

## **Regional Support for Inclusive Education”**

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## **“Regional Support for Inclusive Education”**

### **REPORT**

### **From the First Regional PolicyNet meeting**

**Sarajevo, 6 March, 2014**

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## Summary

**The First Regional PolicyNet meeting** for the Joint EU/CoE Project "Regional Support for Inclusive Education" was held in Hotel Europa, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina **on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2014**. This regional meeting defined common policy areas under which regional policy recommendations – and later beneficiary level implementation plans will be developed.

The meeting was organised in plenary sessions and in thematic working groups. The working groups produced a list of common priorities by education level. The Priorities are the following:

1. Awareness Raising and Sensitization,
2. Teacher Capacity Development and
3. Support to schools, teachers and students.

### *1. Background*

The project "*Regional Support for Inclusive Education*" promotes the concept of inclusive education in South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Kosovo<sup>1</sup>) as a reform principle that respects and caters for diversity amongst all learners, with a specific focus on those who are at a higher risk of marginalisation and exclusion.

The Project supports and facilitates a multi-level, cross-sectorial regional network (Inclusive PolicyNet) with a constant composition, representing a broad range of stakeholders (policymakers - from education, social protection and healthcare sectors, from the central and local level; practitioners – school principals, members of school boards, representatives of education inspectorates, researchers and teacher educators, civil society representatives, parents) to exchange experience and discuss inclusive education issues, as well as common challenges and promising policy approaches or examples of good practice from the European Union and the region. Within the project, The "Inclusive PolicyNet" will produce concrete policy recommendations at each education level (Primary Education, General Secondary Education and Vocational Education and Training).

The Policy work started in an *Expert Group meeting in October 2013*. At this meeting, which was held in Belgrade, experts from each Beneficiary presented their overviews on the existing policies, implementation gaps and main challenges. The meeting concluded that in general, education laws and policies recognize educational rights of all, but there are still policy gaps related to the *processes* such as teaching and assessment methodologies, teacher education (pre-service and in-service), quality assurance/ supervision/ inspection as well as inclusive school and classroom level practices and *inputs* which relate to human resources, curricula, infrastructure and financing. In addition, data and monitoring should be improved and cross-sectorial cooperation enhanced. Awareness raising and attitude development should also continue so that inclusive education would become reality.

Policy analysis continued at the Regional Conference "*Embracing diversity through education*" which was held in Tirana in *November 2013*. At this conference an inclusive education policy workshop was held and the participants from all beneficiaries mapped out policy gaps and implementation challenges by education level. These policies were grouped under themes of access and policies promoting learning and progression. The following were identified as key policy gaps or development areas:

#### **Primary:**

- Ensuring that the initial teacher training includes strengthening teachers' capacity to identify and support different kinds of learning needs.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

- Supporting people from vulnerable groups to become teachers and promote scholarships to be targeted to them for this purpose.
- Developing policies to track absenteeism and for identification of students in risk for drop-out (also at school level).

### **General Secondary Education:**

- Development of resource centres with mobile teams of professionals that will work with teachers in the field
- Including an obligatory module on IE in every teacher initial training programme to help teachers to recognize - children at risk for drop-out and vulnerability. This is needed not only to give information but to influence and change attitudes
- Improving information system on inclusive support measures

### **VET:**

- Introducing professional orientation and vocational guidance and counselling already at the primary level to help children to be aware of all possibilities, also as an extra-curricular activity.
- Developing supportive school management and developing stimulating mechanisms for teachers also at school level.
- Engaging mentoring for the transition from one education level to another and for finding jobs and helping in maintaining employment.
- Promoting intersectoral cooperation (schools and Ministries of Labour, etc.).

The workshop participants noted that successful development projects have been implemented across the region in collaboration with ministries but their results and achievements need to be incorporated in the education system as an evidence-base.

After the Conference, *the Beneficiary Inclusive Education Policy Teams* in each beneficiary were established and *Focal Points* who will coordinate the work at beneficiary level selected. The Beneficiary Policy teams have held their first meetings to discuss main issues and challenges per level and type of education. A summary of the Beneficiary Teams' reports was prepared and used as a framework for the first Regional PolicyNet meeting.

## **2. First Regional PolicyNet meeting**

The First Regional PolicyNet meeting was held in Sarajevo on 6th of March 2014 with all together 83 participants, including 64 out of 70 Beneficiary Policy Team members. The objective of the meeting was ***to define common policy gaps and challenges in the region and to agree minimum of three policy areas which will be addressed in the recommendations by the Inclusive Education PolicyNet.***

The meeting was opened by a panel of Mr Adnan Husić, Ministry of Civil Affairs, BiH, Natalia Dianiskova, Delegation of the European Union to BiH, Mary Ann Hennessey and Sarah Keating from the Council of Europe who gave their opening remarks.

The Project Manager, Ms Atanasova from the Council of Europe presented an overview of the project. The project is a regional intervention which aims at increasing understanding of the benefits of inclusive education and development of feasible recommendations on common policy areas based on the experiences gained from pilot schools and teacher education activities supported by this project.

Mrs Lešić, Project Officer from the Council of Europe presented the policy support component and the work of the PolicyNet. She also explained the work process. The *Beneficiary Policy Teams* will identify the policy gaps at beneficiary level and define good policies with the „SchoolNet“ and

„TeacherNet“, which will be presented to the regional level PolicyNet. *Working groups* will be established at the regional level to identify common challenges and issues by education level and to develop a common regional framework for recommendations. While the recommendations have been developed on a regional level the Beneficiary teams will prepare implementation plans at beneficiary level. The work at Beneficiary level is coordinated by a *Focal Local Point* nominated by the Project. The Focal Point with project support will organize Beneficiary Policy Team meetings.

The Lead Moderator, Mrs Raisa Venäläinen, presented the summary of the policy analyses done by the Beneficiary Policy Teams. She concluded that this work is well in line with the findings made in previous meetings. A summary of Beneficiary Policy Team reports is presented below. A summary of the gaps in each beneficiary is presented in Annex 1.

According to the beneficiary reports main challenges regarding *access to education*<sup>2</sup> relate to limited awareness and prejudices of practitioners and community as well as to boundaries in enrolment and transition procedures and processes. Policies targeted to *Quality of Education*<sup>3</sup>, in turn, include policies targeted to teachers (e.g. professional development), school level policies and policies targeted to students (e.g. assistive technologies). Rigid curriculum and insufficient inter-sectorial cooperation are also issues that need to be addressed.

Limited analyses on inclusive education are available at General Secondary Education level compared to the other subsectors of Primary Education and VET. The critical issues arising from the Beneficiary Policy Team reports are again the need for raising awareness and promoting schools as inclusive learning environments. In addition, strengthening teacher capacities as well as promoting horizontal learning between practitioners and schools could contribute to better practices and understanding of Inclusive Education.

In VET, specific issues relate to meeting the needs of the labour market, tracer studies and inter-sectorial cooperation. These, together with the broader framework of previous analyses for instance by the Education Training Foundation form a broad policy framework for this project.

Many of the identified issues and challenges are common to all education levels (Primary, General Secondary, and Secondary VET) but there are also specific issues at each education level. Education indicators in the Region also suggest that important policy areas are out-of-school children, policies supporting transition and policies preventing drop out. For instance, recent surveys suggest that most dropouts occur in transition from one education level to another.

The participants were divided in three working groups based on education level, Instructions were given to identify minimum of three regionally common areas for policy recommendations. The outputs from the groups are presented below.

### 3. Common Policy Areas

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<sup>2</sup> Access is usually measured at by indicators such as **net intake rate**, **gross intake rate**, and for secondary education by the **transition rate**.

