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CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES
OF INCLUSIVE
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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Ensuring conditions for a quality education for all children is a key goal that is supposed to be achieved within the process of reforming the education system. Efforts to ensure both equality and quality in education have become fully made through the idea of inclusive education. The importance of this concept has also been confirmed by the fact that inclusive education in many countries represents a key indicator of the quality, efficiency and humanity of their education systems. Experiences so far in the application of inclusive education have been very valuable, because they point out some important elements of this process and provide guidelines regarding the manner in which those necessary changes should take place. It is important to highlight that it is impossible to develop one unique inclusive model that could be applied in various countries with the same level of success, but that adequate solutions can be only achieved by analyzing specific contextual conditions, taking into consideration the specificities of each social and cultural environment and the existing conditions of education systems and schools. In order for this idea to be actually implemented, it is important that decisions regarding public policies be based on insights obtained through careful research of various problems in the field of inclusive education. Those insights can be very significant both for decision-makers and practitioners in considering the process and results of the implementation of inclusive education as well as in getting ideas for further development of inclusive practices in educational institutions. It is possible to single out two approaches to the research and perception of inclusive education based on the different interests of researchers. The first approach is about searching for practical solutions to certain problems of inclusive education (a partial reform of the education system and schools), while the other approach perceives inclusion as a cultural policy that requires complete reconstruction of society and a new way of thinking.

Research in this field shows that, in spite of great efforts and endeavours to improve this idea, the inclusive education implementation process in most countries develops slowly and with difficulties. There are still many unresolved issues and dilemmas related to this process: (a) In what way is inclusive education related to key challenges in education such as quality, failing classes, lack of resources, rigidity of school programmes? (b) Is inclusive education the right solution for all children with developmental disabilities? (c) Is there is a best solution for the successful application of an inclusive programme and is there a clear plan to be followed? (d) Is the introduction of inclusive education possible in all countries?

The results show that official education policies in this field haven been completely implemented in practice and that existing differences can be explained by the existence of numerous barriers and challenges relating to the practical application of planned changes. Overcoming existing problems has not yet been fully solved, even in countries that have a long tradition of inclusive education and good economic conditions for its implementation, and it is clear that challenges and problems which developing countries encounter, having less experience in this field and unfavourable economic conditions, are bigger and more complicated.

Education policies in the field of inclusive education can be successfully implemented in practice if the key actors in this process (principals, teachers, students, and parents), strongly support planned changes and express a positive attitude towards them. Research shows that the resistance and negative attitudes of teachers and other stakeholders towards the inclusion of children from marginalized groups in regular schools lead to numerous problems in the implementation of inclusive education. It is therefore highlighted that changing attitudes is one of the challenges and key conditions for the success of this process. Changing and overcoming negative attitudes towards inclusive education is progressing very slowly and with difficulty, and that is why many other planned activities in this field encounter difficulties in the process of realization.

The problems in the application of inclusive education to a great extent relate to teachers, as key actors in this process. Research shows that the successful development of inclusive practice is particularly obstructed by teachers' negative self-assessment of their professional competency for the realization of inclusive education, as well as a lack of adequate professional training and expert support in working with students who need additional support. These problems cause teachers who work in inclusive contexts to become overwhelmed and stressed, which additionally affects their work negatively. Modern educational approaches show the importance of the new role of teachers in establishing the required conditions for encouraging the individual development of children and recognizing their individual abilities, affinities, family and cultural heritage. Therefore, adequate professional training of teachers for working in inclusive education, the implementation of innovative approaches in work, and cooperation with parents has been highlighted as one of the most important goals in the process of adapting education to meet the abilities and needs of all children.

Research indicates that, apart from the conditions of education systems, the achievement of inclusive education is hindered by numerous barriers, including social and local community factors, as well as the those relating to children who need additional support and their families. Therefore in considering key challenges and perspectives of inclusive education, barriers and problems should not only be tackled within the education system, but also in connection with other segments of society, such as the family, local community, as well as healthcare and social security.

A collection of papers "Challenges and Perspectives of Inclusive Education" contains thirteen papers by authors who are, by their thematic orientation, focused on elaborating on numerous issues significant for inclusive education. This book aims to examine current problems in inclusive education from the standpoint of their significance for the improvement of public policies and the practice of inclusive education. No theoretical and stylistic harmonization was required from authors of the articles. They were expected to show the results of their own theoretical and empirical research, thus making them accessible to both an academic audience and the wider public, in the hope that the results of such scientific research will be implemented to a greater extent in educational practice.

This collection of papers addresses certain questions of inclusive education, but it does not give a comprehensive account of all aspects of inclusive education. We thought that it was important to publish and present in a single collection papers by authors who are dedicated to examining inclusive education from various perspectives. Papers contain relevant information about the current conditions of inclusive education in Serbia; dominant discourses of inclusive education within legal frameworks of preschool education in Serbia; the connection between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their implicit pedagogies; attitudes of school counsellors towards the education of students with special needs; preschool teachers' competences for working in inclusive education; preschool teachers' opinions about the benefits of professional development in improving competences in the field of inclusive education; possibilities for inclusion of socially marginalized individuals and groups in an institutional environment and the local community in the context of education for human rights; institutional foundations for the inclusion of Roma people in the education system in Serbia and Croatia; frequency of symptoms of emotional and behavioural problems of older primary school students, with an analysis of gender differences, in the presence of symptoms and students' perception and assessment of the influence of difficulties on their own functioning; inclusive support in preventing bullying in the Italian education system; higher education programmes for teacher training in Montenegro and problems inhibiting improvements in inclusive education in music schools, with suggested solutions for their solution ; characteristics of career development for various types of teacher in regular and special education systems.

