

“Regional Support for Inclusive Education”

2nd Annual Conference in South East Europe

“INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRACTICE”

Patterns, tools and actions

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Session 4 „Inclusive Education in the region: the future“

Lulavere Behluli, Kosovo*¹

Panel discussion: Wednesday 29 October, from 14:30 to 15:30

Duration: 15 minutes

What are the benefits of regional approach in inclusive education to your Ministry?

Inclusive education, as a first step towards social inclusion, is beneficial for the entire society. Last century experience gave a valuable lesson to our societies that segregation of some students in special schools have negative impact in their future lives, as well as in the society in general.

In many educational systems of different countries, inclusion has now become a reality; however, it is followed by many difficulties. However, also countries of the region are being challenged in this regard, but they are putting efforts towards the realization of the inclusive education concept.

Inclusion as an educational philosophy is relatively new in Kosovo as a concept and as a practice. This concept and practice was first introduced in Kosovo after 1999, along with other educational reforms. Therefore, cooperation and sharing of experiences enabled through involvement of various stakeholder of central, local and school levels, with countries of the region through regional project "Regional Support for Inclusive Education" helps us to overcome or mitigate challenges throughout this process, which requires not simply an adjustment of the education system but its thorough overhaul and comprehensive reform of the school itself, in order to include a variety of students and that teaching and learning processes are provided based on this diversity. Considering that all countries in the region have many similarities such as economic and cultural level and education systems, therefore, cooperation in this field increases the possibility that this transformation process of our systems is more soft and successful. Regional cooperation is also a good opportunity to reflect and see what the similarities, differences and where are potential improvements needed, since this process leaves room for reflection and improvement.

* 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.

How can your Ministry support the regional efforts in inclusive education?

In Kosovo, education system is undergoing a profound reform aiming to respond to the changes taking place at local and global scale as a result of globalization processes. Following the contemporary developments in the field of education, inclusion principle is part of all education policies and nowadays the entire education system is making efforts to adapt to these changes. In order to implement the inclusive education ,as a philosophy, is required many supportive mechanisms that assist educational institutions to ensure inclusion.

In this light, Kosovo has undertaken positive steps regarding inclusive education in order to support the educational institutions. It is in our interest to share our experiences in this regard, such as: the new curriculum of Kosovo that includes the principle of inclusion, standards for child friendly schools, teachers' capacity building for inclusive education, mechanisms that support normal schools etc. These cooperation experiences can go down from the policy level to other levels of regional cooperation such as networking resource centres, exchange of information on best practices of preschool institutions and inclusive schools. Sharing of experiences through various projects and regional cooperation enables us to discuss and share positive models between countries of the region and as such it helps overcome some difficulties, and in establishing acceptable and applicable models to our contexts.