<sup>3</sup> Quality measures and input usually relate to participation and progression particularly when students with special educational needs and students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds are concerned. Participation in education is about what extent the population fully takes part in and makes use of available education services, until **completion** of the education level concerned. Commonly used indicators include completion rates and graduation rates as well as student flow rates such as promotion, repetition and dropout rates.

## Primary Education

Moderator: Radmila Rangleov Jusović.

After a brief orientation the team discussed the support system which needs to be in place for Inclusive Education (including support for students, parents and teachers), structural issues, cross-sectorial cooperation and databases which will ensure exchange of information about children. It is also essential to establish standards so that schools can assess where they stand in terms of inclusion and what should be improved. In addition, the community needs to be oriented to inclusion, its benefits and challenges. Based on the discussions, the group came up with the following policy priorities.

### Primary School Policy Priorities

- 1. Getting children, families and schools ready**  
Strategies and policies supporting children and families getting ready for school and school ready for children (e.g. early identification and preparation)
- 2. Teachers' Professional Development**  
Pre-service teacher training and ongoing professional development based on defined competences for inclusive education (e.g. teacher standards, qualification framework)
- 3. Support to schools and families**  
Support for teachers in schools (e.g. assistants, mobile teams, interpreters), for families and cooperation and partnership between school, families and community
- 4. Quality Standards**  
Official Quality standards for inclusive schools for self-assessment and external evaluation, which would also allow flexibility of schools and avoid slow bureaucratic procedures to meet the identified needs of each child.
- 5. Inter-sectorial Cooperation**  
Inter-sector cooperation (e.g. databases, formal procedures) also addressing street children, children without documents and other not yet enrolled
- 6. Monitoring and Evaluation**  
Monitoring, evaluation and self-evaluation that includes schools, families, children (accountability for existing policy implementation), including accountability
- 7. Curriculum**  
Curriculum changes – child centred (flexible and sufficient time, content about inclusion, teaching methods and assessment)

## General Secondary Education

Moderator: Borislava Maksimović

The moderator described the working process and noted that it is necessary to analyse and understand why only a few General Secondary Schools (29 schools, which represents 7 percent of all schools) applied for this project. The group discussed the key issues and challenges in smaller groups and concluded that common gaps and development areas are related to provision of sufficient support to teachers at the level of school and classroom, promotion of inclusive enrolment policies, ensuring physical access to school and to curriculum and materials as well as transition issues. Among the priority areas are also encouraging more active involvement of parents and communities and recognizing positive practises and promoting horizontal learning between schools.

Five priorities were defined

**1. Parent and Community involvement**

Involvement of parents and local community in IE

**2. Support to Teachers and Students at the level of school and classroom**

Direct and indirect assistance and support to teachers and students

**3. Promoting Inclusive General Secondary Education**

Recognizing a school as an inclusive environment and disseminating good practices

**4. Teacher Professional growth and advancement**

Promotion of inclusive schools and teachers’ professional growth and advancement

**5. Comparative analyses**

Comparative analysis of policies and practices in the beneficiaries as well as in EU countries.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Moderator: Lida Kita

The group concluded that many issues are beneficiary specific but common policy areas across the region are related to raising awareness and making VET more attractive, promoting sectoral cooperation (health, education and labour) and connections with labour market both in curriculum design as well as in development of work-based learning. Issues related to quality of VET, include teacher training, promoting school management capacities, and development of teaching and learning materials as well as tracer studies. The group also discussed issues on how to overcome some of the key barriers such as development of selection or entry channels for disadvantaged young people into vocational schools, and quality measures (support to students, curriculum and teaching and learning materials, assessments, support to teachers, school level policies and practices, education of non-teaching staff, preventing drop-out, supporting transition) and development of quality assurance in line with European QA in VET.

The group concluded that common regional priorities are

- 1. Awareness raising**  
Increasing public awareness in implementing inclusive VET reform intentions.
- 2. Cross-sectorial cooperation**  
Enhancing coordination and administrative co-operation between Ministries involved in VET and other actors, such as employers, social partners, community, NGOs and municipalities.
- 3. Support to teachers**  
Strengthening and increasing capacities of education staff and their resources.

*4. Meeting outputs*

Regional Inclusive Education Policy priorities at all three levels of education – primary, general secondary and VET were identified. These policy areas are (a) Awareness Raising and Sensitization, (b) Teacher Capacity Development and (c) Support to schools, teachers and students.

Three Priority Policy Areas by Education Level				
Policy Area	Primary education	General secondary	VET	Description

Promoting Parent and Community Involvement	x	x	x	<u>Primary Education</u> : Getting children, families and schools ready <u>General Secondary Education</u> : Parent and Community involvement <u>VET</u> : Awareness raising; public awareness
Support to Teachers	x	x	x	<u>Primary Education</u> : Pre-service teacher training and ongoing professional development, competences for inclusive education <u>General Secondary Education</u> : support to teachers and students <u>VET</u> : Strengthen capacities of teachers, resources
Support to Schools	x	x		<u>Primary Education</u> : Support for teachers in schools (e.g. assistants, mobile teams, interpreters), for families and cooperation and partnership between school, families and community <u>General Secondary Education</u> : Recognizing a school as an inclusive environment and disseminating good practices
Cross Sectorial Cooperation			x	<u>VET</u> : Enhancing coordination and co-operation between Ministries involved in VET and other actors, such as employers, social partners, community, NGOs and municipalities.

## 5. Next steps

### ➤ Local Focal Points meeting.

The main objectives of this meeting will be to exchange views on accomplished activities and to focus on planning the next steps for the Policy Component of the Project including cross-beneficiary coordination, organization of working group meetings and division of tasks and responsibilities.

The main output should be creation of the PolicyNet work plan for the period May 2014 – May 2015.

### ➤ 1st Primary education working group meeting – June/July 2014.

### ➤ 1st VET working group meeting – June/July 2014.

### ➤ 1st General secondary education working group – August/September 2014.

The main objectives of the working groups meetings will be to further develop identified Inclusive education policy priorities at each level and type of education and start discussing possible policy recommendations for each of the identified priorities.

## Annex 1 Policy Gaps and Issues Identified by the Beneficiary Policy Teams

### Policy Gaps and Issues Identified by the Beneficiary Policy Teams

Education Level	ACCESS	QUALITY
Primary Education	<p><b>Awareness:</b> Existing good school-level practices not well-known and promoted; Attitudinal barriers</p> <p><b>Transition</b> from class teaching to subject teaching, transition from “special’ to mainstream school and vice versa</p> <p><b>Education and life-long learning</b> of teachers, non-teaching expert staff and all other school employees</p>	<p><b>Awareness:</b> Existing good school-level practices not well-known and/or promoted</p> <p><b>Curriculum:</b> Insufficient integration of IE and diversity in applied curricula; Rigid attitudes and understanding of the curriculum as a document to which cannot be changed and/or improved</p> <p><b>Teacher education</b> (pre-service and in-service) is not addressing inclusive class/school practices; Unfunded in-service</p>

