

## **HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN R.MACEDONIA AND R.TURKEY**

### **Nergis Ramo Akgün**

Government Hospitals Association, Çanakkale, Republic of Turkey  
nergis\_ramo@yahoo.com

### **Risto Petrov**

University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje,  
Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Republic of Macedonia  
risto.petrov@yahoo.com

### **Aleksandra Karovska Ristovska**

University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje,  
Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Republic of Macedonia  
aleksandrak@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

### **Goran Ajdinski**

University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje,  
Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Republic of Macedonia  
goran@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

UDK: 37(497.7) (091)  
37(560) (091)

### **Abstract**

Organized social care for people with special educational needs in R. Macedonia, expressed through care, education and rehabilitation, begins after World War II. Before that, on the territory of present Republic of Macedonia there wasn't organized education and rehabilitation for children with special educational needs. In Republic of Turkey, the Ottoman period attributed great importance to the treatment of people with disabilities. In this paper, we analysed historical data of special primary education systems for five categories of disabilities; intellectual disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities and autism in Macedonia and Turkey. The aim of our research was to make a historical overview of the special education system for all categories of disability in both countries. Therefore, the main research question is: In which of the two countries special schools are having longer tradition? In order to answer this question, we made five sub-questions linked with the category of disability and the state. The results showed that Republic of Turkey has a longer tradition of educating children with special educational needs for three categories of disabilities: visual impairments, hearing impairments and autism, while for the children with intellectual and physical disabilities, the treatment in Macedonia is organized earlier. This qualitative research has theoretical, comparative and descriptive character. We used the method of descriptive and comparative analysis. As a technique in qualitative research, we chose analysis of documentation of data received from relevant institutions. All data was analysed according to the research questions, setting the appropriate conclusions and suggestions.

**Keywords:** *historical review, special education system, Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Turkey.*

## Introduction

Special education is considered a relatively new appearance. Historically, people with disabilities were often placed in hospitals, facilities or other institutions offering elementary education, or did not apply any type of education. One of the first special schools in the world is the National Institute des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris, founded in 1784. It was the first school in the world for education of blind students (Turnbull, 2002). The first school in UK, for deaf students is founded 1760 in Edinburgh by Thomas Braidwood (Turnbull et al. 2007).

## Research methods

The subject of our research is the historical review of the education of students with special educational needs in special schools in Macedonia and Turkey. The research problem is **contextual**. The main goal was to make a historical overview of the special education system for all categories of disability in these two countries. By its character, research is **Qualitative** and: **Theoretical** - as to the knowledge we came using analysis; **Comparative** - because we analyzed historical data by examining the differences and similarities in the two countries, **Descriptive** - because we sought to qualitatively describe the past and the first beginnings of the special primary-school system in both countries.

Our main research question is: In which of the two countries special schools have a longer tradition? To provide an answer to this question, we set five sub-questions associated with the category of disability and the state:

1. When the education of children with intellectual disabilities started in Macedonia and Turkey?
2. When the first schools for visually impaired children from Macedonia and Turkey were formed?
3. What are the beginnings of education for children with hearing loss in Macedonia and Turkey?
4. When the education of children with physical disabilities from Macedonia and Turkey, started?
5. When are the beginnings of education for children with autism in Macedonia and Turkey?

Research methods we used for the purposes of our research were: the method of descriptive analysis and the method of comparative analysis.

As a technique, we applied analysis of documentation on data obtained from relevant institutions. For the purpose of this research we used the next sample of documents analysis of content: Official documentation, School documentation and Data from scientific literature and online resources.

