INCLUSIVE APPROACHES WITHIN FIVE ARAD COUNTY'S SCHOOLS. THE RESULTS OF THE IMPACT STUDY WITHIN PROACTV PROJECT

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Abstract: *Within the frameworkof the project-PROACTION FOR A MULTIPROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY -ProActivefunded by the POCU Programme,The house for teach training "AlexandruGavra" Arad and the Arad County School Inspectorate assumed the 5 objectives. The project took place in the period:19.04.2018-28.11.2020. Between September-November 2021 we have coordinated the team that carry out the Impact Study. Following the processing of the data of the two questionnaires applied to the two categories of subjects: members of the managerial boards and teachers included in the target group, it is apparent that the subjects considered the school in which they operate as being inclusive environments, open to all children. Respondents contributed actively to increase the level of inclusion in the school in which they work, considering that their own design-teaching-assessment practices are consistent with the principles of inclusive education.*

Key words: *inclusion; access to education; resources mobilization; inclusive teaching practices*

1. THE IMPACT STUDY's DESIGN

Within the framework of the project- PROACTION FOR A MULTIPROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY -**ProActive** funded by the POCU Programme, *The house for teach training "AlexandruGavra" Arad* and *the Arad County School Inspectorate* assumed the following objectives: OS1. Creation and delivery of a complex professional development program, generically called "ABCD", consisting of four training courses A, B, C and D, for adaptation and personalization of the teaching-learning act in children at risk of dropping out of school. OS2. Improving the professional competences of 307 teachers and management teams belonging to the 5 school units selected in the project during 4 school semesters. OS3. Strengthening a pyramid structure to support teachers' efforts to prevent the risk of dropping out of school, with social innovation and ICT as a tool.

The project took place in the period:19.04.2018-28.11.2020. Between September-November 2021 we have coordinated the team that carry out the Impact Study.

The overall objective of the study was to highlight the impact of the complex development programme and the mentoring programme on the members of the target group and project beneficiaries.

1.1.Specific objectives of the impact study:
• Highlighting the transformative impact of the complex training programme on members of the boards of directors and teachers participating in the training
• Highlighting the transformative impact of the mentoring programme on board members and programme teachers

- **Highlighting the extent to which teachers and managerial boards' members actively promote inclusion and student centred approaches, as a result of the participation to PRoaCTIve project**
- Highlighting the perception of parents of children learning at the schools included in the project about the student-based focus of the educational process and the degree of inclusion of the school
- Identification of the facilitation aspects and those that have braked the participation of teachers/schools in the Inclusive School competition
- Identify measures that can help increase participation in projects addressing the topic of inclusion.

In order to achieve the objectives we have designed two questionnaires with 4 sections and we have organised a focus group with 16 parents. In the following article we will describe the methodology and the results of the questionnaire aiming at revealing the level of inclusion in the schools participants at the project.

1.2. Sample of subjects

We have selected a number of 60 teachers from the total of 307 participants to the project, using stratified sampling method, based on the criteria "school they work at" and "the level of schooling at which they teach.

Table 1-Summary of sample teacher subjects

	CSEI	St. Mary's High School	Middle School Adam Nicholas	Middle School No.2Pecica	Saint Sava Brancovici High School	Number of selected subjects
Preschool	0	1	3	2	0	**5**
Primary	12	2	1	3	4	**21**
Lower secondary	10	0	2	3	1	**17**
Upper secondary	0	5	0	0	11	**17**
	22	**8**	**6**	**8**	**16**	**60**

We also **included 24 members** of the managerial boards of the 5 participants schools.

2. METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR COLLECTING RESEARCH DATA

2.1. Survey through questionnaire

Considered by S.Chelcea as "a logical and psychological sequence of written questions or graphic images with a function of stimuli in relation to research hypotheses, which, by administration by the survey operators or by self-administration, determines on the part of the respondent verbal or non-verbal conduct to be recorded in writing" (Chelcea, S., in C. Strunga, C., 2001, p. 105), the *questionnaire* is the main tool for carrying out *investigations*. This definition applies to the questionnaires applied by the researcher or survey operators, but the questionnaire can also be self-administered.

The questionnaire involves the application of the same questions to different subjects in the same order and allows the collection of relatively simple but relevant information for the purpose of research on the opinions, beliefs, beliefs or modes of action of the subjects. If *the focus group is a qualitative method,* in which it is importantwhat *the subjects respond to* and not how many subjects respond, the survey is a quantitative *method* that allows to learn the opinions of a larger number of respondents about the transformations that have occurred at the level of their own educational and managerial practices as a result of participating in the complex training and mentoring program. According to Rotariu, Tr., Ilut, P., 2001)

In the case of the impact study, we opted for **the self-administered questionnaire**(in which the subject reads the questions himself and notes the answers in the digital google form variant).

In order to measure the transformative impact of training and mentoring programmes on project participants, 2 questionnaires were constructed, applied to 24 managerial boards'members of the 5 schools and a questionnaire applied to 60 teachers participating in the training programmes. The questionnaires have been structured in 4 sections but in this article we will present section C- Indicators of inclusion.

Section C was built on a 4-step Likert scale, from*to* a*very smallextent to a very large extent,*subjects having to assess to what extent the 19 indicators includedare manifested in the schoolwheretheyare working as a result of their participation inthe project.