	<p><b>Cooperation with parents and the community.</b></p> <p><b>Access to support (adequate assistive equipment and aids, teacher’s assistants, interpreters, etc.)</b></p> <p><b>Pre-school;</b> Low level of pre-school enrolment; different authorities responsible for pre-school enrolment</p> <p><b>Other</b></p> <p>Limited availability of inclusive pre-school Enrolment of children without documents is not possible Overcrowded classes in urban areas; accessibility in rural areas Intersectional cooperation; flow of information</p> <p><b>Out-of School Children</b></p>	<p>teacher-training provision</p> <p><b>Role of support staff:</b> the expertise available in the school is not appropriately used in classrooms; Education and life-long learning of non-teaching expert staff and all other school employees,</p> <p><b>Cooperation with parents and the community</b></p>
General Secondary Education	<p><b>Awareness</b></p> <p>Low awareness about and support to promotion of diversity in schools</p> <p><b>Promoting Inclusive schools</b></p> <p>to make general secondary schools/gymnasiums a more inclusive environment for students.</p> <p><b>Professional development of teachers and school management</b></p> <p>Transition from “special” to mainstream schools</p>	<p><b>Awareness</b></p> <p>Low awareness about and support to promotion of diversity in schools</p> <p><b>Rigid Curriculum</b></p> <p><b>Professional development</b> of teachers and school management incl. Subject teachers lacking pre-service teacher training</p> <p><b>Class size; Student Teacher Ratio;</b> Too many students in classes</p> <p>Transition from basic to secondary education</p>
VET	<p><b>Awareness</b></p> <p>Low awareness about and support to promotion of diversity in schools</p> <p><b>Meeting the needs of Labour Market</b></p> <p>Missing links with the labour market</p> <p><b>Enrolment issues</b></p> <p>Enrolment in VET schools, Lack of professional orientation and selection</p> <p>Lack of opportunity for <b>vocational (pre) qualifications</b></p> <p><b>Inter-sectorial cooperation.</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting the Labour Market needs</b> and definition of a framework for modification of VET programmes that would also include the time as a factor; Develop efficient system with shorter certified VET courses tailored by the market needs</p> <p><b>Tracer studies;</b> Professional follow up of students from VET schools Develop a school based system for continuous professional guidance to students (System of students follow-up as feedback and database for further guidance)</p> <p><b>Inter-sectorial cooperation.</b></p> <p><b>Financial resources</b> required to support the needed number of experts. Framework for modified programmes.</p>

## Annex 2 List of Participants

### “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

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### First Regional PolicyNet meeting

**Sarajevo, 6 March, 2014**

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

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# Annex 3 Meeting Agenda

## “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

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Funded  
by the European Union  
and the Council of Europe



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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Implemented  
by the Council of Europe

*An inclusive school is a school where:*

*every child is welcome,  
every parent is involved,  
every teacher is valued.*

**First Regional PolicyNet meeting**

**Sarajevo, Hotel Europe  
6 March, 2014**

**Agenda**

**08:15 – 09:00 Registration of participants**

**09:00 – 09:45 Opening Panel** – Mr Adnan Husić, Ministry of Civil Affairs, BiH;

Ms Natalia Dianiskova, Delegation of the European Union to BiH;

Ms Mary-Ann Hennessey, Council of Europe office in BiH;

Ms Sarah Keating, Education Department Council of Europe

**09:45 – 10:45 Project Overview** – Vesna Atanasova, Council of Europe

**Policy Net – objectives and expected results** – Zorica Lešić, Council of Europe

**Meeting objectives** – Raisa Venalainen, lead meeting moderator

**Thematic groups’ objectives and way of work** – Raisa Venalainen, lead meeting moderator

### Discussion

**10:45 – 11:15 Coffee break**

*Reimbursement of travel costs at the registration desk*

**11:15 – 13:00 GROUP WORK**

<b>Primary Education</b>	<b>General Secondary Education</b>	<b>Vocational Education and Training</b>
<b>Main issues Challenges</b>	<b>Main issues Challenges</b>	<b>Main issues Challenges</b>
Moderator <i>Radmila Rangelov Jusović</i>	Moderator <i>Borislava Maksimović</i>	Moderator <i>Lida Kita</i>

**13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH**

**14:00 – 15:30 GROUP WORK (continuation)**

<b>Primary Education</b>	<b>General Secondary Education</b>	<b>Vocational Education and Training</b>
<b>Challenges Actions</b>	<b>Challenges Actions</b>	<b>Challenges Actions</b>
Moderator <i>Radmila Rangelov Jusović</i>	Moderator <i>Borislava Maksimovic</i>	Moderator <i>Lida Kita</i>

**15:30 – 16:00 Coffee break**

*Reimbursement of travel costs at the registration desk*

**16:00 – 16:45 PLENARY**

**Thematic groups – presentations** – Lida Kita, Borislava Maksimović, Radmila Rangelov Jusović

**16:45 – 17:00 Next steps** – Raisa Venailainen, lead meeting moderator

**17:00 – 17:30 Wrap up** – Vesna Atanasova, Council of Europe

**19:30**

**Joint dinner**

Restaurant 4 sobe gospođe Safije

## Annex 4. Beneficiary Policy team reports

[First Meeting of the Policy Team in Albania - Report](#)

[First Meeting of the Policy Team in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Report](#)

[The First Meeting of the Policy Team in Croatia](#)

[First Meeting of the Policy Team in Montenegro - Report](#)

[First Meeting of the Policy Team in Serbia - Report](#)

[First Meeting of the Policy Team in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"](#)

[First Meeting of the Policy Team in Kosovo\\*](#)

### First Meeting of the Policy Team in Albania - REPORT

Prepared by: Estevan Ikonomi, Focal Point for Albania

18<sup>th</sup> February 2014

#### Introduction

The first meeting of Policy Team of Albania was organized according to instructions of Project Officer in charge of PolicyNet Component of the Joint EU/CoE Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”, hereinafter referred to as JP on Inclusive Education.

**Date:** Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014, 11.00 -16.00

**Place:** Tirana, Sheraton Tirana Hotel

**Participants:** 8 (out of 10) members of the Policy Team of Albania including the Focal Point, JP on Inclusive Education staff from the CoE Office in Tirana including Project Officer and Project Assistant, and a representative from the EU Delegation to Albania (Annex 1: Meeting Attendance List).

**Moderator:** Estevan Ikonomi, Member and Focal Point of Policy Team in Albania.

### **Preparation of the Meeting**

The meeting was prepared by JP on Inclusive Education staff located in Tirana, in close coordination with the Focal Point, as agreed in advance.

The Meeting agenda (Annex 2) and presentations were proposed by Zorica Lesic, Project Officer in charge of Policy Component. Translation and adaptation of slide presentations on Policy Support Component was made by the Focal Point and its consistency checked by the JP on Inclusive Education Officer. Logistic support throughout the process was provided by project staff.

### **Presentation of the Project and Policy Component**

The JP on Inclusive Education Officer in Albania presented the Project, using a slide presentation, focusing on its objectives and five components.

The Focal Point presented, through a slide presentation (Annex 3), the Policy Component and its main function vis-à-vis other components. He elaborated on its key objectives, the PolicyNet action framework, a summary of issues and policy gaps prepared by the team of experts during the Belgrade Meeting, the roles of Policy Team and Focal Point, and the structure and expected results of Regional PolicyNet.

### **Discussion, Questions and Comments of Participants**

Following each presentation, a session on questions and discussions focused on questions ranging from beneficiary policy priorities and challenges facing the IE agenda in Albania to how the project might contribute to addressing them.

With regard to the Project, the EU Delegation office representative was interested to know about the timelines concerning the school grant allocations. It was explained that this process depends on factors such as the identification of needs through the baseline study and that the project will make sure school proposals are submitted and processed on time so that the grants are also disbursed in due time. Another question concerned the eligibility of Albanian schools to receive sizable grants in their semi-official bank accounts. However, one of the participants, representative of the SchoolNet, and the MoES representative guaranteed that this is possible.

