lives of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

This keynote explores the changing landscape of intellectual disability in Ukraine from the late Soviet period to the present through the analytical lenses of everyday life, care, and citizenship. It draws on a long-term qualitative research project involving interviews with adults with intellectual disabilities, parents, disability rights activists, social workers, psychologists, and other experts, as well as participant observation in organisations providing social services.

The presentation examines how the Soviet legacy of medicalisation, defectology, institutionalisation, and segregated education continues to shape disability experiences despite significant reforms. It also traces the emergence of rights-based approaches and highlights the role of families, particularly mothers, whose activism contributed to the development of rehabilitation services, inclusive education, supported living, and disability rights advocacy in Ukraine (Phillips, 2010; Sachuk, Tekuchova & Zaremba-Kosovych, 2023).

Moving beyond institutional and policy histories, the keynote focuses on how people with intellectual disabilities themselves experience inclusion, exclusion, dependence, care, control, and belonging in everyday life (Mladenov, 2015). It also considers how Russia's full-scale invasion has disrupted existing systems of care and support while

generating new practices of solidarity, mutual aid, and civic engagement (Zaremba-Kosovych, 2023).

By combining historical analysis with everyday experiences, the keynote approaches Ukraine's changing disability landscape as a question of citizenship: not only whether people with intellectual disabilities formally possess rights, but how opportunities to exercise autonomy, participate in community life, and be recognised as citizens are created, negotiated, or constrained in everyday practices.

References

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Session overview

Session 1 Block (9:30–11:00 CEST)

Session 1A – Participation, Voice and Agency	Session 1B – Participation, Democracy and Professional Competence	Session 1C – Educational Access in Crisis and Displacement
Zoom Link Conference ID: 858 0908 1264 Passcode: 208533	Zoom Link Conference ID: 851 0142 2155 Passcode: 408445	Zoom Link Conference ID: 867 8501 4032 Passcode: 849251
<i>Chair:</i> Kateryna Bondar	<i>Chair:</i> Magdalena Wójcik	<i>Chair:</i> Dorota Chimicz
Ukrainian Teachers' Accounts of War-Related Barriers to the Educational Participation of Children with Intellectual Disabilities <i>Svitlana Shevchenko et al.</i> The Right to Be Heard: Supporting Children with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families in Neurodiversity-Informed Inclusive Education <i>Fialkora Myndru et al.</i> Interviews with Pupils at a Swedish Compulsory School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities about Participation in Philosophical Dialogues <i>Åsa Gardelli et al.</i>	An Argument for There Being a Need for More Extensive Democracy Education for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities <i>Anders Franklin</i> Building Professional Competencies of Special Educators Working with Children with Intellectual Disabilities: The Case of a Master's-Level University Course <i>Iryna Hladchenko</i> Expanding Participation and Ensuring the Right to Education of Children with Intellectual Disabilities through Education for Sustainable Development <i>Hanna Chaikovska</i>	Ensuring Educational Rights and Enhancing Participation of Displaced Ukrainian Children in Sweden: A Case Study of Adaptive Learning Materials and Inclusive Prose Competitions <i>Maryna Chorna & Olena Ryabicheva</i> The Digital as a (not) Safe Space for Refugee Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: The Case of Ukraine <i>Hanna Slozanska & Nadiia Horishna</i> Offline-First Educational Environment for Ensuring the Right to Education of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Crisis Conditions <i>Ihor Chykalo</i>

Session Block 2 (13:00–14:30 CEST)

Session 2A – Teaching, Learning and Cognitive Development	Session 2B – Educational Practices and Engagement	Session 2C – Education under War and Trauma
<u>Zoom Link</u> Conference ID: 858 0908 1264 Passcode: 208533	<u>Zoom Link</u> Conference ID: 851 0142 2155 Passcode: 408445	<u>Zoom Link</u> Conference ID: 867 8501 4032 Passcode: 849251
<i>Chair:</i> Thomas Barow	<i>Chair:</i> Małgorzata Brodacka	<i>Chair:</i> Hanna Slozanska
Inclusive Choreography: Multisensory Approaches to the Participation of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in the Educational Process <i>Viktoriia Barulina</i> Development of Controlled Cognitive Processes in Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities through an Educational Intervention Based on Student-Centered, Participatory Philosophical Dialogues <i>Ylva Backman & Viktor Gardelli</i> From the Cognitive Profile to Inclusive Education: Executive Functions in Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Implications for School Practice <i>Magdalena Wójcik</i>	Perceiving and Responding to School Absenteeism: A Multiperspective Study on Students with Intellectual Disabilities <i>Steffen Kaiser & Steffen Siegemund-Johannsen</i> Books, Friends, and Inclusive Community – The Next Chapter Book Club <i>Anke Groß-Kunkel</i> Preparing Educators for Inclusive Practice: Multilingual GenAI Simulations as Spaces for Professional Rehearsal and Reflection <i>Ronen Kasperski et al.</i>	Trauma-Informed Pedagogy in Underground Special Schools During the War in Ukraine <i>Kateryna Bondar et al.</i> Manifestations of Burnout, Inertia, Meltdown, and Shutdown (BIMS) in Children with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities During Education in a Civilian Shelter in Wartime: Teachers' Observations <i>Olena Shestopalova & Kateryna Bondar</i> Educational Participation of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Ukraine During the War: Barriers, Resources, and Parental Agency <i>Kateryna Bondar et al.</i>

Sessions and Abstracts

Session 1A, 9:30–11:00 CEST

Participation, Voice and Agency

[Zoom Link](#)

Conference ID: 858 0908 1264

Passcode: 208533

Chair: Kateryna Bondar

Ukrainian Teachers' Accounts of War-Related Barriers to the Educational Participation of Children with Intellectual Disabilities

Svitlana Shevchenko¹, Hanna Varina¹ & Yevhen Topalov¹

¹ Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

Educational participation for children with intellectual disabilities extends beyond attendance to learning, communication, peer relations, choice and agency. Inclusive education, therefore, requires attention to access and to the conditions that enable participation (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016; Lakkala et al., 2024). In Ukraine, war has disrupted routines, displaced learners, expanded distance education and destabilised specialist support (Chebotaryova, 2022; Zasenkov, 2024). Less is known about how these disruptions interact and reshape participation.

The study examined teachers' accounts of how war-related disruptions affected learning engagement, communication, peer interaction, choice and autonomy among children with intellectual disabilities and how teachers sustained participation. We asked how wartime disruptions affected participation, how safety interruptions, displacement and remote learning interacted, and which teacher practices supported participation under constrained conditions.

The analysis used Lakkala, Beaton and Kokko's (2024) conceptualisation of participation and agency, distinguishing among formal access, meaningful involvement, and opportunities for choice. Research on intellectual disability informed the

interpretation of pedagogical and relational conditions that shape participation (Vinatea-Elorrieta et al., 2025; Wåger & Bagger, 2025).

A contextualist qualitative interview study involved 18 teachers with experience teaching children with intellectual disabilities during the war. Semi-structured interviews lasted 35–50 minutes. Recordings were transcribed using Avenote, manually checked and pseudonymised. Analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s six-phase thematic analysis (2006) and reflexive thematic analysis guidance (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Coding was primarily inductive and semantic, followed by interpretive theme development.

The study was approved by the Academic Council of the Faculty of Physical Culture, Sports and Psychology, Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University (Protocol No. 9, 25 May 2026). Participation was voluntary, with informed consent for participation, recording, automated transcription and anonymised data use; only pseudonymised transcripts were analysed.

Four themes were generated: “Safety-related interruptions fracture learning continuity”; “Displacement disrupts personalised support”; “Remote attendance becomes adult-mediated participation”; and “Teachers compensate for discontinuity under resource pressure.” Alerts, shelter transitions and power cuts fractured activity sequences; displacement weakened routines and specialist support; inaccessible digital tasks reduced peer interaction and increased dependence on parents. Teachers used visual schedules, stepwise instructions, repeated routines, flexible pacing, offline materials, structured choice and family coordination. Across themes, reduced predictability and continuity increased the need for adult or specialist mediation; when unavailable, participation narrowed across learning, communication, peer interaction and choice.

