

PĂDURE Marian, MORAR Gina (2018). *Atlas geografic școlar pentru elevii nevăzători [Tactile Atlas for Visually Impaired Students]*. Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 21 p. (21 maps), ISBN 978-973-109-781-7



Printed in both CD and special Braille format, this atlas includes 21 tactile maps addressed not only to teachers from special and inclusive schools, but especially to visually impaired students.

The maps are the result of a long process of scientific and technological analysis whereby the authors wanted to offer to schools and universities a unique teaching resource, designed according to the latest accessibility standards, as well as to be multiplied easily by anyone.

The *Tactile Atlas* can be easily explored by the blind and the visually impaired students, using various tactile symbols, highlighted in the Braille legend, allowing for the identification of landforms and hydrographic areas, as well as of administrative and political

borders. To achieve tactile images correlated with classical school resources is a challenge for any of us, but the authors' expertise has contributed to publishing these tactile maps.

Marian Pădure is a research assistant at the Department of Special Education at Babeș-Bolyai University, with over ten years of expertise in the field of accessibility, due both to the research projects he was part of, to his publishing activity, and to the fact that he is one of the coordinators within the Centre for Assistance in Accessible Technology for Visually Impaired People. The co-author of the *Tactile Atlas*, Gina Morar, is a teacher at the High School for Visually Impaired Students in Cluj-Napoca, being involved in various extracurricular activities designed to help the blind and the visually impaired students achieve the necessary geographical knowledge in an accessible and easy way. Gina Morar is not at her first publication of this kind, writing various papers and presentations in the field of Geography, correlated with educational activities aimed at the visually impaired students.

At a strictly visual analysis of the maps, the *Tactile Atlas for Visually Impaired Students* can be considered an atlas with simple and standardized

maps, with difficult to identify areas, difficult or nonexistent notations. However, the authors combine the specific teaching method with the skills based curriculum, and especially with the rigorous particularities of the tactile-kinesthetic exploration of the visually impaired persons. Thus, they have developed an atlas with much simplified maps, having the classical atlas as its origin, precisely because it deals with intuitive information easily understood by the visually impaired students during their exploration.

The *Tactile Atlas* includes maps of the main topics used in school atlases such as landforms, hydrographical areas, territorial and political administrative maps for Europe, Asia, Africa, North, Central and South America, and Australia. Given the complexity of the atlas, the authors have also introduced maps for Romania, as a minimum coverage of topics within the curriculum.

This unique atlas in the field of scientific and scholarly resources in Romania is provided by authors free of charge, in order to facilitate the unrestricted access of specialists, parents and visually impaired students to accessible school resources. Maps within the *Tactile Atlas* can be reproduced using swell paper and special heating equipment. In addition, to supporting the visually impaired students, a second version of the *Tactile Atlas* will be including both tactile and coloured maps, in in compliance with accessibility norms and academic standards.

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