

Session 4: Inclusive education in the region: the future



Moderator: Ms Lida Kita, European Training Foundation

Panelists: Steering Board members

- Ms Tatjana Vuçani (Albania)
- Ms Lejla Divović (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Ms Nada Jakir (Croatia)
- Ms Vesna Vučurović (Montenegro)
- Ms Snežana Vuković (Serbia)
- Ms Natasha Janevska (“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”)
- Ms Lulavere Behluli (Kosovo*)



Education and Training 2020

(benchmarks)

- Early leavers from education and training/drop out
- Tertiary level attainment
- Early childhood education
- Low achievers in basic skills
- Adult participation in Lifelong learning

Questions for discussion

- *What are the benefits of regional approach in inclusive education to your Ministry?*
- *How can your Ministry support the regional efforts in inclusive education?*

EU enlargement in 2014 and beyond: progress and challenges

Issues on inclusion and education extracted from the annual EU Enlargement Strategy Paper and Progress Reports

Link

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

Education and skills

Establishing functioning labour markets, including (...) improving the employability of workers, and better aligning education and skills with labour market needs.

One of the key economic challenges in the Western Balkans

Roma issues

Across the Western Balkans, the situation of most Roma communities remains a matter of serious concern.

Roma are very often the victims of racism, discrimination and social exclusion and live in deep poverty, lacking sufficient access to healthcare, education and training, housing and employment. (...)

Roma inclusion has to become a national priority backed by strong political will at all levels, with all stakeholders taking their responsibility.

Protection of minorities

A general culture of acceptance of minorities needs to be encouraged and societal hostility countered, through education, broad public debates and awareness raising.

A need for a zero-tolerance, proactive approach to cases of ethnic-based hate speech, discrimination, violence and intimidation.

It is important to consolidate a coherent framework on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia in areas like (...) education.

In Albania

Despite significant improvements over the last decade, Albania still has considerable gaps to close in terms of years of schooling, secondary enrolment rates, education quality and the market relevance of qualifications. Public spending on education is low at around 3 % of GDP.

Education and training should be further improved to address skills mismatches in the labour market and increase employability.

A draft national employment and skills strategy was unveiled in February; it will run until 2020 and aims to (...) improve vocational education and training.

In Albania

A new 2014-20 strategy for youth, covering education, employment, social inclusion and health, is under preparation.

The proportion of youth who are not in employment, education or training exceeds 30%, and has increased by 2.3 % in 2013 compared to 2012.

People with disabilities continue to face difficulties in accessing education.

Living conditions, access to education, employment, health and social care for the Roma population need to be improved.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina

While very good progress was made in addressing the housing needs of Roma, efforts in the areas of education (...) need to be strengthened.

High labour market imbalances as reflected by the persistently high unemployment, notably among the youth, as well as the very low participation rate, call for decisive steps to remove disincentives to work and to improve the quality of education.

De facto ethnic-based separation and discrimination in some public schools in the Federation remain of concern.

There are two action plans under the Roma strategy — an action plan on educational needs of Roma and an action plan on employment, housing and healthcare 2013-16. State-level guidelines on improving the situation of Roma children and social inclusion were adopted in October 2013. Poverty, change of residence and lack of support from families continue to be barriers to access to education for Roma children.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina

Over 50 primary schools in the Federation in the Tuzla Canton and in Republika Srpska integrated an inclusive approach through school development plans based on an index for inclusiveness methodology to promote respect for diversity and tolerance. However, discrimination against the Roma minority remains widespread.

The legislation for vocational education and training has yet to be adopted by four Cantons.

Overall, there was little progress on education and significant efforts are needed to improve the system. Further efforts are needed to support VET policy.

In Montenegro

A new action plan to implement the strategy for improving the position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro was adopted in April.

Overall access to buildings for people with disabilities, including those in the areas of education and medical facilities, remains limited.

Should increase workers mobility and strengthen the effectiveness of active labour market policies, as well as enhance the quality of education, including vocational education and training.

Montenegro took some positive steps to improve the situation of the socially vulnerable and/or persons with disabilities. The 2014-2015 strategy and action plan for the integration of people with disabilities were adopted, together with a strategy on inclusive education.

In Montenegro

Work should be stepped up as regards poverty reduction and improving the inclusion of the Roma and Egyptian population, and people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

In education, the number of Roma students attending primary school has increased markedly compared to previous years, and the desegregation process continued; however, drop-out rates and the low proportion of female Roma students among the total population of Roma students is a cause for concern.

Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED 3) remain, with ca. 90 %, close to the OECD average. Access to secondary education remains problematic for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) children, students with disabilities and those living in remote, mountainous areas.

In Serbia

Quality assurance in primary and secondary education is improving. The action plan to implement the strategy for the development of education up to 2020 has not yet been adopted.

The legal framework for the protection of minorities is broadly in place but its consistent implementation across the country needs to be ensured, notably in the areas of education (...).

Governmental coordination, together with operational cooperation between the various ministries and bodies relevant for Roma inclusion, remain to be further improved.

The positive measures taken to improve the situation of the Roma need to be stepped up, particularly when it comes to education, housing and employment. Further sustained efforts are needed to improve the situation of refugees and displaced persons.



In Serbia

Attention is needed to consistent implementation of the legislation especially in the areas of education, the use of languages, and access to media and religious services in minority languages, whenever there is demand from minorities.

Social inclusion of people with disabilities needs significant improvement. Lack of resources is an obstacle to the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools at local level.

Youth unemployment (15-25 years old) is growing (53 % in June) and the share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) is at around 27 % (June 2014).

Little progress was made in the area of education and culture and significant efforts are needed to improve the quality and efficiency of the education system.

In “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

The level of education and training of the workforce does not correspond adequately to the needs of the economy.

Recent improvements in access to education have produced good results, as the number of early school leavers dropped, and the rate of pre-school enrolment increased.

More needs to be done to improve the inclusion of disadvantaged children. Children with disabilities and children from the Roma community suffer the most from stigma, discrimination and segregation.

Further efforts are needed to provide national institutions with the qualified staff and the appropriate infrastructure necessary to support the process of inclusion.

In “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

Curricula on Roma language and culture for elementary education were developed during the last year and textbooks were printed, however separation of Roma in schools continues and the number of Roma children in special schools is disproportionately high. Stereotyping occurs on social networks.

Although projects in several priority areas are ongoing, they are driven mainly by donor funding as state budget allocations remain unchanged.

Although projects in several priority areas are ongoing, they are driven mainly by donor funding as state budget allocations remain unchanged.

The process of decentralisation in education is progressing. Some progress was made in the areas of education (...). Both the vocational education and training centre and the adult education centres benefited from strengthened human resources.



*In Kosovo**

Equal access to quality education for persons with disabilities and persons from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities remains very limited, despite the commitment to inclusive education.

Students from minority communities have received targeted financial support. However, children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and children with disabilities continue to face limited access to quality education.

Students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have lower registration rates, higher dropout rates, and poor levels of academic performance. Mediators continued to engage with these communities to reduce dropouts, especially in schools with a higher concentration of pupils from these communities.

Statistics on the dropout rates need to become more reliable.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

*In Kosovo**

The government adopted a Law on Vocational Education and Training (VET). The current VET system does not properly meet the labour market needs in Kosovo. An action plan and framework for quality assurance for monitoring the quality of vocational education and training schools has been developed.

The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education for technical support became operational during the spring of 2014.

Overall, progress in the area of education has been slow. More efforts are needed to improve access to quality education for marginalised groups, including for children with disabilities and children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.