The analytical contribution is to show how wartime disruption can preserve formal access while weakening conditions necessary for participation and agency. Teachers’ adaptations partly restored these conditions, but depended on time, expertise, family involvement and specialist support. This extends participation-oriented research by identifying continuity of support as a condition linking access to meaningful involvement (Lakkala et al., 2024; Vinatea-Elorrieta et al., 2025). As the study reflects teachers’ accounts, this pattern is interpretive rather than causal.

Crisis-responsive inclusive education should address access alongside continuity and quality of participation by preserving individual support, ensuring accessible materials and protecting opportunities for peer interaction, choice and agency.

References

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<https://doi.org/10.33189/ectu.v115i3.182>

The Right to Be Heard: Supporting Children with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families in Neurodiversity-Informed Inclusive Education

Fialkora Myndru^{1,2}, Iryna Vorontsova³ & Valeriya Hjertenaes⁴

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² Autism Unity, Ukraine

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Inclusive education can provide access to the same setting without guaranteeing that a child is heard within it. For children with intellectual disabilities, participation depends not only on placement, but on whether adults recognise communication in varied forms, create accessible opportunities for choice, and involve children in decisions affecting daily learning and support. Research shows that participation is shaped by environmental factors and that family involvement and parent-school relationships can facilitate inclusion (Yao et al., 2024; Heiman & Avissar, 2024). Rights-based frameworks like inclusive education and the child's right to express views as substantive, not symbolic, entitlements (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

The aim of this practice-informed conceptual paper is to examine conditions that support children with intellectual disabilities in being heard as active participants in inclusive education, with particular attention to communication access, family-professional collaboration, and role distribution within support teams. It asks what enables children to communicate preferences, discomfort, interests and priorities, and how parents can be supported without becoming permanent substitutes for the child's own voice.

The analysis integrates rights-based inclusive education, neurodiversity-informed practice, family-centred support, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and literature on participation, considered alongside the Ukrainian practice context. It is informed by the authors' multidisciplinary experience in psychological support, neurodiversity advocacy, family support and public education. No human-participant research, individual case material or identifiable data are presented.

Four interdependent practice principles are identified. First, being heard requires communication access. Spoken language should not be treated as the only credible form of expression; behaviour, gesture, AAC, refusal and requests for support may all carry meaning. Communication also requires sufficient processing and response time. Adults may need to tolerate pauses and wait for the child's own response rather than interpret, complete or replace it.

Second, participation requires supported choice: repeated, understandable opportunities to express preferences and influence decisions. Third, parents need support as partners rather than advocates expected to compensate for system gaps. In Ukraine, policy formally includes parents on psychological and pedagogical support teams and permits a parent, an authorised person, or a social worker to act as the child's assistant when needed (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2021/2026; Biletska et al., 2024). In practice, however, advocacy, communication, coordination, and continuity may become concentrated within the family, creating a mismatch between the formal team structure and the actual distribution of roles.

Fourth, meaningful participation requires shared responsibility among families, psychologists, educators and other professionals. A formally constituted team does not automatically create functional collaboration. Clearer role differentiation can allow parents to remain partners, professionals to assume their responsibilities, and the child to participate directly in decisions.

A neurodiversity-informed approach asks not whether the child communicates or regulates typically, but whether the environment makes the child's communication accessible and consequential. Inclusive education becomes more meaningful when systems move from speaking about and for children towards working with them as active members of the support team.

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Interviews with Pupils at a Swedish Compulsory School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities about Participation in Philosophical Dialogues

Åsa Gardelli¹, Viktor Gardelli¹ & Ylva Backman¹

¹ Luleå University of Technology, Luleå, Sweden

This study is part of the project "Philosophical Dialogues in Compulsory School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities", in which philosophical dialogues have been conducted with pupils with intellectual disabilities (ID), both those with mild ID and those with moderate/severe ID. The study is based on Philosophy for Children (P4C) (Lipman et al., 1980), an internationally renowned dialogical educational method where experienced facilitators promote active participation and collaborative thinking. Numerous positive effects have been found in prior research (Backman et al., 2024; Gardelli, 2016). However, previous research on potential effects for students with intellectual disabilities is very sparse (Franklin, 2025).

In this study, we interviewed pupils in grades 4–6 with moderate/severe ID about their experiences participating in philosophical dialogues. To ensure all students had the chance to express their opinions and experiences, we used, among other things, concept maps, which allowed students to point to images when needed. Moreover, one of the teachers participated in the interviews and provided communication assistance as needed. The interviews were recorded, and a thematic analysis will be carried out.

An overarching aim of the project is to contribute to knowledge about the effects of philosophical dialogues on pupils with moderate/severe ID. A specific aim for this presentation is to ensure good conditions for capturing pupils' own experiences of participating in such dialogues. The project includes several different research questions, out of which the following two are posed in this presentation:

- How can interviews be conducted so that pupils with moderate/severe ID really get the opportunity to share their experiences and opinions?
- How have the pupils experienced taking part in the philosophical dialogues?

Ethical clearance has been obtained from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr: 2023-03805-01), and informed consent has been obtained from pupils, guardians, and staff. Since interviewing pupils with more severe ID presents specific challenges, the preparation before and the interviews themselves were conducted in close collaboration with school staff.

This is a small study, but it supports the importance of an often-marginalised group's participation in research. It also shows that it is possible for pupils with severe ID to express their experiences and opinions, with the support of appropriately adapted research methods, thereby enabling their meaningful participation in research.

Previous intervention research shows that participating in philosophical conversations has a positive impact on engagement and communication development for several other target groups (e.g. Murphy et al., 2009). This small study aligns with these results.

The data processing is not fully finalised, but some preliminary conclusions are:

- It was important to adjust interviews based on how much the pupils understood and could handle.
- Most pupils were positive about being interviewed about their thoughts on the dialogues.
- All the pupils were positive about having participated in the dialogues and expressed improvement in, e.g. speaking, listening to others, and understanding what others mean.

References

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<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015576>

Session 1B, 9:30–11:00 CEST

Participation, Democracy and Professional Competence

[Zoom Link](#)

Conference ID: 851 0142 2155

Passcode: 408445

Chair: Magdalena Wójcik

An argument for there being a need for a strengthened democracy education for pupils with intellectual disabilities

*Anders Franklin*¹

¹ Luleå University of Technology

This work is part of a project studying the applicability of philosophical dialogues in the Swedish School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities, funded by Luleå municipality and Luleå University of Technology. Research on philosophical dialogues with pupils with intellectual disabilities (ID) is rare (Gardelli et al., 2023). The foundation of philosophical dialogues rests on democratic values, and I aim to explore the implications of theoretical and empirical work on democracy and school situations involving pupils with ID by answering the research question: What arguments are there for promoting strengthened democracy education for pupils with ID, with regard to societal needs? Ethical clearance was obtained (Dnr: 2023-03805-01) and informed consent was secured.

This tentative work is mostly the result of a scoping review of democracy and pupils with ID, conducted in spring 2026, drawing on articles published 2010–2025. The search compound was [(child* OR pupil* OR student* OR adolescent* OR teen*) AND "intellectual disability" AND (democra* OR self-determin* OR "supported decision-making")]. There were 11 results in ERIC, 50 in Web of Science, 30 in Scopus, and 8 in SwePub. 31 articles qualified for the review.

The theoretical framework of the argument consists of premise one, that a healthy democracy requires its citizens to participate in democracy through deliberative

discussions (Habermas, 1996), and premise two, that a democracy requires a wide variety of opinions to be represented (Mill, 1859). These premises necessitate that pupils with ID should be challenged to develop skills to participate in democracy through deliberative discussions.