The paper authored by Tinde Kovač-Cerović, Dragica Pavlović-Babić, Tijana Jokić, Olja Jovanović and Vitomir Jovanović *First comprehensive monitoring of inclusive education in Serbia: selected findings,* presents selected findings of the first comprehensive evaluation of inclusive education in Serbia, five years after its systemic introduction. This evaluation is based on indicators defined by the Framework for monitoring inclusive education in Serbia. The research was conducted

on a representative sample of 28 schools, and it encompassed 1537 students, 794 parents and 742 teachers. The structure of the framework, which implies predefined indicators and criteria, as well as the assessment of that same indicator by various informants, enabled the identification of the areas which are strong points in our education system, as well as areas that require immediate system development. The results of the monitoring constitute a reliable basis for improving the policy and practice of inclusive education in Serbia.

In the paper *Inclusiveness of preschool education within education policies documents of the Republic of Serbia*, Lidija Miškeljin deals with an analysis of relevant legislative documents with the aim of showing that theoretical starting points interwoven with public policies discourse perceive a child differently, as well as inclusion itself thus bearing different implications for the practice of preschool education. A key question from which the author starts her analysis of the legislative framework is: What are the dominant discourses in legislative solutions for preschool education in Serbia and what kind of construction of inclusion do they offer? This paper uses one method of theoretical analysis implementing the technique of content analysis through the following dimensions: accessibility, employees, monitoring and evaluation, and management and financing. Based on the given criteria and categories we can observe that: children's rights remain at the level of political proclamation because they are not operationalized through the participation of children in education guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child; that reducing inclusion to a separate single consideration (such as the scope of children) becomes its own goal and displays particularity in understanding and recognition of inclusion; and that the concept of inclusion itself in documents of public policy is not based on a clear ideology because of existing terminological inconsistencies.

The results of the research aimed at examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education were presented and analyzed by Milja Vujačić, Rajka Djević and Nikoleta Gutvajn in their paper *An examination of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education*. What distinguishes this research from similar studies in Serbia is its examination of the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their implicit pedagogies. The authors offer an account of key results of related research published both in our country and worldwide and recommend how to create further research on teachers' attitudes, which would lead to a more comprehensive and detailed consideration of this important variable, on which the quality of application of inclusive education depends to a great extent. A basic conclusion of this research is that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are moderately positive. The research has shown that there is a connection between teachers' implicit pedagogies and their attitudes towards inclusion, that is, the closer teachers' implicit pedagogies are to the contemporary education paradigm the more positive their attitudes towards inclusion are.

In the paper *How students with special needs should be educated,* Janez Drobnič shows that special schools can be seen as an opportunity to ensure the right to education for students with special needs, while on the other hand, they imply inequality in education because of students' exclusion from conventional learning environments provided to other students. Considering the fact that school counsellors' task is to help the integration of students with special needs, the

author conducted research on school counsellors' attitudes towards the education of students with special needs, in particular as to where such education should take place. One hundred and one school counsellors from primary, secondary, and special schools in Slovenia were included in the quantitative study. The prevailing opinion of counsellors in schools shows that they prefer the partial model of inclusive education, as they support all students – including those with special needs – being offered education in ordinary schools and classrooms, with the exception of students with learning difficulties. This suggests that we should seek new solutions for modern schools, in particular the education of all teachers for inclusive teaching in a classroom where all students are allowed to be different and individual, rather than being dealt with in two categories: students with special needs and others. This also means that we should revise education curricula and training for all teachers.

In the paper *Attitude towards inclusion: an important factor in implementing inclusive education,* Vanja Riccarda Kiswarday and Tina Štemberger focused on preschool teachers' inclusive competences. The research, in which 124 preschool teachers were included, aims to establish how they value and assess their competences for inclusion, whereby competences are understood on three levels: attitude, knowledge, and skills. The authors also checked whether preschool teachers with longer work experience and those who had attended in-service training for inclusive settings assessed their inclusive competences higher than others with less experience did. The survey results indicate that preschool teachers see themselves quite competent for work in inclusive settings – they rated themselves high in all three dimensions of inclusive competences. It turned out that there are differences in the assessment of skills and knowledge: teachers with 10 - 20 years of service rated these dimensions higher, but no difference could be noticed between teachers in relation to in-service training for inclusive settings.

In the paper *Preschool teachers' perception of professional training contribution to the development of competences in the field of inclusive education*, Isidora Korać presented a segment of research whose goal was to examine teachers' opinions about the contribution of professional development in developing competencies in the field of inclusive education. The research was based on a questionnaire answered by a sample of 150 preschool teachers employed at preschool institutions in several towns in Serbia. The findings of the research show that the current concept of professional development accentuates the adoption of *ready-made decontextualized* knowledge, development of preschool teachers' competencies as individuals, without connecting individual and organizational changes that inclusion initiates. The author concludes that if we want for the system of professional development to contribute to obtaining preschool teachers' professional competencies for application of the current model of inclusive education, it is necessary to enable their greater participation and reflective practice via programmes for professional development. Inclusion is a change and a challenge for organizations in which various protagonists participate, who are supposed to interconnect from their various positions, roles and responsibilities, aiming for horizontal learning and organized action. Future programmes for professional development

in the field of inclusive education should be directed at the following areas: (a) working with gifted children (b) adapting work organization in preschool institutions in order to meet the needs of children who need additional support, (c) assessment and revision of individual education plans and (d) teamwork and cooperation in preschool institutions.

