



SMOK is an innovative project aimed at the development of the **SMOK Model**, a **Teachers Training Program addressed to primary school teachers working with disabled and chronically ill children**.

Within the confines of the project, the model will be tested on about 40 teachers at two primary schools in the Pomeranian Province. If the tests carried out on teachers, students and their parents confirm the effectiveness of the **SMOK Model**, then it will be provided to the Teachers Professional Training Centres in the Pomeranian Province.

The innovative nature of the SMOK programme consists in the focus on work on the teacher's attitude (especially his/her convictions and emotions) towards disability and chronic diseases, and the provision of the tools for work on the attitudes of both disabled and chronically ill as well as healthy students and their parents. Where has the idea of such programme come from?

Poland has been trying to ensure inclusive education for several years. The number of disabled and chronically ill students who want to learn with their healthy peers at integration or ordinary classes at primary schools is growing continually and it is expected to grow further. Unfortunately, such situation is not coupled with adaptation of schools for the needs of disabled students or the process of preparation of the teaching staff to the new circumstances. The results are painful. Poland has one of the lowest in Europe ratios of professionally active disabled people, and even if they are active, their qualifications are low. At further levels of educations, more and more disabled or chronically ill students choose individual learning programmes. At universities, there are virtually no the disabled at all. The social integration of disabled and chronically ill adults is very unsatisfactory, and the number of functioning in the healthy society prejudicial stereotypes about this group is very high.

The idea, on which the SMOK project developed in the result of several years of observations of functioning of the disabled and chronically ill children and youth, their parents, siblings, teachers and the medical personnel of children's wards. Numerous discussions with the representatives of all these groups and following of the lives of children and their families during several years became the basis for the assumption that the key issues for inclusive education are as follows:

1. Setting of building of appropriate relationships between healthy and disabled students as the main goal of inclusive education. It is often forgotten in the inclusive education process that this issue is of core importance. Healthy students form the majority and in a few years they will build the society that which depending on the experiences and convictions shaped at school will include the disabled, or to the contrary – discriminate and exclude them.
2. Free from prejudices and backed by the latest achievements teacher's conviction about the capabilities of disabled students – both in the context of education and future functioning in the society. Such conviction about the capabilities and limitations of the



disabled and about their place in the society to large extent determine their later achievements.

3. The support provided to teachers in the sphere of coping with difficult emotions. The contact with suffering, illness and death – especially of a child – is difficult both for a teacher, a disabled student, his/her parents, siblings and for healthy students. A teacher must have necessary knowledge and support for successful coping with emotionally difficult situations.

The **SMOK Model** has been developed based on the above assumptions. It is an innovative solution in the sphere of continual training of teachers. On one hand, it provides the opportunity to shape the disability related attitudes and convictions of a teacher, and on the other enables him/her to acquire the integrated expertise and skills that are of key importance for solving of the problems and the difficulties encountered in the process of teaching of disabled and chronically ill students.