Whether pupils with ID are challenged to develop skills important to participation in deliberative discussions could be imperfectly operationalised through election participation, and adults with ID do participate to a lesser degree than other groups in elections (Statistics Sweden, 2015). The United Nations Development Programme (2021) identify barriers to electoral participation for people with disabilities. Some of these are relevant for the Swedish context and people with ID, such as informational and attitudinal barriers. My scoping review primarily intersected with the attitudinal barriers, which concern attitudes formed by false assumptions about people with ID. These can stigmatise the election participation of people with ID. An example can be seen in Göransson and Klang (2021), who showed that teachers for pupils with ID rated democratic citizenship as having the least importance of the options given. Furthermore, Sagen and Ytterhus (2014) showed that pupils with ID had fewer opportunities for self-determination compared to pupils without ID. It seems likely that these examples of attitudinal barriers to electoral participation would also impact participation in deliberative discussions.

It is unclear whether strengthened democracy education would improve later democratic participation in elections or in deliberative discussions among people with ID. However, given indicators of attitudinal barriers to participation in elections, it seems likely that there is a societal need for strengthened democracy education for pupils with ID. To determine the needs, more research is needed on democracy education for pupils with ID and on the participation levels of people with ID in deliberative discussions.

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Building Professional Competencies of Special Educators Working with Children with Intellectual Disabilities: The Case of a Master's-Level University Course

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Master's programmes in special and inclusive education face a persistent gap between theoretical preparation and the practical, technology-rich, and interdisciplinary demands of contemporary work with children with intellectual disabilities (ID). This issue is particularly relevant in Ukraine, where educational reform and wartime disruption require flexible approaches to professional preparation. Recent Ukrainian research emphasises the integration of contemporary educational technologies, individualised support, and interdisciplinary approaches in the preparation of specialists working with learners with intellectual disabilities (Chebotarova et al., 2020; Chebotarova & Hladchenko, 2025). International rights-based approaches further emphasise children's participation and their right to inclusive and individualised education.

This contribution presents and critically reflects on the design of the master's-level course "Correctional and Developmental Work in Cases of Intellectual Disability Disorders" (6 ECTS credits, 180 hours), delivered within the "Inclusive Education" programme.

The aim of this contribution is to analyse how a dedicated master's-level university course can support the development of professional competencies required for correctional and special education practice with children with intellectual disabilities, including competencies related to individualised educational planning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and children's educational rights.

Two research questions guide the analysis: (1) How does the sequencing of theoretical and practice-oriented modules support the development of diagnostic, methodological, and interdisciplinary competencies? (2) Which pedagogical strategies appear most promising for translating knowledge about ID into practice-ready skills, including the design of individualised development programmes (IDPs)?

The course is informed by a competency-based approach to teacher education and integrates medical, social, and psycho-pedagogical perspectives on correction and rehabilitation (Dehtiarenko, 2011), together with Vygotsky's (1924/1993) concept of compensatory development. The course design also incorporates an interdisciplinary support model encompassing diagnostic, consultative, correctional-developmental, and monitoring components.

The study adopts a practice-based reflective case-study design. Data sources comprise the official course syllabus, programme-competency matrix, module-level learning outcomes, assessment tasks, and instructor reflection on two years of course delivery. The analysis maps course content and learning activities against programme outcomes related to students' capacity to design IDPs, engage in interdisciplinary collaboration, and support children's educational participation and rights. No data concerning children are analysed, and no student-level empirical data are used. Any illustrative student work presented will be anonymised and used only with appropriate consent.

Preliminary reflection indicates that competency development is supported when theoretical content is systematically followed by applied activities, including IDP design, case analysis, and simulated interdisciplinary case conferences. Case-based and role-play methods appear particularly valuable for developing collaboration and advocacy skills, while sessions addressing ICT, sensory integration, art therapy, and music therapy support students' readiness to adapt educational and corrective approaches to individual learners' needs. These observations are consistent with recent Ukrainian scholarship emphasising contemporary technologies and individualised support in professional preparation (Chebotarova & Hladchenko, 2025).

The case demonstrates that a competency-oriented master's course can integrate theoretical knowledge, applied technologies, and interdisciplinary practice to prepare specialists for more individualised, participatory, and rights-based educational support. The findings may inform the design of similar teacher-education courses in Ukraine and other European contexts affected by educational disruption.

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Expanding participation and ensuring the right to education of children with intellectual disabilities through education for sustainable development

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The right to education of children with intellectual disabilities encompasses not only access to schooling and participation in inclusive learning environments but also meaningful opportunities to influence educational experiences. Such participation involves expressing views, making choices, contributing to decisions, and taking action. Yet participation may remain formal when children are invited to express views or complete adapted activities without their contributions affecting subsequent decisions. Research indicates persistent gaps between children's expressed views and their being reflected in practice, particularly for children with intellectual disabilities (Lundy, 2007; Lewis-Dagnell et al., 2023; Willow et al., 2024).

This paper examines meaningful participation as a practical dimension of the right to education and explores Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a context for its design. Inclusive education frames participation in terms of rights and equity, while ESD provides action-oriented contexts in which learners can identify problems, consider alternatives, make shared decisions, and act on issues affecting their communities. Recent research identifies inclusive education as an important dimension of sustainable development, while showing that inclusive education and ESD have largely evolved as separate fields and that practical approaches to their integration remain underdeveloped (Işıkgöz & Öztunç, 2026; Rončević & Rieckmann, 2025).

The paper investigates how teacher preparation can support the transition from formal involvement to meaningful participation of children with intellectual disabilities. It addresses two questions:

- How can meaningful participation be distinguished from formal involvement?
- How can teacher preparation support its design within ESD practices?

The theoretical framework integrates a rights-based perspective on inclusive education with concepts of voice, agency and participation, alongside the action-oriented perspective of ESD. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides a rights-based foundation for linking inclusive education with effective participation in the realisation of educational rights (United Nations, 2006). Within this

perspective, ESD is considered a context for designing meaningful participation in which children with intellectual disabilities can contribute to identifying problems, making choices, shaping decisions, taking action, and evaluating change.

Methodologically, the study combines conceptual analysis and synthesis of research and international policy documents with pedagogical design. The analysis identified three interrelated characteristics of meaningful participation: accessibility, continuity, and influence. Accessibility concerns opportunities to participate through accessible communication, choice, and action. Continuity concerns whether a child's contribution is carried forward into subsequent decisions and stages of activity. Influence concerns whether that contribution affects decisions, processes, or outcomes. These characteristics informed a practice-oriented process for teacher preparation comprising analysis, mapping participation opportunities, barrier identification, redesign, modelling, and reflection. The resulting Participation Design Map translates this process into the sequence problem–voice–choice–shared decision–action–change.

The study demonstrates that meaningful participation extends beyond mere presence and expressed voice to include continuity, agency, and consequences, making it an important dimension of the substantive realisation of the right to education. ESD provides a productive context because its emphasis on real-world problems, collective deliberation, and meaningful action creates opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities to contribute to shared educational outcomes. The study provides a conceptual and practice-oriented basis for preparing teachers to design participatory processes through which children's views can influence educational decisions, actions, and outcomes, thereby strengthening the substantive realisation of the right to education.

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Session 1C, 9:30–11:00 CEST

Educational Access in Crisis and Displacement

[Zoom Link](#)

Conference ID: 867 8501 4032

Passcode: 849251

Chair: Dorota Chimicz

Ensuring Educational Rights and Enhancing Participation of Displaced Ukrainian Children in Sweden: A Case Study of Adaptive Learning Materials and Inclusive Prose Competitions

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(Presentation in Ukrainian language, simultaneous translation into English)

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Russia's invasion of Ukraine has displaced millions, forcing thousands of children into foreign educational systems (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2025). In Sweden, displaced Ukrainian adolescents face dual challenges: adapting to the national curriculum (Skolverket, 2022) while coping with war stress and language barriers. This study addresses their situational cognitive vulnerability – a temporary reduction in concentration and memory caused by war trauma. While institutional mother-tongue support exists, pedagogically adapted native-language resources aligned with specific subjects in the Swedish curriculum remain scarce (Castillo-Gualda & Språkcentralen, 2025). This gap affects learners experiencing temporary cognitive difficulties similar to those in broader vulnerable populations, including students with learning challenges.