In the work *Inclusion of socially marginalized individuals in the light of human rights education*, Olivera Gajić, Milica Andevski, Spomenka Budić and Biljana Lungulov consider possibilities for inclusion of socially marginalized individuals and groups in an institutional framework and a local community in the context of human rights education. The authors consider the context of social inclusion and human rights education in order to collect qualitative indicators concerning the existing knowledge, interest, and recognition of social inclusion and human rights with the purpose of shedding light on this problem by protagonists of the education process, as well as the wider community, which forms the basis of strategic decisions and guidelines of education in a democratic society. Finally, the authors conclude that a well organized support network for workers in this area, who are required to ensure conditions for the fulfilment of human rights on the principles of accessibility, participation and equality.

Studying the Roma minority, which is one of the most economically and socially deprived minorities in Serbia and Croatia, is the focus of the paper *Inclusion of the Roma in Croatia and Serbia: the institutional framework and its implementation,* whose authors are Nikola Baketa and Dragana Gundogan. The goal of this paper is to show the institutional foundations for including the Roma people in the education system, as well as the way in which institutional foundations changed in the process of approximation to the European Union. On the basis of these insights it can be established that, despite the legal framework, there is a high level of exclusion in the education system so that this approach leads to the more difficult advancement of the Roma people within it dropping out, or deciding not to continue education, which in turn perpetuates the problem of education and the social position of the Roma people. The methodological approach of the authors included analysis of legislative documents and reports, as well as that of available statistical data about the education of the Roma minority.

In the paper *The symptoms of emotional and behavioral problems in older primary school students*, Branislava Popović-Ćitić and Lidija Bukvić have shown the results of the research on the frequency of emotional and behavioural symptoms in primary school students, with analysis of gender differences in the presence of symptoms and assessment of students' perception about the influence of difficulties on their own functioning. The data was obtained by means of a Strengths and difficulties questionnaire, a version for self-assessment of adolescents aged 11 to 16 with an addition about the influence of symptoms, on a sample of 630 students from 5 secondary schools in Belgrade. The obtained results were discussed in the context of considering the need for additional support, which, within an inclusive education system, would be provided for students with difficulties in their emotional and social development.

In the paper *Bullying and strategies for confronting the phenomenon in Italian schools,* Ignazia Bartholini starts with a review of literature about bullying, published since the 1970s to date. On the bases of the outcomes of some studies previously conducted, she aims to explain how the phenomenon of bullying has accompanied the raising of the period of mandatory school. Through the research of eminent scholars, she argues that the crisis of values and the loss of perspective for the future of teenagers increase the possibility of violent relationships among peers in school, where they spend much of their time. An interpretative model on bullying is therefore highlighted, using the "dramaturgic metaphor" of Goffman and focusing the role of viewer/witness (often the same classmates) in breaking the violent triangle where the perpetrator and victim are similarly victims of the same cruel play. Finally she describes the strategies devised by the Ministry of Education which are currently applied in schools in the Italian peninsula from the perspective of preventive and rehabilitative education, on potential protagonists – victim and bully – on spectators viewers – on all those adolescents who just look at the "violent drama" for fun or for weakness, without interrupting it and preventing a recurrence. In the light of empirical evidences, it is suggested that such programs accompanied by informal practices should be encouraged. The author suggests that after Italy another of the European nations that has invested very much in terms of support for inclusion and prevention for confronting the problem of bullying at school can be considered.

On the basis of recent structural and functional changes in the Montenegrin education system, with a special focus on the concept of inclusion, in her paper *The concept of inclusive education in the master's degree curriculum in Montenegro,* Tatjana Novović analyzes high school programmes for teacher training in Montenegro. Almost twenty years since the inclusive concept was implemented in the Montenegrin education system, with substantial changes in teaching practice and education legislation, the problem of vertical discontinuity in the system is still significant, i.e. there is a lack of coherence and compatibility between primary, secondary and tertiary education. The lack of a continual exchange of practical experiences and obtained knowledge about the benefits and marked challenges among all systemic institutional participants, creating a fluid field of inclusive context in Montenegro, induces discontinuity and actualises "old" questions about the purpose and functionality of previous courses of development of this concept in all education segments.

In her paper *Inclusive education of visually impaired students in music schools in Montenegro*, Vedrana Marković presents problems that complicate the improvement of inclusive education at music schools and offers some solutions. Musically talented children with visual impairment should be identified in time and have their music potential developed, i.e. they should be educated in music schools. It is often the case that blind and partially sighted children with musical talent acquire their musical education outside institutions, by private means, whereby they only dedicate themselves to learning how to play a selected instrument, but not to other courses which are envisaged in the elementary music school (solfeggio, music theory, choral singing, orchestra). This way of learning makes their music education incomplete. In addition to the primary goal – achieving a complete music education - there are numerous positive influences that happen through education in a music school.

The text written by Milica Marušić *The career cycle of teachers according to their motives of professional choice: a comparison of general and special schools*, is focused on the consideration of three groups of teachers, based on the dominant motives of their professional choice: realists, idealists and opportunists, with the aim of comparing characteristics of career development of those groups of teachers in regular and special education system. Results obtained by the use of a questionnaire (N=209) show that teacher *idealists* displayed the lowest level of career frustration, out of a total sample. It was concluded that the career development of *idealists*, *opportunists* and *realists* differ depending on the context in which they work: as regular school teachers, *opportunists* are more prone to withdrawal, while at special schools there is a stronger career frustration.

At the end of this foreword we would like to stress that our task was facilitated to a great extent by the readiness of all the authors to fulfill the requirements of the editor both in terms of the scope and structure of the papers. We hope that our gratitude will be a sufficient reward for the efforts they invested. We would like to thank the consulting editors, our distinguished colleagues Professor Nikolay M. Borytko, Professor Susana Padeliadu and Professor Marija Kavkler, whose suggestions significantly influenced the improved quality of the book. We owe a debt of gratitude to Milan Stančić, PhD, who patiently and dedicatedly helped us during all stages of preparation of this collection of papers. We are equally grateful to Rajka Djević, PhD, for her help and constructive suggestions, which significantly contributed to the quality of this collection of papers. We are also grateful to Mladen Radulović, MA, Branko Cvetić and Vlada Polić for their patience, professionalism and friendly understanding during the preparation of this manuscript.