3. LOCATION AND DURATION OF RESEARCH

The questionnaires were applied in the period **4.11.-10.11.2020**, as google form documents to the following links:
1) https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc8wJy0XJD-WJRQSBUMbad-FBaoVgKJLgaGMUyahmFdkXAetQ/viewform
2) https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSef3_HkVbm7GlE0bGRNHDqYm4YtGEmnO9QHCZW4ZCnt8_iJg/viewform

4. RESULTS OF THE APPLICATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE AMONG TEACHERS AND MEMBERS OF THE MANAGERIAL BOARDS

4.1. Response rate and subjects'distribution

The questionnaire was answered by **46** teachers participating in the complex training programme and **22** teachers who are members of the managerial boards, as follows.

The response rate was 77% for teachersand **92%** for managerial boards' members.

Of the 22 respondents of managerial boards' members, 5 respondents work at the "Sava Brancovici" Ineu Technological High School and 5 at the Arad Inclusive Education School Center, 4 respondents work at the "Adam Nicolae" Middle School, Arad, the Special High School "Saint Maria" Arad and the Gymnasium School No. 2 Pecica
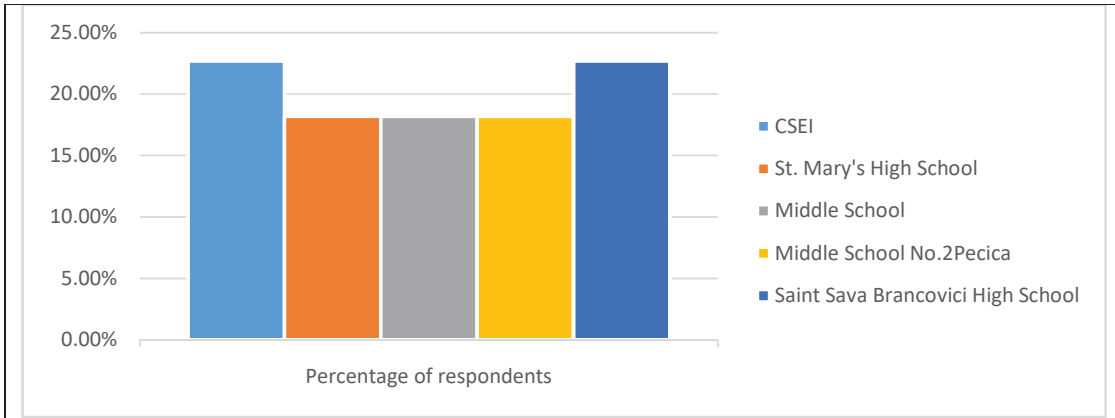
Fig.1 Distribution of subjects, members of management board, by school in which they work

The 46 teacher respondents from the schools participating in the project, work in the following schools: 14 at the Arad Inclusive Education School Center and the "Sava BrancoviciIneu" Technological High School, 7 at The Secondary School No.2 Pecica, 6 at the "Adam Nicolae" Middle School and 5 at the Special High School "Saint Maria" Arad, as can be seen in Figure 2.
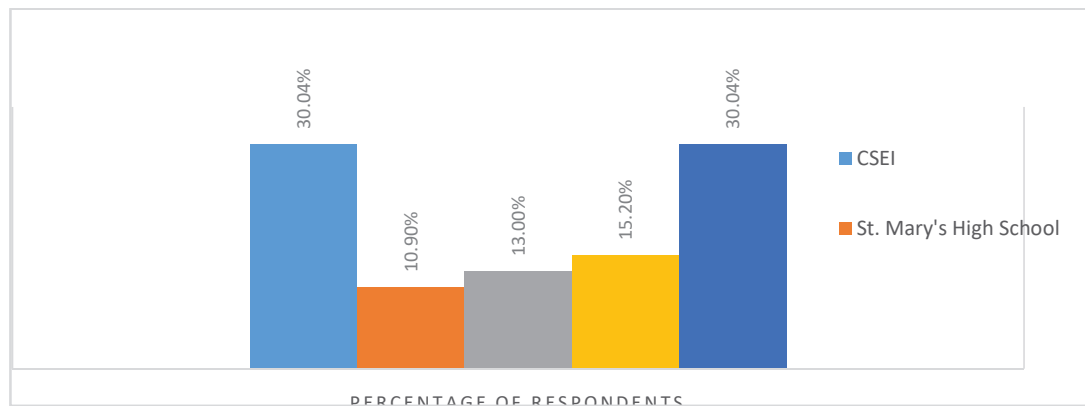

Fig.2Distribution of subjects of teachers, members of the target group, according to the school at which they work

With regard to the distribution of subjects according **to the level of education at which they teach**, we note that:

Members of the managerial boards teach mainly at the lower secondary level (10 persons),6 subjects teach at the upper secondary school, 4 work in primary education, and 2 respondents teach in preschool education.
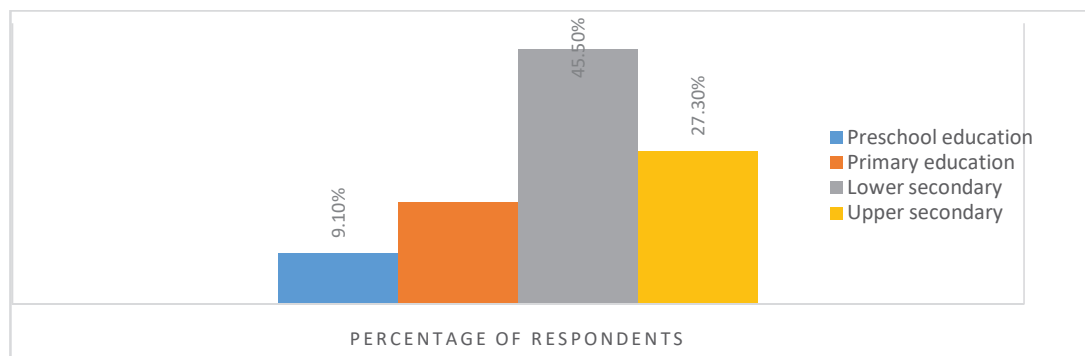
Figure 3-Distribution of subjects members of the managerial boards, by level of education at which they teach