This practice-based case study evaluates an innovative, dual-layered educational and social integration model for displaced Ukrainian adolescents in Sweden, combining a

differentiated native-language textbook aligned with the Swedish curriculum (Lgr22) with a nationwide creative prose competition. The study addresses two research questions:

- How does a dual-layered integration model influence learning motivation, engagement, and curriculum access among displaced Ukrainian adolescents experiencing situational cognitive vulnerability?
- How can this model's design inform accessible educational practices for other vulnerable learners, and is adaptation needed for students with intellectual disabilities?

Grounded in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Meyer & Rose, 2024) and Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson, 2014), and informed by trauma-informed pedagogy, the framework advocates for flexible learning environments that proactively reduce cognitive load, support emotional safety, and promote equitable participation without lowering standards.

Using a qualitative, practice-based case study design, empirical data were collected in Malmö during spring 2026. Materials include classroom observation notes from a textbook pilot involving Ukrainian students in grades 6–9, participant feedback, and student submissions to a nationwide prose competition. Data were systematically analysed using qualitative content analysis, with a focus on cognitive accessibility, self-efficacy, agency, and social belonging.

The study adhered to ethical standards for research involving minors and trauma-affected groups. Written informed consent was obtained from participants and legal guardians; data were fully anonymised; and a trauma-informed protocol ensured that competition themes focused on resilience and future aspirations rather than direct war experiences.

Preliminary findings indicate that visually structured, differentiated native-language materials reduce cognitive load and enhance comprehension of core content as students build Swedish proficiency. The prose competition provided an accessible avenue for emotional expression, agency, and a sense of social belonging.

Findings align with UDL principles (Meyer & Rose, 2024; Tomlinson, 2014), showing that accessible resources reduce barriers to participation while maintaining curricular goals and supporting academic engagement. Cross-sectoral collaboration between civil society and educators (Castillo-Gualda & Språkcentralen, 2025) emerged as a key enabler. Given the study population, this approach may apply to students with intellectual disabilities if appropriately adapted and further evaluated.

Sustainable educational integration for displaced children requires combining adaptive instructional design with opportunities for social participation. Although the

target population consisted of refugee adolescents without diagnosed intellectual disabilities, the underlying principles may offer transferable insights for designing inclusive educational environments. Their applicability to students with intellectual disabilities requires appropriate adaptation and further evaluation.

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The Digital as a (not) Safe Space for Displaced Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: The Case of Ukraine

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The war in Ukraine has created unprecedented challenges for the education of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), particularly with intellectual and or physical disability (Danilaviciute, 2018). This disparity is further complicated by wartime displacement and the lack of reliable tracking among refugee and internally displaced populations. Amid these unstable conditions, establishing a safe, physically secure educational environment has become a top priority for families forced to switch their children to online learning. According to current educational regulations, such children and their families can choose one of two learning formats – family education or distance learning (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2017).

In these cases, at least, the latter helps to realise their right to education. This, however, increases the need for well-trained educators who can effectively facilitate digital learning processes and provide inclusive support to children with SEND.

This study evaluates the accessibility of education for Ukrainian displaced children with SEND during wartime and examines the technical, pedagogical, and socio-emotional safety of their digital learning environments.

To achieve this aim, the study addresses two interconnected research questions: (1) What are the main barriers affecting educational access and student engagement for Ukrainian children with SEND in digital learning environments during the war? (2) Do digital learning environments function as a safe space for displaced learners with SEND from the perspective of teacher assistants?

A qualitative research design was used to explore the experiences of 70 teacher assistants supporting children with SEND in Ukraine. Data were collected online via an anonymous, confidential Google Forms survey with open-ended questions. Responses were analysed using the six-phase reflexive thematic analysis framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The study was officially approved by the Ethics Committee of Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatyuk National Pedagogical University.

The data obtained confirm that digital platforms create various barriers depending on the child's specific disability: they cause technical accessibility issues for students with sensory impairments and acute sensory overload for students with cognitive impairments. These difficulties are significantly exacerbated by a lack of materials and serious infrastructure disruptions, such as frequent power outages and unstable internet connections, which limit the provision of individualised support.

Research demonstrates that while digital platforms ensure the necessary continuity of learning during forced displacement caused by the war, they do not automatically become safe environments due to a lack of resources and the significant psychological impact of war-related trauma on students' ability to regulate their emotions. These findings align with other studies (Samaniego López et al., 2025; Prakash, 2024; Tahane et al., 2026), indicating that technological solutions are ineffective without proper pedagogical support, specialised training for educators, and coordinated interagency cooperation between schools and communities.

In conclusion, ensuring the right to education for internally displaced children with SEND during wartime requires a comprehensive, cross-sectoral strategy rather than isolated digital solutions. Ultimately, digital environments need to be reimaged to go beyond the mere delivery of material and transform online learning into a predictable, safe, and trauma-sensitive space capable of compensating for the physical stability these children have lost. Moving forward, policymakers must implement

holistic approaches that systematically integrate professional development for educators, incorporate trauma-informed practices, and improve logistics and systemic psychosocial support to protect vulnerable students.

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Offline-First Educational Environment for Ensuring the Right to Education of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Crisis Conditions

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Contemporary education increasingly depends on Internet-based platforms, cloud services, and continuous access to digital resources. However, in crisis conditions, armed conflicts, displacement, prolonged power outages, damage to educational infrastructure, and unstable Internet connectivity can disrupt learners' educational trajectories and intensify educational losses. These risks are unevenly distributed: learners from vulnerable groups, including children with special educational needs, may experience more severe and longer-lasting negative consequences when access to educational resources is restricted (Morze & Hlazunova, 2023). For children with intellectual disabilities, disruptions in access to appropriately adapted learning resources and educational support may constitute an additional barrier to the exercise of the right to education. Although existing research has devoted considerable attention to learning recovery and digital access in contexts of educational disruption, the potential of offline-first educational environments to support continuity of education for children with intellectual disabilities in crisis conditions remains insufficiently conceptualised.

The aim of this conceptual study is to theoretically substantiate the potential of offline-first educational environments as a component of resilient educational infrastructure to support the right to education and ensure educational continuity for children with intellectual disabilities in crisis conditions. The study addresses three questions: which infrastructure-related factors restrict access to education and educational continuity during crises; which characteristics of offline-first environments enable essential educational resources to remain accessible when external connectivity is disrupted; and how autonomous local digital infrastructure may help reduce technology-related barriers to participation in the educational process.

The study's theoretical framework integrates the concepts of educational losses, educational resilience, and offline-first digital learning. Educational losses are understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that may encompass cognitive, motivational, emotional, and social consequences. Their prevention, therefore, requires not only compensatory pedagogical measures but also proactive mechanisms to preserve

access to learning opportunities before temporary disruptions result in the accumulation of educational deficits. This approach is consistent with UNESCO's emphasis on educational continuity planning, monitoring, early intervention, and resilient responses in post-conflict and disaster-affected educational contexts (UNESCO, 2023).

Methodologically, the study employs theoretical analysis, synthesis, comparison, and generalisation of scholarly and institutional sources concerning educational losses, crisis-resilient education, and offline-oriented educational technologies. The study does not involve human participants or the processing of personal data; consequently, no direct participant-related ethical risks arise. Nevertheless, accessibility, non-discrimination, data protection, consideration of individual educational needs, and the best interests of the child are regarded as fundamental principles.