With regard to the Policy component, the participants engaged in numerous discussions on issues and challenges the most prominent of which are grouped in a table presented in the next section of this report. They were largely in line with those presented, and later collated, in the report of the Belgrade Expert Team Meeting whereas reference was also made to the Conclusions from the Policy Workshop Report in Tirana's Regional Conference.

Further to identification of issues and challenges, attempts were made to come up with proposals on how to address some of the concerns and gaps in provision. While generating a common understanding of IE-related terminology at all education levels could be addressed by a specific ordinance issued by the MoES, other issues such as curricular integration of IE concepts could be done *now* as the revision of the national curricular framework for grades 1-9 is currently underway.

Another proposal aiming at amplifying the impact of the PolicyNet concerned the possibility to include project-specific issues and suggestions in the current training series, modules and/or other activities of other ongoing accredited programmes, the Pestalozzi being one of them.

Further to planned presentations, Mrs Tatjana Vuçani, a MoES representative and concurrently a Project board member, presented briefly the MoES' project on community schools, currently underway, and discussed ways of eventual collaboration.

### Outputs of the Meeting

Each Policy Team member proposed and discussed on a number of priority issues and challenges. In the end, the team members were encouraged to prioritise them by ranking each issue in accordance to its importance or emergency. The outcomes are as follows:

Level/type of institutions	Issues by level/type of institutions	Cross-cutting issues and challenges
<b>Primary education</b>	<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing good school-level practices not well-known and/or promoted</li> <li>- schools' and teachers' hesitation</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Absence of formal evaluations of good practices</li> <li>- overcrowded classes in urban areas</li> <li>- accessibility in rural areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Issue:</b></p> <p>Gaps in legislation in favour of IE regarding specific and cross-sector/-thematic by-laws, integration and common understanding of IE concepts and terminology, and supporting teacher and school methodologies</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of clear institutional responsibilities regarding translation into sub-national and school level instructions</li> <li>- Existing ambiguous terminology in use</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Issue:</b></p> <p>Insufficient support to teachers (incl. pre-service and in-service provision, ineffective mentoring schemes, etc.)</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- absence or scarcity of IE-relevant modules in pre-service teacher training programmes</li> <li>- differences in individual teachers' perception of their roles</li> <li>- unfunded in-service</li> </ul>
<b>General secondary education</b>	<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low awareness about and support to promotion of diversity in schools</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficult transition from basic to secondary education</li> <li>- Subject teachers lacking pre-service teacher training</li> </ul>	
<b>Secondary education-VET</b>	<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low awareness about and support to promotion of diversity in schools</li> <li>- missing links with the labour market</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of tradition in working with diversity</li> </ul>	

		teacher-training provision  <b>3. Issue:</b> Insufficient integration of IE and diversity in applied curricula <b>Challenges:</b> Lack of resources
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Among other issues discussed, not fully appearing in this table, are those concerning *definitions and terminology in IE*, their understanding and the need for cross-documentary unification, and the *scarcity of qualitative and quantitative disaggregated data* in education crucial to informing sound policy decisions and actions.

### Cross- beneficiary Teams:

Level/type of institutions	Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team
Primary education	1. Valentina Veçani 2. Mirela Kondili 3. Irida Sina
General secondary education	1. Tatjana Vuçani 2. Mirash Shkurti 3. Merita Myftari
Secondary education –VET	1. Ilda Bozo* 2. Agron Pullumbi* 3. Zela Koka

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

\* These members were not present in the First Policy Team Meeting therefore their participation in the Secondary Education–VET team is to be confirmed.

### Conclusions of the Meeting

The First Policy Team Meeting largely achieved its aim. There is an understanding on the JP on Inclusive Education vision and expected results as well as on the expected role of the Policy Team.

Despite slight individual differences, participants agreed largely on the key issues facing the IE Policy agenda in Albania and were able to identify its main challenges. Furthermore, particular members were keen to discuss on the course of singular and collective policy actions required to address those issues.

All participants present in the meeting engaged effectively and pro-actively throughout all discussions demonstrating a keen interest to play a role in team efforts as well as within the overall project framework of action.

## First Meeting of the Policy Team of Bosnia and Herzegovina

### - REPORT -

Prepared by Lejla Kafedžić, Focal Point

#### Introduction

The first meeting of Policy Team of Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized according to the instructions of the Project Officer in charge of PolicyNet Component of the Joint EU/CoE Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”.

**Date** of the meeting: Monday, 24 February 2014, 11.00 -16.00

**Place:** Sarajevo, Hotel Europe

**Participants:** 9 members of the Policy Team from Bosnia and Herzegovina and members of CoE Office in Sarajevo: Zorica Lesic, Project Officer and Elmaja Bavcic, Project assistant. Milena Juric, a member of the BiH team, was absent from the meeting due to illness. Also, Valentine Cuk did not attend the first meeting (instead of her Zeljka Perisic attended the meeting) (Annex 1: List of participants).

**Moderator:** Lejla Kafedzic, Member and Focal point of Policy Team from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

#### Preparation of the Meeting

The meeting was prepared by members of staff engaged in Project in CoE Office in Sarajevo, Zorica Lesic i Elmaja Bavcic, as well as Focal Point of Policy Team of Bosnia and Herzegovina, nominated by CoE.

Draft Agenda of the Meeting (Annex 2) and presentations were proposed by Zorica Lesic, Project officer in charge of Policy Component. Also, the basis of the presentation was suggested by Mrs Lesic, with a little adaptation of Local Point for B&H. Logistic support was organized by CoE Office in Sarajevo.

#### Course of the Meeting – Discussion, Questions and Comments of Participants

Members of the Policy Team introduced themselves by names, positions, background and specific experience in inclusive education area. The first meeting of the BH team was implemented in three parts:

1. Presentation of the project and the presentation of the third component of the project.

Project “Regional support for inclusive education” was presented by Zorica Lesic. She explained the main points: project objectives, five project components, TeacherNet, School Net and showed details from the website of the Project.

Lejla Kafedzic presented the Policy Component of the Project: broad understanding of inclusive education in the project, the objectives of the third component, the framework and the roles of the Team for inclusive education policy and Focal Point, presented the main activities within the group of experts meeting in Belgrade (1-2 October 2013) and the Regional Conference in Tirana (6-7 November 2013).

Important question which was asked: Working dynamic of the Team in the framework of the third component, time frame and tasks?

## 2. Discussions on the country context priorities and challenges in project implementation

Discussion on recent implementation of inclusive education in B&H was opened by presenting conclusions from the meeting in Belgrade about the shortage of educational policies and suggestions for advancement from regional conference in Tirana.

In addition, all members of BH team took part in the discussion. A lot was said about the problems in implementation of inclusive education in B&H, as well as about the good experiences, strengths and challenges.

The Team members think that B&H has well organized regulations/laws/documents, which are coordinated with international documents, but still some acts should be passed, makes documents to be non-discriminatory, and to be realized in practice, that is to be more realistic and less rigid. Obstacles, in creating the documents which would be fully applicable in practice, present that they are not concrete enough and very few professionals from practice are involved in their creation. Besides, law regulations are not attainable, because schools have no support. Other questions which need to be worked at additionally in B&H were being discussed (see more in Table 2, column 3- Joint issues and challenges). It is emphasized how important it is to take care about the expectations of children from vulnerable/marginalized groups. It is stated that in B&H there are many examples of good practice, results of excellent work of government and non-government institutions/organizations, development of inclusive educational institutions and communities, but there is a lack of system/systematic solutions, which would be sustainable.

Forces in BH educational system and society are: teachers (who are at the same time weakness), regulations, students as resources of teaching universities, recent practice, media, low degree of pupils leaving school, etc.