As regards the distribution of teacher subjects, members of the target group, depending on the level of education at which they teach, this can be seen as a percentage in Figure No. 4
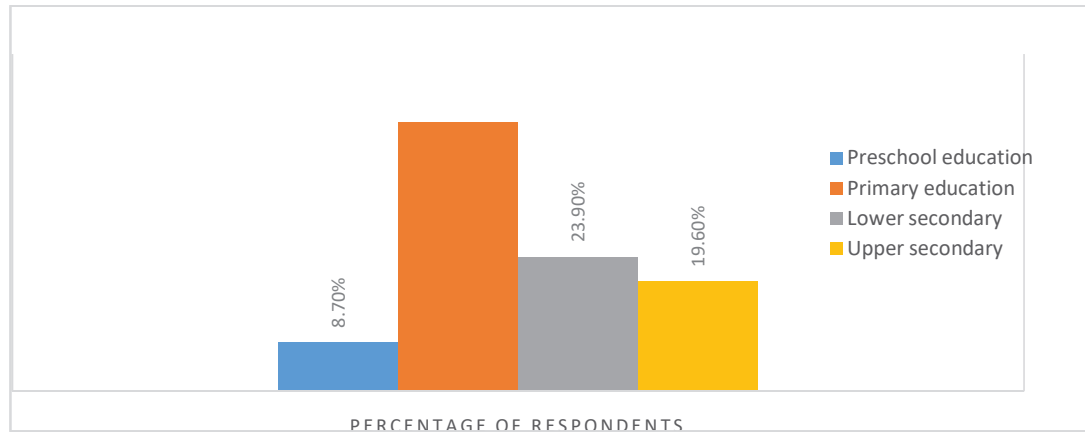

Figure 4-Distribution of subjects of teachers who are members of the target group according to the level of schooling at which they teach

Thus,22 subjects teach in primary education, 11 teach in lower secondary education, 9 in higher secondary education, and 4 in pre-school education.

Comparatively, we note that at the level of managerial boards, the majority of respondents work at the secondary level, while in the case of teachers the majority of respondents work at the level of primary education.

4.1. THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE
SECTION C-INDICATORS OF INCLUSION AND STUDENT CENTRED APPROACHES

Section C of the questionnaire aimed at highlighting the perception of subjects, members of the managerial boards and teachers members of the target group, from the 5 schools participating in the project,**on the extent to which the indicators of inclusion are manifested at school level,**both inthe managerial approaches of the organization and in terms of the organisation of the instructional-educational process.

Subjects had to appreciate, on a Likert scale from 1 to 4 (where 1 signifies *To a very small extent*, and 4 signifies *To a very large extent*), the extent to which they identify in school and in their own educational approaches the 19 indicators of inclusion and student centred approaches.

The 19 indicators contained in the questionnaire were the same for both categories of subjects.

The C section indicators can be grouped as follows:

Table No.2-Averages obtained by categories of respondents and category of inclusion indicators

Category number	Inclusion category	Items included in the category	Average scores/category Management	Average scores/category Teachers within

			boards Members	the target group
I	Access to education for all children	1-2	3,74	3,77
II	Management of the educational establishment	3-5	3,61	3,63
III	Instructive-educational process	6-14	3,57	3,56
IV	Mobilisation of resources	15-17	3,24	3,27
V	Health and safety	18	3,45	3,48
VI	Relationship with the community	19	3,68	3,57
	General Average for Section C		**3,49**	**3,55**

As can be seen in the table above, all averages obtained for inclusion indicators are above 3, i.e. most subjects consider that the indicators of inclusion are manifest in school and in educational practices to a large and very large extent.

Comparing the averages obtained by category for the respondents who are members of the managerial boards and the teachers who are members of the target group, we note **that these averages vary together,** which demonstrates the validity of the data obtained. Thus, **the lowest averages** for both groups of subjects were obtained for the *ResourceMobilization* category (average 3.24-mamagerial boards members and 3.27 for teachers), and the highest averages were obtained on the dimension *Access to education of allchildren* (average 3.74-mamagerial boards members and respectively 3.77 for teachers). We conclude that in the opinion of subjects from both categories, schools ensure access to education for all children. The managerial and educational practices are organized according to the inclusion principles, but a better allocation of resources and development of school infrastructure is needed to physically transform the school into a child-friendly space for all children.

