INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SERBIA

POLICIES, PRACTICE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SERBIA: POLICIES, PRACTICE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Eben Friedman
Dragica Pavlović Babić
Nataša Simić

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
AP	Autonomous Region (*Autonomna pokrajina*)
CCT	Conditional cash transfer
CSW	Center for social work
DILS	Delivery of Improved Local Services
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
IE	Inclusive education
IEP	Individual education plan
ISC	Inter-sectorial committee
LSG	Local self-government
MoESTD	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PA	Pedagogical assistant
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Preparatory preschool program
SES	Socioeconomic status
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States (of America)
WBIF	Western Balkans Investment Framework

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

Factors leading to the introduction of inclusive education in Serbia include international conventions promoting the protection of human rights in general and of educational opportunities for all in particular, as well as socio-political changes enabling the treatment of education as an instrument of social progress. With the adoption of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System in 2009, the Republic of Serbia committed itself to the comprehensive implementation of inclusion in education. Key principles of Serbia's education system in this regard include equal access without discrimination, adaptation to individual educational needs, and solidarity. Consistent with these principles, considerable emphasis has been placed on facilitating the participation in mainstream education of children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties as well as children from disadvantaged backgrounds through the provision of additional support. This emphasis is evident in the changes in policies on enrollment, curriculum and assessment, human resources, support structures, and funding arrangements introduced since the adoption of the law. Together, these changes comprise Serbia's framework for inclusive education.

Purpose of the report

The purpose of the current report is to provide a broad assessment of the state of inclusive education in Serbia approximately six years into implementation of the new education law. Undertaken within the framework of World Bank technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development (MoESTD) of the Republic of Serbia through the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) Trust Fund for the Inclusive Education project, "Monitoring and Evaluation for Inclusive Education," with funding from the European Union, the report examines the results of the recent concerted and substantive efforts to promote inclusive education, with legal and political backing, despite the continued absence of a comprehensive national-level database on education. In so doing, the report takes into account that the quality of the implementation of measures planned at the national level and the resulting effects on the general quality of education depend first and foremost on how the measures are perceived and applied at the level of municipalities and schools.

Methodology

The analytical work for this report was organized to focus on key components of the framework for inclusive education in Serbia. These include inter-sectorial committees (ISCs); individual education plans (IEPs) and teams for additional individual student support; school inclusive education expert teams; and pedagogical assistants (PAs). In addition to examining the existence and function of each component in its own right, the analysis also attends to the extent to which the components function together to form a system.

The findings in this report are based on:

- A review of the legal and policy framework for inclusive education in Serbia viewed alongside relevant international experience;
- An overview of available statistics on indicators relevant to inclusive education in Serbia;
- A synthesis of recent research undertaken in Serbia on various aspects of inclusive education;

- An assessment of the geographical concentration/dispersion of initiatives implemented in Serbia and including activities aimed at educational inclusion;
- An online survey conducted in early 2015 with more than 5000 members of school staff (including teachers, school psychologists and pedagogues, and principals), as well as 760 parents;
- Thematic discussions at ten regional consultative events with key stakeholders held throughout Serbia in spring 2015; and
- Case studies of five primary schools selected for their different conditions and experiences relative to inclusive education.

Review of findings

General findings

The information gathered in preparing this report points both to progress toward inclusion and to the need for continued and intensified efforts on the trajectory set in 2009.

- Both Serbia's overall approach and the selection and design of key components of the country's inclusive education system are consistent with learning from relevant international experience.
- Stakeholders generally appear to be convinced of the benefits of inclusion, but there remains much uncertainty and a lack of confidence about how to approach implementation.
- Examples of principled resistance to the very notion of inclusive education remain and are most evident among members of staff of special schools.
- Children with and without needs for additional educational support not only accept one another, but feel better in each other's presence than they would feel in a more homogeneous educational environment.
- The inclusive approach positively affects the academic performance of children with needs for additional educational support.
- The parents of children with needs for additional educational support are not always aware of the support that the system of inclusive education offers and sometimes withhold consent for fear that their children will be stigmatized.

Some important gaps in the implementation of inclusive education in Serbia relate to information.

- The absence of a comprehensive national-level database on education sometimes makes for discrepant figures on the same phenomenon.
- The effects of training for inclusive education on classroom practice have not been systematically monitored.
- Stakeholders perceive the regulatory framework for inclusive education to be incomplete; that, coupled with a lack of clarity about relations between institutions sometimes results in an emphasis on personal connections in implementing inclusive education.

Beyond insufficient information, the research points to important gaps in practice related to inclusive education.

- The considerable number of initiatives implemented to promote various aspects of inclusive education have largely bypassed five districts in Serbia.
- The absence of channels for communication between institutions at different levels of education often makes for discontinuity in practices central to inclusion.

Findings on key components of inclusive education in Serbia

The effectiveness with which ISCs carry out their tasks varies considerably from one locality to the next.

- Cooperation across sectors is often held back by the limited involvement of centers for social work, as well as by the time constraints of ISC members.
- The feasibility of ISCs' recommendations depends not only on the expertise and cooperation of the members, but also on the availability of resources at the local level.
- Because ISCs do not generally undertake monitoring and service providers are not obligated to report to ISCs, there is little systematic information about the level of implementation and effects of the support recommended by ISCs.
- Levels of understanding about the role of ISCs are often low, particularly among parents.

Although IEPs are broadly appreciated for their contribution to an environment in which children with and without needs for additional educational support learn side by side, there is room for improvement in both design and implementation.

- Class sizes often remain too large for the individualized attention necessary for the inclusion of children with needs for additional educational support.
- Teaching staff point to a lack of clarity about how to assess the work of children learning with an IEP and about differences between IEP1 and IEP2.
- Provisions for releasing children with an IEP from difficult subjects have proven problematic for children with multiple disabilities.

Inclusive education expert teams at school level generally receive high marks for their role in improving relations between schools and parents on the one hand, and relations among and between pupils and staff within schools on the other. Nonetheless:

- The teams are often less active than they would like to be due to time constraints; and
- Members of teaching staff are generally less engaged in these teams than are members of expert staff.

PAs have in general been very well received where established, but obstacles to their efficient operation remain.

- Stakeholders credit PAs with improving pupil performance, school climate, and communication with parents.
- There is a clear demand for increasing the number of PAs, in both schools that already have them and schools that do not.
- A lack of clarity is apparent in relation to how the roles of PAs differ from those of personal assistants.
- PAs' terms of employment offer them little stability and limit their rights within the school (e.g., voting for principal).

Recommendations

General recommendations

1. Mainstream inclusion throughout the regulatory framework for education, ensuring that all policy documents on education adequately reflect the clear vision for inclusive education evident in the Law on the Foundations of the Education System.

2. Provide pre- and in-service training for school staff on various aspects of inclusion, monitoring the effects of training and providing feedback in a continuous exchange that also involves an exchange of experience with peers.

3. Reconsider the role of special schools in such a way as to contribute to the transformation of standard educational settings by ensuring the availability of a continuum of support in such settings.

4. Increase and improve communication between MoESTD and institutions at the regional and local levels, ensuring consistent and adequate resource allocations for the newly established Group for Social Inclusion.

5. Raise awareness among the general public of inclusive education in general, as well as the mechanisms through which it functions, through the broad dissemination of easily accessible information and through school-level information sessions for parents.

6. Elaborate channels for the transfer between different levels of education of information about children's (individual) needs for additional educational support and the means employed for addressing those needs, directing particular attention to the first year of secondary education for children who received individualized support in primary education.

7. Promote full geographical coverage by ensuring that future initiatives, including elements of educational inclusion, emphasize the five districts that have taken part in the smallest number of relevant initiatives to date.

8. Institutionalize monitoring and evaluation by establishing and maintaining a comprehensive national-level database on education and by conducting regular assessments (both self-assessments and external evaluations).

9. Establish thematic networks for sharing experiences in implementing inclusive education among all relevant actors in order to ensure continuous support for improvement of inclusive practice, placing particular emphasis on networking among PAs on the one hand and ISCs on the other.

Recommendations on key components of inclusive education in Serbia

10. Reduce class size further in order to create conditions for the individualized attention necessary for the inclusion of children with needs for additional educational support.

11. Offer modular instruction as an additional option rather than release children with multiple disabilities from all subjects that pose difficulties for them.

12. Recognize expert team members' work by creating conditions to allow inclusive education expert teams to meet on a regular basis during their paid working hours.

13. Institutionalize assistants by introducing an occupational category for PAs and funding those positions accordingly, and also by providing personal assistants with training in skills directly relevant to their specific tasks.

14. Define assistants' roles clearly, with an eye to eliminating situations in which persons hired as PAs perform tasks of personal assistants and vice versa.

15. Provide resources for ISCs sufficient not only to cover the costs directly associated with ISC meetings and compensating ISC members for the time spent on committee work, but also to finance ISC-recommended measures and to monitor implementation of those measures.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.Context

Factors leading to the introduction of inclusive education in Serbia include international conventions promoting the protection of human rights in general and of educational opportunities for all in particular, as well as socio-political changes enabling the treatment of education as an instrument of social progress. With the adoption of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System in 2009, the Republic of Serbia committed itself to the comprehensive implementation of inclusion in education. Key principles of Serbia's education system in this regard include equal access without discrimination, adaptation to individual educational needs, and solidarity (Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije 2013b, Article 3). Consistent with these principles, considerable emphasis has been placed on facilitating the participation in mainstream education of children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties as well as children from disadvantaged backgrounds through the provision of additional support. This emphasis is evident in the changes in policies on enrollment, curriculum and assessment, human resources, support structures, and funding arrangements introduced since the adoption of the law. Together, these changes comprise Serbia's framework for inclusive education.

The purpose of the current report is to provide a broad assessment of the state of inclusive education in Serbia approximately six years into implementation of the new education law. Undertaken within the framework of World Bank technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development (MoESTD) of the Republic of Serbia through the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) Trust Fund for Inclusive Education project, "Monitoring and Evaluation for Inclusive Education," with funding from the European Union (EU), the report examines the results of the recent concerted and substantive efforts to promote inclusive education, with legal and political backing, despite the continued absence of a comprehensive national-level database on education. In so doing, the report takes into account that the quality of the implementation of measures planned at the national level and the resulting effects on the quality of education depend first and foremost on how the measures are perceived and applied at the level of municipalities and schools.

The analytical work for this report was organized to focus on key components of the framework for inclusive education in Serbia. These include inter-sectorial committees (ISCs); individual education plans (IEPs) and teams for additional student support; school inclusive education expert teams; and pedagogical assistants (PAs). In addition to examining the existence and function of each component in its own right, the analysis also attends to the extent to which the components function together to form a system.

1.2.Structure of the report

Immediately following this brief introduction, the second chapter of this report provides a general overview of the legal and policy frameworks for inclusive education. The first section of the chapter examines these frameworks in Serbia, attending in particular to ISCs at the local level and the central-level Joint Body; IEPs and the integrally related teams for additional individual student

support; inclusive education expert teams; and PAs. The chapter's second section provides a brief international overview of policies introduced to support educational inclusion, structured to make its relevance to the Serbian context clear and including a focus on measures targeting and/or specifically affecting Roma.

The third chapter—the longest of the report—surveys inclusive educational practice in Serbia and is divided into six sections. The first presents available country-level statistical data on indicators relevant to inclusive education, and the second summarizes the findings of recent research on inclusive education in Serbia, focusing on the key components explained in the previous section. An assessment of the geographical distribution of initiatives, including activities aimed at educational inclusion, comprises the chapter's third section.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth sections report on research conducted in the framework of the current project. The subject of the fourth section is the online survey of more than 5,000 members of school staff (including teachers, school psychologists and pedagogues, and principals) and 760 parents on good practice and pressing issues in inclusive education conducted by MoESTD in March and April 2015. This section accordingly provides a synthetic analysis of responses to the survey. Section 3.5 summarizes the thematic discussions at the 10 regional consultative events held throughout Serbia in April 2015, which provided a valuable opportunity to hear first-hand from stakeholders directly affected by reforms in their daily lives but too rarely asked about them. The sixth and final section of the report's third chapter consists of case studies of five primary schools selected for their different conditions and experiences relative to inclusive education, with an eye to gaining a deeper understanding of how the various components of inclusive education function individually and as a system in specific contexts. The design of each research component is explained in the corresponding section.

The report's final chapter consists of conclusions and recommendations that take into account both the data collected in the field and insights based on the analysis of policies and prior research. The first section of the chapter accordingly offers an overall assessment of the state of inclusive education in Serbia based on a review of the main findings of the analysis contained in the preceding chapters, summarizing the needs for further support. Chapter 4's second section identifies possible approaches for meeting the needs identified in the first section, drawing on the experience documented in Serbia and further afield.

1.3. Methodology

This report is based on a combination of desk review and extensive field research, all conducted in the first and second quarters of 2015. Objects of the desk review included Serbia's legal and policy framework for inclusive education in Serbia, as well as relevant features of education systems in other countries; available statistics on various aspects of inclusive education in Serbia; recent research on various aspects of inclusive education in Serbia; and documentation on projects implemented in Serbia and including activities aimed at educational inclusion.

The field research conducted for this report included an online survey, ten thematic discussions, and five case studies of primary schools. With an eye to taking into account a wide range of stakeholder views, the online survey collected information from more than 5000 members of

school staff (including teachers, school psychologists and pedagogues, and principals), as well as 760 parents. Thematic discussions at ten regional consultative events held throughout the country in April 2015 provided opportunities to gather richer qualititative data from local-level stakeholders, while case studies of five primary schools selected for their different conditions and experiences relative to inclusive education generated more complete pictures of how various aspects of educational inclusion function in different settings. More detailed information on the methods used in survey, thematic discussions, and case studies is presented in sections 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 (respectively).

2. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1. Examination of the legal and policy framework for inclusive education in Serbia

This section provides an overview of legislative measures and sectorial and inter-sectorial policies that led to the introduction of inclusive education in Serbia and determined its basic characteristics. These basic characteristics in turn set the focus of the remainder of the report.

The context within which inclusive education was introduced in Serbia is characterized by political commitments to the protection of human rights in general and of educational opportunities for all in particular. At the same time, broader socio-political changes enabled the treatment of education as an instrument of social progress. Key achievements of the introduction of inclusive education in Serbia include the establishment and implementation of support mechanisms such as inter-sectorial committees at municipal level; individualization of teaching methods and teaching plans for children in need of additional support; specialized teams at school level; and pedagogical and personal assistants. Also important was the formation of networks to provide formal and informal support to the implementation of inclusive education. All of these instruments became operational as a result of adoption of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System in 2009.

Policy and strategic foundations for inclusive education

The introduction of inclusive education in Serbia was preceded by a number of international conventions to which Serbia is a signatory, including the Salamanca Statement (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 1994); the Decade of Roma Inclusion (International Steering Committee 2005); and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations 2006). It was preceded also by a set of national strategies in which the need for including all population categories in the education system was illuminated and documented from various aspects, for example, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (Oxfam GB 2003) and the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia (Vlada Republike Srbije 2006).

The first decade of the 21st century was marked by noticeable changes that created a social context suitable for the introduction of inclusive education. The first of these were the socio-political changes brought about, among other ways, by Serbia's increasingly clear orientation toward integration into European and general world trends. Education in Serbia today is more explicitly viewed from the perspective of human rights and as a factor of economic growth, economic prosperity, and social cohesion, and above all, in the development of human capital. At the same time, international and national external assessments of educational outcomes consistently pointed to the disappointingly low quality of educational achievements and the significant space for improving the equity of education, particularly in relation to children who come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (see Pavlović-Babić and Baucal 2013).

Another shift stemmed from demographic changes. The demographic decline became very pronounced at the level of the education system, and the disproportion between the continually decreasing number of children and the growing surplus of teachers became increasingly apparent. In expanding the coverage of children from vulnerable groups, the education system saw an important opportunity to preserve the number of classes and teaching staff.

The changed social and political context has led to the definition of new public policies. The most significant sectorial or inter-sectorial policies that influenced the preparation of the implementation of inclusive education in Serbia, as well as its actual implementation, include: the Common Action Plan for Improvement of Roma Education in Serbia, prepared as part of Serbia's activities in the Decade of Roma Inclusion (Ministry of Human and Minority Rights & Coordinating Committee for Monitoring Implementation of the JAP 2004), the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations 2005), the National Action Plan for Children (Savet za prava deteta Vlade Republike Srbije 2004), the National Report prepared for UNESCO (Ministry of Education 2008), and the country's own Educational Development Concept: Equity, Quality, Efficiency (2008).

Legislation of inclusive education

In August 2009, the Law on the Foundations of the Education System was passed (Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije 2013b). According to this law, the education system of Serbia defined inclusiveness in education as its strategic commitment and obligation to be comprehensively implemented at all levels and in all aspects of the education system. Together with the legal basis, measures for educational practice were developed whose purpose was to establish an informed and functional system. Those measures are further elaborated through a set of secondary legislation and special laws, the most important of which are the Law on Preschool Education (Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije 2010c), the Law on Primary Education (Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije 2013c), and the Law on Secondary Education (Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije 2013d). The basic legislative settings related to inclusive education remained unchanged, and in some aspects even improved, although the Law on the Foundations of the Education System was amended in 2010 and 2013, and other ongoing changes are currently up for public debate.

The most important elements of legislation on inclusive education in Serbia include the prohibition of discrimination (including segregation and all forms of separation not in the child's best interest), as well as innovations relating to enrollment; curriculum; assessment; staffing; school management; and external support to standard schools. These innovations, which constitute the main foci of this report, are explained in more detail below.

Direct legislative support to inclusive education

Inter-sectorial committees and the Joint Body. ISCs are responsible for an assessment of the needs for educational, health care, and social support. This body operates at the municipal level and includes representatives of the student's school, the center for social work (CSW), and the health care institution responsible for the child. The ISC prescribes a variety of measures to support the child, including assistive technologies, which are funded from the municipal budget (with certain exceptions).

For support and coordination, the supervision of ISC activities is the responsibility of the Joint Body. Established in early December 2011, this body was formed at the national level and is inter-sectorial as well. It consists of representatives of the competent ministries (MoESTD, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs), representatives of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, independent experts for inclusive education, representatives of civil society, and parents. It is envisaged that representatives of other bodies and organizations, as well as experts in various fields, may participate in the work of the Joint Body. The Joint Body is assigned two tasks: to support the work of the ISCs, especially with regard to the organization

of training, support to coordinators in the line ministries, and other forms of expertise and technical support; and to coordinate the supervision of the ISCs and schedule their supervision activities.

Individual education plans and teams for additional individual student support. The new curriculum policy prescribes that persons with developmental impairments or with exceptional abilities shall be entitled to education that takes into consideration their special educational needs. They have rights to personalized methods of work or IEPs that are designated as either IEP1, IEP2, or IEP3. The first (IEP1) contains adjustments in teaching methodology, characteristics and organization of additional assistance, and compensatory activities ("adjusted program"). The second type (IEP2) includes the provisions of IEP1 and also arrangements for decreased learning outcomes and their specification ("modified program"). The third plan (IEP3) is used for enriching the education program of talented children ("enriched program"). The IEP should establish an adapted and enriched outline of the education of a child or student, in particular: a daily schedule of activities in a class, activities with a person providing additional support, and activities within a special support group as well as the frequency of that support; the objectives of educational and pedagogical work and attendant activities; special achievement standards and adapted standards for particular or all subjects, accompanied by an explanation of any deviations from special standards; an individual program of subjects or contents of subjects taught in a classroom and through activities with additional support; and the individualized manner of delivering work and activities by preschool and other teachers or the individualized approach adapted to the type of impairment (Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije 2013b, Articles 5, 77).

The preparation of an IEP and the monitoring of progress are tasks of the team for additional student support, which is formed for every student with this need. The work program is adapted/modified for each school subject in which the adaptations are needed, ensuring that all school teachers of those subjects are part of the team (including those who do not teach the student). Parent(s) or caregiver(s) and school expert staff (psychologist, pedagogue, special pedagogue) are also members of the team, as well as additional members who are thoroughly familiar with the child or his/her circumstances (social worker, physician, etc.). Each team member is responsible for the implementation of specific activities.

School inclusive education expert teams. The team for additional student support is directly supported and supervised by the school inclusive education expert team. The team is formed at the school level and may include the representatives of school employees (teachers, psychologists/pedagogues), parents or caregivers, local self-government (LSG) unit, or experts in certain areas. This team is in charge of ensuring and improving the quality of work and activities planned for students from vulnerable groups (in need of additional support); participating in developing and monitoring the delivery of IEPs; establishing objectives and achievement standards; and supporting and monitoring the work and performance of teams for additional individual student support. This team cooperates with other neighborhood schools and competent institutions, organizations, associations, the LSG unit, and support bodies at the local level (e.g., ISCs, the Network for Support of Inclusive Education); it also creates and implements inclusive policies at the school level and is responsible for the quality of inclusive education in the school.