## 3. Discussion on priorities for advancing of inclusive education in B&H, challenges for implementation of priorities and ideas for lessening challenges.

At the beginning of this part of the meeting, the members of BH team are divided into three groups according to levels/sort of education. The suggestion for this division was given by the Team Coordinator, which was accepted with one change.

The division of the members of BH team and the results of the discussion can be seen in the addition: Outputs of the Meeting.

### Outputs of the Meeting

**Table1: Cross- beneficiary Teams**

LEVEL/SORT OF EDUCATION	NAMES OF MEMBERS CROSS-BENEFICIARY TEAM
PRIMARY EDUCATION	1. Begić Elmedina 2. Ćuk Valentina 3. Nikšić Mirna
GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION	1. Bjelan Sandra 2. Jurić Milena 3. Trbić Dženana

SECONDARY EDUCATION -VET	1. Divović Lejla 2. Garača Zorica 3. Popović Biljana
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The Focal Point will participate in activities of all three teams.

All members expressed satisfaction in being a part of this Project and optimism regarding the expected results. They also expressed personal readiness to contribute to project achievements in the best possible way.

All members of the working groups have actively participated in the discussion on priorities in advancement of inclusive education, challenges in realizing the priorities and ideas to lessen the challenges (complete table can be seen in Annex 3).

**Table2: Discussion results in the working groups**

LEVEL/SORT OF EDUCATION	ISSUES AND CHALLENGES BY LEVEL/SORT OF EDUCATION	JOINT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES <sup>4</sup>
PRIMARY EDUCATION	<p><b>Issues:</b> TEACHER EDUCATION (pre-service and in-service)</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Existing programs of education and training are based much more on theory than on developing practical teacher skills.</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> MORE FLEXIBLE EDUCATIONAL PLAN AND PROGRAM</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Rigid attitudes and understanding of the curriculum as a document which cannot be changed and improved.</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> EDUCATION OF THE COMMUNITY</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Prejudice. Stereotypes. Lack of information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attitudes (of professionals, parents, the public),</li> <li>- Narrow understanding of inclusive education,</li> <li>- Non adequate initial/academic education and advanced teacher training,</li> <li>- Non flexible curriculum,</li> <li>- Discontent of parents with the implementation of inclusive education,</li> <li>- Discontent of teachers with the implementation of inclusive education,</li> <li>- Indifference of teachers for advanced teacher training,</li> <li>- The problem of transition through levels of education,</li> <li>- Absence of support for teachers,</li> </ul>
GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION	<p><b>Issues:</b> INCREASE ACCESS TO GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN BELONGING TO MARGINALIZED GROUPS</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Low expectations from children belonging to marginalized groups.</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> CURRICULUM</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Long procedures modifications of curriculum. Rigidity of curriculum. Curriculum is not student-oriented but content-oriented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Absence or bad cooperation among various institutions/sectors such as: special and <i>regular</i> schools, education-health-social policy,</li> <li>- Inability of parents to enrol the children with difficulties in <i>regular</i> schools,</li> <li>- Regression of children in special sections of classes,</li> <li>- <i>Regular</i> schools are not prepared for working with children with difficulties (e.g. individual treatments of a speech therapist and</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Discussion results of the whole team in the second part of the meeting.

	<p><b>Issues:</b> PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS AND MANAGERMENTS IN SCHOOL</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Teachers and school management do not see a need for professional training in the field of inclusive education. Understanding of Inclusion only like working with children with disabilities.</p>	<p>special education teacher ),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of early intervention,</li> <li>- Exclusion of parents from the discussion about the child,</li> <li>- Lack of support for teachers in inclusive schools.</li> </ul>
<p>SECONDARY EDUCATION -VET</p>	<p><b>Issues:</b> PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS AND MANAGERMENTS IN SCHOOL</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Training of teachers.</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> THE ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND LABOR MARKET</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Establishment of tripartite advisory council. Joint creation of curriculum.</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> IMPROVING ATTITUDES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> The media campaign (including written, printed, electronic media), as well as cooperation with NGOs and international organizations. Obligatory parent involvement.</p>	

## Conclusion

The first meeting of the BH Team for inclusive educational policies had three aims: mutual introduction of the Team members, presenting details about the project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”, with special review over the third component of the Project, as well as discussing recent implementation of the inclusive education in B&H, priorities that need to be worked on in the future and division of the Team members in the working groups.

All three aims were accomplished on the meeting held in Sarajevo on 24 February 2014.

Many problems were identified in the implementation of inclusive education in BH educational systems, still some good; strong points were emphasized, which need to be further strengthened. The most important thing would be to establish some systematic solutions and to change the philosophy of education, which would promote inclusive education as quality education.

# First Meeting of the Policy Team Croatia

## *-Report-*

*Zagreb, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2014*

Prepared by: Ljiljana Igrić, Focal Point

### **Introduction**

The first meeting of Policy Team of Croatia was organized according to instructions of Project Officer in charge of Policy Net Component of the Joint EU/CoE Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”.

**Moderator:** Ljiljana Igrić, Member and Focal Point of Policy Team from Croatia.

**Date** of the meeting: Thursday, 20 February 2014, 10.00 -15.30

**Place:** Zagreb, Hotel Dubrovnik

**Participants:** 10 members of the Policy Team from Croatia and a member of CoE Office in Sarajevo: Elmaja Bavčić, Project assistant

### **Preparation of the Meeting**

The meeting was prepared by members of staff of CoE Office in Sarajevo and Focal Point of Policy Team of Croatia.

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 the Agenda were made by Focal Point Ljiljana Igrić, while the translation and small adaptation in power-point presentations were made by the CoE Office in Sarajevo, Borislava Maksimović and Ljiljana Igrić. The letters of invitation were sent by Focal Point. Logistic support was organized by CoE Office in Sarajevo.

### **Course of the Meeting**

Members of the Policy Team introduced themselves, with special attention being paid to vast experiences of several members involving inclusion. Since the Education Act of 1980 that first introduced the possibility of integrating children with special education needs was passed over 30 years ago, these experienced span from 30 to 6 years in duration, in case of the youngest Policy Team member (representative of TeacherNet) and cover various education segments, either in form of direct interaction with children or participation in creating educational policies.

Project “Regional support for inclusive education” was presented by Elmaja Bavčić.

Ljiljana Igrić 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.

A discussion on issues and challenges of inclusive education in Croatia was open in order to prepare the Policy Team for the PolicyNet meeting in Sarajevo. The discussion included the following topics:

1. Well designed measures and good practices in Croatia
2. Well designed measures combined with poor practical implementation in Croatia
3. Measure that are lacking in Croatia<sup>5</sup>
  - Teachers are willing to work with children with special education needs as well as to further educate themselves and create an inclusive classroom environment.
  - Cooperation in education of experts and an interdisciplinary approach in the education system are required.
  - Most children in Croatia today are integrated in regular schools (app. 15 000), while a smaller part attends special classes in regular schools to avoid sending them away from their families to special schools.
  - A good example of deinstitutionalisation in the social welfare system, a model financed by the Education and Teacher Training Agency, is COO Vinko Bek, a special education institution for children with vision impairment.
  - Inclusion requires a holistic approach that will include parents, teachers, principals, children and the whole community.
  - II. Gimnazija in Split is a positive example of the process of accepting students with disabilities, from initial scepticism to positive attitudes of teachers after gaining experience. The process also included educating other student how to interact with students with disabilities.
  - National Centre for External Assessment in Education has ensured provisions for students with disabilities by modifying of the state graduation exam materials and introducing educated coordinators.
  - Teaching assistants, who have become an integral part of inclusive practice in Croatia, were a major topic. The exact role of teaching assistants in an inclusive class environment is unclear and there is a lack of adequate training for this position. However, there are examples of good practice.