## Results

Organized social care for people with **intellectual disability** in **Republic of Macedonia** started after the Second World War. Before that, at the territory of Republic of Macedonia there was no organized education and rehabilitation of these children. There were only two classrooms

for "children with disabilities in psychological development" in Skopje, and one classroom in Kumanovo. According to Ajdinski Lj. and Andreevski V. (2001), the first organized educational training of children with intellectual disabilities in our country dates at the beginning of 1950/1951 school year. At the "Institute for defected children", which has grown out of the former "Dormitory for deaf children", located in the village Petrovec near Skopje, there were some cases of children with intellectual disabilities. They were in varying levels, from mild to moderate disability. The second step in the differentiation of the educational process starts with the creation of special classes for children with intellectual disabilities in regular primary schools. So, in 1953/54 school year, first special class at regular elementary school "Kole Kaninski" – Bitola, was formed. The third phase begins with the initial efforts to create a complete system of protection and rehabilitation of children with intellectual disabilities, based on a study examinations in Macedonia and abroad, made by Ljupco Ajdinski. In this phase, which begins in the sixties, the first practical works for complete monitoring, connectivity and improving the process of care and rehabilitation of children with intellectual disabilities had been made, with the establishment of the first "Special schools for mild mentally retarded children" and "Institution for rehabilitation of moderate mentally retarded children". During this period, the first special primary school in Macedonia, "Marko Cepenkov" was formed in the academic year 1966/67 in Prilep. After that, many special primary schools were opened as: "Makarenko" in Bitola in 1967/68; "Idnina" in the academic year 1971/72 and "Dr. Zlatan Sremec" in 1972/73 both in Skopje; and the special primary school "Maca Ovcharova" in the academic year 1972/73 in Veles.

In 1962, the Executive Council of Republic of Macedonia made a decision which deviates part of the "Institution for hard psychologically disabled children"- Demir Kapija, where as a part of the Institution, the facility for "severe retarded and mild imbecile children or moderate retarded children"- in Drachevo (Picture 1). Thus in 1963, the adaptation of premises in the Institution has begun in the Drachevo village, in order to be used for rehabilitation of children with mild intellectual disability.



Picture 1. The old building where the Institution began with work

In December 1965, the "Conceptual and investment program with a planned project for the Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth - Skopje" was prepared by PhD Ljupco Ajdinski. This Institution operates today under the name - Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth - Skopje, for accommodation, education and vocational training of children and youth with moderate and severe intellectual disability.

For **Republic of Turkey**, according to S. Balcı (2013), several documents confirm that in the Ottoman period great importance was shown to the treatment and curing of intellectual disability. In the same period, while in Europe intellectual disabilities were considered as "a devil entered in the child", in the Ottoman Empire mental illness and intellectual disability were treated with music and water. In the Ottoman era there were special institutions for "care and treatment" of persons with mental illness and intellectual disability called "Bimarhane". The meaning of the word "Bimarhane" changes over time to "Timarhane", which literally would mean "madhouse", later to become "mental hospitals", which can be accepted as the only period when these people underwent therapy (Picture 2).



Picture 2. Toptaşı Bimahane (1873-1927)

Ottoman writings can find the names of the most popular "Bimarhane" from that period:

- Built in the most glorious period of the empire, by the famous architect Mimar Sinan in Istanbul, which even today is in good condition, the hospital Haseki (Haseki Hastanesi), 1538-1550 years.
- Known hospitals of the Ottoman Empire, where all kinds of "mentally ill persons" were treated, are the Medical school and hospital in Suleymans complex (Süleymaniye Külyesi'ndeki Şifahane ile tıp medresi), 1550-1557, and the hospital "Attik Valide" 1583-1587 years.
- Hospital Bayezid II in Edirne (II. Bayezid Darüşşifası), where for the first time less staff was providing greater efficiency. The hospital was one of the central, and for that time very advanced hospital. It thought back in XVII - XIX century, with its structure it was one of the best hospitals.