Pedagogical assistants. According to the Law on the Foundations of the Education System, PAs provide assistance and additional support to children and students in keeping with their needs. PAs

can also extend support to teachers, preschool teachers, and psychologists/pedagogues for the purpose of improving their performance when working with children and students in need of additional educational support (Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije 2013b, Article 117). The PA is also expected to establish cooperation with parents or caregivers, the school principal and school teams, and the relevant institutions. The work of PAs is financed by MoESTD on the same terms as all teachers. Currently, there is only one category of PA, Roma assistants, whose inclusion in the educational system began long before the adoption of the 2009 law. Schools with a significant proportion of Roma children started introducing Roma PAs in 1999, supported by the Fund for an Open Society Serbia (from 1999) and by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Ministry of Education (from 2005). Since that time, the number of Roma assistants has progressively increased, particularly encouraged by the new law. At the moment, there are 174 Roma assistants employed in schools throughout Serbia. It is worth mentioning that the law also allows a person accompanying a child or a student to be present during teaching activities for the purpose of assisting the child or student with developmental disabilities.

Indirect legislative support to inclusive education

In addition to the above-presented measures that are directly designed to facilitate and improve the quality of inclusive education in Serbia, the laws on education stipulate a range of measures that regulate other aspects of the education system and indirectly support inclusivity. Some of these additional (indirect) measures regulate the following domains: enrollment of children without personal documents and the possibility of late enrollment; learning support: support for learning the language of instruction, supplementary education, career counseling, student engagement in the extended school activities; affirmative action for students from vulnerable groups in the realization of the right to housing, food, loans, scholarships, and rest and recovery; cultural, artistic, and sporting and recreational activities and the right to be informed; early school leaving: the direct responsibility of the national bodies (National Education Council, the Council for Vocational and Adult Education) involved in the prevention of early school leaving, as well as planning drop-out prevention activities at the school level; prioritizing inclusive education in in-service teacher training; and prohibitions on discrimination, violence, abuse, and neglect.

At the same time, the law provides solutions that are contraindicated for inclusiveness of education, such as grade repetition or exclusion from school or student residences. Additionally, current legislation contains many remnants of the previous educational system. These include the absence of course requirements in the pre-service training of teachers and principals for inclusive education or working with vulnerable children; lack of a clear mandate for cooperative and interactive learning; curriculum regulations emphasizing content over process; insufficient attention to the development and regulation of formative assessment; and the non-implementation of provisions for per-capita funding. Also apparent is a lack of synchronization between education and social sectors, with social assistance not sufficiently aligned with the needs of inclusive education.

In conclusion, it has to be said that all measures outlined here are systemic ones and are provided by strategic, legal, and sub-legal acts of the Republic of Serbia pertaining to education. Notwithstanding the great diversification in terms of conditions, specific life circumstances, cultural differences, and personal characteristics of students who need additional educational support, these systemic interventions are better indicated because they have wider coverage and

greater sustainability in comparison to interventions that are specifically geared toward individual cases.

2.2. International experience

This section provides a brief international overview of policies introduced to support educational inclusion. The presentation makes no claims to geographical or substantive exhaustiveness.[1] Additionally, while this section intentionally does not cover Serbia on the grounds that a more detailed overview of the legal and policy framework for inclusive education there is provided in Section 2.1 of this report, the overview is structured in such a way as to make its relevance to the Serbian context clear. Also included with an eye to relevance for Serbia is a focus on measures targeting and/or specifically affecting Roma. As will become apparent below, measures for the inclusion of Roma in standard education are more common in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe than elsewhere, where policies for inclusive education tend to emphasize overcoming disability and sometimes also move away from disability categories.

The components of inclusive education policy treated in this section are enrollment, curriculum and assessment, human resources, support structures, and financing. Notwithstanding analytical distinctions between these categories, country policies under various headings are closely interrelated, such that there is also some overlap between the subsections corresponding to the categories. An additional caveat concerns the effects of the policies presented on educational inclusion; where available, information on policy success is presented, but the rarity of program evaluations mean that little hard data are available (see Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a, chapter 8, 2014b, Annex 5: 6).[2] Notwithstanding the lack of data, the information presented in this section is sufficient to demonstrate that the introduction of inclusive education in Serbia is broadly consistent with relevant international experience.

Enrollment

Policies to include children with disabilities in standard schools and classes have become increasingly common since the 1970s. In some countries, such inclusion has been based on the elimination of disability categories in education legislation. Thus, in England, the 1978 Warnock Report called for the "abolition of statutory categorization of handicapped pupils" in favor of a concept of special educational needs (cited in White 2012, 87). Disability categories were removed from British law in 1981, and British schools have prioritized the inclusion of all pupils regardless of educational needs since the early 1980s (White 2012, 87). Other countries in which disability categories have been removed from education legislation and the provision of special services to meet special educational needs moved to integrated classroom environments are Finland, France, and New Zealand (White 2012, 84–87). Thus, in New Zealand, for example, the use of diagnostic labels has been replaced with practices of defining special educational needs in terms of the support required to address them.

[1] More detailed information on relevant educational structures is available from the Eurydice country education system resource database Eurypedia and the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. See https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Countries and https://www.european-agency.org/national-policy-and-provision, respectively.

[2] For an evaluation of Hungary's School Integration Program, see Kézdi & Súranyi (2009).

Two countries that have prioritized the inclusion of all children in mainstream schools without abolishing disability categories are Italy and the United States. One of the ways in which this priority is pursued in Italy is by limiting class size to 20 pupils in total and the number of pupils with disabilities in each class to two (White 2012, 86). Support services are accordingly integrated into the classroom. In the United States, the legal category "developmental delay" forms a basis for the provision of special education services without labeling for disabilities not rooted in biology (White 2012, 88).

In Western Europe, Roma have been affected by mainstream enrollment policies as well as by policies specifically targeting this group. In Sweden, the integration of Roma in mainstream schools was first proposed in a 1956 government report (Olgaç 2013, 199). In Italy, on the other hand, while the enrollment policy reforms of the 1970s were aimed primarily at children from the ethnic majority population with learning difficulties, one of the results was the abolition of special classes for Sinti and Roma children in the 1980s (Bello and Hallilovich 2013, 224–25; cf. White 2012, 86). Whereas Sweden appears exceptional among West European countries in its explicit attention to the education of Roma as early as the 1950s, Roma have more often been the objects of targeted policies in Eastern Europe. In Romania, for example, a 2004 ministerial order called for the transportation of Roma students from predominantly Roma neighborhoods to schools serving primarily non-Roma neighborhoods with an eye to promoting ethnically mixed classes (Moisa 2012, 290). By way of contrast, the notion of "multiple disadvantage" introduced in Hungarian education policy in the early 2000s attempted to promote the inclusion of Roma through a definition emphasizing a combination of parent education level, family eligibility for social benefits, and special educational needs, while avoiding references to ethnicity (Szendrey 2012, 235–36).

Another important aspect of enrollment policy particularly relevant for Roma is school choice. On the one hand, policies that allow parents to select the school in which they enroll their children sometimes result in segregation (see, for example, Kertesi and Kézdi 2013). Responding to such a tendency, a policy introduced in Hungary in 2007 not only required schools to admit all children living in the school district (i.e., catchment area), but also called on local authorities to draw school districts in such a way as to keep the proportion of multiply disadvantaged children in any district within 15 percent of the average for the municipality (Szendrey 2012, 246). On the other hand, there is evidence from outside Eastern Europe to suggest that a voucher system can be useful for combating segregation and promoting equity by giving the parents of children attending disadvantaged neighborhood schools the possibility of enrolling their children in schools in other neighborhoods (see Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 30).

Curriculum and assessment

Among the key findings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in relation to equity in education is that early streaming disadvantages the poor (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007). Consistent with this finding, evidence from Poland and Sweden suggests that the removal of early tracking positively affects overall educational attainment (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 10–11). In Finland, there is no streaming in compulsory education, with a national core curriculum applied for the entire duration of this phase. In Hungary, curriculum reform was introduced in 2002 as part of the "Integrated Education System."

The meaningful inclusion of all children in mainstream schools and classes requires not only enrollment policies that ensure that admission does not depend on disability or disadvantage, but also flexible curriculum and assessment frameworks that support teaching approaches to engage all learners. A common instrument for this purpose is the IEP. Broadly understood as documents defining educational goals, objectives, and the means to reach them for specific learners, IEPs have been employed in Canada, Ireland, Italy, and New Zealand (among other countries). In Ireland, for example, the design and implementation of IEPs is led by locally based Special Educational Needs Organizers (SENOs) employed by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to serve as a point of contact for parents and guardians on the one hand and schools on the other, providing advice and support to both (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 30). IEPs in Italy are based on an assessment (*certificazione di handicap*) consisting of a functional diagnosis (made by doctors, therapists, and psychologists) and a profile (generated by teachers together with other providers of expert educational services), serving to define the teaching hours to be delivered by support personnel (White 2012, 86).

Closely linked to the individualization of education for inclusion is the approach taken in the assessment of children's educational needs. Rather than aiming at the diagnosis of disability to serve as the basis for labeling and thereby tracking, assessments undertaken with an eye to educational inclusion catalog a child's strengths and weaknesses in order to generate appropriate instructional strategies, including but not necessarily limited to IEPs (see White 2012, 84). Taking into account that family members are involved in a child's learning well before the child enters school, education legislation in France includes provisions for family participation in the assessment of children's skills and needs under the leadership of a multidisciplinary team (White 2012, 85). Changes to assessment procedures were introduced in Hungary in the framework of the "From the Last Desk" program (Szendrey 2012, 239–40).

Human resources

Ensuring that the educational needs of all children are met in a classroom with a wide range of needs often requires a departure from the model of one teacher per classroom. In Finland, many classrooms have their own special education teacher as well as the standard education teacher (White 2012, 84). In addition to working with children with special educational needs and providing consultation on special education to the standard education teacher, the special education teachers contribute directly to the learning of all children in the classroom through co-teaching in some subject areas. In Italy, provisions for support teachers (*insegnanti di sostegno*) were introduced in the 1970s as part of a broader policy for the inclusion of all children in mainstream schools and classes (Bello and Hallilovich 2013, 224).

The emphasis on addressing special educational needs in standard schools and classes has major implications for the role of special schools, as well as for the number of such schools. Thus, Finland's eight special schools serve exclusively children with hearing, visual, or relatively severe physical disabilities, with 1.3 percent of all pupils enrolled in those schools as of 2008 (White 2012, 17, 84). In similar fashion, Italy's special school system consists of seven schools for deaf pupils and two schools for blind pupils—a total of 693 pupils in 2008 (White 2012, 17, 86).

The most common human resources policies introduced to promote the inclusion of Roma in schools are Roma PAs and Roma mediators, differentiated by the fact that the former are based in schools and the latter operate primarily outside them. The role of Roma PAs is accordingly to facilitate communication between Roma pupils, their parents, and their teachers, usually in standard primary schools. The work of Roma mediators, on the other hand, is generally focused on relations between schools and Roma communities more broadly. Countries in which Roma PAs have been employed include Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 26; Moisa 2012, 290–91; Szendrey 2012, 243). Bulgaria is also among the countries in which Roma mediators have been used, as are Denmark, Finland, Spain, and Sweden.[3] In the absence of hard data, views on the contribution of Roma PAs and Roma mediators to the educational inclusion of Roma vary widely (see, for example, Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 26; Marushiakova and Popov 2013, 142).

Support structures

Structures to support educational inclusion have been established at the school, local, and central levels in various countries. In Finland, school-level student welfare groups consist of teachers, the school guidance counselor, the school nurse, the school psychologist, the school social worker, and a special education teacher, as well as the school principal and others as needed (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 20; White 2012, 85). The groups work closely with parents in developing and monitoring implementation of learning supports.

Also common at the school level are extracurricular activities organized to provide academic support, such as the study groups (*tanoda*) introduced in Hungary in 2003 and the catch-up classes for children with learning difficulties in Romania beginning in 2004 (see Moisa 2012, 290–91; Szendrey 2012, 243). On the one hand, after-school support is particularly important for students from families in which parents may be unable to help with homework due to their own level of educational attainment. On the other hand, the effectiveness of such support depends not only on sustained participation by pupils and the quality of content and staff, but also on the extent to which partnerships are formed between families, schools, and communities (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 23)

An example of a support structure at the local level are the Networks of Specialized Aid to Struggling Pupils (RASED) in France. Established in 1990 with funding from the Ministry of Education, RASEDs consist of school psychologists, teachers, and other service providers (EPASI 2015). RASEDs provide support for teacher requests on addressing special educational needs and/or other difficulties among pupils in standard classes of standard primary schools.

In Hungary, a National Education Integration Network was formed on the basis of a 2002 regulation of the Ministry of Education on the integration of disadvantaged students (Forray 2013, 128–29). Member schools committed to develop a model of integrated education that could be shared with other schools. Headquartered in Budapest, the Network operated through six regional coordinators based in the country's most disadvantaged regions to coordinate and provide

[3] In England, an intermediate practice between PAs and mediators has been the designation of a member of school staff (not necessarily a Gypsy, Rom, or Traveler) as a contact point between Gypsy, Romani, and Traveler families on the one hand and the school on the other (Themelis and Foster 2013, 186).

professional assistance to schools implementing the integration program, including (but not limited to) in-service teacher training (Szendrey 2012, 238).

Another example of a national network is the Special Educational Needs Organizers under the National Council for Special Education in Ireland. Established in 2003 by the Ministry for Education and Science as an independent statutory body, the National Council works on improving coordination between education and health sectors and undertakes research focused on the delivery of services to children with special educational needs (National Council for Special Education 2014).

Financing

As mentioned briefly above in relation to school vouchers, financial arrangements affect the extent to which schools are inclusive. At the level of families, whereas vouchers can serve the purpose of desegregation insofar as they increase the variety of schools in which parents may enroll their children (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 30), conditional cash transfers (CCTs) have sometimes been used to promote participation in education among children and youth from disadvantaged families by adding an education-specific benefit to a broader social safety net for children who meet enrollment, attendance, and/or performance requirements (Friedman et al. 2009a, 14). Thus, in Italy, for example, a program aimed at Roma and migrants provided a monthly benefit of €100 per pupil for 75 percent attendance and demonstrated parental engagement (Bello and Hallilovich 2013, 226–27). In other cases, CCTs have made social support not specific to education contingent on school attendance, thus adding a condition rather than a benefit to the existing social safety net.

Although there have been few evaluations of either type of CCT in Central and Eastern Europe, available evidence suggests that the considerable (and well-documented) successes of such policies in other parts of the world have not generally been replicated with Roma in the region (Friedman et al. 2009a, 43). The main reason for this appears to be the fact that Roma frequently attend low-quality, segregated primary schools, and thus increasing the inclusion of Roma requires attention to the supply of education as well as to the demand for it (Friedman et al. 2009a, 44). By way of contrast, a CCT program supported by the World Bank in FYR Macedonia avoids the risk of segregation by focusing on upper-secondary education, where the numbers of enrolled Roma are smaller and demand-side constraints (e.g., the possibility of waged labor) more significant than at lower levels of education. Roma account for approximately 7 percent of all beneficiaries of this program, which transfers approximately €50 per quarter to families receiving social financial assistance for each child attending at least 85 percent of classes as a student enrolled in secondary education on a full-time basis (Ministerstvo za Trud i Socijalna Politika 2014; see also Armand and Carneiro 2013).

Recent comparative research on arrangements for financing at the level of schools suggests that "[a] decentralized model is likely to be more cost-effective and provide fewer opportunities for undesirable forms of strategic behavior" where equity in education is the goal (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 31). In such a model, the central government allocates a lump sum to municipalities for distribution to the schools for which they are responsible. Whereas the lump sum does not take into account the numbers of students with special educational needs, the levels of funding transferred from municipality to schools are expected to cover the necessary resources

for addressing those needs. As the authors of the research point out, monitoring and evaluation is therefore particularly important for the proper functioning of a decentralized school funding model (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 31).

The same research offers findings on the risks associated with pupil-bound budgeting and direct input funding models. In the former case, clear administrative definitions of special educational needs are particularly important to prevent abuse by standard schools interested in accessing additional resources by ascribing special educational needs to a larger number of pupils (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b, Annex 5: 31). Evidence from Hungary further suggests that pupil-bound support for integration can be subverted to maintain segregation through manipulation of figures on multiply disadvantaged pupils (Szendrey 2012, 235, 255; see also Rostas and Kostka 2014, 277). Most problematic, however, is the direct input funding model, in which special schools are funded according to the number of pupils enrolled. Extensive abuses of this approach in the form of school management recruiting non-disabled Roma have been documented in Slovakia (see Friedman et al. 2009b, 73–74; Hapalová and Kubánova 2012, 326–27).

3. INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN SERBIA

3.1. Statistical overview

In this section, a statistical overview of data relevant to inclusive education in the Republic of Serbia will be presented. Data on enrollment rates by level and type of education (preschool and primary, secondary, and special schools) and dropout and graduation rates for the overall population, Roma, children with disabilities, and those from the families with low socioeconomic status will be provided. Although data on some aspects of education are sparse and data taken from different sources are sometimes difficult to reconcile, the overview nonetheless paints a picture of persistent inequalities in Serbia's system of education. Among the groups at the greatest disadvantage are persons with disabilities and Roma.

Educational structure in Serbia

A near majority of the population in 2011 had a secondary education qualification (about 49 percent), and about 16 percent had a higher education qualification (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). Among the Roma population, 87 percent of people had basic education or less, whereas only 1 percent had a diploma from a higher education institution. The educational structure of persons with disabilities is also much more unfavorable compared to the general population—53.3 percent of people with disabilities (mostly physical disabilities) have basic education or less and only 6.6 percent of those graduated at the level of secondary education (Marković 2014; Government of the Republic of Serbia 2014).

Number of children and youth in preschool, primary, and secondary education

According to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, an increase in coverage of children with preschool education has been noted. On the other hand, the number of students enrolled in primary and secondary education overall is still declining, due to the negative demographic trends (see table 1).

Table 1. Number of Enrolled Children and Students in the Past Four Years

School year	Preschool Institutions	Primary School Institutions	Secondary School Institutions
2010/11	179,865	578,978	285,596
2011/12	184,900	572,099	283,173
2012/13	188,340	565,199	280,422
2013/14	189,304	562,556	270,356

Coverage, graduation, and dropout rates in preschool, primary, and secondary education

The coverage of the compulsory preparatory preschool program (PPP) in the school year 2012/13 was 92.65 percent, which is somewhat less than in the previous school year but more than in the school years 2009/10 and 2010/11 (see table 2). According to data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 98.1 percent of children who go to first grade attended PPP in the previous year (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 2014a).

PPP coverage of children from families with higher socioeconomic status is greater than the coverage of children from the poorest families. Data obtained through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey show that 62.9 percent of Roma children have attended PPP (46.6 percent from the poorest Roma families), and 94.7 percent of the poorest attend PPP (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 2011, 2014a). Only 1.2 percent of children with disabilities are enrolled in PPP, whereas 5 percent of children in that respective age group have some kind of disability (Government of the Republic of Serbia 2014).

The coverage of school-age children with primary education has been relatively constant in the past several years, and for the school year 2012/13 it was 97.24 percent (see table 2). This means that about 3,000 children per generation (and 25,000 of the children in the age groups that should attend school) are not covered by the educational system. Particularly low enrollment rates are registered in districts Borski, Braničevski, Pčinjski, and Sremski (Nacionalni Prosvetni Savet 2013).

The percentage of children from the Roma population who were enrolled in the first grade was lower than the national average (about 69 percent). As for Roma children aged six to 13, 85 percent attend basic education, whereas 15 percent are out of the educational system (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 2014a).

According to the data from MoESTD, 92.2 percent of all students with additional support needs were enrolled in mainstream schools. Among this group, there are mainly students from a socially non-stimulating environment (48.3 percent), followed by students with learning difficulties (29.3 percent), and students with developmental or physical disabilities (22.4 percent) (IPSOS 2012a).

Table 2. Coverage, Dropout, Completion, and School Continuation Rates for the Past Four School Years

	Preschool Education		**Primary Education**				**Secondary Education**	
	Coverage %	Coverage with PPP %	Coverage %	Dropout Rate	Completion Rate	Schooling Continuation Rate	Coverage %	Dropout Rate
2009/2010	51.61	87.82	96.98	0.57	94.26	99.90	84.39	1.57
2010/2011	51.87	87.54	96.11	0.96	92.15	99.6	85.12	1.40
2011/2012	54.84	93.16	95.25	0.71	96.60	99.95	85.56	1.40
2012/2013	58.08	92.65	97.24	0.28	96.72	100	88.5	1.55

Data from different sources present the situation for dropout rates differently. According to the Strategy of Educational Development in Serbia until 2020, 13–15 percent of children from each generation do not finish even primary school**.** Eurostat data point to the rate of 8.5 percent (9.66 percent for males and 7.18 percent for females) (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). On the other hand, data from the Statistical Office for the past two years show that less than 4 percent of children who attended primary school did not complete it (see table 2). The highest percentage of dropouts live in Central Serbia and then Belgrade, while the lowest percentage of dropouts are from Vojvodina. A higher percentage of children who drop out are from urban rather than rural settlements and are from marginalized groups (Roma) (IPSOS 2012b). Most children leave school at the transition from the fifth to the sixth grade; according to the data from MoESTD, 15.4 percent of students from a non-stimulating environment leave school in the fifth grade (IPSOS 2012b), and in general, dropout rates are higher for upper grades of primary school than for the first four grades (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a).