The theoretical analysis suggests that offline-first environments based on autonomous local servers can provide access through a local network to learning management systems, adapted learning and multimedia materials, assessment tools, as well as resources and didactic materials for corrective psychopedagogy aimed at supporting the individual educational needs of children with intellectual disabilities, without requiring continuous Internet connectivity. The Kolibri ecosystem demonstrates the feasibility of offline-first access to educational content with subsequent synchronisation when Internet connectivity is restored (Roveri, 2024). Such environments should not be regarded as substitutes for inclusive pedagogical practices, specialised support, or interaction with teachers and peers. Rather, their pedagogically informed implementation may strengthen educational resilience by reducing infrastructure-related barriers, maintaining access to learning resources, and creating more stable conditions for educational continuity and participation during crisis-related disruptions.

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Session 2A, 13:00–14:30 CEST

Teaching, Learning and Cognitive Development

[Zoom Link](#)

Conference ID: 858 0908 1264

Passcode: 208533

Chair: Thomas Barow

Inclusive Choreography: Multisensory Approaches to the Participation of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in the Educational Process

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A child's right to education is not limited to physical presence but requires active participation and belonging – a right often realised only formally for children with intellectual disabilities. Dance is an increasingly recognised, though underused, resource in inclusive education: a systematic review of adapted dance programmes (19 studies, over 500 children aged 3–18) recorded positive physical, cognitive and psychosocial effects, though evidence quality remains uneven (May et al., 2021), while shared dance activities between disabled and non-disabled peers have been shown to foster children's sense of belonging (Zitomer, 2016).

This conceptual paper examines how choreographic composition can be structured to support the participation, communication and social integration of children with intellectual disabilities. It addresses the research question: Which choreographic and pedagogical strategies enable these children to access rhythm, structure and group coordination through non-verbal, multisensory means?

The paper draws on the human rights model of disability underlying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006; Degener, 2016), in which participation is active engagement rather than mere presence, combined with embodied learning theory, which treats movement, touch and vision as channels of communication equal to spoken language (Macrine & Fugate, 2021).

The study adopts a practice-based conceptual approach combining a narrative literature review with a reflective analysis of an original choreographic composition created by the author for a mixed-ability ensemble of seven or more performers. The reflective analysis is a structured review of the author's rehearsal notes, staging decisions and role adaptations, read against the theoretical framework to identify replicable strategies rather than to test a hypothesis empirically. Illustrative strategies include tactile and visual counting, peer-led movement cues, and role distribution by individual capacity. As the paper involves no direct data collection from children, no formal ethical approval was required; any future empirical extension would need informed consent, institutional approval, and person-first language.

Reflective analysis suggests that reframing rhythm as something perceived through the whole body, rather than through hearing alone, broadens participation beyond children with typical auditory-verbal processing. In practice, this took the form of counts given by hand or touch, repeated motifs absorbed bodily rather than verbally, and a role distribution that let every performer remain an organic part of the whole rather than an accommodated exception.

These observations align with community-informed recommendations on sensory and communicative considerations in inclusive dance instruction (Ladwig et al., 2025) and with a narrative study finding that choreography teachers favour creative movement over mechanical reproduction (Kim & Hong, 2020). They extend a literature largely framed around physical education outcomes (Intani et al., 2025; Syahrudin et al., 2026) or therapeutic engagement (Johnels et al., 2024; Surujlal, 2013) by proposing choreographic principles for artistic rather than therapeutic practice. Deaf dancers' access to musical structure through vibration and visual synchronisation (Hopkins et al., 2022) illustrates multisensory access to rhythm but is not direct evidence for children with intellectual disabilities; transferring findings across disability groups remains a proposition requiring empirical testing.

Choreography can constitute a genuinely inclusive, rather than merely adapted, educational tool, with relevance to educational reconstruction in post-war contexts such as Ukraine.

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Development of controlled cognitive processes in pupils with intellectual disabilities through an educational intervention based on student-centred, participatory philosophical dialogues

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A domain-independent dual-system version of the influential dual-process theory distinguishes between two different cognitive systems – the intuitive (“System 1”) and the reasoning (“System 2”) (Gawronski et al., 2024). Research about methods for triggering System 2 could be particularly relevant for pupils with ID, a group that should not automatically be excluded from research about more advanced thinking. While the educational model Philosophy for Children (P4C) has shown good results in several areas, there is no prior research within the dual-process framework. In general, studies about philosophical dialogues with pupils with ID are lacking. Thus, our aim is to study cognitive development among pupils with intellectual disabilities (ID) through an intervention consisting of participatory inquiry dialogic education inspired by P4C (Lipman et al., 1980). Our more precise research question is: “Do data from filmed intervention sessions show that participants trigger System 2 monitoring of intuitive responses from System 1?”

Research has highlighted the importance of appropriate education to learn to use System 2. When it is triggered to monitor intuitive responses from System 1, System 2 may either:

- (1) endorse this response,
- (2) adjust the response for other features that are recognized to be relevant,
- (3) correct the response for a recognized bias, or

(4) block the response from overt expression if it is identified to violate a valid rule of inference (Gawronski et al., 2024, p. 13).

In accordance with the list above, evidence that System 2 has been triggered is that the response has been (2) adjusted for other features that are recognised to be relevant, (3) corrected for a recognised bias, or (4) blocked because it violates a valid rule of inference. (However, a simple endorsement of the response would not be a clear sign of System 2 processing.) We provide examples from an inquiry dialogue intervention with pupils with mild ID in school year 7–9 from a Swedish Compulsory School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities, showing how an initial intuitive (System 1) response to a hypothesised peer-to-peer conflict was monitored by well-structured dialogic moves from facilitators that prompted for steps (2)–(3) above and lead the group dialogue into a more reflected (System 2) viewpoint. We also present additional results on the cognitive development of the pupils from the intervention, which progressed through three phases during 2023–2026, from researcher-led to school staff-led inquiry dialogues.

While communication abilities vary among persons with ID, difficulties are common (Smith et al., 2020; WHO, 2021). Thus, promoting group communication aligns with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, UN, 1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, UN, 2006), which outline rights to freedom of expression. According to Lgr22, pupils with ID should be supported to use verbal language in a nuanced way, engage in critical thinking, and independently formulate opinions. The importance of testing ideas, posing questions, and collaborating with others is emphasised. This suggests that P4C pedagogy is suitable for the target group.

The project obtained ethical clearance from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr: 2023-03805-01). The research is funded by Luleå municipality and Luleå University of Technology (LTU-5257-2022).

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From the Cognitive Profile to Inclusive Education: Executive Functions in Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Implications for School Practice

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Contemporary approaches to intellectual disability increasingly emphasise cognitive processes underlying learning alongside general intellectual ability. Executive functions (EF)—including inhibition, working memory (WM), and cognitive flexibility—are central to information processing, attentional regulation, and task performance. Research indicates difficulties in several EF components among people with intellectual disabilities, although substantial heterogeneity exists across cognitive domains, aetiologies, and task conditions (Fidler & Lanfranchi, 2022; Spaniol & Danielsson, 2022). Understanding these profiles is essential for addressing barriers to learning in inclusive education.

This narrative review synthesises current evidence on EF and WM profiles in students with intellectual disabilities and examines its implications for designing supportive educational environments in inclusive classrooms.

The review addresses two questions:

1. What patterns of EF and WM strengths and difficulties are reported among students with intellectual disabilities?
2. Which environmental adaptations and instructional strategies are identified in the literature as supportive of learning and participation for these students?

The review is grounded in Diamond's (2020) core executive functions framework and complemented by Cognitive Load Theory (CLT; Paas & van Merriënboer, 2020) to interpret the effects of task complexity and instructional design on working memory demands.