As for the organized protection and education of children with intellectual disabilities, the first data is from 1957, when the law no.6972 was enacted as "Law to protect children in need." In 1960, for the first time the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Turkey opened special classes in government primary schools, for "children that can be educated." A year later, in 1961, the education for children with disabilities is legally regulated by the Primary Education Act no. 222 Article 12. The following data (Ş. Karahisar, 2013) from 1985, shows that there were 517 special classes with a total of 685 children accepted in the educational process "until they reach their capacity." Until 1960, IQ under 50 is considered as disability that needs to be treated as a medical problem; therefore training programs were excluded. In Turkey the first association for protection of "children that can be educated", was founded by Makbule Olçen, and it referred to

all children with an IQ less than 50. Meanwhile, the discovery of the importance of early education, in 1978, provided rights for organized educational services to children from the age of 3 years old. In 1985, the Ministry of Education of Republic of Turkey has decided all "children that can be educated" to be included in training program (M. Olçen, 2005).

If we consider only organized educational process for children with intellectual disabilities, we can notice that R.Macedonia has 7 years longer tradition of educating these children. The first special classes in Macedonia appear in academic year 1953/1954, while in Turkey the same classes were first opened in the academic year 1960/1961. Today this country has a total of 178 public and private schools for children with intellectual disabilities.

Organised treatment of **visually impaired** children in **R.Macedonia**, (Ajdinski; Andreevski, 2001) practically began in 1950 when ten blind children were collected at the "Institute for defective children" - Skopje, which in 1951 moved to Bitola. In the academic year 1951/1952, the Institution formed a class for blind students, which worked until 1954. The Executive Council of Republic of Macedonia on 10.06.1954 founded a school for blind children in Skopje. In 1959 the Institution for work and professional training of blind youth was opened in the village Dracevo in Skopje. The functioning of both institutions for blind, separated from one another, proved to be uneconomical, and in 1962, the two institutions, the School for the Blind in Skopje and the Institute for professional or vocational training in Dracevo, were integrated into one institution - Institute for blind children and youth in Skopje. By decision of the Executive Council, in 1967, the name changed to "Institute for children and youth with vision impairment", which expanded the activities of the Institute with educational and vocational rehabilitation for children and youth with low vision, too. Today, this Institute is known as State school for rehabilitation of visually impaired children and youth "Dimitar Vlahov" in Skopje.

For **Republic of Turkey** it is assumed that the first school for blind persons was opened back in 1899 (S. Balçı, 2013) when in order to provide a basic education for children "whose eyes do not see", a department in Istanbul School for Trade was opened. One section in this School for Trade, participated in the training of blind students. In 1910, Alber Karamona, a Jew from Izmir, opened a special school for deaf children and children with mutism. Later, in 1927, the Ministry of Health took over the school, and opens a department of education of blind children in it. In 1951 the school links with the Ministry of Education, when the school for deaf remains in Izmir, and the school for blind separate in Gaziantep.

The first step towards education of visually impaired was on the orders of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, when in 1925, the foundation of the Organization of Deaf, Muted and Blind was incorporated in Izmir. For these organizations, it is considered that they never represented the real special schools according to their quality (M. Özyürek, A. Koçak, 1995). In order to organize the education for people with special needs in Turkey, the Ministry of Education set a task to Mithat Enç, who was sent for education in the United States of America. After completing the Faculty of Psychology and Education of Persons with Disabilities, he returned to Turkey and implemented many changes; instead of closing the institution for deaf, muted and blind in Izmir, he renamed this institution into School for deaf children in Izmir, while he opened school for blind children in Ankara. So, in 1951, the school for blind children in Ankara began teaching (it still exists today under the name Primary School for Children with Visual Impairments "Mithat Enç"), which is open for organized education of visually impaired persons in Turkey and is considered as first special school, in the true sense of the word (D. Çağlar, 1979). Today in Turkey there are about 15 primary schools for visually impaired children. In

addition, there are many students with visual impairment included in regular education with the process of inclusion.