According to the data from the country's Statistical Office, the school continuation rate after primary education was 100 percent (see table 2), which means that all children who finished primary school enrolled in some secondary school. However, general statistics show that 88.5 percent of children from each generation are covered by secondary education, which means that dropout rates in the first year of secondary education are very high. In some regions of the Republic of Serbia, the coverage is even lower; in the districts of Borski, Braničevski, and Sremski, only 60–70 percent of youth attend any type of secondary school (Pavlović Babić et al. 2015). Dropout rates are higher for the three-year profile than for the four-year profile in vocational schools (Government of the Republic of Serbia 2014).

In the group of the poorest at the country level, 74 percent of children continue with secondary education, whereas only 21.6 percent of Roma continue (14.9 percent of girls and 28 percent of boys). In the age group 14–18 years, only 22 percent of youth from Roma settlements are attending secondary school (14 percent are still in the primary school), and 64 percent do not go to school at all (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 2014a). Although these rates are high, a positive trend is evident, since in 2010 there were about 72 percent of Roma children of secondary school age who did not attend any type of school (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 2011). As for students with disabilities, as many as 30 percent do not succeed in passing the respective grade of secondary school, and about 13 percent of these students leave school in the first two grades (Government of the Republic of Serbia 2014).

Special schools: number of students, graduation and dropout rates

In the Republic of Serbia, there are 70 special primary and secondary schools. In contrast to the structure of students with additional support needs attending mainstream schools, in special schools there are mostly students with developmental or physical disabilities (77.1 percent), whereas children with learning difficulties and children from socially non-stimulating environments account for 13 and 9 percent of all children in special schools, respectively (IPSOS 2012a). Special schools cover 3,045 students with additional support needs, whereas 36,405 of this category of students attend mainstream schools, which means that 92.2 percent of all students with additional support needs are embraced by the inclusion process.

Regarding the success of students who attend special schools, one should notice that 3.8 percent of students in primary education repeat a grade and 3.4 percent leave school without completing the school year. In secondary special schools, these rates are higher: 6.8 percent of students repeat a grade and 8.9 percent leave school altogether (IPSOS 2012a).

Roma students are still overrepresented in special education (particularly boys), but there is a positive trend of decreasing their number (e.g., compared to the school year 2011/12, when 20 percent of all students enrolled in special schools were Roma, in the school year 2012/13, this rate was 11 percent). However, they still make up almost one-fifth of all students in special schools, and the practice of transferring Roma students from mainstream to special schools continues to be evident, while the reverse is extremely rare (European Roma Rights Centre 2014).

3.2. Recent experience with inclusive education in Serbia

As explained in Section 2.1, many reforms have taken place in the Republic of Serbia since 2009, with the Law on the Foundations of the Education System defining the components of inclusive education that have been implemented to date (except for the reform in financing, "money follows the child"). Additionally, MoESTD has engaged in other activities relevant to inclusive education, such as affirmative action for Roma enrollment in secondary schools, the provision of coordinators for Roma integration, and external evaluation (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b). Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have additionally supported implementation of inclusive education through, among other measures, material support, daycare and free-time activities, assistance to parents (including with document collection), support for teachers, and informational campaigns (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a).

This section reviews some of the most relevant measures and activities related to implementation of inclusive education in Serbia and presents available findings about the effects and contributions of these measures and activities. Overall, the review points at once to progress in implementing relevant reforms and to difficulties in relation to key components of the framework for inclusive education mandated by the Law on the Foundations of the Education System. As will become apparent below, educational inclusion depends not only on the implementation of provisions specifically aimed at inclusion, but also on the overall quality of teaching and management.

Enrollment and attendance

The Law on the Foundations of the Education System stipulates two major changes in enrollment procedures. First, the pre-enrollment categorization of children, which proved to be problematic and discriminatory toward children from disadvantaged backgrounds and especially Roma, was abolished. In case of need, children are assessed after enrollment and after pedagogical profiles and IEPs have been created. The law further stipulates that children from deprived backgrounds (Roma, poor, and refugee children, children of displaced persons, and children with disabilities) may enroll in school after the specified enrollment period. Significantly, children may enroll without a parent certificate of residence and other necessary documents, including a certificate of attendance at a PPP (which is otherwise mandatory).

The level of compliance with the new procedures varies. Schools that were covered by the project "Delivery of Improved Local Services" (DILS), which included, among other provisions, trainings for teaching and other professional staff and grants for municipalities and schools (for more, see section 3.3 below) and showed greater readiness to apply more "user-friendly" procedures for the enrollment of children from non-stimulating environments. Similarly, the principals from these schools reported that cooperation between preschool institutions and schools has become better owing to the DILS program (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2013).

However, there are still some bottlenecks at all educational levels. The main enrollment barriers are related to the issue of preschool and school network optimization; insufficient outreach to particularly vulnerable groups due to the weaknesses of enrollment logistics at the local level; and barriers to accessing rights for the estimated 6,500–6,700 persons without identification documents (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). With regard to the weaknesses of enrollment logistics, one should note that LSGs are responsible for maintaining records on school-age children and informing the preschool institutions/primary schools and parents. Unfortunately, these records are often not updated and information for parents on upcoming enrollment is not adapted for vulnerable groups. Preschool institutions and schools are expected to inform the LSG about children who are not enrolled, but the validity of this information is also hampered by non-updated records and the absence of a tracking system in the form of an integrated database. For children who are reported as not enrolled in school, the law mandates that the LSG initiate misdemeanor proceedings if a discussion with parents or involvement of the local CSW proves ineffective. However, this rarely happens in practice because the penalties are perceived as excessive for vulnerable populations (IPSOS 2012b). CSW involvement in the process is also weak, as the centers react only on formal request and have limited fieldwork and emergency intervention capacities. Generally, the coordination and cooperation between different state systems, such as education, health care, social welfare, and labor markets, are not well established.

Even once a child enrolls in the first grade, additional systemic obstacles may prevent him or her from finishing school. Although serious problems affecting dropout rates in the first four grades have been largely removed, in the higher grades the system is still rigid. As stated in section 3.1, dropout rates are higher for the upper grades of primary school than for the first four grades. Some of the most relevant reasons for this at the school and local community level are: lack of willingness/competencies of the subject teachers to engage in individualized teaching and the organization of remedial classes, weak cooperation with parents, and lack of available meals or transportation (Pavlović Babić et al. 2015).

Attendance barriers at all education levels are related primarily to insufficient, inadequately targeted, and/or poorly managed social assistance to children and families, and to the inability of LSGs to meet their financial liabilities regarding transportation. The greatest barrier seems to lie in the fact that meals, clothing, and school supplies are not provided systematically. The lack of links between CSWs and schools leads to the fact that the school attendance conditionality has not been consistently applied and managed for beneficiaries of child allowances. Here again, the absence of an integrated education database also hinders the adequate monitoring of the enrollment, attendance, achievements, and progression of students by socioeconomic status (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a).

At the end of primary education, a student makes a list of desired secondary schools, but the requirement that the student must pass all grades and the external school leaving exam means that a student's further education prospects largely depend on his or her family's socioeconomic status (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). Further, a mismatch between curricula and labor market needs means that many youth from vulnerable groups enroll in courses of secondary education that yield poor employment prospects. Another factor in early school leaving is the uneven distribution of schools and the lack of transportation support mentioned above (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a; Pavlović Babić et al. 2015).

Overall, although the number of students from vulnerable groups attending mainstream schools reflects a fairly high level of integration in the educational system, relatively high dropout and class repetition rates indicate that the system has failed to carry out all the activities that would contribute to keeping these students in schools. Quantitative indicators in this research show that it is necessary to pay special attention to the progression of pupils to the fifth grade of primary school, and that the readiness for implementing inclusion in mainstream secondary schools is poor (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b).

Curriculum, individualization of instruction, and assessment

The emphasis on individualized instruction introduced by the Law on the Foundations of the Education System is reflected in the introduction of school inclusive education expert teams and teams for additional individual student support. According to Stefanović et al. (2013), the roles and tasks of these teams usually overlap. However, what can make the school inclusive education expert team distinct from the other is its role in keeping records on children from vulnerable groups, organizing final exams for students who have IEPs, supporting colleagues, ensuring cooperation with parents and ISCs, promoting inclusive education at school and in the local community, and participating in inclusion-related projects. Available evidence further suggests that school psychologists and/or pedagogues generally take on the most work in the school inclusive education expert team, whereas subject teachers are less motivated to be actively engaged.

Members of the teams for additional individual student support provide pedagogical profiles of the students and create IEPs. Pedagogical profiles and IEPs are most usually developed for pupils/students with developmental disabilities and most rarely for those living in socially non-stimulating environments (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b). Children with learning difficulties and emotional and behavioral problems are the least likely to be identified as needing additional support and adjusted education (Stefanović et al. 2013). Students with IEPs are reassessed every three months (in the first year of schooling, when the IEP is introduced) or every six months (during subsequent years), and any lowered standards (IEP2) must be approved by the ISC.

Table 3. Numbers and Percentages of Students having IEP1 and 2 and Sent to the ISC in Mainstream Primary Schools in Serbia in 2013/14 School Year

	Students for whom IEP1 was created		**Students for whom IEP2 was created**		**Students who have an assessment of ISC**	
	Total	*Girls*	*Total*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Girls*
Students in mainstream primary schools	4,538 (0.80%)	1,722	2,500 (0.45%)	993	2,852 (0.51%)	1,101

Two challenges related to the use of IEPs should be highlighted (see Jeremić et al. 2012; Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2013). First, parents of students who need additional support are sometimes reluctant to sign consent forms for the implementation of IEP1. Second, IEP2 is sometimes misused, in that more Roma students are educated according to this category than should be expected. With regard to the first issue, the most frequent reasons parents refuse to provide consent include lack of information, denial that their child needs additional support, and fears that the child will be labeled and isolated from his or her peers (Pokrajinski zaštitnik građana Autonomne Pokrajine Vojvodine 2011). Teachers often face difficulties in distinguishing between IEP1 and IEP2, and also in identifying strengths and support needs, defining clear and measurable outcomes and concrete activities, and recognizing the discrepancies in achievements in different subjects (Jeremić et al. 2012).

The difficulties reported by teachers in relation to IEPs should be seen in connection with the low overall stage of development of assessment culture in Serbia's schools. Symptomatic of this state of affairs is are negative teacher perceptions of descriptive feedback even after 12 years of its implementation (see Nikolić and Antonijević 2014). The assessment of children's achievements is thus mainly numerical and summative, while formative assessment is only sometimes used in class teaching (Jeremic et al. 2012). Almost two-thirds of the teaching staff in preschool and primary school institutions claims they regularly monitor the development and progress of children with difficulties. Almost 60 percent of the psychologists and pedagogues in preschool institutions and 69 percent of their colleagues from primary schools keep child portfolios (Zlatarović and Mihajlović 2013).

Closely connected to the introduction of IEPs is the matter of reduced class size, which is intended to provide the child who needs additional educational support with adequate attention from teachers. The number of students in classes with IEP students is reduced by two for each student with an IEP1 and by three for each student with an IEP2. In Serbia, the class size is set at 30, and it can be reduced to 26 or 28 children if one or two children from vulnerable groups are included. This number is still high for effective differentiation and individualization to happen (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a).

Human resources

Official statistics show that teacher-student ratios are low. Whereas the ratio in preschool institutions is about 1:15, the corresponding figures for primary and secondary schools are approximately 1:11 and 1:9, respectively. The ratio of professional staff (e.g., psychologists, pedagogues, social workers, defectologists) to students is approximately 1:810, which means that a member of professional staff can allocate about five minutes weekly for a child. These statistics show that staffing for meeting the needs of children from vulnerable groups is at a suboptimal level (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). The situation is not helped by the absence of affirmative measures for employment in education.

With the legislative changes of 2009, those who want to become subject teachers or professionals at any education institution must attain 36 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

(ECTS) hours of psychological and pedagogical competencies during their preservice training. A review of study plans for faculties of class teacher education (or pedagogy) shows that each has at least one course that relates to working with children with additional support needs, but these courses usually take a medical approach (Macura-Milovanović et al. 2011). When it comes to faculties that educate subject teachers (engaged in upper grades of primary and all grades of secondary schools), there are no particular courses that address inclusion, indicating that work with children with additional support needs is at best taught as a part of a pedagogy-psychology course (Simić et al. 2013). All this indicates that preservice teacher education does not provide the necessary competencies for working in an inclusive school.

Between 2010 and 2012, more than 17,000 school administrators and staff of primary and special education schools completed some form of in-service training (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b). Although in-service training dealing with inclusive education is relatively common, there are no reliable indicators of the effects of such training on teacher practices.

Study findings of teacher attitudes toward inclusion generally conclude that they are positive. The findings also determined that there is a need for additional support mechanisms, beginning with preservice education and followed by practical in-service training and well-defined cooperation between various institutions and individuals (Jeremić et al. 2012; Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2013). As for teacher competencies, one study showed that roughly 60 percent of subject teachers attended some kind of training on inclusive education, while a much larger proportion of class teachers participated in in-service trainings dealing with inclusion (93.8 percent) (Pokrajinski zaštitnik građana Autonomne Pokrajine Vojvodine 2011). MoESTD's focus on training for school staff has meant that professional staff from preschool institutions have fewer opportunities to attend training on inclusive education, with 58 percent of kindergarten teachers participating in one study stating that they are insufficiently trained, compared to 24 percent of class teachers (Zlatarović and Mihajlović 2013). Needs for professional development are particularly apparent in the following areas: developmental characteristics of students with developmental disabilities; development and implementation of IEPs; monitoring, evaluation, and assessment of students; teaching methods; teamwork; cooperation with parents; and tolerance and respect for diversity (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b).

One of the measures that has yielded positive results is the introduction of PAs, though the 174 PAs (mostly in primary schools) financed by the state represent a small number compared to the need (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a; Government of the Republic of Serbia 2014). Based on school requirements and the number of Roma children, it seems that approximately 200 more Roma PAs would be needed to ensure appropriate coverage (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a).

According to a study from 2009, PAs (then called "Roma assistants") spent most of their time working with Roma children during remedial classes and helping them do their homework. They rarely provided support during regular classes or worked with teachers on planning classes, reflecting a lack of cooperation between the two (Institute for the Evaluation of Education Quality 2009). Owing to their engagement, however, almost two-thirds of Roma students showed modest or great improvement in all school subjects after the first semester of the assistants' work with them. Two other studies showed that PAs are also very helpful in breaking the barriers when it comes to discrimination and in the promotion of Roma language and culture, as well as democratic

values in general (Duvnjak et al. 2010; Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2013).

The Law on the Foundations of the Education System also provides for the appointment of personal assistants (*lični pratioci deteta*). These assistants are proposed by ISCs and funded by LSGs as a community-based social service.

Established by MoESTD to assist school staff in introducing inclusive education practices through various trainings, exchanges of good practice, local actions, and visits, the Network for the Support of Inclusive Education has made an important contribution, improving the implementation of inclusive education in Serbia.[4] In addition to 14 "model schools," the Network includes another 13 schools that have been recognized as examples of good practice in inclusive education. In the past two years, UNICEF has supported Network activities, including the training of 750 teachers and direct support to approximately 30 children with disabilities.

Replacing committees for the categorization of children with disabilities, the new ISCs consist of experts from the local CSW, health care institution, and regional school administration office, while the municipal/city authorities are responsible for providing the coordinator. ISCs may recommend a wide range of support (including but not limited to supplies, assistance of a pedagogical or personal assistant, and special transportation), which must subsequently be financed at the municipal level. Informal evidence shows that in many cases, municipal financial means are not available to provide the full support needed (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). A recent evaluation on the beginning of ISC operations (Mihajlović et al. 2012) showed that in the first year, there were still several administrative and logistical problems (space, complicated and redundant forms, database problems, inadequate security of student records) and that procedures and financing varied greatly by municipality, but also that parents appreciated their work, which gave the impression of high professionalism and commitment. Although one of the duties of the ISC is to monitor the effects of the implementation of additional support, the monitoring procedures at the local level are not defined and service providers are not obliged to report to ISCs (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b). Teachers assert that ISCs usually give too general an opinion and fail to provide specific, concrete recommendations and guidelines for teachers (Stefanović et al. 2013).

Support structures

An important measure in preventing dropouts and supporting implementation of inclusive education is the provision of free textbooks and other instructional supplies to children assessed to be in need (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2013; Pavlović Babić et al. 2015). The 2009 Law on the Foundations of the Education System further stipulates that pupils with developmental difficulties and/or disabilities are entitled to textbooks in the format suiting their educational needs.

The Law on Basic Education introduced a recommendation that schools organize meals, but financial means connected to the actual provision were not provided (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). It is estimated that about 40 percent of municipalities are currently providing meals for at least some children in standard schools, but most often the meals are provided only to special schools,

[4] For more information about the Network for Support of Inclusive Education, see www.mrezainkluzija.org.

which has proved to be an incentive for parents of low socioeconomic status to enroll their children in there rather than mainstream schools (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). The new requirements contained in the Law on Basic Education and Law for Secondary Education of 2013 might have a positive impact on pro-poor actions by school management insofar as they require that income from school cooperatives be used on a priority basis for financing school meals (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a).

The Law on Basic Education stipulates that transportation costs should be covered by the municipal budget for all children with additional support needs, for children attending the PPP in a facility more than 2 kilometers away from their home, and for children who attend school more than 4 kilometers away from home. Informal evidence suggests that about 82 percent of municipalities provide transportation support, while others either avoid the obligation or offer only poorly organized assistance. It should also be noted that the coverage of transportation costs is not regulated for children between the ages of three and five (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a).

Moreover, educational institutions are not physically accessible and lack adequate teaching aids (Zlatarović and Mihajlović 2013). The majority of schools, including over 70 percent of special schools, have no access ramps or toilets for the disabled (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b). In more than 80 percent of all schools, no assistive technologies or specific equipment required by individuals are used, though the situation is somewhat better in special schools and those that received DILS grants (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014b).

Affirmative action for Roma for the transition between basic and secondary education was introduced in 2003. During recent years, the number of Roma enrolled through affirmative action increased significantly, from a starting point of around 50 to more than 350 in 2012 (Kovács Cerović et al. 2014a). Additionally, in the past eight years in AP (*Autonomna pokrajina*, or autonomous region) Vojvodina, more than 1,600 Roma students received some kind of scholarship, which, together with trainings for teachers and student mentors, contributed to the increase of the number of Roma students at all educational levels.

Loans and scholarships for secondary school students in general are merit based, with the exception of 10 percent of scholarships that are reserved for students from vulnerable groups, based on a special decree of the Minister of MoESTD. Socioeconomic status is taken into account in the allotment of space in dormitories more than in the distribution of scholarships, but students from lower-income families still have limited chances to use this service unless they have excelled during their prior schooling.

Box 1. Applying the Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education

In February and March 2015, the Institute of Psychology conducted a survey on a representative sample of 28 schools located throughout the Republic of Serbia, making use of instruments piloted in 2014.

Students: A stratified random sample consisted of 1,212 students, out of which 156 were from vulnerable groups (66 students with an IEP and 90 with a very low socioeconomic status). Overall, students provided relatively positive assessments of the various aspects of inclusiveness. An important finding in this regard is that there are relatively few differences between the assessments of students from vulnerable groups and other students. However, it is unclear how much students are able to adequately estimate the quality of inclusiveness given that the vast majority does not know about the different teaching practices.

Parents: The survey included 610 parents: 58 with a low socioeconomic status, 43 parents of children with IEPs, and 509 others. They expressed very positive opinions about the school enrollment policy, stating that they are well or very well informed about school enrollment (89.4 percent), that the school is open for registration of all children (96.5 percent), and that they do not know of cases of discrimination

Teachers: The study involved 741 teachers (476 subject and 265 classroom teachers). Unlike the students and parents, teachers do not think that they have high expectations of students, though they generally have slightly higher expectations of students concerning school work and good behavior in school. But they do not perceive their responsibility to cultivate motivation for school learning to be high, and one in five teachers (21 percent) do not see their role in motivating students or believe it to be their responsibility.

Teachers highly valued their competences as individuals and the value of schools as institutions, as illustrated by the following findings:

- 36.1 percent estimated that 75 percent of the teaching staff is competent to adequately respond to school violence;
- Teachers generally estimate that their conduct is in accordance with the culture of mutual respect and the defined measures for the promotion of non-discrimination; and
- 60 percent said that their preparation time contains adjustments so that hyperactive students could fully participate, that they follow more tolerantly the rules of conduct, and that they use a variety of measures to support and implement various activities to provide additional support for these students.

Though confident about their own competences for inclusive education, teachers indicate that they do not know enough about the legal provisions that regulate this field (only 24.2 percent estimated that they know the legal regulations of inclusive education well). Also, six years after the systemic regulation of inclusive education, half of the teachers (51.4 percent) had not attended a single course in the field of inclusive education, and the same percentage (50.2 percent) does not plan further improvement in this area.