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FIRST COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING
OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SERBIA:
SELECTED FINDINGS

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Inclusive education has become a key area of education reform in Serbia since 2009, introduced by the new Law on the Foundations of the Education System (Official Gazette RS, 72/2009). The shift towards inclusive education was motivated by international conventions to which Serbia is a signatory[2], development strategies in Serbia that underlined the need for educational inclusion[3], research conducted in the field of education highlighting problems in equity and quality of education[4] and more than 10 years of experience in piloting inclusive education through projects dealing with inclusion of students from vulnerable groups in education[5] (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2014).

In 2010 and 2013 other legislative documents[6,7] regulating different aspects and levels of education were introduced, additionally strengthened the implementation of

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2 Salamanca Statement, 1994; The Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005; UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006; etc.

3 Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003; The Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia, 2006; Action Plans for Education, Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005 etc.

4 Open Society Foundation research (2010) indicates that before legislative changes in 2009, 30% Roma students were enrolled in special schools, and 38% of Roma students were enrolled in special classes within mainstream schools. Also, UNICEF reported (2007) that before the Decade of Roma more than 50% of Roma students were directed to special schools. Similar conclusions could be found in the study Advancing education of Roma in Serbia (-Cerović, 2007).

5 Index for Inclusion (2003-2009), Inclusive Education: from Practice to Policy (2005-2009), Roma Assistants (1999 onward), etc.

6 e.g. Law on Pre-School Education, *Official Gazette RS*, No. 18/2010; Law on Basic Education, *Official Gazette RS*, No.55/2013; Law on Secondary Education, *Official Gazette RS*, No. 55/2013; Law on Adult Education, *Official Gazette RS*, No. 55/2013.

7 e.g. Rulebook on Additional Educational, Social and Healthcare Support to Child and Student, *Official Gazette RS*, No. 63/2010; Rulebook on Closer Instructions for Determining the Right to Individual Education Plan, *Official Gazette RS*, No. 76/2010; Rulebook on the Program of Training for the Pedagogical Assistant, *Official Gazette RS*, No. 11/2010.

inclusive education, and rounding up a comprehensive list of inclusive policies. The most important of these policies focused on prohibition of discrimination and segregation in the education system; changes in school enrolment policy and the policy of support provision; introduction of individual education plans (IEP) and individualization of instruction; employment of Roma Pedagogical Assistants; changes in assessment and evaluation policy; new requirements for the teaching profession; introduction of inclusive education expert teams (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2014). The new Strategy for Education Development in Serbia until 2020 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 107/2012) developed in 2012, also endorsed equity and quality of education as the major strategic orientation. Equity of education is seen in several documents as the way schools actually provide quality education (Kovač-Cerović & Levkov, 2002; UNICEF, 2007; Kovač-Cerović et al., 2013).

Given the abundance of policy actions instigated in the framework of the inclusive education reform, a wide space opened for research and evaluation in the field, which attracted and still attracts many researchers. An overview of inclusive education research in Serbia conducted after 2009 shows, however, fragmentation and inconsistency in respect of research topics, methodology, sampling, theoretical and methodological frameworks (Baucal et al., 2014; Friedman et al., 2015), thus hampering a comprehensive understanding of the state of practice of IE in Serbia. Some research studies address the question of what prerequisites for inclusive education implementation have (not) been set (e.g. MPN, 2012; Kostović et al., 2011; Jeremić et al., 2012; Stefanović et al., 2013) while others refer to particular drivers of change of inclusive culture in school (e.g. personal experience with students who need additional support – Jovanović, 2009; participation in inclusive education projects – Djević, 2009; inclusive school climate – Meseldžija, 2012) or barriers to change (lack of competences, knowledge and information about inclusive education as well as on potential benefits of inclusive education – Jovanović, 2009; Rajović & Jovanović, 2010; Kolić, 2012; the perception that difficulties in reaching educational goals are linked to the child alone – Djević, 2009; teacher initial education – Macura-Milovanović et al., 2010; Macura-Milovanović et al., 2011; problems in IEP development and implementation – Jeremić, 2012; lack of support at municipal level, transition to higher level of primary education, lack of individualized subject teaching– Jovanović, 2013), a third group of studies focuses on attitudes and beliefs (Arsenović-Pavlović et al., 2008; Jovanović, 2009; Djević, 2009; Kostović et al., 2011; Kolić, 2012; Meseldžija, 2012; Stefanović et al., 2013; Macura-Milovanović & Peček, 2012; Peček et al., 2014), while there is also research of the effects of particular inclusive education innovations as the introduction of Pedagogical Assistants (Dauite et al, 2013), the Support Network for Inclusive Education (Pavlović Babić, Jovanović, 2015) or nation-wide teacher training in inclusive education (Petrović et al., 2012; Jovanović & Čekić-Marković, 2014). Among the studies reviewed, findings on processes and outcomes of inclusive education

implementation were lacking the most (Baucal et al., 2014). Taking into consideration, that the preparations for and implementation of inclusive education have been going on for almost 15 years, this lack of monitoring that is conceptually, institutionally and legally set seems inexcusable (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2014).

This gap has been overcome by a new Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education in Serbia (MFIES) developed by the Institute for Psychology and supported by Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU), Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (MoESTD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Open Society Foundation (OSF).

MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SERBIA

In addition to the above-mentioned research, the development of MFIES and its structure was inspired by a comparative analysis of systems for monitoring the quality of inclusive education used in the Netherlands, UK (Wales and Scotland), Australia (Victoria State), and New Zealand (Rajović et al., 2014).

