

**Education Policies for Inclusion in South Eastern Europe:
Challenges and Opportunities**
22-23 May 2007, Vienna

Towards Inclusive Education: Some UNICEF Experiences in South-Eastern Europe



Why support Inclusive Education ? Key International Commitments

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
- Millennium Development Goals
- Education for All
- Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994)

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UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UN State Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. ... State Parties shall ensure that... children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability; persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live. (Article 24)

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Why support Inclusive Education ? UNICEF priorities in context

- Human rights (protection of most vulnerable, excluded)
- While overall living standards improved...
- Number of children with disabilities and at risk increased
- Disadvantages of these children greater than of majority and more entrenched
- Support to EFA and MDG agendas
- IE linked with health and child protection agendas

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UNICEF's Core Framework for Quality Education

Child-Friendly School Framework: 5 components

1. Inclusive
2. Effective
3. Healthy and protective
4. Gender sensitive
5. Encouraging participation of children, families and communities

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Child-Friendly School: Inclusiveness

A child-friendly school actively identifies excluded children and gets them enrolled in school. It regards education as every child's right and helps to monitor the rights and well-being of every child in the community.

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Child-Friendly School: Inclusiveness

A child-friendly school is inclusive of all children. It:

- Does not exclude, discriminate or stereotype on the basis of difference
- Provides education that is free and compulsory, affordable and accessible, especially to families and children at risk.
- Respects diversity and ensures equality of learning for all children
- Responds to diversity by meeting the differing circumstances and needs of children based on gender, social class, ethnicity and level of ability.

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Some achievements: Montenegro ***Inclusive education for children with disabilities***

- New Law on education of children with disability 2004
- 100 enrolled children in preschool, 220 in primary school
- Training: teachers (250), social workers, medical staff - NGO capacity-building
- Mobile teams linking regular and special schools
- Parental participation and team work enhanced;
- Community-based services; linkages with day-care centres

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Some achievements: Kosovo

Policies, systems and standards for inclusive and quality education for all

- Strategy on Inclusive Education (2007-2017) developed – based on CFS principles
- Awareness-raising on importance of inclusion of children with special needs and options for inclusion
- PTAs Capacity Building and Promotion of positive attitudes towards inclusion
- Staff training for identification and referral of children with disabilities
- Enhanced Inter-ministerial cooperation

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Some achievements : TFYR Macedonia

- National Education Strategy (2005-2015) : recognizes the need for the inclusion of students with special needs
- Child-Friendly School Initiative (2006-2009) : & Policies–
 - ✓ Development of CFS standards – including standards for inclusion of children regardless of their background and ability;
 - ✓ Creation of a baseline
 - ✓ Testing of CFS standards in pilot schools
 - ✓ Formulation of policies in support of CFS standards

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Some achievements : TFYR Macedonia

- De-Institutionalization Project :
 - ✓ D-I Strategy and Action Plan (on-going)
 - ✓ Support to institutions
 - ✓ Development of a national network of alternative solutions to institutionalization – day care centers, group homes, foster care

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Conclusions

- Overall: Lack of political and financial commitment
- Inclusive Policies: Progress but implementation plans and budgets?
- Limited comprehensive, comparable and reliable data sources
- Issue classification of students with special needs: prevalence of defectology and medical approach
- Small-scale, fragmented projects
- Lack of coordination and cooperation between partners

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Towards child friendly education systems Messages

In order to overcome complexity and obstacles ...

- Need to strengthen collaboration between partners
- Need to create synergies between initiatives: i.e. between data collection and standard/policy development
- Need to build on comparative advantages
- Need to make use of evidence-based advocacy – OECD tri-partite classification very useful to advocate for de-institutionalization and inclusion of students with learning difficulties and social disadvantage

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