School and school professional services: As with previous informants, contradictory attitudes toward inclusive education are evident at the school level, too. Almost all schools have developed an inclusive school policy, explicitly defined in the school's annual work and development plans. However, in some schools, almost no one would agree with the statement that every child deserves to be educated in a standard school.

All schools claim to foster a climate of high expectations for student achievement and that they are oriented toward the social integration of all students. However, the average score on a scale of motivating students is significantly lower, and 17 schools have a score lower than 3.00.

Nearly half of the schools (12) have no defined measures for the prevention of absenteeism. School data show that students from vulnerable groups are absent more in comparison to the general population. Children who are most at the risk of early school leaving come from socially non-stimulating environments.

What did schools most often state as the necessary support that they cannot provide?

- Involvement of experts with specialized knowledge (9)
- Engagement of personal assistant (8)
- Assistive technologies (6)
- Free meals (5)

Which initiatives did schools mark as rarest?

- Mobilization of volunteers to assist students who need additional support (6)
- Students volunteering in the local community (6)
- Lending of assistive technology (2)

Trends and predictions of future development: All informants agree that the school is focused on social integration and that there are high expectations of students in terms of academic achievement and attendance. Students highly valued the benefit of school education, and teachers estimate that school management supports inclusive education. The school expert staff is perceived as the strongest support for inclusive practice.

On the other hand, negative attitudes and conflicting assessments provide cause for concern:

- 45 percent of the schools (instead of 100 percent) implement inclusive education consistently and regularly report on this, though the vast majority of schools are not keeping records of students from vulnerable groups or planning activities based on such data;
- 56 percent of schools (instead of 100 percent) involve students and parents in the self-evaluation;
- There is broad agreement that neither parents nor students are sufficiently involved in school life;
- Although teachers estimate that they have competence in the field of security, only 18 percent of parents estimated that their children feel safe at school.

3.3. Mapping initiatives aimed at educational inclusion in Serbia

In this section, an overview and a brief assessment of the regional concentration/dispersion of projects and initiatives aimed at educational inclusion in Serbia will be presented. Here we will concentrate on large-scale projects and significant local initiatives implemented since 2009. This overview is not meant to provide a complete picture, since it is not possible to track all projects and initiatives at the municipality, community, and school levels, but it includes most relevant projects.[5]

In the table below, one can see the names of all relevant projects distributed by districts in Serbia. Not included in the table are large-scale national projects or other initiatives realized throughout the country. However, details on such initiatives are provided in Annex 1.

Table 4. Realized Projects by District[6]

Region/District	Project
North Bačka	Equal Opportunities in Secondary Education; Strong from the Start
Central Banat	Intercultural Drama Education and Learning
North Banat	/
South Banat	Civic Society for Inclusive Education – Education That Fits the Child; Civil Society Organizations as Equal Participants in the Development of Inclusive Society in Serbia; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
West Bačka	All Different, All Equal; Kindergartens Without Borders; Network for Support of Inclusive Education; School of Good Will - Volunteers in the Service of Children; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
South Bačka	All Different, All Equal; Child Center: Support of Children in Education; Civil Society Organizations as Equal Participants in the Development of Inclusive Society in Serbia; Equal Opportunities in Secondary Education; Impres; Mother-Child Education Program; Network for Support of Inclusive Education; Regional Support of Inclusive Education; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Sremski	Impres
Mačvanski	Impres; Kindergartens Without Borders; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Kolubarski	Schools of Life – Together for a Childhood; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Podunavski	Intercultural Drama Education and Learning; Kindergartens Without Borders; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Braničevski	Impres; Network for Support of Inclusive Education
Šumadijski	Equal Opportunities in Secondary Education; Club for Children and Youth; Impres; Mother-Child Education Program; Network for Support of Inclusive Education; Parents Have a Say Too; Schools of Life – Together for a Childhood; Strong from the Start; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Pomoravski	/
Borski Zaječarski	Regional Support of Inclusive Education Parents Have a Say Too; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion

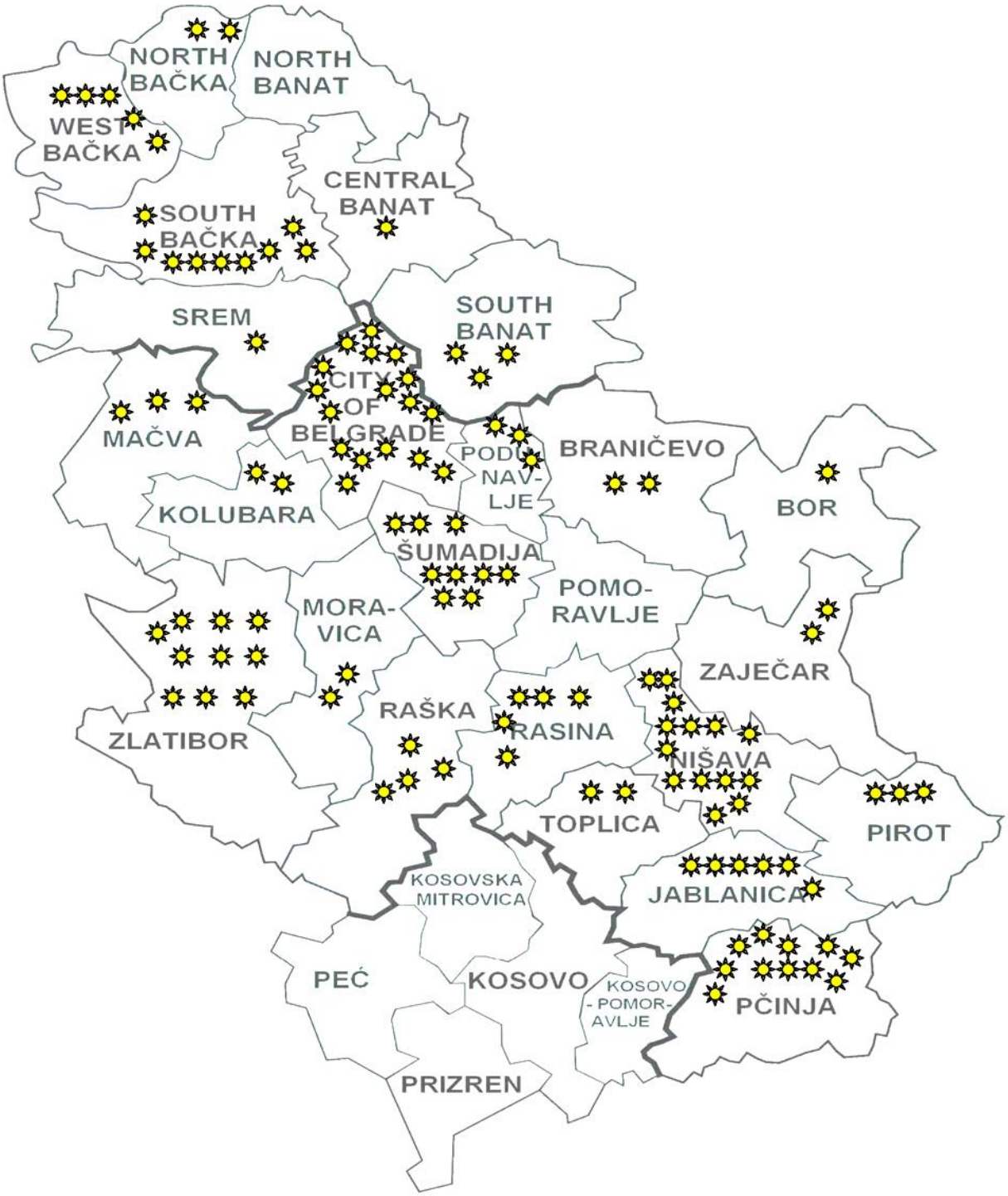
[5] See Annex 1 for a table of relevant projects.

[6] No data are available for Kosovo (i.e., Kosovski, Pećki, Prizrenski, Kosovskomitrovački, and Kosovskopomoravski districts).

Zlatiborski	Civic Society for Inclusive Education – Education That Fits the Child; Civil Society Organizations as Equal Participants in the Development of Inclusive Society in Serbia; Coalition for Monitoring of Inclusive Education; Educational Services in Selected Schools in Southwestern Serbia; Impres; Kindergartens Without Borders; Network for Support of Inclusive Education; Parents Have a Say Too; Regional Support of Inclusive Education; The Youth Network for Inclusive Education
Moravički	Club for Children and Youth; Kindergartens Without Borders
Raški	Educational Services in Selected Schools in Southwestern Serbia; Impres; Mother-Child Education Program; Schools of Life – Together for a Childhood
Rasinski	Developmental-Educational Centers in Municipalities in the South of Serbia; Equal Opportunities in Secondary Education; Impres; Mother-Child Education Program; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Nišavski	Civic Society for Inclusive Education – Education That Fits the Child; Civil Society Organizations as Equal Participants in the Development of Inclusive Society in Serbia; Coalition for Monitoring of Inclusive Education; Combating Discrimination in Educational System; Developmental-Educational Centers in Municipalities in the South of Serbia; Equal Opportunities in Secondary Education; Impres; Intercultural Drama Education and Learning; Network for Support of Inclusive Education; Parents Have a Say Too; Regional Support of Inclusive Education; Strong from the Start; The Youth Network for Inclusive Education; Towards the Inclusion of Roma children
Toplički	Developmental-Educational Centers in Municipalities in the South of Serbia; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Pirotski	Developmental-Educational Centers in Municipalities in the South of Serbia; Impres; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Jablanički	Developmental-Educational Centers in Municipalities in the South of Serbia; Equal Opportunities in Secondary Education; Impres; Kindergartens Without Borders; Let's Talk About Rights; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion
Pčinjski	Impres; Circles of Friends; Civic Society for Inclusive Education – Education That Fits the Child; Coalition for Monitoring of Inclusive Education; Developmental-Educational Centers in Municipalities in the South of Serbia; Knowledge and Skills Against Poverty; Let's Talk About Rights; Parents Have a Say Too; Regional Support of Inclusive Education; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion; The Youth Network for Inclusive Education
Belgrade	Circles of Friends; Civic Society for Inclusive Education – Education That Fits the Child; Civil Society Organizations as Equal Participants in the Development of Inclusive Society in Serbia; Club for Children and Youth; Coalition for Monitoring of Inclusive Education; First Step – Preschool Program for Roma Children in Zvezdara; Intercultural Drama Education and Learning; Kindergartens Without Borders; Mother-Child Education Program; Network for Support of Inclusive Education; Parents Have a Say Too; Regional Support of Inclusive Education; Strengthening Professionals' and Parents' Competencies for More Effective and Fair Education; Strong from the Start; Support Integration Process of Resettled Children from Roma Settlement Gazela; Technical Support for Roma Inclusion; The Youth Network for Inclusive Education

If we look at the distribution of resources (financial, technical, and human) provided through the above-mentioned projects, we can conclude that some districts obtained more support and resources than the others. As one can easily notice, North Banat and Pomoravski districts have not received any support from most comprehensive projects and local initiatives (except for Education for All, Inclusion through Education – Support to Roma and other Marginalized Groups and DILS). Similarly, Sremski and Central Banat districts in Vojvodina, as well as Borski district in eastern Serbia, were covered by only one of the projects. The relevant projects and initiatives were concentrated in the following districts: Belgrade, Nišavski, Zlatiborski, and Pčinjski.

The map of Serbia below provides a graphic depiction of the regional concentration/dispersion of projects and initiatives aimed at educational inclusion. In the map, each symbol represents a single initiative. As in table 4, country-wide initiatives are not shown on the map.



Map 1. Distribution of relevant projects on inclusive education throughout Serbia

3.4. Results of the online survey

In March and April 2015, MoESTD conducted an online survey on the state of inclusive education in the Republic of Serbia. The survey probed the views of school staff and parents of children attending standard and special primary and secondary schools on the effects of inclusive education to date, as well as on strong and weak points of the system and on the need for improvements. The findings of the survey point to a high level of satisfaction with PAs, while IEPs, ISCs, and the system of inclusive education as a whole received more mixed reviews.

The survey provided an opportunity to reach various stakeholders in education throughout the country and to obtain an overall picture of their experiences and attitudes, in so doing providing a valuable complement to the other data collected for this report. Approximately five percent of teaching staff and nearly all school psychologists and pedagogues employed in Serbian schools took part in the survey. Taking into account that there are approximately 840,000 students enrolled in primary and secondary education in Serbia, the share of all parents participating in the survey was considerably smaller. In the following table the sample structure can be seen.

Table 5. Structure of the Participants

Participants' Role	Frequencies	Percent
Class teachers	1,132	18.8%
Subject teachers in primary education	1,401	23.3%
Subject teachers in secondary education	758	12.6%
School psychologist/pedagogue in primary education	856	14.2%
School psychologist/pedagogue in secondary education	261	4.3%
School principals	850	14.1%
Parents	760	12.7%
Total	**6,018**	**100%**

Questionnaires were designed for the purpose of this specific survey and consisted of multiple choice, open-ended questions and Likert-type scales. Teachers and school psychologists/ pedagogues provided their answers on 36 questions, school principals on 43, and parents on 29.[7] The main results regarding the "pillars" of inclusive education and the functioning of the system of inclusive education as a whole will be briefly presented below.

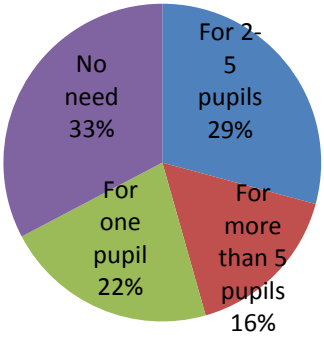
Individual education plans and teams for additional student support

The majority of teachers stated that they have on average one–two pupils with additional support needs in the classrooms (65 percent), whereas 16.7 percent believe that they do not have these pupils at all. In the past two years, the most frequently applied measure of adjustment was individualization, followed by creating IEPs 1 (see the figures 1 and 2 below). The number of IEPs 2 and 3 that were created is much lower.

As pointed out by the teachers and school principals, those most involved in the creation of IEPs are school psychologists/pedagogues (82.1 percent of teachers gave them the highest mark for engagement), who are generally perceived as the experts who can provide advice regarding inclusion. Only 32.3 percent of parents surveyed are members of IEP teams. The most visible

[7] The questionnaires used in the online survey are provided in Annex 2.

effects of the use of IEPs noted by both teachers and school principals are better inclusion of children from vulnerable groups into the peer group and more regular class attendance.



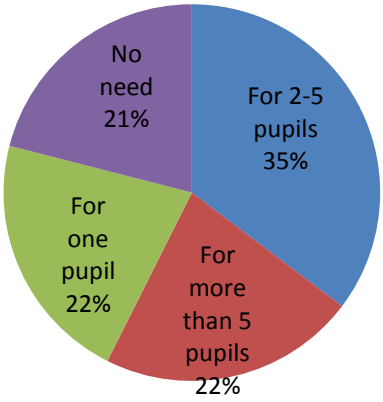


Figure 1. Created Individualizations in the Past Two Years **Figure 2. IEPs Created in the Past Two Years**

Pedagogical assistants

Twenty-four percent of teachers and 18 percent of school principals stated that there is a PA engaged at the school, whereas 50.6 percent of teachers asserted that they do not have a PA but need one. Experiences with PAs' work are mostly positive—teachers gave them a mark of 2.29 and principals 2.49 out of a possible 3 for their contribution to the realization of inclusive education, mostly to their support of the learning process of children with additional support needs and their cooperation with these children's parents. Parents who had experience with PAs are also mostly very satisfied or satisfied (74.1 percent).

Inter-sectorial committees

More than two-thirds of all school staff are completely informed about the ISC's jurisdiction and almost one-half contacted the ISC more than five times in the ongoing school year. They would like to receive more specific advice, more intensive involvement in monitoring the child's progress, and greater assistance in the process of requiring additional support measures from the municipality (e.g., pedagogical or personal assistants, free meals).

Other support measures

Seventy-three percent of the school principals stated that they have cooperated with a special school. Two-thirds of the principals answered that their school staff were granted with some professional training and 70.4 percent that the schools were equipped through projects or donations in the past five years. Some of the schools whose principals participated in the online survey were granted equipment (mostly white boards, computers, and Internet access) by corporations (e.g., Telenor, Dunav Insurance) and local small private companies, while the trainings for the school staff and direct support to pupils in need were provided by the Red Cross, local authorities, and NGOs.

According to the parents' experience, the most frequently provided support are free textbooks and free participation in sports and cultural activities, whereas there were many cases when a personal

assistant or home-based teaching was needed but not provided. Thirty percent of parents who needed some kind of support are not satisfied with the information they received from the schools about available support, and 22.7 percent believes that the school could have done more for their child.

Functionality and effectiveness of the system of inclusive education

School principals assessed their schools as very inclusive—56.8 percent answered that nobody avoids working with children with additional support needs and 37.6 percent that few teachers avoid it. The majority of principals gave a mark of four on a five-point scale, meaning very good, for the state of inclusive education in their institutions (see figure 3).

As for the parents' view, 77 percent believes that the school that their child attends promotes inclusive values. There are more marks of one and two than in the group of principals, but in general, inclusive practice of the school is estimated as positive (34.4 percent gave a mark of five, meaning excellent and 32.5 percent gave a mark of four, meaning very good).

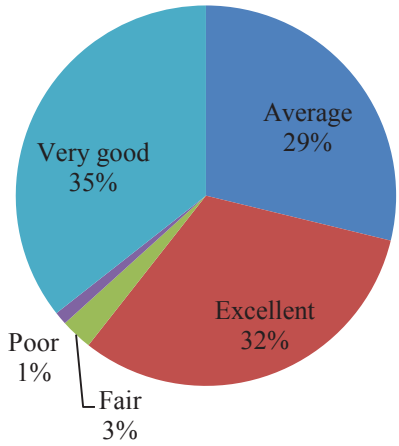


Figure 3. Principals' Assessment of their Schools' Inclusive Education Realization

Participants consider the high level of burden of administrative work and the lack of teacher competencies as the biggest barriers to more efficacious inclusive education. In figure 4, the percentages of teachers who agreed that the noted obstacles hinder high-quality inclusive education are presented.

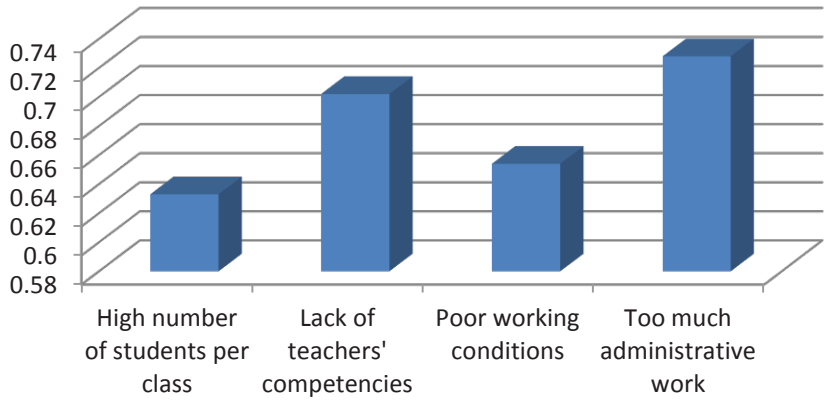


Figure 4. Most Frequently Stated Barriers to Better Implementation of Inclusive Education

From the point of view of the teachers and principals, what would facilitate more efficacious inclusive education is direct help from another person in the classroom (65.8 percent teachers opted for this solution). Generally, teachers and principals recommended employing defectologists or PAs in schools. They would also appreciate the provision of additional books and guides on

inclusive education (58.8 percent) and additional training on the subject (51.9 percent), both during the initial teacher education and in-service training. At the trainings, teachers would like to improve their competencies for teaching children with additional support needs and to hear more concrete examples from practitioners instead of attending theoretically oriented seminars. Principals also highlighted the need for the better networking of all actors at the local level and systemic financial support. Finally, parents pointed to the need for the improvement of inclusive education at the preschool level, adequate equipment, and more attention to talented children and the realization of IEP3s.

3.5. Regional consultation meetings

During the month of April 2015, a series of 10 regional consultation meetings on good practice and pressing issues in inclusive education was held in locations throughout the country: Belgrade, Gornji Milanovac, Kragujevac, Leskovac, Niš, Novi Sad, Obrenovac, Sombor, Valjevo, and Zaječar.[8] The purpose of these meetings was to collect information from a wide range of local-level stakeholders who have direct experience with the day-to-day implementation of inclusive education in their respective localities. With this in mind, the meetings were designed for approximately 70 participants each.[9] After an introductory plenary session, each meeting saw participants divided into five groups, with each group taking part in a moderated discussion examining progress and barriers to progress in order to generate short- and long-term recommendations on one of the following themes: ISCs; IEPs; teams for additional individual student support and school inclusive education expert teams; PAs; and the function of the system of inclusive education as a whole (e.g., classroom practice, information flow, cooperation between institutions and persons). Group findings were subsequently presented and discussed in a final plenary session. Additionally, moderators prepared reports on their respective group discussions on the basis of templates prepared by the research team.[10]

The materials from the moderated discussions form the basis for the overview presented in this section. The overview focuses on the achievements and remaining barriers identified by participants in the meetings in relation to each of the themes outlined above. As will become apparent, the range of stakeholder attitudes toward the state of inclusive education in Serbia covers a wide spectrum, from internalization of inclusion as a fundamental principle of education coupled with satisfaction with progress to date, through ambivalence combined with various concerns with implementation, to wholesale rejection.