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<sup>5</sup> Part of the discussion is listed under Outputs: Cross-cutting issues and challenges

- Cooperation with schools has proven to be a problem regarding introduction of Croatian Sign Language interpreters (who undergo special training) into classrooms. Thus, their role in class must be clearly defined.
- Level of competence gained by students in special schools has proven inadequate and an obstacle in their further education.
- The importance of inclusion in preschool education and cooperation between parents and various experts were emphasised, seen as many children don't enter the education system before the age of 7.
- The availability of secondary education to students with special education needs is alarmingly low. The fact that secondary education isn't mandatory affects financing of transport, especially in rural areas. This leads to multiple forms of exclusion (poverty, rural areas, disabilities, etc.)

The second part of the discussion was done in three small groups: primary education, general secondary education, and secondary education – VET.

### Outputs of the Meeting

Based on the discussion, the following suggestions were proposed:

Level/sort of education	Cross-cutting issues and challenges	Issues by level/sort of education
Primary education	<p>1. <b>Issue:</b> Increasing teacher competence gained during their university studies.  <b>Challenge:</b> Tools available for improvement of university programmes that would ensure gain of needed skills are not being used and there is a traditional view that only educational rehabilitators should possess adequate skills for working with children with special education needs.</p> <p>2. <b>Issue:</b> Teaching assistants are an integral part of inclusive education.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b>  Lack of state-level criteria</p>	<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <p>1. Education and life-long learning of teachers, non-teaching expert staff and all other school employees, as well as cooperation with parents and the community as a whole</p> <p>2. To ensure access to adequate assistive equipment and aids, as well as an entire, wholesome support system to students with disabilities</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>1. A vast system composed of</p>

	<p>regarding which students are eligible for a teaching assistant</p> <p>Organisation of teaching assistants' work</p> <p>Lack of a financing system</p> <p>Lack of a standardised education of teaching assistants</p> <p>Lack of expert support for</p>	<p>individuals with various interests, age groups and willingness to participate in life-long learning.</p> <p>Lack of time!</p> <p>2. Financial means, cooperation between sectors, inadequate flow of information</p>
<p>General secondary education</p>	<p>Lack of expert support for teaching assistants</p> <p>3. <b>Issue:</b> Inclusion in the preschool system and cooperation between experts from various levels of education are essential.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> In many regions of Croatia many children don't enter the education system before the age of 7.</p>	<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <p>1. To increase the number of students from at-risk groups – to make gymnasiums a more inclusive environment.</p> <p>2. Ensuring provisions for an increased number of students: raising of awareness of all stakeholders in education – students, parents, teachers; individualisation of methods; realisation of gymnasium programmes by including all stakeholders in education; peer support.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>1. Availability of information: delivering information to the public via the media, enrolment brochures, and “Open Door” days.</p> <p>2. Workshops for all stakeholders about given topics; an adequate flow of information from primary to secondary education.</p>
<p>Secondary education -VET</p>		<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <p>1. To harmonise VET</p>

		<p>programmes with the demands of the labour market and to define a framework for modification of VET programmes that would also include the time as a factor. To define precisely the outcomes of VET and to harmonise them with the demands of the labour market.</p> <p>2. Providing support – mobile expert teams.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>1. To achieve quality cooperation between parents, experts and educational rehabilitators in development of a framework for modified programmes for specific occupations. The labour market is not well-equipped to welcome people with disabilities.</p> <p>2. Lack of financial resources required to support the needed number of experts.</p> <p>Lack of a framework for modified programmes.</p>
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**Cross- beneficiary Teams:**

All participants agreed to be members of the following teams:

<b>Level and sort of Education</b>	<b>Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team</b>
Primary education	1. Marija Japundža Broznić 2. Mišo Basić

	3.Sanja Tarczay
General secondary education	1.Ivanka Kovačević 2. Mara Capar 3. Nada Jakir
Secondary education -VET	1.Zvezdana Janičar 2. Marijana Gojčeta 3. Lidija Pongrac Vincelj

Focal Point will participate in activities of all three teams.

All members expressed satisfaction in being a part of this Project and optimism regarding the expected results. They also expressed personal readiness to contribute to project achievements in the best possible way.

### 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.

### Lessons learned:

1. First Policy Team meeting in Croatia included formation of a group of experts who can help improve inclusive education in Croatia and the Region with their vast array of experiences and skills.
2. Exchange of information and perspectives between Policy Team members is important for future decision making regarding inclusive education policy and for each member's performance in their respective workplace.
3. This Project enabled, via the Policy Team, the formation of a support and inclusion advocacy network at a level unprecedented in Croatia.

## First Consultations of the Policy Team in Montenegro

### *-REPORT-*

Prepared by: Ms Nataša Borović, Focal Point for Montenegro

February, 2014

The consultations of the Policy Team in Montenegro were organized in accordance with the conditions and possibilities of the Team members. All 10 members of the Policy Team participated in the consultations that were held from 24 - 28 February 2014.

Nataša Borović, member and Focal Point of the Policy Team in Montenegro prepared all of the relevant documents for the Policy Team members. In addition, to facilitate work for those members who were not strong in English, the translations of the relevant documents were provided in local languages.

Members of the Policy Team introduced themselves by names, positions, background and specific experience in inclusive education area.

Nataša Borović presented the Policy Component of the Project: objectives of the component, PolicyNet action framework, the roles of Policy Team and Focal Point as well as the structure and expected results of Regional PolicyNet.

Discussions on issues and challenges of inclusive education in Montenegro were open in order to prepare Policy Team for PolicyNet meeting in Sarajevo.

### Outputs of the Meeting

Level/type of institutions	Cross-cutting issues and challenges	Issues by level/type of institutions
<b>Primary education</b>	<p><b>Issues:</b> Services of early diagnosis, intervention and support: number and education of the health institutions staff.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs analysis</li> <li>• Training of paediatricians and professional associates</li> </ul>	<p>1. <b>Issue:</b> Assistants in learning as a support to students</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Financial support.</p>
<b>General secondary education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment and implementation of the Memorandum on Co-Operation and Information Exchange among and within the sector.</li> </ul> <p><b>Issues:</b> Increase the inclusion of children</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Accessibility of facilities and materials</p>	<p><b>Issue:</b> Inclusion in secondary schools.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Attitudes.</p>
<b>Secondary education –VET</b>	<p><b>Issues:</b> Facilitate continuity of education</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating the Individual Developmental and Educational Plan (IDEP).</li> <li>• Training for the whole staff on all educational levels for the development and implementation of IDEP.</li> </ul> <p><b>Issue:</b> Improve and ensure professional support for the process</p>	<p><b>Issue:</b> Harmonise VET programmes with the demands of the labour market.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Labour market is not well equipped to welcome people with disabilities.</p>

	<p>of teaching and learning</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining and implementation of the description, level and range of support of the mobile teams.</li> <li>• Development and implementation of the plan for the support of the resource centres to schools.</li> <li>• Developing the model of engaging the learner assistants in teaching.</li> </ul> <p><b>Issue:</b> Defining inclusive education as one of the priority areas of professional development of teachers, re-accredit programmes based on clear criteria of evaluation and selection, increase the number of trainings</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Increase the competencies of the staff through basic education, specialist training, and continual vocational development.</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> Monitoring and evaluation of educational and developmental achievements of children.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve and implement monitoring and evaluation of children's' achievements</li> <li>• Improve and conduct external assessment of knowledge in the best interest of children</li> </ul>	
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### Cross- beneficiary Teams:

Level/type of institutions	Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team
Primary education	1. Tamara Milić 2. Anita Marić 3. Anka Đurišić
General secondary education	1. Dragan Zuković 2. Ljubomir Ljubisavljević 3. Nataša Borović
Secondary education –VET	1. Ana Šeekić 2. Mirjana Đurić 3. Vladislav Koprivica

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## First Meeting of the Policy Team in Serbia

### - REPORT -

Prepared by: Borislava Maksimović , Focal Point for Serbia

12/02/ 2014

#### 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
<b>Primary education</b>	<p><b>Issues</b> -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><b>Challenges:</b> there are no significant challenges, some schools have good models for transition</p>	<p><b>1. Issue:</b> Lack of promotion of diversities through initial education of teachers</p> <p><b>Challenge:</b> Autonomy of universities</p> <p><b>2. Issue:</b> Lack of support to teachers for implementing of inclusive education (teachers</p>

<b>General secondary education</b>	<b>Issues:</b> -Gaps in enrolment system -Too many students in classes -Transition from “special” to mainstream schools  <b>Challenge:</b> There are no significant challenges	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) <b>Challenges:</b> Additional budget. Beliefs of teachers on inclusive education.
<b>Secondary education -VET</b>	<b>Issues:</b> -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  <b>Challenges:</b> there are no significant challenges	<b>3. Issue:</b> Lack of inter-sectorial cooperation <b>Challenges:</b> 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:

<b>Level/type of institutions</b>	<b>Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team</b>
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

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

## Lessons learned:

4. The first meeting of Policy Team should be understood and organized more as a team building and process- oriented than tasks- oriented.
5. Team building has to be in the focus at the future meetings, as well.
6. Focal point has to have all information about all Project components, especially on choosing pilot schools.
7. Different members have different parts of information related to policy of inclusive education in Serbia and it is necessary to build the whole picture step by step.
8. Exchange of information and different point of views of members of the Policy Team will be very important for future policy decisions and work of each member on his/her work place.
9. Policy Team becomes a small Network for the future support and advocacy of inclusive education in Serbia.

## **First Meeting of the Policy Team in "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" - REPORT -**

Prepared by Ognen Spasovski, Focal Point

27.02.2014

## Introduction

The first meeting of the PolicyNet Team in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (the Beneficiary) was organized by the Focal Point, according to the general instructions given by the Project Officer with regard to PolicyNet meetings in the frame of the Joint EU/ CoE Project “Regional Support for Inclusive Education”.

**Date of the Meeting:** Thursday, 20 February 2014, 11.00 -16.30

**Place:** Skopje, Hotel Kontinental

**Participants:** 10 members of the Policy Team, and members of CoE Office in Sarajevo - Zorica Lesic and CoE Office and Belgrade - Marijana Todorovic, (Annex 1: List of participants)

**Moderator:** Ognen Spasovski – Focal Point of PolicyNet Team

### **Preparation of the Meeting**

The meeting was prepared in coordination of the Project Officers from the Office in Sarajevo and Belgrade, and the Focal Point of the Beneficiary Policy Team.

Draft Agenda of the Meeting (Annex 2) and ppt presentation were proposed by Zorica Lesic, Project officer in charge of Policy Component. They were translated by the Focal Point. The letters of invitation and draft Agenda were sent to the members of Policy Team. Logistical support was organized by CoE Office in Sarajevo using the services from a local agency.

### **Presentation of the Project and Policy Component**

At the beginning of the meeting, the Policy Team members introduced themselves, shortly explaining their positions, background and specific relations to and experience in inclusive education area.

Next, Ms. Marijana Todorovic presented the project “Regional support for inclusive education”. She explained the main project objectives, its five components, School Net and Teacher Net, and also gave basic instruction about the Project website, showing some details.

Ognen Spasovski, the Focal Point for the respected beneficiary, presented the Policy Component of the Project in more details, explaining the objectives of the component and the PolicyNet action framework. Additionally, presented was the summary of the issues and policy gaps prepared by the team of experts during the October Meeting in Belgrade. The roles of Policy Team and Focal Point were elaborated, as well as the structure and expected results of Regional PolicyNet.

### **Discussion, Questions and Comments of Participants**

In the next session, discussion was raised on the issues and challenges of practicing Inclusive education in the educational context in the Beneficiary:

The situation where there are number of children (and people in general) who haven't basic documents for identification. This is obstacle for enrolling those children in the school. Disputants appeal for urgent solving of this problem.

It was discussed that there is collision between education-related laws prepared by different ministries. Understatements in the laws are partial factor for the previous issue, too.

Related to previous issue is the following: there is no educational program and opportunity for education for children who are 10 or older and have not enrolled or haven't finished first grade.

Emphasized was the need pre-school education to be involved in the project, due to its significance for further education of the children and their adaptation to school-related obligations and tasks, as one of the crucial factors for underachievement and dropping-out.

Teachers' training was discussed in dept. Participants consider that pre-service and in-service training in inclusive education is insufficient. Regarding this issue, a dilemma appears: whether Inclusive education to be thought as one subject, or to be spread through all the curricula. One of the participants shared the results of a research showing that almost 90% of the teachers declare that they need additional training for work with children who need additional support in learning.

University programs for pre-school teachers training don't fit the desired standards, they differ across universities.

Another issue was the cooperation between teachers and support staff (pedagogues, psychologists, special educators). Participants expressed an opinion that there is great space for improvement with regard to this cooperation.

Few members discussed the issue with the external evaluation of children with special educational needs due to disabilities, seeing it as inappropriate and stressful for those children.

It was also mentioned that similar activities are present in the frames of few other projects which are realized in the country. The members emphasized the need for harmonization of the activities with such similar projects.

Participants meant that for Policy Net it will be fruitful if they could visit pilot schools and to discuss with them the main issues and challenges. They stressed the need to cooperate with the schools in implementation of prospected action plans.

To avoid possibility conclusions from previous project meeting to affect the discussion in this team, conclusions from the first PolicyNet team Serbia meeting and from the Workshop Policy Report produced during the Regional Conference in Tirana in November 2014, were presented after this session of discussion and before forming the sub-groups and defining issues and challenges according to the level of education. Anyway, after the presentation of these conclusions, members further discussed these issues with regard to their applicability for the context in the Beneficiary.

### Outputs of the Meeting

In the final session, members of the PolicyNet team were divided in three groups according to the level of education: primary, general secondary and VET. Within the sub-groups, they discussed the main issues and challenges related to the respected level of education.

Finally, every group proposed at least three priority issues and challenges for every level, simultaneously discussing which issues are cross-cutting for the different levels.