The first institution for working with **hearing-impaired** people in **R. Macedonia** was founded on 20. 2. 1949 under the name "Dormitory for defected children", based in the village Petrovec in Skopje (Picture 3). This Institution is the first social institution in Macedonia, as beginner of the Macedonian Special Education and Rehabilitation process. Since, it is not only the beginning of education of deaf persons, but also the beginning of special education theory and practice in the country (LJ.Ajdinski 2014).



*Зградата на училиштето за глуви ученици во с. Петровец-Скопско*

Picture 3. The building of the school for deaf students

Starting as a dormitory with socially-protective character, the living conditions in the Institution were difficult. Because of the distance from the city, two parts were formed: school and dormitory. The teaching in this school started on October 16, 1950. In the same year a special shelter for blind children was established. With decision of the Ministry of Social Welfare, they merge into one institution under the name "Institution for defected children," which worked under this name until December 1955, when the Executive Council changed its name to "Institute for Rehabilitation and Correction of Speech" i.e. institution only for deaf and hearing impaired children. Because of the distance between the dormitory and the school and also the poor working conditions, the Ministry of Social Welfare adopted a decision to relocate the Institution in Bitola in June 1951, at the building of the former French college. At the same time, new institutions for people with hearing impairment were opened all over Macedonia, such as: Professional craft school for deaf youth and Phoniatics audiology center in Skopje (LJ.Ajdinski, V.Andreevski, 2001). The Institution continues its work under the name "Institute for rehabilitation of children with hearing impairment- Koco Racin - Bitola." In the 2013/2014 academic year the Institution expanded its activity and was renamed into Institution for rehabilitation of children with hearing, speech, voice and other development problems "Koco Racin" - Bitola, it operates today, under the same name.

For **Republic of Turkey** some documents confirm that even in XV century in Ottoman palaces the sign language was systematically used. Studies of M. Miles (2000) show that deaf people worked as servants in the palaces, because they couldn't hear when others were talking about confidential matters of the state. Later, sultans used the sign language too, and with that the gesture automatically became a language for people who are in high positions. People with mutism, however, managed to become experts on gesture, in that environment. In descriptions of the Ottoman dynasty (J. Freely, 2000) during the reign of Selim IV, it is mentioned that in Palace

there were deaf people everywhere. They had a right to enter in rooms without announcing or permission. Even the wives of the sultan and other women were cooperating with deaf- muted women or girls to learn the sign language.

The education of deaf people in Turkey begins with the Trade school (Ticaret Mektebi) in Istanbul since 1889. In 1912, the students were transferred to a special facility (Darülaceze). The second school was opened in 1923 in Izmir. In 1944, by an association, the third school was opened as Special School for the Deaf and muted in Istanbul. In 1990, all over Turkey there were 28 schools for deaf children and 2 schools for children with severe hearing loss, today the figure reaches 49 primary schools for children with hearing impairments.

In **Republic of Macedonia**, for a long time there was no institution for rehabilitation of children with **physical disabilities** at a younger age, so they were placed in various medical institutions. In regards to such needs, the first attempts of Education in Macedonia were taken in Orthopedics Hospital in Ohrid, the orthopedic clinic at the Medical Faculty in Skopje and the Institute for Medical Rehabilitation in Skopje since 1963. While children were on treatment in the hospital in Ohrid or in the Institutions in Skopje, there was organized primary school education for children from I to VIII grade. For those children and young people with severe physical disabilities, who have completed their treatment and were unable to continue their education in mainstream schools, in 1970 the Institution for Protection and Rehabilitation of hard physically disabled children and youth was founded in Bansko, Strumica by Ms. Ryder, the founder of the foundation "Sue Ryder".

The Institution for Protection and Rehabilitation "Banja Bansko" in Strumica was founded on 23. 6. 1971 under the name "Dormitory for persons with hard physical disabilities." Later, this Institution changed the name to "Institution for protection and rehabilitation of physically disabled persons "Banja Bansko "- Strumica, and it exists today under the same name (LJ.Ajdinski, V.Andreevski, 2001).