Inter-sectorial committees

The average grade given for the work of the ISCs was 4.2 on a scale of one–five. It was noted in groups on this topic that the grade applies more to the work of the ISCs than to the results of that work, and that some participants did not assign a grade for lack of experience with ISCs, such that the assessment largely reflects the views of ISC members. The most frequently mentioned positive effects of the ISCs' work were improved cooperation with parents and the inclusion of children with disabilities in standard classes made feasible by the introduction of IEPs. A participant in the group on this topic in Novi Sad explained, "We changed the paradigm. Now the most fundamental

[8] See Annex 3 for a table of regional consultation meetings by location and date.
[9] Information on participant composition at the regional consultation meetings is given in Annex 3.
[10] The reporting templates for the regional consultative meetings are provided in Annex 3.

principle is that we observe the child in its natural surroundings. The committee, so to speak, goes to the child, rather than the child going to the committee, although many still don't work like that."

On the other hand, some participants employed in special schools expressed concerns about the consequences of such a paradigm shift for that category of educational institution:

> "I would ask the ISC [...] to pay more attention to children who need the kind of support which our school can provide and to direct them to our school [so that] we take as large a number as possible of children who will not be able to continue their schooling in the standard system." (Zaječar)
>
> "Do you think that the ISC should abolish special schools? Because if we go by the current legislation this is completely certain." (Kragujevac)

Beyond concerns about the role of ISCs in general, the barrier to their successful operation that received most frequent mention was insufficient funding for the support they recommended. Also mentioned in a majority of groups on this topic were insufficient links between sectors, particularly education, health care, and social welfare.

Individual education plans

The overall assessment of IEPs was 3.4 on a scale of one–five, with moderators noting that the figure would be higher if IEPs' potential as a tool were distinguished from teachers' readiness to implement them. On the positive side, mentioned in all groups on this topic were IEPs' effects on the integration of children with needs for additional educational support and the accompanying sensitization of children without such needs. At the same time, some participants expressed concerns that defectologists were excluded from the process of developing and implementing IEPs.

IEPs' adaptability was mentioned in all but one group on this topic, as was the resulting effects on the learning progress of children working according to an IEP. Receiving mention in half of the groups on this topic were various forms of parental engagement with children's education (e.g., communicating with teachers, encouraging children to develop strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses) and children's self-confidence. The process leading from IEP to self-confidence was neatly summarized in the following statement from a participant in the group on this topic in Obrenovac: "An IEP contributes most to self-confidence, as the child gets a better picture of himself, achieves better results […] The child grasps that he is capable of something, gets much more praise than was the case before."

The most frequently observed barriers observed to successful implementation of IEPs were parental engagement and demands on school staff. The former was mentioned in all groups on this topic and points to differences of opinion among meeting participants on the success of IEPs insofar as parental engagement was also mentioned as a benefit of IEPs in half of the groups. Demands on school staff, on the other hand, received attention in all but two groups. In one instance, a participant in a group on another topic (school teams for inclusive education) at the meeting in Kragujevac explained that although developing IEPs is relatively easy, putting an IEP into action requires expert support missing in her school: "Anything can be put on paper – I'll write the IEP – but I expect that the child whom I've been given progresses in school at least a bit, and I don't have help in working with the child […] I'm completely incompetent for work with a child with Down's Syndrome." Also receiving mention as a barrier to successful IEP

implementation in a majority of groups on this topic were the material conditions under which schools operate.

School teams for inclusive education

Expert inclusive education teams and IEP teams were assessed similarly overall, at 3.8 and 3.7, respectively. Of all regional meetings, IEP teams were assessed more favorably than expert inclusive education teams only in Belgrade, Leskovac, and Sombor, with the largest difference (approximately 0.3 points on the one–five scale) observed in Leskovac. Both types of teams were widely appreciated for their role in securing parental engagement in the education of their children. Also mentioned in a majority of meetings was the teams' role in improving the overall school climate and in promoting peer support among teachers in the sharing of knowledge and experience and cooperation among teaching staff.

Recalling the proceedings of the groups on IEPs, the most frequently cited barrier to the successful operation of school teams for inclusive education was insufficient training in inclusive education for team members. Barriers cited in half of the groups on this topic were the absence of mechanisms for the transfer of information between levels of education on the one hand, and insufficient cooperation with parents on the other. As in the case of IEPs, participants were divided on the extent to which school teams for inclusive education had increased parental engagement in children's education. Also mentioned in half of the groups was the amount of administrative work and time constraints involved in the operations of the teams.

Pedagogical assistants

With an average grade of 4.7 on a scale of one–five, PAs were rated higher than any of the other components of inclusive education discussed in the regional meetings, and higher than the system of inclusive education as a whole. Somewhat different from other components, however, a considerable proportion of participants in the regional meetings lacked experience with PAs and for this reason did not assign a grade. Additionally, participants in the group in Novi Sad noted that the appropriate grade for PAs depends on what is being measured, as the PAs' work deserved a grade much higher than the effects of their support.

Among the positive outcomes of the PAs' work, those receiving most frequent mention related to improved academic performance. Often, these effects on performance were mentioned together with improvements in enrollment and attendance rates, and/or in connection with reduced dropout rates. PAs were also widely appreciated for their contribution to a school climate of social and educational inclusion and, more concretely, to the improved integration of children in need of additional educational support among their peers without such needs. Also receiving frequent mention was the support provided by PAs to parents, mostly in the form of practical information.

A recurring theme of discussion on this topic was PAs' target group. Here, there was broad agreement that PAs provide support not only to Roma children, but also to all children in the school in need of additional support. As a PA at the meeting in Sombor put it: "We were Roma assistants only at the beginning. Now we are pedagogical assistants and we work with all children." For some participants, this expansion of PAs' target group raised concerns about the role of defectologists in correctly identifying and addressing needs for additional educational support. In the words of one participant from Belgrade, "Before we talk about pedagogical assistants, we need

to set up inclusion in a much more humane way. What we're doing is inhuman, and without the presence of defectologists, an army of children who attend classes is at a loss!"

Consistent with the more common positive assessments of PAs' work, the main concern raised in relation to PAs—mentioned in all groups in this topic—was their insufficient number relative to the demand for their services. Also receiving frequent mention were PAs' unstable employment arrangements and a lack of clarity and precision in the definition of their tasks. Closely related to the latter, it was observed that PAs sometimes serve as *de facto* personal assistants.

System functionality

With an average grade of 2.9 on a scale of one–five, the system of inclusive education as a whole was assessed less positively than any of the individual components of the system discussed above. Areas of progress received less focus than did issues in need of attention, such that even the improvements mentioned most frequently were recorded in only a minority of groups. Mentioned in four groups as areas of progress were the legislative framework for inclusive education, the inclusiveness of primary education, and peer support among school staff. Peer support among children received mention in three groups on system functionality, as did the role of special schools as resources for inclusive education.

The most frequently cited issue in need of attention was adequate training for school staff on how to approach inclusive education. Whereas this issue was recorded in all but one group on system functionality, inter-sectorial cooperation, pedagogical assistants, and personal assistants were also mentioned in a majority of groups on the system as a whole. With regard to the latter, one parent participating in the meeting in Leskovac reported that her child had not attended school for several months after losing her personal assistant, concluding that "[c]hildren don't have assistants so all of this is reduced to a caricature. In my opinion inclusion is an illusion if it continues to be implemented in this way."

Beyond criticism of the function of the system by stakeholders in favor of educational inclusion, some participants expressed resistance to the notion of inclusive education in general. A representative of a special school participating in the meeting in Obrenovac thus stated "Inclusive education…that's a country dance that we dance but I don't have the feeling that we are really equipping them for what awaits them in life." By way of contrast, among the most positive assessments of the system as a whole was recorded in the group discussing school teams for inclusive education in Sombor: "If someone had told us six years ago that we would get this far with inclusion, I wouldn't have believed them!"

3.6. Case studies

The purpose of including case studies in the analytical work is to complement the more general information gathered from the online survey and regional consultation meetings with a more in-depth look at how schools have coped under the framework for inclusive education introduced in 2009. The word "case" accordingly refers not to an individual child but to a school as a whole. More precisely, the case studies operate on those aspects of functioning that are particularly important in a school with children in needs of additional educational support, such as: an inclusive school policy; measures to increase anti-discrimination and safety in the school environment;

support for the achievement and social integration of students; collaboration with institutions in the local community; and the implementation of policy measures. As will become clear, each case study generated its own set of findings. To the extent that general conclusions can be drawn from the case studies, however, these might be that understanding and acceptance of the framework for inclusive education is incomplete and that a critical mass of motivated school staff is necessary to advance inclusion at school and community levels.

The selection of the four primary schools and one special school on which case studies were produced took into account geographical distribution.[11] It also considered aspects of school environment and population, such as percentage of students in the school with a mental or physical disability; percentage of students in the school from rural areas; percentage of Roma students; poverty in the communities served by the school; and distance of the school and the availability of transportation from the communities served. The research team made use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups for the purpose of collecting detailed information from local-level stakeholders who have direct experience with the day-to-day implementation of inclusive education. The categories of stakeholders consulted for the case studies were similar to those participating in the regional consultative meetings, including representatives of municipal authorities participating in ISCs, regional school administrations, CSWs, public health centers, schools, NGOs, and the Network for Support of Inclusive Education, as well as parents and children. Field research for the case studies was conducted in late April and early May 2015.

Like the discussions at the regional events, the interviews and focus groups conducted to generate the case studies solicited participants' views on the innovations introduced to support inclusive education in Serbia, as well as on the extent to which the various components of inclusive education function together to form a system.[12] Additionally, the interviews with municipal authorities, regional school administrations, and school staff solicited information about relevant features of school context, including the number of students with disabilities, the number of Roma students, and the school's financial situation. Where feasible, focus groups with parents and children were organized for the purpose of collecting information from children with IEPs and their parents on their experiences with the implementation of inclusive education. The reason for organizing focus groups rather than interviews with stakeholders in these categories where possible is the peer-group security offered by focus groups, which makes them likely to be more effective than semi-structured interviews for the purpose of collecting the necessary information from children with IEPs and their parents. The children and parents joining in the focus groups were drawn from the same schools as the members of school staff participating in the semi-structured interviews.

A third method employed in conducting research for the case studies was field observation. For this purpose, a school observation matrix was developed and deployed in each school.[13] Additionally, visits to some schools afforded opportunities to observe teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions in a classroom environment. These unstructured observations were useful for getting a clearer sense of the interpersonal dynamics of inclusive education.

[11] The districts in which the selected schools are located include Belgrade, Kolubara, Moravica, Pčinja, and South Bačka.
[12] Interview guides and questions from the focus groups are included in Annex 4.
[13] The school observation matrix used for the case studies is included in Annex 4.

Case study 1: Inclusion of a child with ADHD[14]

Context

The municipality in which the school selected for this case study is located has four preschool institutions in urban areas and two in rural areas, seven primary schools (with 26 satellite schools), and three secondary schools. There are about 3,100 pupils in primary and 1,200 in secondary education. Out of the 150 million dinars allocated per year for the education sector, 6 million are spent for inclusive education. The school staff asserts that the municipality is mostly open to their suggestions, but that the lack of money is evident (especially in the case of personal assistant engagement).

The school selected is located about one kilometer from the center of the town, on a landslide that required huge investments several years ago to strengthen its foundation. Consequently, it was not possible to build an additional building with classrooms, which is necessary for this school since there are no specialized classrooms (except for the computer laboratory with about 30 computers). Apart from the lack of space for all pupils (about 500), the school is nicely decorated (there is even a small fountain inside) and there is student artwork on the walls. It has running water, indoor toilets, central heating, and a small library. This school has been involved in several projects and currently is an "eco-school," which promotes sustainable development and ecological values. Besides this central facility, there are six satellite facilities with one to 70 pupils. The dropout rate is extremely low.

Inter-sectorial committee

The ISC was founded in 2010 and as stated by the representative of the municipality, consists of devoted people who get along well and who were chosen on the basis of recommendations from the respective institutions. The municipality has provided much training for the members of the ISC, who usually gather in the office of the municipality before the beginning of the school year and provide recommendations within 10 days. For this school year, the ISC provided about 100 opinions, but the head of the sector for social activities from the municipality insists also on a review of some of them in order to determine whether children need some new kind of support. The head of the sector characterized cooperation between the ISC and this school in positive terms and noted that ISC members always underline that they receive the best prepared requests from this school.

By way of contrast, the school psychologist and the coordinator of the inclusion team stated that the ISC does not have enough of an inclusive stance and expressed their impression that the members were randomly chosen. A representative of the regional school administration expressed a similar opinion and presented two weaknesses in the work of the ISC. First, it is sometimes more concerned about the teachers and so protects their interests more than those of the child, such that

[14] For this case study, interviews with the following persons were conducted: the head of the sector for social affairs from the municipality, the head of the regional school administration, the school psychologist, pedagogue, and principal, a class teacher who is the coordinator of the inclusive education expert team, a history teacher, and a personal assistant engaged at the school. As for the pupils, one interviewee was a seventh-grader with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) for whom IEPs have been developed and who changed schools twice before coming to this school in the fourth grade. The other pupil interviewed was a fifth grader who attends the same class as another student with speech disabilities. The other of the boys with ADHD was also interviewed. In addition, three classes were observed, and particular attention was paid to the activities of the pupils for whom IEPs had been created.

"there is more damage than benefits to the child." Second, "they are not ready to place professionalism above the local community attitudes and practices."

The school psychologist expressed the view that the complete and detailed documentation prepared by the school team has contributed to some extent to the ISC's better understanding of what inclusion means in practice and which measures really help. The ISC accepts the measures proposed by the school, but the municipality does not have enough money to finance everything. In the case of the boy with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who attends the school, the municipality provided a personal assistant and services in the special school (use of the sensory room), but the parents had to cover travel expenses. Concerning assistive technology, no funds were available for this kind of investment, but the head of the sector for social activities asserted that the municipalities plan to purchase this technology, noting that it would be most practical to have an assistive technology center within the municipality that could lend equipment and material to schools according to their needs.

Individual education plans and teams for additional student support

Most children who need additional support come from low-stimulation environments. There are five pupils with chronic illnesses, two with behavioral problems, and only two Roma. In total, 24 IEPs have been created for this school year (18 IEPs1, two IEPs2, and four IEPs3). As estimated by all the interviewees, IEPs are a very useful measure that contributes most of all to the self-esteem and socialization of the pupils and thus to their sense of well-being. Pupils with IEPs are very well accepted by their peers; as the class teacher explained: "I was able to explain to other children that he had a special plan, so they were not jealous when I used lower criteria for him. Peers accepted him better. And he started to value himself by comparing his actual with previous achievements, and not by comparing himself with others."

Through having a peer with additional support needs, other children develop empathy, humanity, and "grow as persons." A fifth-grader said: "Our role is to help, to make friends with them and to respect them like we respect others." The class teacher and school psychologist agreed that the use of the IEP made teachers more relaxed. On the other hand, teachers still worry whether they neglect other children because of the pupil with the IEP. The school principal has the impression that the teachers have started to show more understanding toward the pupils after they started to use IEPs and explained that "one cannot be a good teacher before one has worked with both excellent and weak students."

Some parents benefit from the IEP because it makes them more involved in their children's schooling and gives them some guidelines for additional support at home. However, some parents do not have the time or capacity to implement the proposed measures. As presented by a history teacher, there is a need for additional education for parents who think that "children are born this way and nothing can change them."

In this school, IEPs have been created primarily by the school psychologist, who developed IEPs for individual children and explained to teachers how they should adjust this plan to their specific subjects. Without these concrete guidelines, she believes, it would not be possible to make teachers create and implement IEPs. Even those who were reluctant at the beginning started to consult the

school psychologist, pedagogue, and personal assistant and to implement IEPs when they saw their colleagues' successes with them.

The inclusive education expert team meets rarely (once per semester), but short spontaneous meetings and consultations occur regularly. As explained by the coordinator, the class teacher: "When teachers are assigned as members of a team, they feel it as an obligation and want to cover this obligation by their regular 40-hour workweek and not to spend their free time on it. So when they have short exchanges in the hall during the breaks, they do not feel that is a big obligation. Moreover, they get suggestions immediately and can solve the problem soon after it happened, so this is more efficacious than big meetings long after something big happened." During the stay at the school, it was possible to see that teachers who have a dilemma about any student consult the school psychologist and pedagogue and ask for advice. The role of the inclusive education expert team is also to monitor all the children and their families, to make contacts with other institutions (they highlighted valuable cooperation with the CSW), and promote inclusive values at the school (e.g., they organized a school assembly with Serbian paralympic champions). In order to make this team function better, the coordinator proposed recognition of their activities in the 40-hour work week or some financial compensation for the work, not only because of the additional time they spend, but also as a sign of the recognition of the importance of the team's work. In general, time foreseen for preparing classes should be extended for those teachers who work with the IEP students, and classes should be smaller (e.g., there should be no more than 20 pupils in a class where there are also pupils with IEPs). The history teacher stated that this team should, if they had more time, visit and provide feedback on *all* teachers' classes more often and thus put small but continuous pressure on them to work better with all pupils.

Pedagogical assistants and personal assistants

Since this school (and the entire regional school administration) does not have any PAs, school management lobbied the municipality to fund personal assistants, who are in fact engaged at tasks that a PA would perform. Currently the school has two assistants, one engaged for a boy with ADHD and the other for a chronically ill girl. As explained by the coordinator of the inclusive education expert team, the municipality provides personal assistants only for children who are ill or for those who might endanger other children, and those who have some cognitive and learning difficulties are neglected. All interviewees agreed that the role of the personal assistants is very valuable; they contribute to the child's academic achievements and socialization as well as better classroom discipline and group cohesion; they also mediate in conflict situations and generally contribute to the feeling of safety of all children. However, their income is poor and their status unstable, with interviewees agreeing that the assistants should be employed as equal members of the school staff and financed by MoESTD (and not the municipality). They should also attend specialized trainings.

In the case of the boy with ADHD, the engagement of the personal assistant was not initially welcomed by the children. Peers blamed the boy for the assistant's presence in all classes and believed that she was spoiling their fun at breaks. As described by the boy with ADHD, "We all feared her small notebook." In this special case, the role of the personal assistant was very complex, since she also had to observe the children and make notes about their behavior and actions toward this boy in order to demonstrate that he was not always the aggressor but was often also the victim of the other children. Due to previous transfers from other schools and the many

rumors that followed his family, this school had problems with the parents of other children, but thanks to the engagement of the personal assistant—who shared her observations at the parent meetings regularly—and intensive psychological counseling for the boy provided by the school psychologist and pedagogue, they succeeded in establishing a positive atmosphere. Compared to the time the boy first came to the school, when there were incidents every day, in this school year the boy was only twice involved in conflict situations. As the mother of the boy expressed, "This was the only school where we experienced understanding and support. For me it is fine if you do not have enough knowledge. I also had to learn everything about his problem, but one should be humane and show a positive attitude. We would not succeed without the help of the people from the school." What was also very important for the boy was the absence of favoritism of particular children, as described by the pupil: "For our class teacher we were all equal. […] Class teachers want to help; they organize remedial and additional classes. They do not have their favorite pupils. They simply like working with children."

The school receives help from a speech therapist who is engaged in four primary schools and can therefore provide her treatments at school only once a week. The interviewees agreed she should come to the school at least twice a week.

Functionality and effectiveness of the system of inclusive education

The inclusive practice of this school was acknowledged by all interviewees. In the classrooms, one could also notice that children with additional support needs were well accepted by their peers and involved in activities but also provided with individualized, adjusted materials and assignments. The school is also known for its readiness to enroll students who are rejected by other schools, and due to this practice, the school psychologist and pedagogue created a plan of support for newly enrolled students. Values of tolerance, understanding, and cooperation are also adopted by the other students, as reflected by a fifth-grader's answer when he was asked about pupils' reactions to children with additional support needs: "Maybe they are weaker learners, but I do not mind their poor grades – for me it is important that they are good friends. […]We all want that weaker learners become good and respected members of the society." Classes via Skype were also organized when one pupil broke her leg and had to rest at home.