MFIES addresses all organizational and governance levels of the educational system (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2014; Jovanović et al., 2014; Pavlović-Babić et al., 2014). Different parts of the MFIES addressing different levels can be applied together or separately. Also, for each level input, process and output indicators have been developed. This distinction allows monitoring of the dynamics of inclusive education implementation, understanding possible causal, temporal or procedural relationships between different aspects of implementation (input -> process -> output). In this way, the MFIES helps in developing a common understanding of expected effects in different phases of inclusive education implementation, measuring the impact of inclusive education and drawing conclusions on positive and negative changes in different aspects of the educational system at different times periods during implementation (e.g. during the beginning years the focus is more on monitoring inputs and part of the processes, later on the focus is on all processes and outcomes). The MFIES also uses a multi-perspective approach by involving various parties involved in the education system (students, parents, teachers, principals, councilors, LSG officials, ministry staff, etc.) to participate as respondents. Besides evaluating, the MFIES also models the future practice of IE by communicating a view on how the developed system should look, and can serve as a useful resource and guide for research studies as well (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2014).

The MFIES at school level incorporates three areas of monitoring and evaluation. These are: (a) Characteristics of the education process; (b) School ethos; (c) Support to education inclusiveness. The indicators are nested within the areas as presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Areas and Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation at School Level

Areas of monitoring and evaluation at school level		
Characteristics of the education process	School ethos	Support to education inclusiveness
A1. Enrolment policy and procedures	B1. Safety of school environment	C1. Physical and material support
A2. Teaching/learning quality of lessons delivered	B2. Antidiscrimination	C2. Remedial and supplementary teaching
A3. School records of achievements and progress of students	B3. Engagement of students in school life	C3. Development and implementation of IEPs
A4. High expectations of students and student's motivation	B4. Engagement of parents and support to parents	C4. Pedagogical assistants
A5. Quality of transition	B5. School management	C5. Support to teachers
A6. Absenteeism	B6. School proactivity	C6. Cooperation of school and other institutions
A7. Social integration, satisfaction and students' wellbeing	B7. Inclusive school policy	C7. Finances

The first monitoring of inclusive education using MFIES was conducted during the 2014/15 academic year and this paper presents the first results.

METHODOLOGY OF THE FIRST MONITORING

In this chapter a brief description of the development of instruments will be given as well as description of the research methodology.

Description of the process of creating instruments. The research team had developed indicators for each area of monitoring, which were fine-tuned through consultations with stakeholders. This was followed by creating items for every indicator at school level, and adjusting them for different respondents (students, parents, teachers, pedagogical assistants and principals) as well as for different kinds of instrument (assessment scales, checklists, observation protocols). Subsequently, cognitive interviews were conducted with students and parents from vulnerable groups in order to improve the instruments. In total, 54 instruments were developed, from which 20 were selected for the purpose of assessing psychometric properties in a pilot study.

Pilot testing. Pilot testing was conducted on a sample of 347 students (26.5% of them from vulnerable groups), 192 parents and 165 class and subject teachers. All 20 instruments, except the instruments for students of lower grades, proved to have satisfactory internal consistency (α varies from 0.7 to 0.9), adequate Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (from 0.6 to 0.9) and a satisfactory measure of homogeneity (Momirovic's H2) (that varies from 0,65 to 0,95 across instruments). The

instruments for younger students were not used in the main study. Criterion validity was checked through a comparison of schools with highest and lowest scores of students' wellbeing perceived by students. This gave evidence that criterion validity is high.

Sample. The sample of the schools was formed through combining quota and stratified sample in accordance with the characteristics of municipalities in which the schools are located. Municipalities were clustered in 5 clusters according to the characteristics relevant for the implementation of inclusive education (development index, percentage of Roma population, school network and percentage of people younger than 17, assuming that the percentage of children with disabilities is similar in all municipalities) in order to monitor the out-of-school factors of inclusive education. Schools in each cluster were grouped into 3 strata according to size of school and number of students from vulnerable groups. Then, schools were randomly selected from each stratum of every cluster. To ensure that segregated schools were not excluded from the sample, two schools with a high percentage of Roma students were added to the sample, based on experts' input. The sample structure is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Structure of the sample for the first monitoring of inclusive education using the MFIES

Cluster	Number of schools from cluster	Number of students	Number of parents	Number of teachers
1	6	357	189	176
2	3	180	91	89
3	8	345	187	172
4	3	171	95	79
5	8	484	232	225
Total	28	1537	794	741

Respondents in each school were selected according to a stratified random sample (grade, class, shift) and students from vulnerable groups and their parents were selected by quota sample (15% of all students and parents in each school). In the case of teachers, the sample reflects the proportion of subject teachers and class teachers in each school. The sample consisted of 1537 students (379 of them are students who need additional educational support), 610 parents and 741 teachers.

RESULTS

The framework places school at the centre of the analysis. This reinforces the point that inclusion should focus on increasing the capacity of local neighbourhood mainstream schools to support the participation and learning of an increasingly diverse range of

learners (Ainscow, 2001). Following the philosophy of inclusive education and formative assessment, the presentation of the findings is tuned to an individualized, strengths-based approach. We try to shed light on a unique set of strengths and challenges of inclusive education in Serbia.

Domains characterized as strengths or opportunities are those in which there is high consensus of respondents that the education system in Serbia demonstrates quality above expectations. These domains are: leadership and organizational structure, school policy concerning enrollment, individualized educational support and school ethos with dimensions of student's wellbeing and high expectations from the students.

