

*Regional Workshop on Inclusive Education -
Eastern and Southeastern Europe*

Main Outcomes



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Bureau of Education

- A Regional Workshop organised in partnership with the Center Education 2000+ (Bucharest, Romania), IBE focal point of the regional Community of Practice in Curriculum Development.

- Participants:
 - Representatives from international organisations (UNESCO, OECD, OSI)
 - National experts from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Moldova and Montenegro

- Objectives

- Expected outcomes

- Workshop structure

- Regional challenges and experience discussed in line with the ICE 2008 sub-themes:

- Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content
- Inclusive Education: Public Policies
- Inclusive Education: Systems, Links and Transitions
- Inclusive Education: Learners and Teachers

■ Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content

- No unified terminology but premise on equal right to education and consensus on a revised substance of “special education”
- Human rights as fundamental approach
- Inclusion of all children in education, inclusion of all citizens in society, achievement of “social justice” as goals (OSI)
- Generational and global perspectives as basic concepts

■ Inclusive Education: Public Policies

- Focus on diverse learning opportunities to meet each learner's needs in mainstream schools
- Political willingness and sustainable policy based on reliable data and regulated by law important (a common concern, Albania, BiH, Serbia, etc.)
- Public conviction and changes of mentalities supportive (e.g. Finland)
- Cooperation between ministries (education, health, economy, social affairs, etc.) and multiple stakeholders important
- Schools can act as source of policy
- Relationships with tradition and religion significant (BiH, Romania, Moldova, Georgia, etc.)

■ Inclusive Education: Systems, Links and Transitions

- Inclusive education should be embedded in a comprehensive basic education including pre-school, primary and secondary education
- Different stages of education should be articulated in a coherent and less selective way to avoid dropout and disaffection
- Learning opportunities, contents, means and environments should be flexible enough: curricula of all levels of education should be easily adaptable to students' needs in classroom (Albania)

- Inclusive Education: Learners and Teachers
 - The whole process of education should be learner-centred (curriculum design, expectations conveyed, outcomes evaluation, etc.)
 - Teachers to develop abilities in pedagogy and psychology through pre- and in-service training; become curriculum co-developers and able to teach whatever learner (e.g. Montenegro)
 - Teacher training still not enough satisfactory and teaching profession not as much valued as in Finland (a common concern)
 - A consensus: involvement of parents difficult but indispensable

■ Good practices shared

- Finland: legislation, stable and homogeneous political and educational systems, open and flexible institutional dialogue, highly respected teachers with great qualification and autonomy, assistant educators, choice of 30 foreign languages, student individual support, withdrawal of inspectors, lessened selectivity, part-time support teachers for special needs, involvement of parents, etc.
- Montenegro: inclusive education requirements taken into account from the very beginning of reform, definition of a teacher model meeting the requirements, one-year practice in teacher pre-service training, all school staff involved in teacher in-service training, involvement of parents, mobile multidisciplinary teams and support teachers (also the case in Georgia, Moldova but not in Albania), etc.

■ Good practices shared (continued)

- Croatia: resource persons/teacher trainers promoting innovative teaching approaches, schools as source of policy, etc.
- Georgia: manual on inclusive education, actions taken to increase public awareness, etc.
- Albania: cooperative and activity-based learning, step-by-step action plan for gradual training of all mainstream school teachers, new curriculum made more flexible, transition from primary to secondary improved, 15-20% of teachers' working time allocated to address students' needs, support materials collected to assist teachers, etc.
- Romania: Romanian versions of relevant UNESCO guides distributed throughout the country.

- The way forward in attaining Inclusive Education in the E & SEE region
 - Campaign to raise governmental and public awareness, dissemination of existing guidelines
 - IOs to help to frame policy statements, alternative models and a new profile of teacher for inclusive education
 - Inform and train deciders and professionals: inclusive education goes beyond but stands on special needs education
 - Conceive education reform in line with the concept of inclusive education
 - Changes in relevant legislation

- The way forward in attaining Inclusive Education in the E & SEE region (continued)
 - Design evidence-based and sustainable policy, allocate adequate resource
 - IOs to help to implement and monitor (with tools, minimum standards, etc.)
 - Improve the participatory process involving multiple actors
 - Improve teacher training incorporating the concept of inclusive education
 - Diversify outcome standards and evaluation
 - Promote grass-roots initiatives, source of major activities

■ Regional Workshops on Inclusive Education in preparation of the ICE 2008

Process:

- Regional consciousness, mapping, sharing and cooperation
- Continuous development of reflections around the 4 sub-themes
- Interregional comparison, lessons to learn
- Overall picture, awareness-raising

Challenges (or opportunities):

- Incomparability
- Clear statements, well-balanced discussions with regard to the 4 sub-themes
- Follow-up of the group work and progress

Thank you