First information mentioning the education of persons with physical disabilities in **Republic of Turkey** comes from 1961, when the Law on Primary Education, Article 12, states that "education is compulsory for those children who are in a state of mental, physical, spiritual social disadvantage, for which the special education and training is predicted." The first school for children with physical disabilities was opened in 1974 in Ankara - Aydınlık evler, which started with education of 38 children. In June 1977, this school had 138 children. A total of 10 teachers worked with them. These 138 children were only 2% of the total number of students with physical disabilities, in need of special education, from all over Turkey. This is a concrete example of how the education of these children was neglected at that time. (D.Çağlar, 2004).

Today in Turkey there are only three primary schools for education of children with physical disability: Turhal in Tokat - Black Sea, Doğan Çağlar - Ankara and Yeşil Düzce- Bolu.

Unfortunately, we could not find official data for the treatment of people with **autism** in **Republic of Macedonia** in the past. Autistic children were educated together with children with intellectual disabilities in special schools and classes. Last few years in the Special Primary School "Dr. Zlatan Sremac" two special classes were organized for children with autism. But the beginnings of organized education of children with autism in Republic of Macedonia date back to several years earlier. In the 2006/2007 academic year in Strumica, in regular elementary school "Sando Masev" the Department of Education for students with autism started with work. Despite in Strumica, classes for children with autism were also opened in Stip and Bitola in recent years. In 2013 the first Centre for Autism, was opened by the Ministry of Labour and



Social Policy. The center is functioning as organizational unit of the Social Work Center of the City of Skopje. A year later another Centre for Autism was opened in Stip.



Picture 4. The school "Doğan Çağlar" in the past, Ankara, R. Turkey

The only historical data that we have managed to find from PhD Binyamin Birkan for **Republic of Turkey** show that children with autism in this country were educated in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities until 1999. In 1999-2000 the project "Educational practice for children with autism" came into force. The aim of this project was all children aged 3 to 15 years to receive appropriate training in accordance with their needs. Next year the functioning of dependent centers for education of children with autism started, which means that these centers at that time didn't have the right to rule their own decisions about the educational process, but after a few years, all centers have become independent.

### Discussion

Analyzing the data in the table, we can observe that Republic of Macedonia in comparison with the time of creating an organized educational system for children with intellectual disabilities and for children with physical disabilities is front, but for other categories, Republic of Turkey has a greater advantage.

Historical overview for children with:	Macedonia	Turkey
<b>Intellectual disability</b>	1950/1951	1960/1961
<b>Visual impairment</b>	1951/1952	1899/1900
<b>Hearing impairment</b>	1949/1950	1889/1890
<b>Physical disability</b>	1963/1964 (1971/1972)	1974/1975



Autism	2006/2007	1999/2000
--------	-----------	-----------

Data from Turkey indicates that the open section at the Istanbul School for Trade participated in training of blind students. Also, for the schools for children with hearing impairment, data from 1899 is followed by the explanation "Education of deaf people in the Trade school." For these two categories of disability, difference between Macedonia and Turkey is 52 or 60 years, which is quite a big difference and long period required to organize education of children with visual and hearing impairments in Republic of Macedonia.

First attempts for education of children with physical disabilities were made in 1963 in several clinics in Ohrid and Skopje, for children staying in hospital during long period of treatment. Institute for Protection and Rehabilitation "Banja BANSKO" starts working in the academic year 1971/1972.