A literature search was conducted across Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, PsycINFO, and PubMed for peer-reviewed studies published between 2016 and 2026. Search strings combined terms related to intellectual disability, executive functions, working memory, and inclusive education/instructional adaptations. Eligible studies included empirical research, systematic reviews, and theoretical articles focusing on school-aged students with intellectual disabilities. From an initial retrieval of 184 records, 32 articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the thematic synthesis.

The study does not involve human participants or the collection of primary personal data; therefore, ethical approval and informed consent are not applicable.

Evidence indicates that WM limitations, difficulties with inhibitory control, and reduced cognitive flexibility frequently increase the challenges associated with multi-step instructions and independent task completion. However, substantial profile heterogeneity highlights the need for individualised supports rather than uniform interventions. The literature consistently identifies external task structuring, visual scaffolding, the reduction of unnecessary information, explicit routines, and systematic guidance as supportive strategies (Lifshitz et al., 2016; Spaniol & Danielsson, 2022).

Findings align with research documenting core EF impairments while highlighting inter-individual variability (Cáceres-Álvarez et al., 2025; Spaniol & Danielsson, 2022). Cognitive profiles should inform, rather than rigidly dictate, environmental adaptations. While identified strategies offer strong theoretical alignment with CLT, empirical evidence regarding specific adaptation outcomes across diverse inclusive settings remains uneven.

Moving from descriptive cognitive profiling to environmental adaptation allows educators to proactively reduce unnecessary cognitive load. Matching instructional supports to individual EF profiles enhances access to inclusive learning. Further research should empirically evaluate targeted adaptations across varying degrees of intellectual disability.

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Session 2B, 13:00–14:30 CEST

Educational Practices and Engagement

[Zoom Link](#)

Conference ID: 851 0142 2155

Passcode: 408445

Chair: Małgorzata Brodacka

Perceiving and Responding to School Absenteeism: A Multiperspective Study on Students with Intellectual Disabilities

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School absenteeism has received increasing attention in recent years (Heyne et al., 2019), yet students with intellectual disabilities remain a largely understudied population (Melvin et al., 2023). In the research context, little is known about the reasons for their absenteeism and how to address it, although questions of educational participation and the right to education are highly relevant to this group. The study examines school absenteeism among students with intellectual disabilities as a challenge to educational participation that may signal fragile inclusion in school life.

The aim of the study is to deepen understanding of how school absenteeism among students with intellectual disabilities is perceived by different actors and which consequences and responses they consider meaningful. The central research question is: How do school leaders, teachers, social workers, parents, and students with intellectual disabilities perceive the relevance, causes, consequences, and approaches to responding in relation to school absenteeism for this group?

Regarding the theoretical framework, school absenteeism is conceptualised as a phenomenon shaped by individual, familial, school-related, and peer-related factors (Kearney, 2016; Ricking et al., 2009), associated with emotional and social developmental risks, reduced educational participation, and constrained societal integration (Ricking & Hagen, 2016). This allows absenteeism to be analysed as a sign of fragile participation and potential exclusion.

With regard to methodology, a qualitative, multiperspective design was employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with headteachers (n = 6), special education teachers (n = 40), social workers (n = 11), parents (n = 9), and students with intellectual disabilities (n = 3). The interviews explored experiences of absenteeism, perceived causes, consequences, and support strategies. Data were analysed using qualitative content analysis, allowing group-specific reconstructions and comparisons across stakeholder groups. Regarding ethical considerations, approval was obtained, informed consent was obtained using adapted procedures for students, and attention was paid to confidentiality and vulnerability.

Among selected key findings, school absenteeism in this context is shaped by intersecting individual, familial, and institutional conditions that are complex, often not directly visible, and perceived differently by stakeholders. In relation to educational approaches for increasing participation, attempts to improve attendance must be tailored to the underlying reasons for absence. One recurring challenge concerns parental withdrawal, for example, when school attendance is seen as lacking value. The data also point to institutional exclusion, such as when staff shortages lead schools to ask students to stay at home. These patterns suggest that differentiated educational responses are needed: at the individual and familial levels, this includes early identification of absence-related challenges and trust-based communication between home and school; at the institutional level, it requires adequate staffing and the ability to ensure that all students can exercise their right to attend school.

In the discussion, the findings are related to broader research on school absenteeism, revealing parallels to students without disabilities and specific vulnerabilities associated with intellectual disability. In conclusion, the study makes visible a group whose participation is particularly fragile, highlighting the need for context-sensitive educational approaches that reduce exclusionary effects of absenteeism and strengthen meaningful participation for students with intellectual disabilities.

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Books, Friends, and Inclusive Community – The Next Chapter Book Club

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Questions of cultural participation and the inclusion of children with disabilities have gained prominence, driven by the ratification of the UN-CRPD. Article 30 emphasises the right to participate in cultural life and access cultural materials in accessible formats. Despite this, research on cultural participation for people with disabilities remains limited, leaving gaps in understanding how to implement inclusive cultural participation. Our research on the Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) in the USA, Germany, and Switzerland (where we run over 350 book clubs that meet weekly in a fun, community-based setting) shows that reading together – understood broadly – can put cultural participation into practice and create cultural materials in accessible formats (Groß-Kunkel & Fish, 2023; Groß-Kunkel, 2017).

The studies aim to explore how reading together in the NCBC can serve as a practical means of cultural participation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). It addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of NCBC on literacy skills, self-determination, and self-advocacy among its members?
2. How does the NCBC model foster community and social connectedness for children with IDD?
3. What are the benefits of peer support and mutual assistance in inclusive settings like NCBC?

The study is informed by the “New Literacy Studies”, which defines literacy as what people do with it based on a text: “In the simplest sense, literacy practices are what people do with literacy” (Barton & Hamilton, 2012, p. 6).

The research employs a qualitative approach, including observations, interviews with NCBC participants and facilitators, and analysis of participant feedback over the last 24 years in the USA and Germany. The dissertation of Anke Groß-Kunkel on the NCBC involved 7 qualitative Interviews with book club members with a disability and 4 qualitative Interviews with book club facilitators, as well as monthly participant observations of the hourly meetings. The data was collected from 2007 to 2010 in the USA and Germany. The study involves human participants and has obtained ethical approval from the “Office of Responsible Research Practices (ORRP) / The Ohio State University Institutional Review Boards”. Informed consent procedures are followed, and safeguards are in place to protect participants' privacy and well-being.

The NCBC offers weekly opportunities for individuals with IDD to read, learn, and make friends in an inclusive setting. The qualitative study highlights the societal significance of literature and the impact of inclusive book clubs. The research results show that NCBC fosters a sense of community and belonging among participants with IDD. The meaning of reading extends beyond the text, encompassing practices such as group discussions and shared experiences. The multifaceted literacy practices within the NCBC promote literacy skills, social support, and personal development. The NCBC model, adapted for both adults and schoolchildren, demonstrates positive effects on participants' literacy and social connectedness.

This presentation will explore the NCBC model's role in fostering cultural participation and implications for inclusive community initiatives. It will discuss qualitative study results and provide insights into practical implementation possibilities and opportunities for adopting the model in other countries.

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Preparing Educators for Inclusive Practice: Multilingual GenAI Simulations as Spaces for Professional Rehearsal and Reflection

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Meaningful participation in inclusive education depends not only on access to educational settings, but also on educators' capacity to navigate emotionally complex, uncertain and relationally demanding encounters. Teachers must respond to diverse learner needs, communicate with families and make professional judgements under conditions of ambiguity. Simulation-based learning offers a structured means of rehearsing such practice and can support educators' social-emotional competencies (Kasperski et al., 2025). GenAI-based simulations further extend these opportunities by providing responsive, low-risk environments for practising complex professional situations without involving real learners (Li et al., 2025). However, relatively little is known about how educators themselves experience and make sense of learning within AI-mediated simulations, particularly across different linguistic, cultural and professional contexts.