Enrollment procedures. Since 2009, the Law on the Foundations of the Education System (Official Gazette RS, 72/2009) guarantees parents the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children regardless of the type or level of support needed. Findings suggest that schools are open for the enrollment of every student – the vast majority of schools (92 to 100%) follow legally prescribed procedures for student enrollment. Correspondingly, 96.5% of parents agree that a school enrolls every student, while only 1.7% report that they have heard about discrimination of students on enrollment.

Individualized educational support. One of the arguments often used against inclusive education is that it does not provide conditions for children who need additional support to make progress. Contrary to this, 89.2% of parents whose children receive education by IEP stated that they are satisfied with the progress of their child. Furthermore, the majority of parents (79.1% to 84.5% depending on the question) state that members of the IEP team have a highly developed individualized, strengths-based approach to education of their child.

Leadership and organizational structure. Implementation of inclusive education is often met with resistance by general educators. In this context, educational leaders continue to wrestle with concerns regarding institutional norms, resources and the capacity of educators to meet the needs of students requiring additional support (Crockett et al., 2012). Developing schools that provide wide and flexible systems of supports for students with variable and sometimes significant support needs is recognized as a complex and significant challenge within educational leadership (Theoharis, 2010). Results of our study show that 93.2% of teachers perceive that the school principle is actively engaged in the improvement and promotion of inclusive education. Additionally, teachers (96.4%) recognize school councillors as the most effective source of support in the field of inclusive education (e.g. cooperation with parents, development of individualized approach/IEPs).

School ethos. Students' wellbeing can be defined as a dynamic concept that refers to the fit between contextual factors, as well as the personal needs and expectations of students (e.g. Van Petegem, 2008). The wellbeing of students increases when students

are interested and motivated to learn, as well as when students perceive the interpersonal behaviour of their teacher as cooperative (Fraser & Walberg, 2005). The perception of students' wellbeing is a particularly important indicator of the quality of inclusive education (Estyn, 2010; Thijs et al., 2009), especially in respect of whether differences between children from vulnerable groups and their mainstream peers would arise. We have identified this area as strength or opportunity of our education system, since teachers, schools and students, including those from vulnerable groups, agree that students' wellbeing is at a high level. Results concerning high expectations of teachers show similar pattern. Students, especially those who need additional support (d=0.05), recognize that teachers have high expectations regarding both achievement and obligations. However some of these should be taken with some caution, since we found differences of moderate effect size between parents on some of the indicators. For example, parents with low socio-economic status (SES) assess their children's wellbeing at school more negatively than other parents (F=4.048, p>.0), and parents from vulnerable groups perceive teacher expectation more negatively than other parents (F=9.40, p>.01).

Besides strengths, the results of the first comprehensive monitoring also allow us to identify challenges for further implementation of inclusive education in our educational context, i.e. domains in which expected developments have been hindered or specific obstacles arose. These domains were identified taking into consideration several criteria:

◈ Agreement of different informants that a particular aspect of inclusiveness is underdeveloped;

◈ Discrepancy between different informants in their perception of a particular aspect;

◈ Statistically significant difference between students and/or parents from vulnerable groups and other students/parents;

◈ Extremely negative perception of a particular area by one informant.

Based on these criteria, several domains were identified as sensitive points of inclusive education in Serbia: school inclusive policy, quality of teaching/learning, parents' engagement, and school ethos in the area of safety of the school environment and antidiscrimination procedures.

School inclusive policy. Evidence-based inclusive policies have been recognized as one of the key aspects in the process of inclusive school development. As Ainscow (2005) mentioned: "In essence, it leads us to conclude that, within education systems, what gets measured gets done." Our research shows that the percentage of school varies from 4% to 70%, depending on the type of data, when it comes to the school's ability to disaggregate data for students in ABC categories (OECD, 2007), suggesting that schools do not have the capacity and opportunity to monitor equity of education through comparison of different groups of students. Data shows that a high percentage of schools

(around 80%) had not been informed by the respective institutions about the expected records' management procedures. Furthermore, the culture of school self-evaluation based on monitoring and evaluation of school in the area of inclusive education, appears to be poorly developed. A significant number of schools report that school self-evaluation does not take into account the perspectives of students and parents (10 schools), and perspectives of students from vulnerable groups are even less present (19). At the same time, 4 to 7 schools, depending on the type of the school document, do not include in school documents activities aimed at improving inclusive education. When interpreting the data, it is important to remember that such documents often provide overly rationalized portrayals of ideal practice, in which the challenges and uncertainties of unfolding action are smoothed over in the telling (Brown & Duguid, 1991). Therefore, development of school inclusive policies, for now, remains a burning issue for primary schools in Serbia.

Quality of teaching/learning. The development of positive attitudes of educators is central to the accomplishment of inclusive education (Avramidis et al., 2000; Hrnjica, 1991; Van Reusen et al., 2001). A number of researchers found that attitudes govern the day-to-day practices of classroom teachers and many decisions about what teaching strategies to use, or what sort of activity to involve children in, are based on attitudes (e.g. Forlin, 2004; Subban & Sharma, 2006). Negative teacher attitudes hinder the development of inclusive practice in Serbia, since in every fifth school in our research negative attitudes toward inclusive education prevail, whilst more than 50% of teachers show no willingness to provide additional support for students who need it. Moreover, 6 schools from the sample report that some of their classes include more than 3 students educated by IEP. Hence, results suggest that classrooms managed by teachers who have positive attitudes toward inclusive education can become isolated and are under higher risk of burn out.

According to Murphy (1996), negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion, once developed, are extremely difficult to change. This highlights the importance of pre-service teacher education, which engenders positive attitudes towards inclusive education of new teachers, as well as the importance of continuous professional development. Teachers in our research report high self-efficacy in the area of inclusive education. However, 61.7% reported also that they had attended g at least one seminar in the area of inclusive education since 2009, while only 50.3% used at least one of the handbooks on inclusive education. Teachers perceive staff support within school as the most effective way of professional development, and rely on that source more than on written materials, policies or manuals.