For children with autism, the difference in time of beginning with organized educational process between these two countries is 6-7 years, if we consider the time of opening the first special class for children with autism as organization of the education process for this category. So, for this research question we can conclude that *Turkey shows a longer tradition of education of children from three categories of disabilities: visual impairments, hearing impairments and autism, while for the children with intellectual and physical disabilities the treatment in Macedonia is organized earlier.*

## Conclusion

From the historical review of special schools, we noted that Republic of Turkey has longer history of organized educational system for children with disabilities. It is interesting that in the past it was believed that children with intellectual disabilities don't possess any educational opportunities and the process of education for "children that can be educated" (which most likely means "mild intellectual disability") starts in 1960 / 1961. That is 60 years later than the time of organizing education systems to other categories of disability in this country, and 7 years later than the first organized system for these children in Republic of Macedonia. For the categories "visually impaired children" and "hearing impaired children", the difference between Turkey and Macedonia is 52 or 60 years, in favor of Turkey, as well as for children with autism, while for the period of organizing special education process for children with physical disability, the difference is in favor of Macedonia.

By analyzing the historical development of complete disrepair through hospitalization until special schools and institutions, *we see that education for children with special educational needs has a longer tradition in Turkey for three categories of disabilities, except for children with intellectual and physical disabilities where Macedonia started the implementation of special educational system before Turkey.*

**References**

1. Ајдински, Љ., Андреевски, В. (2001). *50 години Заштита, Рехабилитација, Воспитание и Образование на Лицата со пречки во развојот во Република Македонија*. Сојуз на дефектолозите на Република Македонија и Филозофски факултет - Институт за дефектологија, Скопје.
2. Ајдински, Љ. (н.д). Преземено 2014. *Кон развојот на институционалната заштита, рехабилитација и образование на хендикепираните лица во Македонија*. Дефектолошка теорија и практика: [http://jser.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/pdf%202000%20ДТР%203-4/1\\_182Ajdinski%20Ljupco.pdf](http://jser.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/pdf%202000%20ДТР%203-4/1_182Ajdinski%20Ljupco.pdf)
3. Balcı, S. (2013) *Osmanlı Devletinde Engelliler ve Engelli Eğitimi: Sağır Dilsiz ve Körler Mektebi*. Libra Kitap, İstanbul.
4. Karahisar, Ş. (2013). Retrieved 2014. *Zihinsel Özürlü ve Sınıflandırılması*. From Rehberlik ve Araştırma Merkezi. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı: [http://mebk12.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/28/10/965284/icerikler/zihinsel-engelliler\\_473837.html](http://mebk12.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/28/10/965284/icerikler/zihinsel-engelliler_473837.html)
5. Miles, M. (2000). Singing in the Seraglio: Mutes, dwarfs and gestures in the Ottoman Court 1500-1700, *Disability and Society*, Vol. 15, No.1.
6. Ölçen, M. (2005). *Özürlüler yokuşu*. Ajans Türk, İstanbul.
7. Özyürek, M., Koçak, A. (1995). *Görme Güçlüğünden Etkilenmiş Olan İlkokul Eğitimleri İçin*. Öğretmen Rehberi, Ankara.
8. Turnbull, Ron (2002). "Exceptional Lives: Special Education in Today's Schools (3rd ed.)" Merrill Prentice Hall. New Jersey.
9. Tohum Türkiye otizm vakfı. (2012). Retrieved 2013. *Otizm Spektrum Bozukluğu nedir?* From: <http://www.tohumotizm.org.tr/otizm-spektrum-bozuklugu-nedir>
10. Turnbull, H. R., Beegle, R. & Stowe, M.J. (2007). Public policy and developmental disabilities: A 35-year retrospective and a 5-year prospective on the core concepts in disability. In: S. Odom, R.H. Horner, M.E. Snell, & J. Blacher, *Handbook on Developmental Disabilities*, London: Guilford Press.
11. Freely, J. (2000). *Osmanlı Sarayı/ Bir Hanedanlığın Öyküsü*. Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul.
12. Çağlar, D. (1979). *Geri Zekalı Çocuklar ve Eğitimi*. Kadioğlu Matbaası, Ankara.
13. Çağlar, D. (2004). *Ortopedik Özürlü Çocuklar ve Eğitimleri*. Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Yayınları, Ankara.