The aim of this study was to examine how educators experienced a multilingual GenAI-mediated simulation designed for social-emotional learning. The study addressed one research question: How do participants across diverse linguistic and professional contexts experience and make sense of their learning within a multilingual GenAI-mediated simulation? The study was informed by simulation-based teacher education, Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action, and professional unlearning, which conceptualises the disruption of established interpretive and behavioural patterns as a potential catalyst for professional learning (Angelini, 2026).

An exploratory qualitative design was implemented across three countries. Participants were 20 in-service teachers enrolled in an M.Ed. programme in Inclusive Education in Israel, 31 pre-service teachers in Spain, and 35 pre-service teachers in Special Education in Poland. The same simulation framework was implemented in Hebrew, Spanish and Polish. Data were collected from end-of-semester focus group

interviews exploring participants' experiences of the simulation. Interviews were analysed inductively within each site and subsequently synthesised across sites to identify shared and context-specific patterns. The study received institutional ethical approval (ETH-2025-191125). Interview participation was voluntary, data were anonymised, and participants were instructed not to enter identifiable or sensitive information into the AI system; all scenarios were fictional.

Across contexts, participants described a learning process characterised by emotional activation, uncertainty, and disruption of habitual responses, followed by slower, more regulated responding, reconstruction of possible responses, and reflection on professional positioning. Pre-service participants particularly emphasised uncertainty and emotional activation, whereas experienced educators described disruption when familiar routines failed to achieve the intended outcome. Cross-context differences were also evident in participants' interpretations of the encounter, suggesting that a shared simulation does not yield a uniform learning experience. Participants additionally identified limitations, including the absence of non-verbal cues, linguistic unevenness, rigid escalation and generic feedback.

These findings align with previous work identifying authenticity as a core feature of simulation-based teacher education (Levin et al., 2025). They also support accounts of professional unlearning in which the disruption of familiar responses creates opportunities to reconsider assumptions and reconstruct professional action (Angelini, 2026).

In conclusion, multilingual GenAI simulations may serve as supplementary spaces for professional rehearsal in inclusive teacher education. By allowing educators to practise regulation, communication, judgement and reflection before consequential encounters with learners and families, educators may strengthen the professional conditions that support responsive and meaningful participation in inclusive educational settings.

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Session 2C, 13:00–14:30 CEST

Education under War and Trauma

[Zoom Link](#)

Conference ID: 867 8501 4032

Passcode: 849251

Chair: Hanna Slozanska

Trauma-Informed Inclusive Underground Schooling During the War in Ukraine

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Since 2022, the war in Ukraine has required substantial organisational and pedagogical adaptation to sustain schooling under prolonged conflict (Avsheniuk & Seminiukhyna, 2025; Klein & Murasova, 2026; Makhniuk et al., 2024). In frontline regions, this has included underground and shelter-based schools, which provide protection but may involve spatial confinement and sensory deprivation (Babchuk, 2026; Ivantsev & Obynochna, 2023; Roberts et al., 2016). These sensory-spatial underground conditions, along with cumulative effects from war traumatic events, may affect students' regulation and learning and change the implementation of trauma-informed and inclusive practices (Bondar et al., 2026; Cooper & Ivey, 1964; Goldenthal et al., 2024; MacKenzie et al., 2023; Mytsyk et al., 2025). However, empirical evidence remains limited, particularly regarding students with ASD and intellectual disabilities and the interaction between environmental constraints, educator regulation, and disability-responsive pedagogy.

The study aimed to explore how educators adapt environmental, pedagogical, relational, and psychosocial practices to sustain inclusive education, students' regulation, participation, and learning in underground schools operating under prolonged armed conflict, with particular attention to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and intellectual disabilities. We examine how educators respond to the sensory and spatial demands of underground schools through trauma-informed and inclusive pedagogical practices.

The study integrates trauma-informed, embodied-relational, and sensory-environmental perspectives (Abdou & Younis, 2026; Goldenthal et al., 2024; O'Toole, 2026; Wilson et al., 2026). Together, these perspectives conceptualise inclusive practice as the adaptation of pedagogical, relational, sensory, and environmental conditions to support students' safety, regulation, participation, and learning under chronic adversity.

The qualitative study explored inclusive practices through semi-structured online interviews with 34 educators from underground schools in two eastern Ukrainian cities. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis with HyperRESEARCH (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ethical approval was granted by Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University (Protocol No. 3, 20 November 2025). Informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were ensured.

Thematic analysis identified 4 interrelated domains: (1) sensory-spatial conditions of schooling, (2) psycho-emotional adaptation of educational process and co-regulation, (3) specifics of the organisation of routine, and (4) adaptation of pedagogical strategies. Educators described underground environments as involving both sensory deprivation and overload, particularly for students with ASD and intellectual disabilities. Prolonged shelter stays were associated with anxiety, behavioural dysregulation, fatigue, and disruption of routines. Recreating familiar classroom structures was described as supporting predictability and educational continuity despite spatial constraints. Educators adapted practices to developmental and disability profiles using movement, tactile materials, visual schedules, sensory supports, grounding, breathing, and other stabilisation strategies. They also emphasised their own emotional regulation as a resource for supporting students' co-regulation.

Our findings show that underground schools function as sensory, relational, and pedagogical environments, not merely protective spaces. Previous Ukrainian research has focused on educational continuity and teacher adaptation (Mytsyk et al., 2025; Avsheniuk & Seminikhyna, 2025) and on safety and architectural requirements (Babchuk, 2026; Ivantsev & Obynochna, 2023). Consistent with trauma-informed and neurodevelopmentally responsive research, inclusion also depends on sensory conditions, teacher-student co-regulation, and reorganisation of educational routine and teaching (Goldenthal et al., 2024; O'Toole, 2026; Abdou & Younis, 2026). Extending confinement research (Cooper & Ivey, 1964; Roberts et al., 2016; Suedfeld & Steel, 2000), prolonged shelter use adds a temporal dimension to environmental demands.

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Manifestations of Burnout, Inertia, Meltdown, and Shutdown (BIMS) in Children with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities During Education in a Civilian Shelter in Wartime: Teachers' Observations

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Contemporary research demonstrates that children with neurodevelopmental disabilities critically depend on environmental predictability, consistent routines, and sensory balance. The scientific literature (Belek, 2019; Phung et al., 2021; Raymaker et al., 2020) describes burnout, inertia, meltdown, and shutdown (BIMS) as responses to cumulative stress and difficulties adapting to environmental demands (Higgins et al., 2021). However, the existing evidence base primarily examines responses to everyday stressors, leaving extreme conditions such as martial law in Ukraine and education in shelters largely unexplored (Howlett, 2025). Artificial lighting, specific acoustics characterised by reverberation, and crowding can create complex sensory demands (Boyce et al., 2003; Kaplan, 1993). For children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and co-occurring speech and language difficulties, these challenges may be further complicated by difficulties in verbalising discomfort, which may impede compensatory mechanisms and contribute to dysregulated behaviour, regression in communication skills, and exacerbation of BIMS manifestations (Phung et al., 2021). Despite the implementation of face-to-face education, such responses remain systematically understudied, while safety protocols do not adequately account for sensory needs and difficulties with verbalisation.

The study aims to explore how teachers and allied educational professionals describe BIMS-related responses among children with neurodevelopmental disabilities during shelter-based education and how they perceive and adapt their pedagogical practices in response to these experiences. The following research question is addressed: How do BIMS-related responses manifest in teachers' observations, and what pedagogical tools and strategies do professionals perceive as helpful for preventing or mitigating them in shelters?

The theoretical framework integrates theories of sensory processing and environmental demands (Ashburner et al., 2008; Belek, 2019; Goldenthal et al., 2024) with

concepts of stress accumulation, self-regulation, and BIMS phenomena (Higgins et al., 2021; Paris et al., 2026; Phung et al., 2021; Raymaker et al., 2020). It conceptualises BIMS-related responses as potentially emerging when cumulative sensory, emotional, and situational demands exceed children's available regulatory and communicative resources. At the same time, pedagogical support is understood as a relational and environmental response rather than as an independently established treatment effect.