Regarding the functioning of the system as whole, school staff believes that the local authorities should be more sensitive and involved and that MoESTD should have more control over local authorities' use of money. It was felt that the persistent practice of enrolling Roma students in the special schools must be stopped by local authorities and the ministry. MoESTD should also provide information on time frames for delivering data and give reasonable deadlines (e.g., the school was given only a few days to provide data on the pupils who needed free textbooks). The rulebooks on the teachers' work should be revised, since many tasks, including those related to inclusion, are not recognized and financially supported. Moreover, the school psychologist contends that the categories of additional support needs defined by the ministry, which all psychologists must rely on when writing reports, are not detailed enough. Both the school psychologist and the representative of the regional school administration mentioned poor competencies and resistance toward inclusion among some members of staff in preschool institutions and also pointed to a lack of cooperation with others actors of the system. Finally, when talking about human resources, in addition to more and better trained pedagogical or personal assistants, there is a need for more education for all teachers and professional specialists, largely

in order to change their attitudes. As explained by the mother of the boy with ADHD: "Everything is nicely defined in the rulebooks. The application is what is needed. Every school should work on its own openness. People always look for excuses, but only good will is necessary."

Overall, this case study points to the importance of openness and persistence on the part of key school staff – in this case the school psychologist, pedagogue, and personal assistant – in order to create and maintain a school climate of tolerance, transparency, and cooperation.

Case study 2: Integration of Roma children in the school and city environment[15]

Context: a city and a school in the city

The school is located in a town of about 100,000 inhabitants. The city has eight primary and five secondary schools, three departments of private universities, and a more or less standard repertoire of cultural institutions and sports facilities. Of all the city schools, this one is the closest to the downtown, located only 500 meters away from the town center in a quiet, dead-end, narrow alley. The school yard is not large, but is equipped with benches and greenery and extends to an open sports field with bleachers and a high fence.

This school year the school enrolled 708 students in 32 classes, an average of 22 students per class; there is no satellite facility. Out of the 708 students, 42 are Roma (slightly more than 3 percent), while the rest are Serbian. Roma students are distributed in each class. The school is located near a large Roma settlement inhabited predominantly by urban, middle-class residents. Apart from this settlement, the school enrolls Roma children from two nearby villages in which Roma live in conditions of extreme poverty.

In the municipality there is a total of 240 Roma children of primary school age, divided into three urban and four rural schools. School coverage at this age is complete. With 42 Roma pupils, the school covers slightly less than 20 percent of the Roma primary school population. One Roma child has an IEP1 due to intellectual disability. In the past five years, the school has participated in several projects that supported the inclusion of Roma children, for example, DILS from 2009 to 2012, "World Book Day" in 2010, "For the First Time at the Museum" in 2009, and "Cyclo-Student" in 2012.

Educational policy of Roma inclusion at the municipality level

In the LSG there is a coordinator for Roma. With the coordinator of social affairs, he is actively engaged in the education and social and health protection of Roma. The local government has adopted policy documents on long-term and one-time actions, implemented projects, and achieved effects. A report entitled "Education Inclusion of Roma" documents the activities carried out at the municipal level and the key problems, and also identified priority areas for further action.

[15] Interviews for this case study were conducted with representatives of the municipality, including the head of the sector for social affairs and the coordinator for human and minority rights. Also interviewed were the president of the local Roma organization, the head of the regional school administration, and a member of the ISC. In the school, the principal, school psychologist, pedagogue, two classroom teachers, and two subject teachers were interviewed. Also, four focus group discussions were carried out with four–seven participants each. The participants in the focus groups were Roma students and their parents and non-Roma children and their parents.

According to this report, the municipality has achieved full coverage of children in primary school education and in the compulsory preschool program. In the early developmental age (three–five years), there are no Roma children in preschool institutions. About 50 percent of the high school–age Roma population is attending high school. According to this report, both at the secondary and primary levels of schooling, Roma children demonstrate a distinctive below-average school achievement, higher absenteeism, and a higher dropout rate. From its funds, the municipality covers, or attempts to cover, the cost of textbooks, meals, transportation, and field trips. Through the services of the CSW, the municipality is trying to establish cooperation with parents in order to reduce school absenteeism.

The municipality's coordinator for social affairs recommends that schools with a higher percentage of Roma students engage Roma parents in school boards and parent councils (there are none currently). Monthly scholarships are provided to 50 high school students and five university students. The coordinator identified the following priority issues for resolution: a lack of support in secondary education for determining additional education or career opportunities and a lack of mentoring and support for employment at the university level. There is no instruction on the Romany language, and bilingualism and Roma culture are not sufficiently promoted.

Educational policy of Roma inclusion at the school level

Several indicators demonstrate a good integration of Roma children in the school. The data show that there is no significant variation in the average school achievement of children in relation to the average achievement of the school as a whole. Two school years ago, one Roma student was a candidate for valedictorian. The absenteeism of Roma children is slightly higher, but the difference is not dramatic. There are no dropouts from school, and in previous school years all Roma pupils were enrolled in secondary school.

Schools provide assistance on a fairly regular basis to children and families through humanitarian organizations. The school provides musical instruments and has offered them to Roma pupils for use in music school (which half of the Roma pupils attend). By participating in the school choir and the orchestra, they improve their participation in school life and their status in the peer environment. This year the school organized a free final exam preparatory training course for all Roma pupils in the municipality. However, only a small number of students were interested, much smaller than in the previous year, when classes were organized for all students. According to the principal of the school: "Of course, it's always better to be part of the peer collective than isolated, even if the intentions were good."

Inter-sectorial committee

An ISC exists, operates with a consistent composition, and meets regularly (once a month). According to one member, the committee's job is difficult because it is emotionally demanding, but not difficult in terms of decision making, because the proposals that come to them are for the most part justified and well reasoned. Most of the claims relate to the provision of a personal assistant, assistive technologies, or adapted teaching resources.

The expenses associated with the measures recommended by the ISC exceed the budgetary capacity of the municipality. Hence, most of the ISC recommendations remain unrealized. For example, in the absence of criteria for prioritization, the municipality has not funded any of the 20

requests for a personal assistant. This vicious circle could be interrupted if the municipal budget were planned in accordance with the current recommendations of the ISC. Until then, the role of the ISC will remain unclear and its work will "hang in the air."

Individual education plans and teams for additional student support

According to school expert staff, the school has 11 children with intellectual and one child with physical disabilities. Ninety children come from rural areas. Except Roma, there are no other minorities. In total, IEPs have been developed for six children. Parents and children both expressed satisfaction with the overall experience with IEPs in the school, with school achievement and obligations that are consistent with children's capabilities. Positive effects are identified also in other students and parents, who have developed a kind of empathy, solidarity, and acceptance of diversity. It seems that only teachers have not benefited, as for them, an IEP is seen as an obligation requiring more lesson preparation and a greater time commitment. The teams that form around the IEPs generally work well, although their functioning is usually based on the enthusiasm or the responsibility of one person.

Inclusive education expert team

The school's expert team for inclusive education was established in 2009. Its main contribution is to enable parents to participate actively in the education of their child. According to the assessment of teachers and school expert staffs, it is a substantial contribution because without it, parents are often left exhausted, helpless, frustrated, and on edge by the poor level of information. From the perspective of the team, there are two basic problems in their work. First, they often find themselves in the role of counselor, even though they are unsure and in need of additional help and training. Second, teachers have different beliefs and personal theories about the ways in which teaching could be individualized and differentiated, though even more often, they were not even interested in trying them.

On the other hand, there are neither institutionalized procedures for cooperation with partners outside the school nor an established way of exchanging information. Hence, members of the expert team try to achieve their goals through the ISC or through personal contacts, aware that none of these strategies may be effective.

Due to the fact that there is only one Roma child with an IEP in the school, Roma children and their parents are not frequent partners of this team.

Pedagogical assistants

In this municipality, there are five PAs in primary schools and one in the preschool institution. The current PA has been at the school for two school years, while the previous one went to the Republican Office for Human and Minority Rights. The assistant's position and roles are clearly defined, and the activities are comprehensive: from direct work with children and their families to cooperation with institutions at the national and municipal levels. The PA does not participate in education in any way, but often mediates between teachers, children, and parents.

The most important part of the assistant's activities is direct work with families, most commonly due to absence from school. The reasons for the absenteeism, which is critical enough that it warrants intervention, could be seen as "objective" and explainable by the poverty in which

families live ("they do not even have [money] for food") or practical (child helps parents), and sometimes they simply say "Why I should go to school?" The PA has developed a strategy for approaching the family: "If you say anything bad about the child, there will be a hassle. It is good to praise the child and say what the teacher said good about him." Regarding educational achievement, the PA expressed the view that the children most need help in making a realistic estimation and selection of secondary school, since they often settle for inferior schools. At the level of families, the biggest help would be employment.

According to the estimates of all interviewees, of all the measures that the system introduced to support inclusive education, the effects of PAs' work are the most immediate, obvious, and valuable.

Functionality and effectiveness of the system of inclusive education

It is not easy to reconstruct a picture of the whole system based on individual experiences and partial insights, so the teachers were wary of these assessments. Their main characteristic of the whole system is the feeling that they personally were not and are not now sufficiently prepared for the new situations, relationships, and needs that have arisen with inclusive education. Moreover, they are not sure about the sustainability of the concept as a whole under current conditions. On the other hand, the parents of Roma children were not easy to engage in conversation, and the picture they aired is quite idealized. However, both groups could identify school and municipal policies that contribute to the inclusiveness of Roma education and evaluated the overall school climate and current results positively.

When we talk about the systemic measures that support the inclusiveness of education, PAs and school inclusive teams are seen as well-designed measures that produce obvious results. On the other hand, the ISC has not been sufficiently integrated into the system, such that it lacks the power to monitor the children as well as a basis for planning future activities.

Every example of inclusive practice is a good opportunity to learn, and there are lessons that can be derived from this example. Generally, children are well accepted by other children and know how to be with them; the bigger problem is often the adults. The earlier the integration process is started, the easier it is. The process is more difficult in larger areas and larger schools. In dealing with children, it is important to support and repair what works less well, but it is equally important to give the children an opportunity to demonstrate what is working properly.

Case study 3: Inclusion in a rural setting[16]

Context

Located just off a dirt road in the center of a village of approximately 200 inhabitants, the school's central facility is attended by children not only from the village, but also from numerous other villages within a radius of several kilometers. The main school, which covers grades 1–8, is attended by approximately 90 children in seven classes, with a total of three classes (of which one combines two grade levels) for grades 1–4 and four classes for grades 5–8. The school participated in DILS from 2009 to 2012.

In addition to the central facility, the school operates six satellite facilities (*izdvojena odeljenja*) in more remote villages. The largest of these facilities is located on mountainous terrain approximately 10 kilometers from the main facility. The satellite facility is attended by 19 children in six classes covering grades 1–8, with grades 1–4 taught in classes combining two grade levels each.

Renovated in 2009, the central school has running water, indoor toilets, central heating, a small library, and a computer laboratory, as well as an asphalt sports field. Conditions in the visited satellite facility are more basic, with heating provided by wood stoves located in the classrooms.

According to school staff, the dropout rate from the main school and the satellite facilities is low. Additionally, all children who complete grade 8 continue to secondary education, with the nearest secondary school located approximately 10 kilometers away.

With the exception of one Roma child in the main facility, the pupil population of the school as a whole is composed of Serbs. Parents participating in a focus group in the central school characterized the atmosphere in the school as "familial," explaining that all inhabitants of the village know one another, most since childhood. Parents also expressed satisfaction with the function of the school's parent councils and board. Additionally, the guardian of the school's sole Roma pupil (a close relative of the child) reported good relations with the village's non-Roma majority in general, with the parents of other children attending the school, and with school staff.

A total of three children attending the school are recognized as having needs for additional educational support: two in the central school and one in the visited satellite facility. The parents and guardian of these three children expressed satisfaction with the respective children's academic

[16] In the central school facility, an individual interview was held with the school principal. Additionally, a group interview brought together six teachers. Also conducted in the central school facility was a focus group with seven parents of children enrolled in the school, including two parents of children with needs for additional educational support. A brief additional meeting was held with those two parents to provide them with an opportunity to offer views that they might not have been comfortable expressing in the company of parents of children without similar needs. In the satellite facility, a group interview was carried out with three teachers, including the coordinator of the inclusive education expert team. Individual interviews were conducted with one parent each of children with and without needs for additional educational support who attended classes in the satellite facility. The visit to the satellite facility also included observation of a class attended by a child with needs for additional educational support. At the level of municipal government, an interview was conducted with two members of the ISC, one of whom serves as coordinator. Finally, an interview was held with two representatives of the Network for Support of Inclusive Education: one pedagogue in a school other than the one selected for the case study, the other employed in the regional school administration.

progress and with their treatment by school staff and by other children. More specifically, the mother of one child with additional educational support needs in the main facility reported that her child regularly receives help with school assignments from her classmates, while both the father and teachers of a similarly designated child in the satellite facility characterized the child as a favorite among other children in the facility. The visit to the satellite facility also provided an opportunity to observe the child with additional educational support needs sitting together and singing with two peers in music class.

Inter-sectorial committee

Following a break in its operations, the ISC was constituted for a second time in November 2013. From its reconstitution through April 2015, the ISC received 28 requests for support.

The function of the ISC received mixed reviews not only from external stakeholders but also from the interviewed members of the ISC, who, though assessing inter-sectorial cooperation favorably, noted the need for additional training for ISC members and for the participation of a speech therapist and defectologist. Additional needs cited by ISC members were more precise regulations and higher levels of funding for ISC operations. Members of the ISC also expressed doubts about inclusive education in general, including but not limited to the views that children without needs for additional educational support suffer under the post-2009 arrangement and that the pre-2009 arrangement was better overall.

Among stakeholders external to the ISC, the most positive assessments came from school staff, who characterized their cooperation with the ISC as satisfactory. At the same time, however, members of school staff noted that their contacts with the ISC are infrequent and suggested that the quality of the support provided could be improved by holding meetings in the school that included parents as well as school staff. Whereas none of the parents of children attending the central school reported contacts with the ISC, the parent of the child with additional educational support needs in the satellite school expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of his request for a personal assistant and transport for his daughter.

Also reporting negative experiences with the ISC were the interviewed representatives of the Network for Support to Inclusive Education (one of whom was employed by the regional school administration), who observed a tendency to refer children to special schools whose needs could be addressed in standard schools. These stakeholders further characterized the ISC as closed to members of the Network. On a more general level, representatives of the Network characterized the ISCs as the weakest component of the system of inclusive education, while at the same time noting that the expectations placed on ISCs—particularly by parents—are sometimes unrealistic.

Individual education plans and teams for additional student support

Both the central and the visited satellite schools include children whose learning is organized around an adapted work program (IEP1). In the central school, the two children with an IEP are a Roma girl in the second grade (the only non-Serb in the school), who started school with a delay of several years, and a Serbian girl without a specific diagnosis in the seventh grade. The child learning according to an adapted work program in the satellite school is enrolled in the fifth grade and has multiple disabilities.

A team for additional student support has been formed for each of the three children with an IEP. Whereas both school staff and the guardians of the three children expressed satisfaction with the overall function of the teams and with guardian participation in them, stakeholders in both categories also took the view that the teams merely formalized cooperation that had taken place in the school prior to the introduction of inclusive education. Additionally, members of school staff reported difficulties in developing and implementing the IEPs, mostly for lack of access to expertise not available within the school; as one teacher put it, "We want to, but we don't know how." Related complaints from school staff concerned the absence of precise instructions, with frequent mention of a verbal order not to assign negative grades to children with an IEP. Additionally, teachers noted that classes consisting primarily of children without needs for additional educational support but combining two grade levels make it more difficult to address needs for additional support in the classroom. Overall, teaching staff presented their experiences with IEPs as examples of successful improvisation.

Inclusive education expert team

The school's inclusive education expert team was formed in 2011 and consists of five members. The team includes the father of the child learning according to an adapted work program in the satellite school, who expressed satisfaction with his role in the team while other members of the team appreciated his engagement. Covering all six satellite schools as well as the main school, the team meets on a monthly basis. Some members of the team noted that it would be useful to meet more frequently, but pointed to difficult terrain as a barrier to more frequent meetings. Recalling positive experiences in cooperation with a speech therapist in the framework of the DILS project, members of school staff participating on the team felt the absence of this profile as a gap in the team. Also mentioned was the need for regular access to a defectologist, as well as to expert literature.

Pedagogical assistants

Consistent with practice throughout Serbia, as a school without considerable numbers of Roma pupils, the school lacks PAs in both the main school and the satellites. When questioned about the absence of PAs in the school, some members of school staff pointed to the lack of a corresponding need due to the small size of the local Roma population. Although PAs were not missed, several stakeholders, including not only teaching staff and parents of children with needs for additional educational support but also members of the ISC, noted the need for personal assistants. Problems cited in relation to personal assistants included a lack of clarity about funding and training arrangements, as well as the requirement that such assistants not be close relatives of the persons to whom they are assigned.

Functionality and effectiveness of the system of inclusive education

The information gathered in the course of the field visit suggests that the school delivers inclusive education in an effective way. At the same time, close interpersonal relations within small local communities, combined with concerns raised by stakeholders about ISC operations and the sparseness of outside expert support and training for inclusive education more broadly, raise questions about the extent to which the school's apparent successes with inclusive education can be attributed to the system introduced in 2009. Additionally, attitudes that children with needs for additional educational support belong in special schools persist among school staff as well as within the ISC.

Assessing the functionality of the system of inclusive education in predominantly negative terms, members of school staff pointed to the need for more frequent and detailed guidance and good practice examples, as well as for a higher level of material support for schools and teachers. For their part, members of the ISC noted that children with needs for additional educational support are increasingly integrated in standard classes and that funding is generally inadequate. On the other hand, notwithstanding his dissatisfaction with the ISC's rejection of his requests for a personal assistant and transport for his daughter, the parent of the child with additional educational support needs at the satellite school noted that the support provided by the school was an important factor in the family's decision not to move down the mountain and into the town that forms the center of the municipality, where the family also owns a house. Overall, this case study demonstrates the relevance of personal capacity, motivation, and relations in an environment of sparse resources for inclusive education.

Case study 4: Meeting needs stemming from urban poverty[17]

Context

The school selected for this case study is located in a Belgrade city municipality (not an LSG), which puts some limitations on its activities and jurisdiction, mostly related to financing, as stated by the principal of the sector for social affairs. The municipal government has established a wide network of different stakeholders in order to support inclusion. Meetings with all the principals from educational institutions and representatives of health care and social welfare institutions, police, and NGOs are organized on a monthly basis. Many projects dealing with inclusion, prevention of risky behaviors, and security have been organized; in addition, wheelchair ramps have been provided in all schools in the municipality, and in some schools, toilets adjusted to the needs of wheelchair users have been built.

There are 26 kindergartens, 12 primary schools (with a total of more than 10,000 pupils), nine secondary schools, and one special school. Some of these institutions are located in suburban areas, like the school presented here.

The school is located near the main road, partially enclosed by a fence and in relatively poor condition. Overall reconstruction was planned for this year but has been postponed for financial reasons. There is a wheelchair ramp at the entrance to the school as well as a library, a small and poorly equipped gym, and a single specialized classroom for computer science.

The school counts 785 pupils (about 25 per class). Most come from low socioeconomic status families in which parents are unemployed and have completed no more than secondary education. Student-teacher relationships are warm and the general atmosphere in the school is pleasant and

[17] For this case study, interviews were conducted with the municipal head of the sector for social affairs and the head of the ISC. In the school, interviews were conducted with the school principal, pedagogue, psychologist, a classroom teacher (member of the inclusive education expert team), and an external associate from the special school. A focus group with five parents of children with additional support needs was organized, and an interview was conducted with one parent of a child who attends the same class as one of the children with additional support needs. Finally, one girl, a fifth-grader who attends the same class as one of the children with additional support needs (whose mother participated in the focus group) was interviewed.

cheerful. The head of the sector for social affairs confirms that the school climate is supportive and that the school is open to all children and parents.

According to the records of the school pedagogue and psychologist, the category of pupils who need additional support includes an increasing number of children with speech, reading, and writing difficulties; attention disorders; and learning difficulties in general. There are several pupils with intellectual deficits and behavioral problems, one pupil with cerebral palsy, many children from dysfunctional families, 13 pupils who live more than 10 kilometers away from the school, and about 40 Roma students. As one class teacher stated, there are on average three–four pupils per class with additional education support needs.

The dropout rate is very low, but the problem of school absenteeism is evident (especially in the Roma population). Early school leavers are usually Roma pupils whose parents, as stated by the school psychologist, do not support schooling and put pressure on children to work. In line with the Law on the Foundations of the Education System, the school regularly informs the magistrate about the cases of irregular school attendance, but the court rarely punishes the parents. The school therefore invests more in preventive measures, providing three free meals for all poor children, collecting clothes and school materials throughout the year for delivery to poor children, and offering excursions and sports activities free of charge. In general, the culture of humanity and success (academics and sports) is promoted at the school. The transition from primary to secondary school was characterized as unproblematic and continuation rates are high. Almost all pupils enroll in the school that was the first on their wish list, a trend that the school pedagogue and psychologist ascribe partially to the school's well-organized career guidance office.

In addition to participating in projects supported by the municipality, the school initiated its own humanitarian initiative, "A Jar Full of Love," during which students collected food for their less-affluent peers. Additionally, several teachers and a representative of the local authorities visited a school in Slovenia in the framework of bilateral cooperation on inclusion. Further, the school principal introduced a successful free program of physical exercises for children from the community with cerebral palsy (including one from the school).

