

“Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

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FIRST MEETING OF THE POLICY TEAM IN SERBIA - *REPORT* -

Prepared by

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Introduction

Date of the meeting: Tuesday, 4 February 2014, 11.00 -16.00, Belgrade, Hotel Metropol Palace

Participants: 10 members of the Policy Team from Serbia and members of CoE Office in Belgrade: Marijana Todorovic, Project Officer and Miroslava Balabanovic, Project assistant (Annex 1: List of participants)

Moderator: Borislava Maksimovic, Member and Focal point of Policy Team from Serbia.

Preparation of the Meeting

The meeting was prepared by members of staff engaged in Project in CoE Office in Belgrade, CoE Office in Sarajevo as well as Focal Point of Policy Team of Serbia, nominated by CoE.

Draft Agenda of the Meeting (Annex 2) and presentations were proposed by Zorica Lesic, Project officer in charge of Policy Component. Translation and small adaptation of power-point presentations were made by Marijana Todorovic, Miroslava Balabanovic and Borislava Maksimovic. The letters of invitation and draft Agenda in Serbian and English were sent to members of Policy Team by Focal Point. Logistic support was organized by CoE Office in Belgrade.

Presentation of the Project and Policy Component

Project "Regional support for inclusive education" was presented by Marijana Todorovic. She explained the main points: project objectives, five project components, School Net and showed details from website of Project.

Borislava Maksimovic presented the Policy Component of the Project: objectives of the component, PolicyNet action framework, summary of issues and policy gaps prepared by team of experts during the Meeting in Belgrade, the roles of Policy Team and Focal Point as well as the structure and expected results of Regional PolicyNet.

Presentations of the Project and the Policy Component raised certain issues. One of them is related to a database web application, which is prepared, but not put in use. Common conclusion was that this problem must be addressed as soon as possible. Other issues were mentioned: engagement of personal assistants for children with disabilities, role and employment of special pedagogues in schools, too many children in classes, and so on.

The summary from Expert team meeting in Belgrade served as a framework for decisions of Policy Team, regarding issues and challenges of inclusive education in Serbia.

Conclusions from the Workshop Policy Report produced during the Regional Conference in Tirana in November 2014 were presented after defining issues in inclusive education in Serbia by Policy Team.

Discussion, Questions and Comments of Participants

1. Why the Project did not include pre-school level of education?
2. Why the Project did not involve “special” schools as a part of pilot group of schools?
3. How to define the examples of good practice? What criteria are relevant: Parents’ satisfaction? Children’s achievements? School ethos? Number of children who have individual support?
4. Does this Policy Team define methodology and steps regarding work and the handling of policy issues on local level? Do we have Action plan until the end of the Project?
5. Why do we not contact or visit our pilot schools and discuss with them the main issues and challenges?
6. Comment: the Project will be finished with the preparation of Implementation plan without the possibility of the Policy Team monitoring practice according to this plan. Based on this, some members of the Policy Team proposed the possibility of Project extension.
7. Could we put information from today’s meeting on our website (website of the Network for inclusive education in Serbia, for example)?

Outputs of the Meeting

Level/type of institutions	Issues by level/type of institutions	Cross-cutting issues and challenges
Primary education	<p>Issues</p> <p>-Inclusive pre-school education and transition to primary education, transition from class teaching to subject teaching, transition from “special’ to mainstream school and vice versa</p> <p>Challenges: there are no significant challenges, some schools have good models for transition</p>	<p>1. Issue:</p> <p>Lack of promotion of diversities through initial education of teachers</p> <p>Challenge: Autonomy of universities</p> <p>2. Issue:</p> <p>Lack of support to teachers for implementing of inclusive education</p>

General secondary education	Issues: -Gaps in enrolment system -Too many students in classes -Transition from “special” to mainstream schools Challenge: There are no significant challenges	(teachers do not have good skills for inclusive education, teachers are not ready for tailoring teaching/learning process according to needs of a child or groups of children) Challenges: Additional budget. Beliefs of teachers on inclusive education.
Secondary education -VET	Issues: -Enrolment in VET -Lack of professional orientation and selection -School practice is not suitable for all children -Cooperation between schools and companies is poor -Certification and validation are missing Challenges: there are no significant challenges	3. Issue: Lack of inter-sectorial cooperation Challenges: long time is needed, policies and laws should be harmonized

Members of Policy Team mentioned other issues and challenges: common understanding of inclusive education concept, support of parents in recognizing the best interest of their children, improvement of number and kind of support services for the children, using inclusive principles as the main indicator for quality evaluation of schools.

Cross- beneficiary Teams:

Level/type of institutions	Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team
Primary education	1. Slavica Jašić 2. Ljiljana Simić 3. Radica Blagojević Radovanović
General secondary education	1. Snežana Vuković 2. Jelena Marković 3. Branislav Brojčin
Secondary education –VET	1. Natalija Krstić 2. Gordana Cvetković 3. Gordana Čaprić

Note: Focal Point will participate in activities of all three teams.

Conclusions

1. Objectives of the Meeting are achieved: Project and its philosophy is understood as well as the role of Policy Team.
2. Cross-beneficiary Teams are chosen and issues and challenges are considered and defined.
3. Policy Team worked very openly and constructive.
4. A certain number of initiatives are considered and Policy Team members chose the way of their implementation (database establishment, for example).