Quality of teaching and learning is a serious problem in Serbia, as reflected in the PISA and TIMSS results (Mullis et al., 2008; Baucal, 2012; Gašić-Pavišić & Stanković, 2012; Pavlović Babić & Baucal, 2013). Therefore, it is not surprising that less than 30%

of students from our sample report that their learning takes place at school[8] and 51% perceive lessons as cognitively challenging. Since design, selection and use of particular teaching approaches and strategies arise from perceptions about learning and learners (Bartolome, 1994), it can be expected that teaching quality might be additionally hampered in the case of vulnerable groups and that nascent pedagogically advanced methods are likely to be ignored and ineffective in the hands of those who implicitly or explicitly subscribe to a belief system that regards some students, at best, as "those who shouldn't be here". Indeed, the perception of students needing additional support is worse than the perception of their peers (d=0.11). Cooperation in class also seems to be low, with just 36.8% of students reporting that they are usually or always supported by teachers or peers and 15.5% of students who have the opportunity to actively communicate with teachers and peers during lessons. Although the majority of students perceive that teachers are trying to motivate them, a high number of students do not agree with this. Around 20% of teachers and 35% of schools report that they do not perceive students' motivation for learning as part of teachers' role, a finding that points to wider inadequacies of teachers' beliefs and problems at school that are not pertinent only to students from vulnerable groups. Moreover, around half of parents say that their children are anxious at school, frightened of certain teachers, and do not receive enough support in this area.

School ethos. We recorded discrepancies between teachers and schools and other informants (parents and students) concerning safety of the school environment and antidiscrimination policies. Teachers and schools perceive their schools as highly safe and tolerant environments with relatively highly developed policies, teachers' competencies and practice in the field. Parents and students report a more negative situation. So, 65% of parents report that their children do not feel safe at school and only 40% of them believe that teachers are competent to create a safe school environment as well as to react adequately in situations involving violence. Students (50%) and parents perceive that the school has not properly informed them about school safety policies. Parents with low SES are better informed about school violence prevention teams, a finding indicating a possibly unfavourable situation for students with low SES. Moreover, 21% of students themselves and 15% of parents report discrimination in schools regarding their children. Alarmingly, parents of students from vulnerable groups perceive this aspect more negatively and more frequently report that their children are facing discrimination. This diverse picture points to the very different perspectives of important actors in school life indicating that they do not have a common ground for joint efforts and cooperation, at least in this area.

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8   In order to ensure that students give answers that are not based only on their perception of how quality teaching should look like, instruments consisted of questions/items clearly explaining what good practice means. Therefore, students were assessing how frequent are certain practices, elements, methods, techniques, etc.

Parental participation in the life of the school. There is an agreement in the literature that involvement of the community in schools is an important element in the success of inclusive education. Elkins (2005) argues that schools have become disconnected from society, and greater connection between school and the community is called for. Although it is of utmost importance for the school to engage parents, not just as partners, but also as decision makers, teachers, and advocates (Loreman et al., 2005), meaningful parent involvement in any aspect of the life of the school is in Serbia, as in many other countries in the region, not a widespread practice (Cerovic et al., 2010).

The results of the current study also show that parents' engagement is alarmingly low. Both teachers and parents report low cooperation between these two groups, while less than 20% of schools have formally included parents from vulnerable groups in school bodies, despite the legal requirement. Parents from vulnerable groups significantly less frequently report that they are involved in school life, a finding that is similar to the regional study involving Roma parents (Cerovic et al., 2010). Cooperation between schools and parents from vulnerable groups remains almost absent although this partnership is of utmost importance for the attainment of educational goals.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This paper aims to present selected findings on the current state of inclusive education in Serbia based on predefined quality indicators, five years after full legally-regulated application of the principle of inclusiveness in the education system. At the same time, two key aims pursued by the education system – equity and quality – include high inclusiveness of schools as an indispensable element, hence the findings of this study allow conclusions about education in this regard as well.

This monitoring enables us to identify domains in which the education system in Serbia demonstrates quality above expectations. These are: leadership and organizational structure, school policy concerning enrollment ("no child left behind"), individualized educational support and school ethos, with dimensions of student's wellbeing and high expectations from the students. All these indicators are anchored in the legal framework, and based on findings we can conclude that the education system in Serbia is oriented toward the improvement of its equity and quality.

However, thanks to a specific methodological solution (multi-perspective approach and a crossover of perception of chosen indicators by various users)significant differences have been shown in several domains, which are identified as sensitive points. Some of these, such as quality of teaching/learning, parents' engagement, and school ethos in the area of safety of the school environment are repeatedly identified shortcomings of the system, which can additionally hamper inclusive education. Some others are more

specific to inclusive education, such as school inclusion policy or school ethos in the area of antidiscrimination procedures. It is also shown that parents with low socio-economic status perceive that their children do not feel good at school; students from vulnerable groups recognize that teachers have lower expectations regarding their achievement; parents of students from vulnerable groups report that their children are facing discrimination, etc.

In the methodological sense, the framework proves to be a tool for multi-layered comprehensive monitoring, with the capacity to focus on specific areas. One of its main advantages is to put a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement.