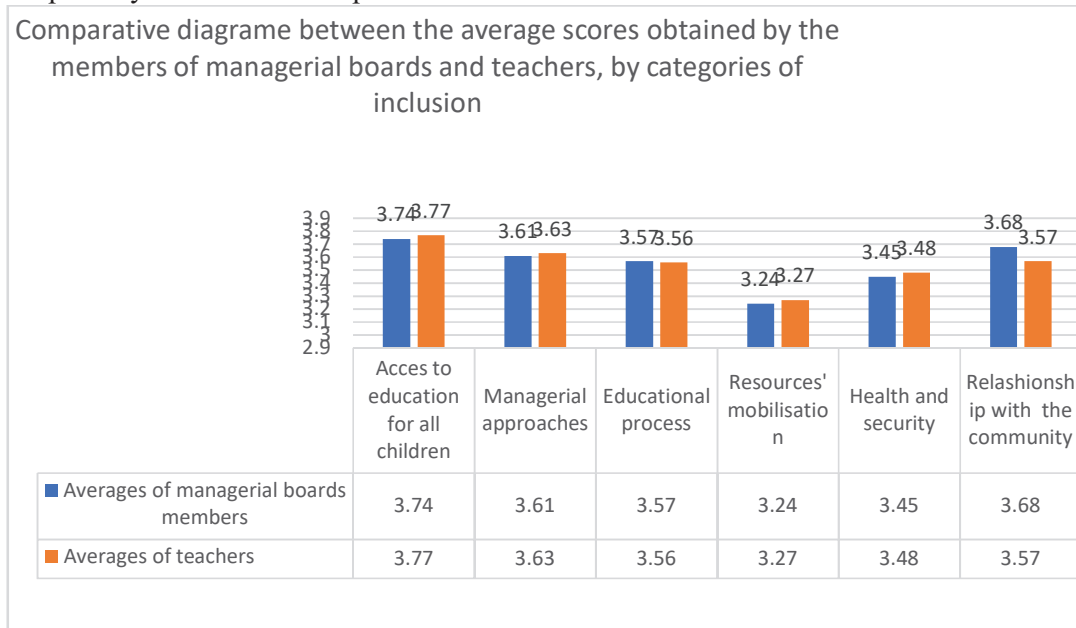Graphically these results are presented as follows:

Comparative diagram between the average scores obtained by the members of managerial boards and teachers, by categories of inclusion

	Acces to education for all children	Managerial approaches	Educational process	Resources' mobilisation	Health and security	Relashionship with the community
■ Averages of managerial boards members	3.74	3.61	3.57	3.24	3.45	3.68
■ Averages of teachers	3.77	3.63	3.56	3.27	3.48	3.57

Figure 5- Averages of subjects members of management teams and teachers by categories of indicators of inclusion

The greatest difference between the responses provided by Managerial boards members and teachers is found in the category *Relationship with the community* (average of managerial boards members 3.68, teachers 3.57) which can be explained by the fact that the main interface and link of the school with the community is represented by the management of the organization and less by the teaching body.

We find that managerial boards members achieved a lower overall average than the teachers who are members of the target group, 3.49 compared to 3.55, which can be explained by the fact that they have a 360 degree picture of the school processes, regularly analyse the strengths and areas of school improvement, and are more informed about the existing and necessary resources in the school.
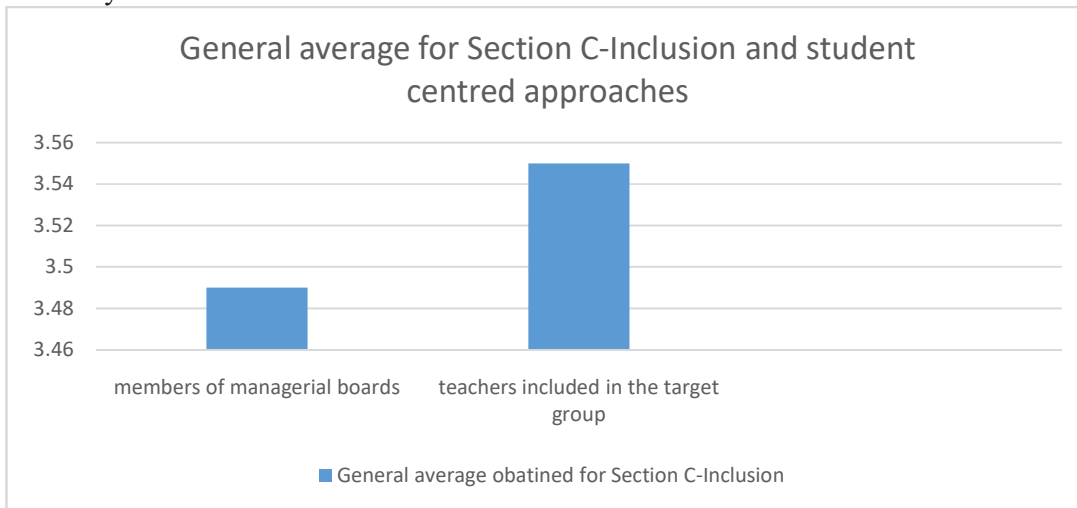
Figure 6-General average of section C

By looking individually at each of the 19 items in Section C, we find that among both, the subjects members of the managerial boards and the 46 teachers, the highest frequency was obtained by scores 3 and 4, namely *to a large and to a very large extent.* Calculating the central trend value of the distribution of responses for managerial boards members and teachers, **it emerged that the highest frequency value is 4,** which describes the subjects' option for the maximum positive rating.