Inter-sectorial committee

The ISC in this municipality has faced many problems since its founding in 2010. Prominent among these are a lack of financing (e.g., members worked for two years without compensation) and delays with contracting. The head of the ISC explained that many schools are not well informed about the ISC's jurisdiction. They expect the ISC to do the testing and provide an assessment of the child, and do not start with any modifications without the ISC's opinion. Moreover, sometimes the ISC receives requests without any information on the child (especially in cases when parents submit the request).

The head of the sector for social affairs added that parents are sometimes confused about the ISC's role. They were familiar with the work of the categorization committee and with the rights that that committee's decision gave them, but those rights no longer apply. On the other hand, some parents are initially intimidated by the ISC but are pleasantly surprised when they meet its members. According to this stakeholder, a key obstacle in the work of the ISC is that it can only

provide recommendations; "their opinion is not binding." As a result, the ISC cannot be sure whether schools adhere to these recommendations.

The head of the ISC stated that it had good cooperation with the school, which had solicited an opinion from the ISC on a relatively small number of occasions. One reason for the low frequency of consultation with the ISC, according to the school staff, is the school's excellent cooperation with two defectologists from the local special school, who help with assessments, IEP preparation, modification and evaluation, and teaching. As one school staff member stated, the opinions of the ISC are not useful because it simply recommends the measures proposed by the school to the ISC.

Members of school staff also reported excessive waiting times for the ISC's opinion. In most cases, this is not a problem, but when the class teacher is reluctant to make use of the IEP, she does not start with any adjustments before she receives the opinion of ISC. Parents who had experience with the ISC were not satisfied with its work, mostly because they had to wait too long.

With regard to the measures proposed by the ISC, the head of the committee explained that some measures (e.g., going to the swimming pool) are not available in a given specific municipality, such that in the absence of cooperation between municipalities, a child might not be able to access the recommended measures free of charge. Another obstacle to the work of the ISC is finding a time when all three members are free to meet and work on the cases. Finally, the special pedagogue expressed the view that a defectologist should be involved as a constant member of the ISC.

Individual education plans

An IEP1 has been developed for only four pupils and an IEP2 has not been used at all. For the majority of children with additional support needs, individualization is perceived as the most appropriate measure. Examples of adjustments provided by the class teacher included positioning the child in the first row, together with a pupil who is academically successful, and providing questions that "lead" the child when writing essays. Peers are used as a source of support, and all stakeholders agree that children with additional support needs are very well accepted and integrated at school.

Although all interviewees consider IEPs a good measure that affects both academic success and socio-emotional growth, school staff notice that the administrative work involved makes teachers reluctant to use them. The special pedagogue associated with a special school further explained that class teachers do not feel at ease when they write an IEP because they do not feel competent. The special pedagogue also mentioned cases when teachers are frustrated with their failure to teach some children basic reading and writing, which sometimes prevents them from noticing children's potential and strengths in other fields. According to the experience of the special pedagogue, some of teachers who use IEP1 do not understand that it is only a small adjustment, so they lower their criteria too much and have problems when grading.

The lack of parent support and child truancy are two of the most discouraging factors for teachers. As one teacher described, she created an IEP for a Roma boy, but since he was absent almost the entire semester, she has to revise her plans and invest more time without any guarantee that he will start to attend school more regularly. She said: "Those for whom we write IEPs are protected, there is no responsibility on the part of the parents, so if they do not cooperate, we cannot do anything."

The special pedagogue asserted that some parents are afraid of IEPs because they are not well informed about their use and effects. Parents are thus rarely involved in the process of individualization or IEP creation and evaluation. A mother of a seventh-grader with an IEP who is very engaged in her son's education stated that subject teachers do not follow the IEP; instead, they tend to give him better marks than he deserves because that is easier than adjusting their teaching and assessments.

Teams for additional student support

The school's inclusive education expert team was established in 2010. It is not very active, meeting once in two months on average. The team is primarily oriented toward planning support for children, but its members do not perceive their wider role in promoting inclusion and improvement at the school level. Members have pupils with additional support needs in their class and are therefore motivated to join the team. Parents are not included in the work of the team, but one teacher expressed the view that all parents whose children have additional support needs are familiar with the team's work. The psychologist stated that the "small" teams formed around IEPs have a more important role, but that they often do not function as they should because teachers are too passive and expect too much instruction from the psychologist and pedagogue. The class teacher asserted that a way to motivate subject teachers to individualize their instruction should be found, since some still reject the idea of inclusive education. In general, it is difficult to coordinate team members' everyday duties in such a way as to enable more frequent meetings.

Pedagogical assistant

There is no PA engaged at this school (and only three in the whole municipality), but all the stakeholders believe that a PA would contribute significantly to the quality of inclusive education. However, the school has external support from two defectologists from the special school located in the same municipality, who each come two times a week. Sometimes they are in the classroom, but more often they work with the pupils separately during or after the regular classes.

Functionality and effectiveness of the system of inclusive education

According to the school pedagogue, one of the biggest obstacles to inclusive education is the lack of cooperation with the CSW. When teachers notice that a child is depressed, often ill, or absent for several days, they visit the child and talk to the parents, and in many cases, they determine that the child is neglected or abused. Reports sent from the school to the CSW often meet with no response. Moreover, the centers require a large number of documents (and in some cases, children do not have any personal documents), procedures are very slow, and financial help is missing. The school pedagogue also expressed dissatisfaction with the response of the Roma National Council to a request from the school for help in the case of one Roma family (see the textbox below). On the other hand, the school cooperates successfully with local authorities and one local NGO. The overall impression is that school staff use their private connections and mobilize motivated parents to resolve the problem as soon as possible in the absence of institutional links and support.

All interviewees from the school claimed that the employment of a defectologist would make inclusive education easier. As a defectologist explained: "The idea of inclusive education is weird without defectologists! It is good for typical children – to show them that there are different children and to foster them to help others, but the children with special education needs lose a lot." Better education of all staff is also necessary, as are smaller class sizes. Notwithstanding these

shortcomings, the mother of a seventh-grader with additional support needs stated, "When I hear stories of other parents, I must say I am satisfied. But inclusive practice in Serbia deserves the lowest mark. However, if I had to choose again, I would again enroll my son in the standard school. In special schools children do not have a future. Here they are in a healthier surrounding, they are more motivated."

This case study illustrates the narrow and conservative vision of inclusive education which persists among some defectologists and other teaching staff. At the same time, it shows that educational inclusion cannot be separated from social inclusion: Inclusive practices can be achieved and children's learning advanced when a group of people (in this case, mostly the school pedagogue, psychologist, and principal) shares an understanding of the ways in which social factors influence academic performance and works together together as a team to establish cooperation with parents and the local community in order to alleviate children's difficult living and family conditions.

Box 2. Failure of Inter-Sectorial Cooperation

One pedagogue described a striking example of the lack of support from the CSW in one school's struggle to enroll and keep a child in school. T., a nine-year-old girl, was singing with her two younger brothers when the school pedagogue met her at a bus stop. When asked whether she and her brothers go to school, T. answered that they do not because they do not have personal documents. The initial encounter ended with the pedagogue explaining that the children can come any time to school and be enrolled even if they do not have documents.

The next day, T. and her brothers came to the school. The school principal and a pedagogue visited their home, where they lived with grandparents in extremely poor conditions. T. was enrolled in the first grade and the two brothers in the PPP, and the pedagogue initiated the process of securing personal documents and health care while the entire school engaged in collecting clothes, food, and learning materials. T. was nicely accepted at school and advanced quickly. She even participated in several radio and TV shows, and the school was recognized as one that deals with inclusion very successfully.

After a fire struck the settlement where T. and her family lived, the school succeeded in finding new housing for them. Because the family did not have any financial support from the state due to the lack of registration, for the next seven months the school covered all their living expenses in the expectation that the grandmother would soon be able to apply for financial support from the CSW. During this period, the center neither visited the children nor provided financial assistance. When the grandmother finally got her personal documents and financial support and it became apparent that it would not be sufficient to provide decent living conditions for all the children, the center decided to find a foster family for T.

In the end, T. changed schools when she was placed in a family that lived far away from the school that had enrolled her. Apparently following the advice of the CSW, T's. new family has not communicated with the previous school.

Case study 5: Resources for inclusion from a special school[18]

[18] This case study is based on interviews conducted with the head of the regional school administration, a representative of the sector for social affairs from the municipality, and school staff: two defectologists (one of whom

Context and school services

The school is located in a city that counts 38 primary schools (many of which offer classes in two or three languages) and 38 secondary schools. Some schools are located in urban areas and enroll more than 1,900 pupils, whereas some are in rural areas and have about 60 pupils.

The school chosen for this case study is a special school that serves as a resource school for standard schools and that has introduced many innovations in inclusive education. Therefore all the interviews were focused not on the activities done for the pupils of this school, but on the services provided for the children from regular educational institutions and initiatives directed toward wider social inclusion promotion.

The head of the regional school administration highlighted several innovations in the functioning of this school that reflect its inclusive orientation. First, the school started to include children with multiple disabilities (which is in line with the idea of turning special schools into multifunctional schools, rather than serving only children with one disability). There are also several children who attend the music school at the same time, as well as cases when these children moved to the regular elementary school after a short period of accommodation, which was supported by this school. The school has enrolled many children and adults from the residential schools. In addition, the school has succeeded in systematically preventing other special schools from enrolling Roma children, which was the case for a long period. The school has also developed models of supported housing. Additionally, the support service team from the school is engaged in maintaining the smooth transition of children with additional support needs from preschool institutions to the regular primary schools.

The principal explained that the strategy of the school was *"to explore the needs, without regard to regulations, and to find ways to meet these needs."* The school succeeded in providing 15 services financed by the city, including an assistive technology center, early stimulation programs (for children 0–6 years old), a care center during the summer holidays, and the daycare service "Breather" (*Predah*). A distance-learning program has been created, and a center for early stimulation, which cooperates with the health care institutions in the city, has been established. The school staff put much effort into empowerment of the parents and cooperation with the local community. One can conclude that two keys to this school's success are its proactive, bottom-up approach and team work. What is more, the school has its work evaluated regularly, so it has feedback from beneficiaries about what should be improved and introduced.

About 10 years ago, before the law that introduced inclusive education, defectologists from the school voluntarily provided support to teachers who contacted them from other schools. Today, the school's support service center counts a team of 18 members, all defectologists. They cooperate with 37 schools and five preschool institutions (more than 200 children). As the head of this support service stated, "this school has always been a step ahead – its experience has been integrated in the current laws and rulebooks." Through various projects, the school has built a

is a head of the support service team) and the principal. Interviews were also conducted with a mother of a child who has additional support needs and who uses some services at the school, as well as a mother whose child attends kindergarten and who has experience as a coordinator of a parents association. Finally, a school psychologist and a class teacher from a standard school that cooperates with the school selected for this case study were interviewed.

sensory room, purchased assistive technologies, and obtained flats and houses for supported housing.

The building where the support service is located was built four years ago according to the principles of universal design, and most services for children from standard schools take place there. In some cases, children receive services after school, but in most cases they receive services once or twice a week instead of going to the regular classes. The head of the regional school administration has the impression that the defectologists advise parents to come to the center because it is more convenient for them to manage their time that way, at the same time underlining that it is not the best solution for the child, who "*develops fastest surrounded by peers*." Moreover, she expressed the view that these services, which mostly involve medical and practical skills support, cannot replace educational activities done at schools.

The psychologist from the standard school believes that the children with additional support needs are burdened with too many classes and that it is better for children to receive special services than to attend all classes, especially those that are less important (e.g., elective subjects). According to the head of the regional school administration, also consolidating the practice of delivering services at the center is the sense of relief that some teachers from the standard school feel when a pupil with additional support needs goes out for special services instead of coming to regular classes. A coordinator of a parents association agreed that the majority of activities that could be realized at standard schools take place in the support service center, which puts more pressure on parents, who may need to drive across town for a session that lasts 45 minutes.

On the other hand, the head of the support service center says that parents are eager to bring their children to the center, since it is very well equipped. A mother whose child uses the center's services said that parents can decide whether their child receives services at the center or at the standard school. She herself decided on the center because her daughter started receiving special services there in kindergarten and is used to those surroundings, and because she can consult on-site experts about exercises and assignments for her child. The defectologists also explained that one obstacle when organizing services at standard schools or kindergartens is the lack of space or appropriate furnishings. They go to the school when conditions are appropriate, and they even visit children who have chronic illnesses at home. The school psychologist and teacher from the standard school and the defectologist from the special school concluded that everything depends on the standard school's willingness to cooperate and ask for support.

The issue of location—where the child gets the needed services—is closely connected to the problem of human resources and financing. Several stakeholders complained about the annual plan that the school is required to deliver to MoESTD by the middle of August, when the precise number of children from regular kindergartens and schools who will need support is not yet known. As a result, they cannot predict the exact number of services and consequently the human resources they will need for the next school year. This results in work overload and a lack of time for the children. The head of the regional school administration asserted that the school staff should cooperate more closely with educational institutions when creating this plan, instead of basing predictions mostly on the opinions of the ISC.

Services offered by the support team include both technical and expert support. Teachers from standard schools may make use of didactic materials (some of which are produced by the school) and assistive technologies, children may try technologies before their parents buy them, and services and consultations are provided to children and teachers (respectively) from standard schools. The school also offers accredited seminars for teachers.

The psychologist from the standard school highlighted the great cooperation with this school. This cooperation consists mostly of writing requests to the ISC (about 10 this year), but sometimes also involves more direct help (e.g., consultations on the modification of methods and content, class visits). The head of the regional school administration expressed the view that the special school could also write projects that would empower standard schools (through both assistive technologies and human resources). On the other hand, the head of the support service believes it is more useful to have one center accessible for all users, that is, one focal point, instead of having technologies scattered in different schools that would not be used regularly because of the small number of users at that specific school.

Inter-sectorial committee

In 2010 when the ISCs were established, one committee had to cover all educational institutions in the city and consequently there were delays. Since 2013, there have been three ISCs and they have managed to process all cases within the foreseeable 45 days. However, this time frame is inadequate when the school waits for the opinion on a child who has an IEP2. The ISCs have meetings in the special school, and in some special cases, they do assessments in an environment familiar to the child.

The cooperation within the ISCs is adequate. The measures proposed by the ISCs directly improve the lives of children and families since the municipality provides the recommended equipment or personal assistants and the special school's support service center provides the services. The extent to which the proposed measures affect the school mostly depends on the motivation of the school staff. The problem on which everyone agreed is the lack of systematic monitoring of whether the proposed measures are implemented at the school. Moreover, the head of the regional school administration shared the impression that schools sometimes lack confidence in the child's ability to learn and succeed and they often give in to parents' wishes. The representative of the municipality stated that there should be more coordinators of the ISCs, since they have many obligations regarding administration, organization, and counseling of parents about procedures. The school's principal proposes introducing defectologists into the ISCs and better defining the rulebook on additional support.

Individual education plans and teams for additional student support

Defectologists from the special school rarely participate in developing IEPs. As the defectologist said, the special school always offers help, but school teams must decide whether to invite them or not. The representative of the municipality had the impression that many standard schools do not want to cooperate with this special school and ask for the defectologists' help only in a case of extreme necessity. As she said: "Some schools do not enable the socialization of these children – they just apply for the projects, but are not genuinely interested in children's well-being. In other schools children exceed themselves because the school staff is engaged and humane." The school principal noticed that in many standard schools, teachers prefer individualizing their instruction to

writing IEPs even when the child would benefit more from working according to an IEP, because of their resistance to administration and sometimes the refusal of parents to sign the IEP. The representative of the municipality asserted that many teachers do not realize the complexity of a child's needs and just "copy–paste" when creating IEPs. However, the special school principal highlighted that the situation is much better now than before because "the first wave of 'musts' and therefore resistance has been replaced by the need to make the everyday work less severe."

Pedagogical assistants

Since the number of PAs is limited, the city finances the engagement of personal assistants. They should provide only technical support, but they are often used for support in the classroom. Since their salaries are very low, the turnover rate is high, which is not good for the children. Moreover, the assistants have not completed any training so their competence is questionable. The special school principal stated, "Pedagogical assistants are present in all regulations, but in reality they do not exist," and recommended organizing a short training and engaging unemployed teachers as PAs. In order to overcome the problem of the lack of PAs and the inexperience of personal assistants, the city plans to introduce training for personal assistants this year. In general, all agree that the work of PAs is invaluable. Among the areas in which they can be of particular help, according to the head of the regional school administration, are the identification of children who are ready for the PPP, the organization of adjusted preparatory programs during the summer holidays for those who failed to enroll in the regular programs on time, dropout prevention, the facilitation of smooth transitions from preschool to elementary school and from elementary to secondary school, and finally, sensitization of families and schools. However, she added that people's expectations of PAs are usually too high.

Functionality and effectiveness of the system of inclusive education

Through the conversations with school staff, several recommendations for system improvement emerged. First, the network of all actors at the local level is very important, particularly insofar as some still do not know their tasks and responsibilities. A mother of one girl who uses the services of this school added: "The key is cooperation." Also needed are additional trainings on inclusive education for external evaluators. Further, all policy documents should be attuned to the Law on the Foundations of the Education System in such a way as to acknowledge inclusive education (e.g., by current achievement standards, children who cannot attain even the first standard are not covered). Finally, modular instruction should be introduced for children with multiple disabilities who attend standard schools, since the current solution of releasing the child from all difficult subjects (which is allowed by the IEP) is not adequate.

From the experience presented in this case study, we can learn how teamwork, readiness for change, and awareness of the opportunities offered by legislation and funding sources can result in not only the establishment of inclusive practices in school, but also the successful promotion of inclusive values in the local community.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first section of this chapter attempts to distill the preceding analysis into an overall assessment of the state of inclusive education in Serbia, and the second offers a set of inter-connected recommendations to address the needs identified in the first in pursuit of the overarching goal of improving the quality of teaching and learning in inclusive schools. Both sections address issues that apply to the general system of inclusive education in Serbia as a whole before turning to specific components of that system.

4.1. Conclusions

General conclusions

The framework for inclusive education introduced and implemented in Serbia since 2009 marks an important change in approach relative to previous arrangements. Moreover, the unequivocal adoption of equal access without discrimination, adaptation to individual needs, and solidarity as central principles of Serbia's education system is backed by more concrete changes in policies on enrollment; curriculum and assessment; human resources; and support structures. Both Serbia's overall approach and the selection and design of key components of the country's inclusive education system are consistent with learning from relevant international experience.

The information gathered in preparing this report points both to progress toward inclusion and to the need for continued and intensified efforts on the trajectory set in 2009. In general, stakeholders appear to be convinced of the benefits of inclusion, but there remain much uncertainty and lack of confidence about how the various components of Serbia's system of inclusive education are to be implemented. Among school staff, concerns about handling the demands of inclusive education during their own work day are common. Additionally, there are examples of principled resistance to the very notion of inclusive education, most evident among members of staff of special schools.

Crucial for the success of inclusive education is that all are convinced that it is in the best interests of the child. Available evidence suggests that children with and without needs for additional educational support not only accept one another but feel better in each other's presence than in a more homogeneous educational environment. Teaching staff and parents further indicate that the inclusive approach positively affects the academic performance of children with needs for additional educational support. On the other hand, the parents of these children are not always aware of the support that the system of inclusive education offers and sometimes withhold consent for fear that their children will be stigmatized.

Notwithstanding the progress made toward inclusion in recent years, considerable gaps remain in the implementation of inclusive education in Serbia. Some such gaps are informational. Perhaps the best example of a gap in information is the absence of a comprehensive national-level database on education, in some cases resulting in discrepant figures on the same phenomenon. Closely related to this, the effects of training for inclusive education on classroom practice have not been monitored systematically.

Other informational gaps affect the day-to-day delivery of inclusive education more directly. Widespread among stakeholders consulted in preparing this report is the perception that the

regulatory framework for inclusive education is incomplete, with personal connections taking on particular importance in the absence of clearly delineated relations between institutions. Stakeholders further made frequent mention of sparse opportunities for consultation and tight deadlines from MoESTD as exacerbating the effects of an incomplete regulatory framework.

Beyond insufficient information, the research points to important gaps in practice related to inclusive education. One example is that the considerable number of initiatives implemented to promote various aspects of inclusive education have largely bypassed five districts in Serbia. Another concerns transitions from preschool to primary and from primary to secondary education, where the absence of channels of communication between institutions at the different education levels often makes for discontinuity in practices central to inclusion.

Conclusions on key components of inclusive education in Serbia

The effectiveness with which the ISCs carry out their tasks varies considerably from one locality to the next. Often, however, cooperation across sectors is constrained by the limited involvement of the CSWs, as well as by the time constraints of ISC members, whose participation on the committee is not compensated. At the same time, the feasibility of ISC recommendations depends not only on the expertise and cooperation of the members, but also on the availability of resources. Further, there is little systematic information about the level of implementation and effects of the support recommended by ISCs, because ISCs do not generally undertake monitoring and service providers are not obligated to report back to them. Finally, levels of understanding about the role of ISCs are often low, particularly among parents.