Methodologically, we analysed interview data from 12 teachers, speech and language therapists, and physiotherapists working in special classes in 2025 with children with neurodevelopmental disabilities requiring support at Levels 4–5 (ASD and intellectual disabilities). Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Interview transcripts were de-identified, and sensitive material was handled to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation.

The analysis identified three interconnected themes. First, *Sensory Strain in Shelters*: Professionals described acoustic overload, ventilation noise, voices, reverberation, restricted space, and abrupt environmental changes as increasing sensory and emotional demands and limiting children's capacity to adapt. Second, *Disrupted Self-Regulation*: Professionals identified BIMS-related responses to interrupted activities, contextual transitions, and demanding sensory conditions, including meltdowns, shutdown-like responses, reduced responsiveness, withdrawal, transition difficulties, reduced learning readiness, and repetitive self-stimulatory behaviours. Third, *Recognition and Co-Regulation*: Professionals described recognising signs of distress and providing sustained individual support, transition assistance, adapted learning demands, and predictable, calm interactions to support children's regulation.

The findings extend research on BIMS by examining these responses in Ukrainian wartime shelters, where sensory overload, restricted space, disrupted routines, and forced transitions intersect (Ashburner et al., 2008; Higgins et al., 2021; Phung et al., 2021; Raymaker et al., 2020). Participants linked acoustic and spatial demands with disrupted self-regulation and highlighted the importance of predictable routines, multimodal communication, and relational co-regulation (Belek, 2019; Goldenthal et al., 2024; Paris et al., 2026). The novelty lies in connecting shelter environments, BIMS-related responses, and professional co-regulation, highlighting implications for sensory-informed shelter design and trauma-informed educational support.

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Educational Participation of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Ukraine During the War: Barriers, Resources, and Parental Agency

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Meaningful participation in inclusive education extends beyond physical access to social connectedness, interaction, shared learning, recognition, and belonging (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2026). Teacher and peer interactions, adaptive educational environments, and partnerships with parents facilitate participation (Vinatea-Elorrieta, Rojas-Pernia, & Haya-Salmón, 2025; Mann et al., 2024). In Ukraine, war has intensified educational disruption and loss of support services, while families often compensate through largely invisible parental labour (Vromans et al., 2024; Bondar et al., 2026; Kukuruza et al., 2026).

The study examined, from parents’ perspectives, how educational resources and contextual conditions become – or fail to become – genuine capabilities for children with intellectual disabilities to learn, participate, interact, and experience belonging during war. What resources, conversion factors, and wartime constraints shape children’s capabilities to learn, participate, interact, and experience belonging in education?

The study used the Capability Approach, which shifts attention from resource availability to genuine opportunities to achieve valued ways of being and doing (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2009).

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents of children aged 7–14 years with ASD, intellectual, and complex disabilities in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine. Parents were recruited through educational institutions in Zaporizhzhia, with organisational coordination by the Education Department of the Melitopol City Council, Zaporizhzhia Region. Interviews were conducted in Ukrainian via Zoom and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The LPIE Framework informed questions on physical, socio-emotional, decision-making, and engaged participation (EASNIE, 2026). Coding was semantic and data-driven, while the Capability Approach guided abductive interpretation.

The study was approved by the Academic Council of the Faculty of Physical Culture and Sports, Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University (Protocol No. 4, 19 December 2025). Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Interview transcripts were de-identified, and sensitive material was handled to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation.

Four themes illustrate how educational resources are converted into children's capabilities under wartime conditions:

- Theme 1. Formal availability without accessibility. Formal provision did not ensure participation when personnel and institutional support were absent.
- Theme 2. Support enabling participation. Individualised teaching, family partnership, strengths-based approaches, and sensory adaptations converted support into capabilities for engagement and learning.
- Theme 3. From presence to belonging and voice. Peer relationships, responsiveness, and decision-making opportunities transformed attendance into capabilities for belonging, recognition, and voice.
- Theme 4. Parental agency and transferred responsibility. Parents expanded educational opportunities by mobilising specialists and services, but often compensated for institutional gaps, shifting responsibility for inclusion from institutions to families.

The findings indicate that inclusion depends not only on access and placement but also on relationships, adapted teaching, voice, and belonging (EASNIE, 2026; Vinatea-Elorrieta, Haya-Salmón, & Rojas-Pernia, 2025). Parental agency emerged as a dual conversion factor: it expanded children's capabilities, while its necessity could also signal transfer of institutional responsibility to families (Mann et al., 2024; Bondar et al., 2026; Kukuruza et al., 2026).

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Roundtable 14:50–15:30 CEST

From Educational Inclusion to Social Participation: A Systemic Approach to Ensuring the Rights of Children and Youth with Intellectual Disabilities in Ukraine

[Zoom Link](#)

Simultaneous interpretation: Yevhen Topalov

Conference ID: 885 9454 6882

Passcode: 919328

The roundtable brings together researchers, educators, practitioners, and civil society representatives to discuss and develop systemic cross-sectoral approaches. Such endeavours aim to ensure an effective transition from inclusive education to full social integration and the protection of the rights of children and young people with intellectual disabilities in Ukraine, particularly under martial law and during post-war recovery.

Moderators

- *Hanna Slozanska*, Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine
- *Kateryna Bondar*, Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

Panellists

- *Olha Boiko*, PhD in Social Work, Research Coordinator of the study “The Impact of Supported Living Services on Perceptions of Quality of Life and the Rights of People with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities”; Consultant, Ukrainian-Swiss project “Mental Health for Ukraine” (MH4U)
- *Olena Chebotariova*, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Education for Children with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities, Mykola Yarmachenko Institute of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine
- *Yevheniia Panichevska*, Lecturer, National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”; Director, All-Ukrainian NGO “Scientific Society of Persons with Disabilities ‘Institute of Social Policy’” (since 2022); Director, Charitable Foundation “Association of Parents of Children with Autism” (since

2013); Communications Director, International NGO “Child with a Future” Autism Support Foundation (since 2021)

- *Liudmyla Lysogor*, PhD, Associate Professor, Head of the Division for Educational and Methodological Support of Special and Inclusive Education, Ukrainian Institute for Education Development and co-creator comprehensive assessment tools used by Inclusive Resource Centers (IRCs) to gauge children's needs; developer of the State Standard for Basic Secondary Education (Natural Sciences educational field); author of teaching and methodological resources for the professional development of primary school teachers

Discussion Areas

1. The Right to Education in Times of Crisis

What does the right to education mean for children with intellectual disabilities in conditions of war and other prolonged crises? How can this right be understood beyond formal access to schooling to ensure both psychosocial safety and the right to continuous educational progress?

2. Educational Transitions and Individual Trajectories

How does current education reform address the diverse needs and individual educational trajectories of children with intellectual disabilities during key transitions – from early intervention to primary school, from primary to lower secondary, and from lower to upper secondary education? How can the ecosystem of pedagogical, social, and health support remain seamless across these stages?

3. Transition to Adulthood, Supported Living, and Social Participation

How does access to supported living, employment, and community integration services influence perceptions of quality of life among young people with intellectual disabilities and their families? How can these services contribute to meaningful autonomy and belonging within community life across the adult life course, rather than simply providing an alternative form of residential care?

4. Crisis as a Catalyst for Systemic Change

How have war, displacement, and institutional disruptions reshaped national priorities in protecting and advancing the rights of children and youth with intellectual disabilities? What systemic, cross-sectoral reforms are needed to transform emergency responses into a sustainable, rights-based infrastructure?

Chairs, Presenters and Discussants

Angelini, Maria Laura, Catholic University of Valencia, Spain

Backman, Ylva, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden

Barow, Thomas, Örebro University, Sweden

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