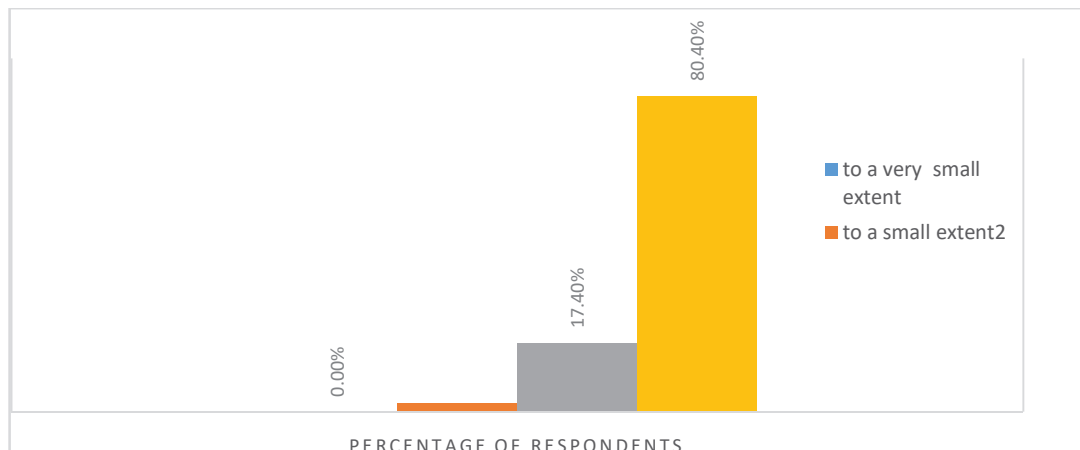We have selected for example the questions that have been overwhelmingly appreciated with the rating 4.

Figure no.6-Mangerial board members'answers related to equal access to education for each children
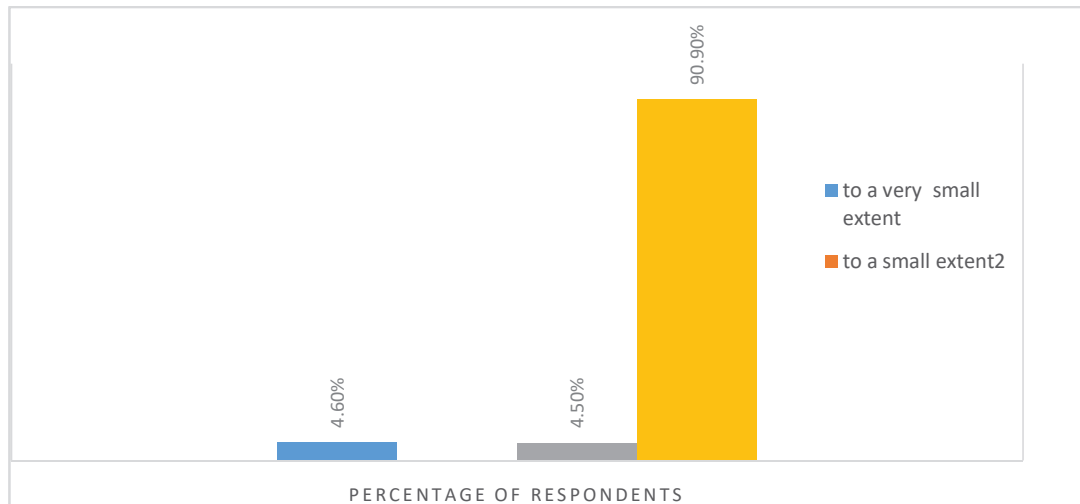

Figure no.7-Teachers' answers related to equal access to education for each children

This distribution of responses was also highlighted in the highest average in the Access to Education category of all children. It follows that subjects do not perceive any barrier that could hinder children's access to education. Management and teaching strategies should focus on keeping children in school and ensuring fair access to school success.

For teacher respondents, questions 2, 5,6, 9,10,11,12, 18 and 19, representing about 50% of the total questions in Section C,**were assessed exclusively with scores 3 and 4 i.e. to a large and to a very large extent.**

In the case of managerial board members, only questions 11, 12 relating to students' activation, differentiated assessment andrelating to the relationship with the community**were assessed exclusively by 3 and 4.**

This difference may be due either to a more cautious attitude of managerial boards' members in the evaluation of the inclusion indicators in their own school and/or the excessively positive perception of teachers regarding indicators of inclusion related to the organisation of the instructional-educational process, which are more in direct control of the teacher.

Analyzing the items that achieved the most scores of 1 and 2 (to a very small extent and To a small extent we find that 18.2% of the respondents who are members of the managerial boards consider that the instructional-educational process does not sufficiently value the differences between the students and does not use them as resources for teaching-learning-assessment.
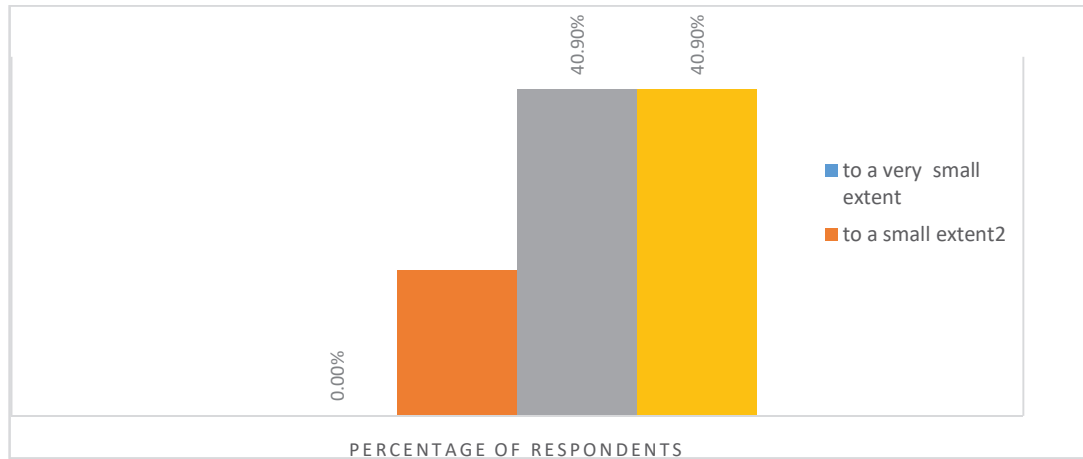
Figure no.8 Managerial boards members'answers for item: *The difference between students are used as resouces for learning and evaluation*