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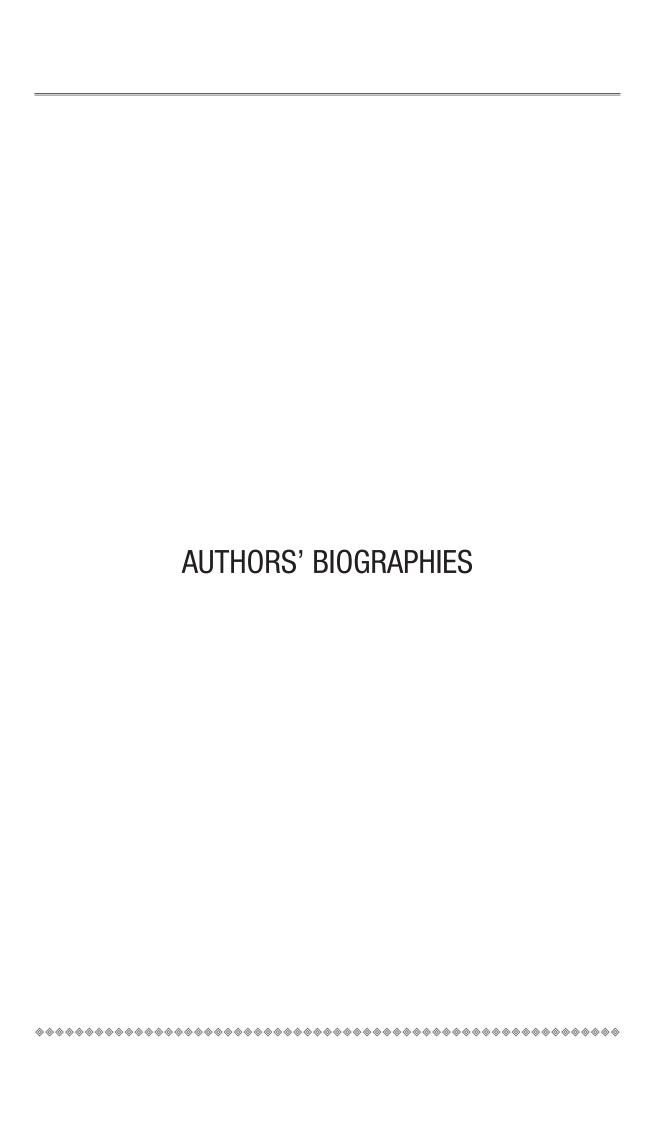
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Olja Jovanović is a research assistant and PhD student at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, where she also assists in teaching. As a researcher she has participated in numerous research projects in the field of educational and social psychology. Her primary research interest lies in examining social barriers to inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly in an educational context.

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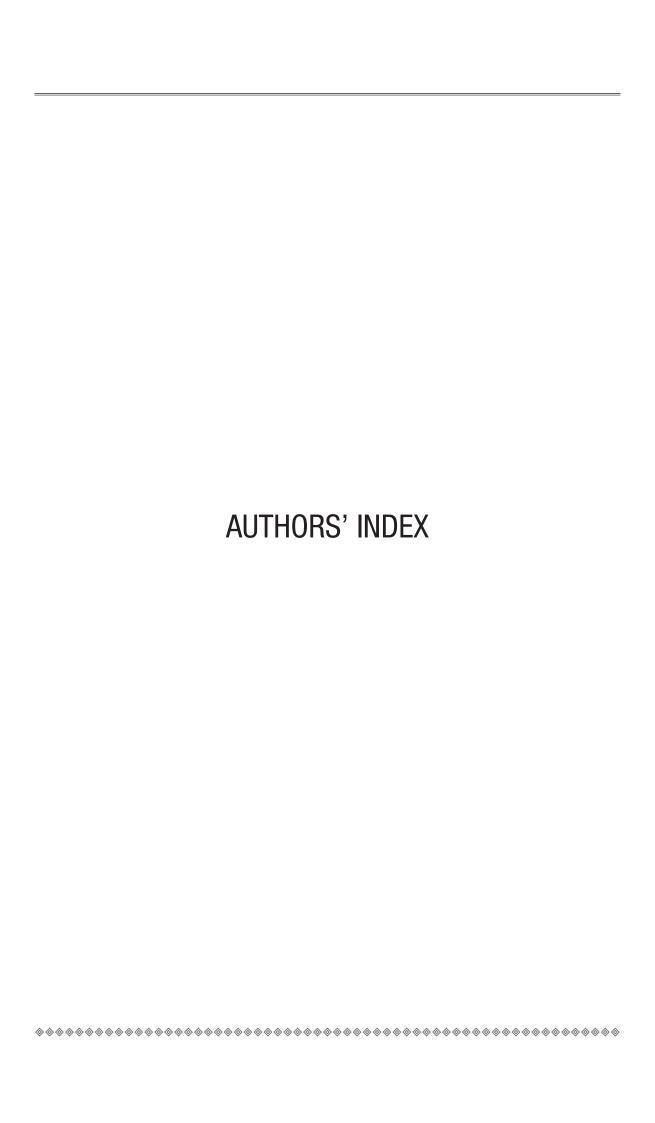
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AUTHORS' INDEX

Nikoleta Gutvajn

Milja Vujačić

Nowadays inclusive education is seen as a priority field in development of the system of education for children with disabilities. The authors use relevant research materials and apply modern methodology. Each article shows long-term research interest of its author, reflecting their scientific interests and priorities. The edited book can be recommended not only to researches and educators, but also to students, undergraduates, graduate students, who only begin their path in science and in need of expanding research horizons.

Professor Nikolay M. Borytko (from review)

This book as a whole provides information on several countries in the wider Balkan area, for which there is limited relevant information available and communicates both commonalities and diversity. The mission of inclusive education is propelled throughout the entire book and many of the challenges discussed, are of interest of wider readership. It is certainly a useful book for anyone who is interested in inclusive education.

Professor Susana Padeliadu (from review)

The chapters follow the framework of the scientific papers with clear objectives, adequately described methodology of the studies, consist of clear descriptions of results with discussion and conclusions and also include information how results may affect the practice. Reader of the book will also find the review of relevant literature in the field of inclusive education.

Professor Marija Kavkler (from review)