Based on member's proposals, results are as follows:

<b>Level/type of institutions</b>	<b>Issues by level/type of institutions</b>	<b>Cross-cutting issues and challenges</b>
<b>Primary education</b>	<p><b>Issue:</b> Low level of pre-school enrollment of children</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Different Ministries are responsible for pre-school education and elementary education, having pre-school under MTSP: How to mount the pre-school education among the priorities?</p>	<p><b>Issue:</b> Teachers' pre-service and in-service education- with focus on inclusive education</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> In-appropriate university teacher preparation curricula; Low level of cooperation between universities, as well between universities and</p>

	<p><b>Issue:</b> Enrollment of children without documents for personal identification is not possible</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Bridging legislation gaps and procedures which result with “phantom” children</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> Low level of awareness about the inclusive education in all school sub-structures</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> To include the issue of Inclusiveness in the School Annual Program, and, to implement the “hidden” curriculum promoting values, respect and school climate;</p>	<p>MOES/BDE - in developing improved pre-service and in-service training programs; Budget restrictions; Dilemma: Inclusive education to be thought as a subject, or to be spread through all the curricula</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> The role of support expert staff: the expertise of the psychologists, pedagogues and special educator is not appropriately benefited in the classroom</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Rethinking on the role and expectances from the support expert staff and reform of their professional role in the school</p>
<p><b>General secondary education</b></p>	<p><b>Issue:</b> Low level of cooperation between school-relevant stakeholders toward improving conditions for effective and inclusive educational practice</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Capacity building of the school management in order to provide a cooperation between the school and the parents, community, NGOs, institutions</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> Sharing experiences between schools, as a system of mutual support</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> To provide mechanisms of cooperation between schools, specially remote ones, building a “experience-and-support platform”</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> Motivating teachers and school staff for professional development</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Inefficient system of teacher promotion and career development</p>	<p><b>Issue:</b> School leaving and drop-out;</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> How to improve prevention (from school leaving and dropping-out) through building teachers’ sensitivity to relevant early indicators</p> <p><b>Related-issue:</b> Transition of the pupils in higher levels of education: 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade elementary, as well from elementary to secondary</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Overcoming the differences in the models of class teaching and subject teaching (and teachers), and sensitization of subject teachers for specifics of the transitions and typical students’ needs and reactions</p>

<b>Secondary education -VET</b>	<p><b>Issues:</b> Professional follow-up of the students from VET schools</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> How to follow-up the students with aim to get a feed-back and to create a database for further guidance</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> Professional orientation of the students</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> How to develop school-based system for continuous professional guidance of the students</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> Lack of opportunity for vocational (pre)qualification</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Developing efficient system with shorter VET courses tailored by the needs of the market and of the potential users</p>	<p><b>Issue:</b> Lack of teachers in minority languages</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Stimulating university programs in minority languages, budget allocations</p>
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Members of the Policy Team also discussed some other issues and challenges: Lack of personal teaching assistants; violence toward members of vulnerable communities, especially Romani subgroup called Chergari; need for support of parents in recognizing the best interest of their children; the issue with families which migrate and are not in the place of their permanent residence, so children cannot attend a school; the need Life Skills Education program to be fully and substantially implemented; the consequences of juvenile marriages; problems with transportation of children from remote regions in the country (and specially in wintertime); insufficient training of teachers to prepare and develop Individualized Educational Plan for the children with special educational needs.

### Cross- beneficiary Teams:

<b>Level/type of institutions</b>	<b>Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team</b>
Primary education	1. Florina Shehu 2. Gordana Nestorovska 3. Dušan Tomšić
General secondary education	1. Biljana Sajkovska 2. Jane Nikolovski 3. Vera Kondić
Secondary education –VET	1. Elizabeta Jovanovska 2. Žaneta Čonteva

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

### Conclusions of the Meeting

Objectives of the Meeting are achieved: Members of the Policy Team understood the role and goals of the Team and the Project.

Members for the Cross-beneficiary Teams are define, as well issues and challenges regarding the various levels of education are discussed and defined.

The working atmosphere at the meeting was very positive and constructive.

## First Meeting of the Policy Team in Kosovo\*<sup>6</sup>

### *-REPORT-*

Prepared by: Blerim Saqipi, Focal Point for Kosovo\*

28.02.2014

### Introduction

**Date and Place of the Meeting:** 28 February 2014, Lesna Center, Prishtina

**Participants:** 7 participants from the PolicyNet group (Mr. Defrim Rifaj and Igballe Cakaj were not present; Eljona Elmazi and Delina Cici from the CoE project and Blerim Saqipi as the focal point.

**Moderator:** Blerim Saqipi, Focal point

### Preparation of the Meeting

The agenda for the meeting was proposed by the CoE project and was discussed with the local focal point before being finalized. The invitations were sent by email directly by CoE staff in Tirana while local focal point has made additional contacts to confirm the attendance. The logistical arrangements were coordinated by the CoE staff in Tirana. The necessary arrangements were made that the meeting was chaired by Mrs. Drita Kadriu, the Steering Board member of the project from Kosovo\*.

### Presentation of the Project and Policy Component

The presentation of the project was made by Eljona Elmazi by describing the main idea behind the project, the partnership as well as the detailed activities to date and the projected activities for the upcoming months of the project implementation. The presentation was

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<sup>6</sup> 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

followed by a brief questions and answer session to clarify the details of the project implementation.

Following the presentation of the project, Kosovo\* focal point presented the scope of work and rationale behind the PolicyNet as well as the role of the local focal point. In addition, a summary of the main outcomes of the expert meeting in Belgrade in October 2013 and the regional conference in Tirana in November 2013 were presented as well.

A small question and answer session was allowed after this presented on the clarification issues around the role of the PolicyNet. This was followed a more substantial session on discussions around the Kosovo\* context, priorities and challenges in inclusive education.

### **Outputs of the Meeting**

*( 2-3 issues and challenges regarding of inclusive education of country by levels and types of institutions, cross-cutting issues and challenges)*

The discussions were held around the challenges and priorities of the Kosovo\* inclusive education context and the following were agreed by the Team as the key points and priorities for the Kosovo\* education context:

1. Promoting the inclusive education concept to lead to advanced understanding, as well as sharing of it by key players and practitioners;
2. Gaps in the legislation and the implementation of specific parts of the legislation;
3. Inter-sectorial cooperation including the coordination and coherence of the activities between the Ministry – Municipal Education Authorities – School level;
4. Teacher training – preparing pre-service teachers and supporting and developing the in-service ones.

In addition a number of issues were raised and discussed by the group:

- The sustainability of the project results may be further empowered by addressing the pre-school level education through project activities;
- Ensuring the links between the practice level and policy level; Kosovo\* has had substantial external support and legislation developed is in a good shape but requires practice level support;
- The support to teachers should be provided by ensuring that every teacher training program in future should have a compulsory module on inclusive education. School inspection experiences speak about the practices of teachers showing insensitive to working with students from different background and level.
- School management training programs should also have an inclusive education module as well.
- There has been a number of previous projects in inclusive education so it will be a challenge how to build on those projects;
- The new Kosovo\* Curriculum of 2011 provides for flexibility at school based curricula and this is a good momentum, however it is a critical point whether teachers are able to make use of the autonomy in the right way.

- VET sector is faced with a specific serious challenge in the lack of textbooks; VET teachers lack pedagogical background training though teachers have had some methodological in-service development, in last years through different projects. The difficulty in VET sector is in ensuring the practical side of the training despite the strategic plans in place for that to happen.

#### **Cross- beneficiary Teams:**

<b>Level/type of institutions</b>	<b>Names of Members Cross-beneficiary Team</b>
Primary education	1. Drita Kadriu 2. Artan Billaca 3. Lulavere Behluli
General secondary education	1. Besa Zagragja 2. Igballe Cakaj 3. Refik Azemi
Secondary education –VET	1. Beke Mulliqi 2. Avdurrahman Simnica 3. Defrim Rifaj

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

#### **Conclusions of the Meeting**

The participants of the meeting were very satisfied for the opportunity to meet as a team, the opportunity to know more about the project overall, the opportunity to understand their role as a PolicyTeam member.

#### **Lessons learned**

Future PolicyNet meetings should be organized related to more substantial elements following this introductory meeting. The studying of relevant legislation and practices should be made integral part of the agenda for future meetings.

The PolicyNet meetings should also be linked with other activities in the project such as activities of school net and teacher net so that the good practices from the ground will inform the work of the PolicyNet.