As regarding the item:*The school is equipped with educational and curricular ancillary means for all pupils, including pupils with special educational requirements* the answers of managerial boars were the following:
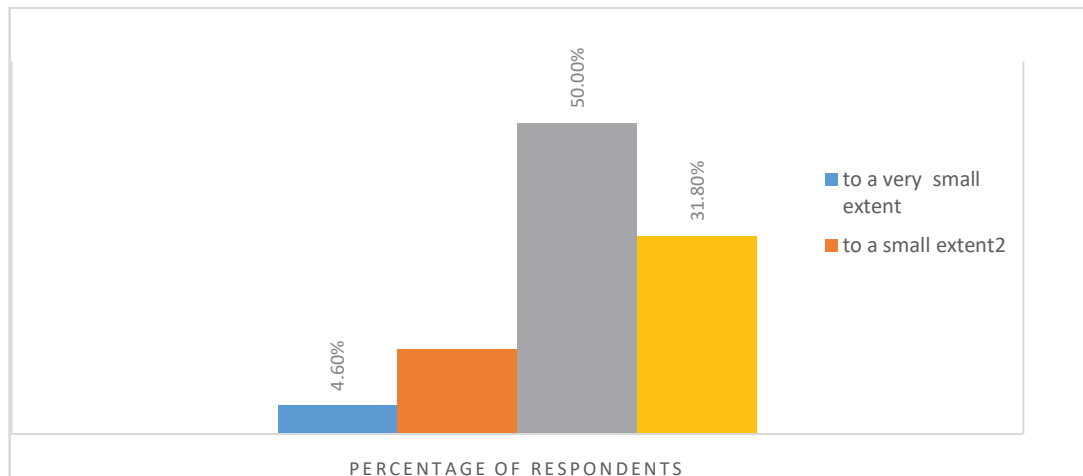

Figure no.9 Managerial boards members'answers for item: The school is equipped with educational and curricular ancillary means for all pupils, including pupils with special educational requirements

Approximately, the same number of respondents consider there is not enough provision of the school with teaching and ancillary means adapted to the needs of pupils with special requirements.

In the case of teacher respondents, question 16 obtained the highest percentage (17.4%) for the 2 score-*to a small extent*, as it can be seen in the below figure:
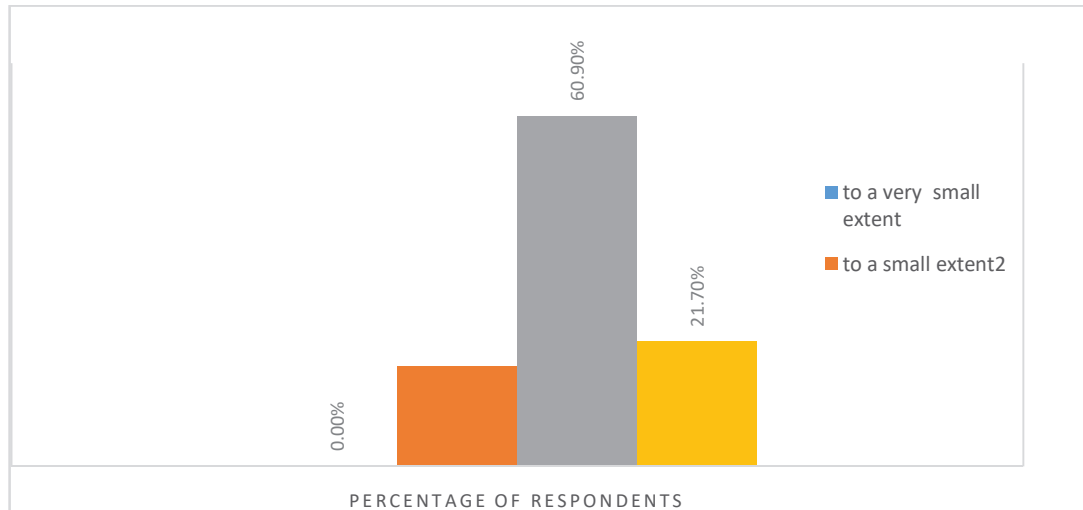
Figure no.10 Teachers' answers for item: *The school is equipped with educational and curricular ancillary means for all pupils, including pupils with special educational requirements*

We see a unified conception of managerial boards' members and teachers on self-efficiency and self-efficacy: aspects of their own pedagogical and managerial capacity are appreciated overwhelmingly positively, less positively (although overall the evaluation is majority favourable) are appreciated the dimensions of learning resources, which are less controllable directly bythe teachers.
We also wanted to make a comparison between the subjects' assessments of the inclusion indicators according to the criteria of the school they are teaching at and the level at which they teach.
Synthetic results are observed in the table below:

Table no.3 -averages scores of teachers for section C, according to the two criteria			
Average of teachers by the school they teach at		Averages of the teachers by education level they teach at	
a) "Adam Nicolae" Arad Middle School	3,39	Pre-school education	3,55
b) Special High School "Saint Mary" Arad	3,54	Primary education	3,51
c) Arad School Center for Inclusive Education	3,56	Lower secondary education	3,64
d) Technological High School "Sava Brancovici" Ineu	3,59	Higher secondary education	3,49
e) Middle School No. 2 Pecica	3,53		

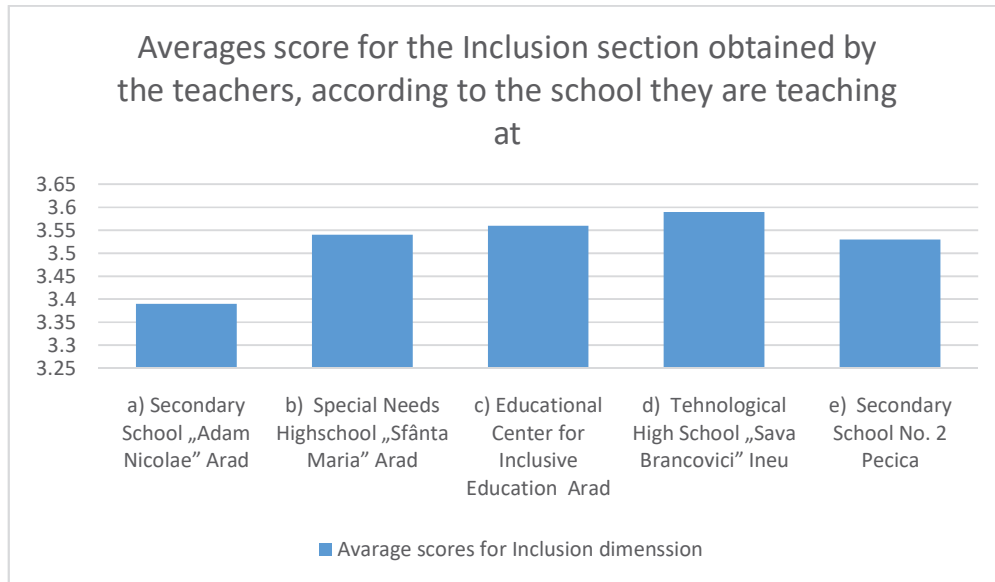The graph results are presented as follows:

Figure no.10-Average scores obtained by the teachers for Section C, depending on the school in which they teach

We note that all the averages of the C-Inclusion section calculated in the function of schools are above 3.39 (the lowest average obtained by the subjects of the teachers of "Adam Nicolae" Arad Middle School) and range up to 3.59 (average of the subjects of teachers from the Technological High School "Sava Brancovici" Ineu.

The situation is reversed in the case of managerials boards' members respondents as follows:
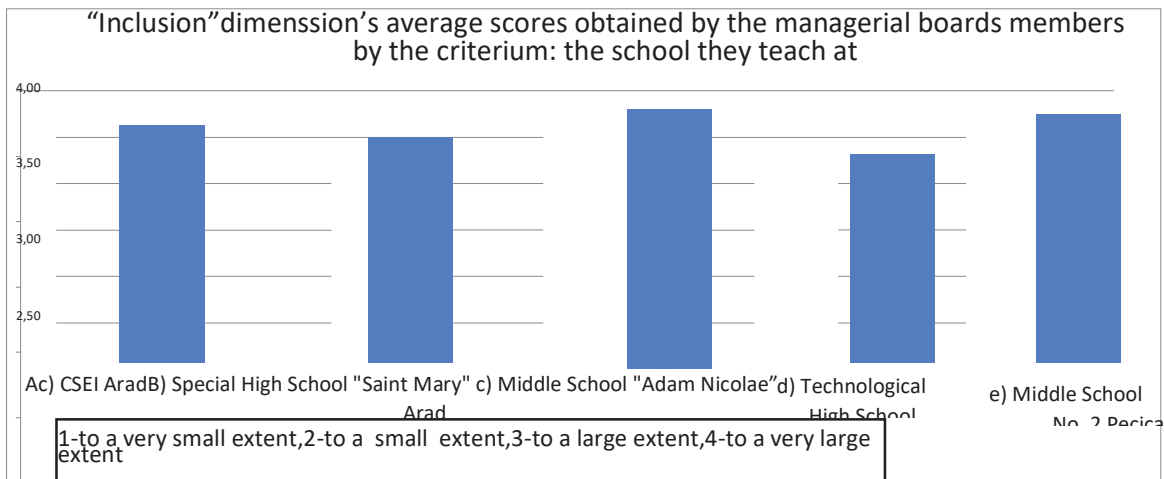

Figure no. 11-Average of the scores of the members of managerial boards for Section C, depending on the school in which they teach

Managerial board members of"Adam Nicolae" Arad Middle School obtained the higher scores for the *inclusions* indicators, while managerial boards members of the "Sava Brancovici" Technological High School Ineu rate the level of inclusion of the school in which they work, lower than the other respondents from the other four schools.

It follows from these inverted results between managerial boards' members and school teachers,**the need for dialogue and better compatibility between employees and the school's governing body. Lower results of managerial boards' members represent**

growth opportunities, development directions to be assumed both on a personal level and at the level of school management.

Analyzing the averages of Section C-***Inclusion****according to the level of schooling at which teachers and managerial boards' members teach*, we find the following:
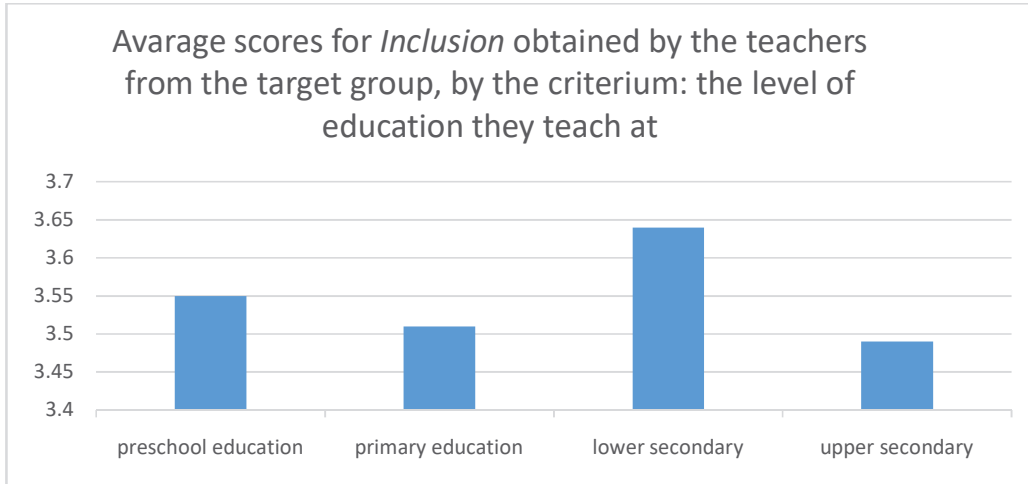

Figure 12-Average of teachers for Section C, depending on the form of education they teach

As regarding the results obtained by the managerial boards' members we can observe that, regardless of the level of education at which they teach, the subjects werepositively and uniformly appreciated the indicators of inclusion, around **the average of 3.50**. Respondent teachers appreciate the indicators of inclusion more nuancedly.
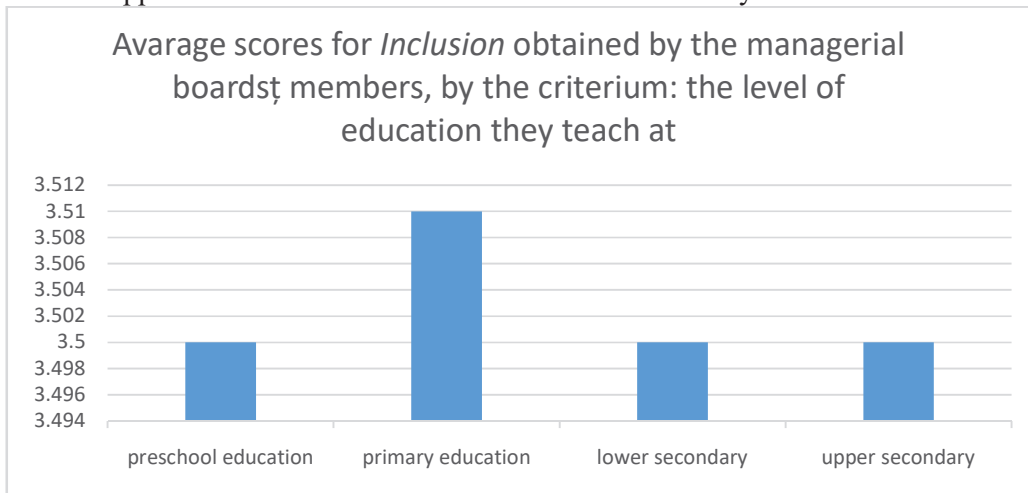

Figure 13-Average scores of the members of the management boards, for Section C-Inclusion, by the level of teducation they teach at.

The lowest average 3.49 was obtained by teachers teaching in higher secondary education, and the highest average 3.64 was obtained by teachers teaching in lower secondary education.Emerge from the results the **need for more intensive training of teachers in upper secondary education in the field of inclusion, understood as an operational concept, manifested by indicators visible in school and educational practices.**

Conclusions

Following the processing of the data of the two questionnaires applied to the two categories of subjects: members of the managerial boards and teachers included in the target group, it is apparent that the subjects consider the school in which they operate as being inclusive environments, open to all children. Respondents contributed actively to increase the level of inclusion in the school in which they work, considering that their own design-teaching-assessment practices are consistent with the principles of inclusive education.

Respondents believe that there are still opportunities to diversify the school's resources to facilitate the well-being of all children in school and full learning, in line with the potential of each child.

The higher the level of education they teach at, the more obvious is the need for the continuous training in the field of the inclusion approaches within the instructional-educational process. The complex training and mentoring programmes within the PROACTIVE project responded to real teachers' needs and brought them great added value, a new set of skills and stimulated the right attitude towards inclusive schools. It is recommended to continue to improve management and teaching approaches from the perspective of the inclusive approaches.

Better communication between managerial boards and teachers within the school and participatory management would lead to a unified approach at school level in terms of the inclusive approach to the instructional-educational process. It would increase the cohesion and level of accountability of each teacher.

Acknowledgements

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