IEPs are broadly appreciated for their contribution to an environment in which children with and without needs for additional educational support learn side by side, benefiting from each other's presence both socially and intellectually. Although the presence of children with IEPs reduces the total number of children in a class, teaching staff report that class sizes often remain too large for the individualized attention necessary for the inclusion of children with needs for additional educational support. Teaching staff also point to a lack of clarity about how to assess the work of children learning according to an IEP and about differences between IEP1 and IEP2. Finally, provisions for releasing children with an IEP from difficult subjects have proven problematic for children with multiple disabilities.

Inclusive education expert teams at the school level generally receive high marks for their roles in improving relations between schools and parents on the one hand, and relations among and between pupils and staff within schools on the other. At the same time, the teams are often less active than they would like to be due to time constraints, and members of teaching staff are generally less engaged in these teams than are members of expert staff.

Credited with improving pupil performance, school climate, and communication with parents, PAs have in general been very well received where established. They are also often seen as facilitating an efficient division of time and attention in classrooms that include children with needs for additional educational support. Moreover, there is considerable demand for increasing the number of PAs both in schools that already have them and in schools that do not. Notwithstanding the high levels of enthusiasm about PAs' work, there is a widespread lack of understanding about how their role differs from that of personal assistants. Coupled with differences in funding arrangements for

these two types of support staff, this results in situations in which persons hired as PAs perform tasks of personal assistants and vice versa. Moreover, PAs' terms of employment offer them little stability and limit their rights within the school (e.g., voting for principal).

4.2. Recommendations

General recommendations

1. Mainstream inclusion throughout the regulatory framework for education. Address perceptions of incompleteness by ensuring that all policy documents on education adequately reflect the clear vision for inclusive education evident in the Law on the Foundations of the Education System in such a way as to maximize learning opportunities for all learners. Particularly important from the standpoint of motivating school staff is recognition of the time needed for inclusion-related activities as part of regular working hours and/or compensation for additional time investment.

2. Provide training for school staff. With an eye to eliminating situations in which inclusion is seen as others' responsibility and ensuring support for inclusion from school leadership, preservice training for future teachers and principals should emphasize various aspects of inclusion, including (but not necessarily limited to) improving the social integration of children with needs for additional educational support by preparing peers and their parents to accept them, improving school motivation, preventing violence, and raising awareness about and reducing discrimination. Additionally, the skills of school staff in delivering inclusive education should be cultivated through systematic in-service training, with the effects of such training on classroom practice monitored and feedback provided in a continuous exchange that also involves an exchange of experience with peers. In addition to building the skills and confidence of school staff in delivering inclusive education, such training provides an avenue for improving working relations between standard and special schools by drawing on specialized expertise housed in the latter.

3. Give special schools a stake in inclusive education. The development of inclusive education requires that the role of special schools be reconsidered in such a way as to contribute to the transformation of standard educational settings by ensuring the availability of a continuum of support in such settings. Consistent with the role foreseen for special schools as resource centers for standard schools, arrangements should be formalized for expert staff of special schools to deliver training to school staff in skills relevant to the education of children with needs for additional educational support and to provide consultation to school teams for inclusive education. Consultation between ISCs and expert staff of special schools should also be encouraged. Additionally, special schools are well positioned to serve as centers for assistive technology to be loaned out to standard schools as needed, together with expert support from defectologists on the use of such technology.

4. Increase and improve communication between MoESTD and institutions at regional and local levels. Reducing system fragmentation through better, timelier, and more frequent communication with the central level is key to ensuring implementation of the inclusive agenda on the ground. Although the establishment of the Group for Social Inclusion in MoESTD is an

important step in this direction, the department's effectiveness will depend in large part on consistent and adequate resource allocations.

5. Raise awareness in the general public. With an eye to improving the recognition of, destigmatizing, and addressing the needs for additional educational support as part of a longer-term approach to policy-making, information about inclusive education in general and the mechanisms through which it functions should be disseminated widely and in an easily accessible form. Partners in the dissemination of relevant information include not only educational institutions, but also NGOs and media. Additionally, information sessions for parents should be organized at the school level for the purpose of securing parents' active participation in educational inclusion, regardless of whether their children have additional support needs.

6. Increase attention to transitions. Channels should be elaborated for the transfer of information about children's (individual) needs for additional educational support and the means employed for addressing those needs between pre-primary and primary education on the one hand and between primary and secondary education on the other. Particular attention should be directed to the first year of secondary education for children who have received individualized support in primary education. Direct communication between pedagogues and psychologists based in the respective institutions is vital for this purpose.

7. Promote full geographical coverage. Insofar as inclusive education is a national priority, there is a need to ensure that no part of the country is neglected by projects that include elements of educational inclusion. Future initiatives should place particular emphasis on the five districts that have taken part in the smallest number of relevant initiatives to date. This emphasis should be reflected in donor priorities, including but not limited to programming for EU funding facilities.

8. Institutionalize monitoring and evaluation. A comprehensive national-level database on education should be established and updated on at least an annual basis. The development of sections related to inclusive education should be guided by the *Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education*, which should also be the basis for regular assessments (both self-assessments and external evaluations).

9. Expand horizontal networking. Building on the positive example of school-level networking offered by the Network for Support of Inclusive Education, thematic networks should be established for sharing experiences between all relevant actors in order to ensure continuous support for improvement of inclusive practice. Particular emphasis should be placed on networking between PAs on the one hand and ISCs on the other.

Recommendations on key components of inclusive education in Serbia

10. Reduce class size. In order to create conditions for the individualized attention necessary for the inclusion of children with needs for additional educational support, the maximum class size should be further reduced while also preserving the current arrangements for a reduction in the maximum number according to the number of children learning from an IEP.

11. Offer modular instruction as an additional option. Rather than release children with multiple disabilities from all subjects that pose difficulties for them as allowed by regulations governing IEPs, consideration should be given to introducing differentiated instruction based on a series of learning activities consisting of self-contained units designed to help children accomplish clearly defined objectives.

12. Recognize expert team members' work. Consistent with the general recommendation on the regulatory framework, conditions should be created to allow inclusive education expert teams to meet on a regular basis during the paid working hours of their members.

13. Institutionalize assistants. As a basis for providing permanent employment, an occupational category for PAs should be introduced and funded at a level sufficient to attract and maintain a number of qualified candidates adequate to meet the outstanding need. Additionally, personal assistants should be provided with training in skills directly relevant to their specific tasks.

14. Define assistants' roles clearly. With an eye to eliminating situations in which persons hired as PAs perform the tasks of personal assistants and vice versa, the roles of each should be elaborated and communicated to school staff, as well as to the members of the ISCs. Care should be taken to avoid the isolation of students with additional support needs from their classmates by ensuring that assistants' support is directed toward inclusion, rather than leaving inclusion to the assistants while teachers focus exclusively on students without additional support needs.

15. Provide adequate resources for ISCs. Resource allocations for the ISCs should be set at a level sufficient not only to cover the costs directly associated with ISC meetings and compensating ISC members for the time spent on committee work, but also to finance ISC-recommended measures and to monitor the implementation of those measures. To this end, ISCs should be consulted in planning municipal budgets.

ANNEXES

The four annexes to this report offer compilations of detailed information and materials used in preparing the report. Whereas Annex 1 provides a tabular overview of projects supporting inclusive education in Serbia since 2009 and related most directly to the mapping of initiatives in Section 3.3, Annexes 2-4 contain materials which relate to the field research undertaken for the report.

More specifically, Annex 2 consists of the three questionnaires used in the online survey analyzed in Section 3.4. One of the questionnaires was designed for teaching and expert staff, another for school principals, and a third for parents.

The materials contained in Annex 3 were generated for the regional consultation meetings treated in Section 3.5. These include a table of meetings by location and date, a second table describing the stakeholder categories to be invited to participate in the meetings, and reporting forms for the discussion groups held at the meetings. A reporting form was created for each theme addressed at the regional consultation meetings: ISCs, IEPs, teams for inclusive education, PAs, and the overall function of the system of inclusive education.

Finally, Annex 4 contains the questions generated for the focus groups and interviews conducted in researching the five case studies presented in Section 3.6. This annex also contains an observation matrix used in the school visits undertaken for the case studies.

ANNEX 1: PROJECTS IN SUPPORT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SERBIA

Table A1.1. Projects Supporting Inclusive Education Realized after 2009 (in alphabetical order)

Project	Localities	Money	Main Activities
All Different, All Equal, IPA 2010	Apatin, Novi Sad, Bečej	€59,113	Creation of inclusive culture, policy, and practice in primary schools in Vojvodina, thus enhancing equal participation of all children in education, regardless of their gender, disability, or social or ethnic background.
Circles of Friends [Krugovi prijatelja] (2014-2015)	Rakovica (Belgrade) and Vranje		The goal is to provide greater inclusion of children with disabilities through development of a model of support. In total, 4,960 beneficiaries will be covered, out of which 2,310 directly (children with disabilities, their peers, parents, kindergarten staff and schools, representatives of the ministry and local community).
Civic Society for Inclusive Education – Education That Fits the Child [Građansko društvo za inkluzivno obrazovanje – obrazovanje po meri dece] (2012-2013)	Niš, Pančevo, Belgrade, Užice and Vranje.	5,522,448 dinars	The goal was to increase active participation of civil society organizations in monitoring inclusive practice implementation and advocating for human rights.
Civil Society Organizations as Equal Participants in the Development of Inclusive Society in Serbia [Organizacije civilnog društva kao ravnopravni učesnici u razvoju inkluzivnog društva u Srbiji] (2010-2011)	Belgrade, Pančevo, Niš, Užice, Novi Sad	€86,149	Facilitating better understanding of standards for inclusive education application and more flexible management among school and kindergarten staff; informing association of parents about reforms in the field of inclusive education and social welfare.
Child Center: Support of Children in Education [Dečiji centar: Podrška deci u obrazovanju]	Novi Sad		Since 2003, Humanitarian center of Novi Sad has organized a group of volunteers who help poor children finish school.
Club for Children and Youth, 2010	Kragujevac, Ivanjica, Belgrade		The goal was to contribute to the greater social inclusion of children and youth from marginalized groups through the establishment of services at the local level that promote inclusive values.

Coalition for Monitoring of Inclusive Education [Koalicija za monitoring inkluzivnog obrazovanja] (2014-2016)	Niš, Belgrade, Užice, Vranje		Activities included formation of a coalition, training about children's rights on education protection, informing parents about the recognition of discriminatory practices.
Combating Discrimination in Educational System (2014-2016)	Niš, Alekinac, Svrljig		Accredited trainings for employees in schools on the subject of children's rights, tolerance, and non-discrimination; workshops for students; development of the mechanisms for tackling discrimination in the education system. In total, 625 children and youth and 150 employees in the educational system were included.
Delivery of Improved Local Services (DILS 2009-2013)	Throughout Serbia (56 municipalities)	€12,000,000	National two-day trainings for all primary schools, five participants from each school, were organized in 2010. Grants for school-based inclusion projects for about 300 schools from almost all municipalities in Serbia were delivered, and staff trainings in these schools were organized. Grants for 56 municipalities (140 schools, 54 preschool institutions, 55 Roma NGOs, and 56 LSGs) for projects aimed at including Roma children in the education system were provided, enabling better inclusion of about 10,000 Roma students. About 600 persons, permanent members of ISCs participated in training, and grants for 20 special education schools for piloting new special education services were provided. Many handbooks and guides for practitioners were created.
Developmental-Educational Centers in Municipalities in the South of Serbia [Razvojno-obrazovni centri u opštinama na jugu Srbije (ROC)] (2002-2012; 2012–2013)	Bojnik, Vladičin Han, Kruševac, Lebane, Niš, Pirot, Prokuplje, Surdulica	€670,000 in the first phase and €100,000 in the second	Centers contributed to the establishment of relations between formal and informal education through raising awareness of children's rights and promoting equal opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds. Project provided support to teachers in their striving to create an inclusive environment.

Education for All, IPA project (2009-2011)	Throughout Serbia	€3,000,000	190 teaching assistants and more than 1,450 teachers were trained, 131 schools were equipped (about €10,000 per institution was spent) and more than 700 kindergartens received educational toys.
Educational Services in Selected Schools in Southwestern Serbia (2009)	Novi Pazar, Raska, Sjenica, Tutin and Prijepolje		Work of the coordinator for Roma education, assistance with enrollment in preschool institutions and schools, additional Serbian language courses for returning Roma children, organization of meals, provision of school supplies, shoes, and clothing, organized accredited seminars for teachers, etc.
Equal Opportunities in Secondary Education [Jednake šanse u srednjoškolskom obrazovanju] (2005-2013	Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Sad, Leskovac, Kruševac, Subotica	€860,000	During the project, 1,284 13–15-year-old students and 3,005 15–18–year-old students were directly included; 543 secondary school teachers passed several trainings; 651 parents (10% were parents from Roma community), 105 representatives of government institutions and local community participated.
IMPRES (2011–2014)	Požarevac-Kostolac, Petrovac na Mlavi, Aranđelovac, Leskovac, Kruševac, Ražanj, Surdulica, Gadžin Han, Bela Palanka, Užice, Tutin, Ruma, Beočin, Šabac i Mali Zvornik	€3,750,000	The goal was to improve conditions for preschool education, with particular focus on education of children from vulnerable groups, through trainings, development of innovative preschool programs, and provision of equipment, better access and reconstruction, etc.
Inclusion through Education - Support to Roma and other Marginalized Groups-Joint Programme (2009–2013)	Throughout Serbia (60 municipalities)	€800,000	Over 15,000 direct beneficiaries, from Roma and other marginalized groups, have been supported by the program; 97% of these children have been enrolled and remain in schools. Enrollment in secondary school has increased by 20%; over 500 teachers from preschool and elementary schools have been trained in inclusive and active learning methods; more than 1,000 Roma adults have been trained through functional adult education.

Intercultural Drama Education and Learning, 2011	Belgrade, Smederevo, Zrenjanin		Trainings for teachers and pedagogues in the field of drama and theatre instruments for intercultural learning were developed, thus contributing to improving social cohesion and overcoming discrimination.
Kindergartens Without Borders [Vrtići bez granica] (2011-2013)	Smederevo, Loznica, Leskovac, Sjenica, Odžaci, Krupanj, Bojnik, Čačak, Nova Varoš and Čukarica (Belgrade)	US$384,000	The main goal is to include 3–5.5-year-old children, and particularly those from vulnerable groups, into short but effective inclusive programs, and to improve professionals' competencies and legal frameworks. In the 2014/15 school year, 584 children will be covered by everyday four-hour programs, where they will learn about culture, science, and healthy lifestyles.
Knowledge and Skills Agains Poverty [Znanjem i veštinama protiv siromaštva] (2012-2014)	Vranje, Bujanovac, Surdulica, Vladičin Han		Scholarships for students were provided.
Let's Talk About Rights, 2014	Jablanica and Pčinja district	€29,810	The goal was to support vulnerable groups in terms of promoting and monitoring the implementation of human rights in schools.
Mother-Child Education Program (2011-2015)	Kraljevo, Kruševac, Kragujevac, Obrenovac, Novi Sad	€327,000	The main goal was to increase the access to early childhood education for Roma children by developing the capacity of Roma NGOs to run community-based education projects for mothers and children and to establish networks between stakeholders; empowering Roma mothers of preschool-aged children to support their children in the process of education and schooling; provide comprehensive early childhood education services and to reduce the gap in early childhood development outcomes between Roma and non-Roma.

Network for Support of Inclusive Education [Mreža podrške inkluzivnom obrazovanju] (2012–2013)	Model schools: Sombor, Pančevo, Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Užice, Požarevac	US$91,000	The network provides information and advice via telephone, email, and the website. Visits to schools are organized in order to support school staff with organization of teams, creation of IEPs, etc. The network also supports parents and advocates for their children's rights. It promotes good practices and strengthens capacities of ministry, educational institutions, and model schools. Local actions have been realized in: Sombor, Čokot, Čonoplja, Užice, Temerin, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, and Petrovac na Mlavi.
Network of Friends of Inclusive Education [Mreža prijatelja inkluzivnog obrazovanja] (2014–2016)	30 local communities	US$150,000 per year	Twenty teachers and parents organizations that support inclusive education are established.
Parents Have a Say Too [I roditelji se pitaju] (2011-)	Belgrade (municipalities Zvezdara, Vračar, Obrenovac, Savski venac, Stari grad and Zemun), Kragujevac, Vranje, Užice, Zaječar, Niš (municipalities Medijana and Pantelej) and Požega.		The goal is to improve conditions for development, education, and life of children, through the development of system conditions for more active participation of parents in decision making in educational institutions and local communities. Parents and staff from more than 260 educational institutions were included in activities or informed about the initiatives.
Regional SEED Program (Support of Educational and Employment Development in Albania, Kosovo and Serbia) (2014–2016)	Apatin, Kula, Surdulica, Vladičin Han		The goal is to contribute to employment and poverty reduction, gender equality, and socioeconomic development. Direct beneficiaries are 160 women and youth.

Regional Support of Inclusive Education [Regionalna podrška inkluzivnom obrazovanju] (2013-2016)	Užice, Vranje, Đurđevo (Žabalj), Belgrade, Novi Sad, Bor, Niš	€5,165,650 (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, FYR Macedonia, and Kosovo)	In order to provide better understanding of advantages of inclusive education, main project activities will be directed toward the work of 49 pilot schools (7 schools per country: 3 primary, 2 high schools, and 2 vocational schools). Experience gained in these schools will contribute to creation of relevant policies and practices that could be established in other schools as well.
School of Good Will - Volunteers in the Service of Children (2014)	Sombor	€19.992	The project is designed to help children, especially children from vulnerable groups, in their primary education
Schools of Life – Together for a Childhood [Školice života – zajedno za detinjstvo] (2013)	Ljig, Raška, Kraljevo and Knić		The goal is to improve living and schooling conditions through the reconstruction of space at four localities, the provision of equipment, toys, and teaching aids, and the creation of programs for 3–5-year-old children who are not covered by present preschool programs.
Strengthening Professionals' and Parents' Competencies for More Effective and Fair Education [Jačanje kompetencija stručnjaka i roditelja za kvalitetnije i pravednije obrazovanje i vaspitanje] (2013)	Zvezdara (Belgrade) and Obrenovac		The goal was to improve competencies of schools' staff to facilitate learning, prevent discrimination, and create communities that promote solidarity and intercultural values.
Strong from the Start [Snažni od početka] (2012–2015)	Nis, Kragujevac, Subotica, Belgrade	US$310,776	Creating safer and more supporting environment for Roma children aged up to 5.5 years; supporting Roma parents and raising awareness of parents and community about the importance of early child development and responsibilities of all actors; initiating cooperation between parents, Roma community, NGOs, local community, and relevant government institutions in order to improve conditions for development and learning of young children.

Support Integration Process of Resettled Children from Roma Settlement Gazela (2009-2011)	Belgrade	€48,675	The goal was to initiate development of new educational and social policy in Belgrade.
Technical Support for Roma Inclusion [Tehnička podrška za inkluziju Roma] (2014-2015)	Bela Palanka, Bojnik, Bujanovac, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kovin, Kragujevac, Kruševac, Leskovac, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Palilula, Pančevo, Prokuplje, Smederevo, Sombor, Valjevo, Vranje, Žitorađa and Zvezdara	€4,800,000	Some of the activities are: access to basic rights, creation of mobile teams, strengthening capacities of civil society organizations, implementing dropout prevention programs, improvement of living conditions, and sustainable employment.
Towards the Inclusion of Roma Children (2010)	Niš		Project targeted 6–18-year-old Roma children (65 children and their parents), and activities were focused on encouraging children to return to school and visiting cultural institutions.
Youth Network for Inclusive Education [Mreža mladih za inkluzivno obrazovanje] (2013 – 2014)	Niš, Belgrade, Užice, Vranje and Aleksinac		Advocating for improvement of inclusive processes and the position of minorities in Serbia; direct beneficiaries were 30 young activists, 1,500 pupils from 25 primary schools and their parents, school staff, and representatives of local communities.

Beyond the initiatives included in the table above, the results of the online survey conducted in spring 2015 by MoESTD (and treated in more detail in Section 3.4 above) indicate that some schools have been provided with equipment and training for teachers through the ongoing project "Razvionica" (Support Human Capital Development and Research – General Education and Human Capital Development), financed by the EU. The project plans to enable at least 13,000 teachers to acquire transversal competencies and then develop them in their pupils, enhance digital competencies in at least 4,000 teachers, establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the professional development of teachers, develop an e-learning platform and electronic collections of effective lessons, and equip 41 practice schools with state-of-the-art equipment.

Another initiative not included in the table is the program "Digital School" of the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society. Since 2010, 2,808 school facilities in Serbia have received completely equipped computer laboratories through this program.

ANNEX 2: ONLINE SURVEY
Questionnaire for teaching and expert staff

Welcome to the questionnaire!

Dear Madam/Sir,

In the past five years, great efforts were invested so that regular schools would increase the coverage of children who were less involved in education (pupils with different organic, sensory, motor or neurological disabilities; students with emotional difficulties, behavioral problems and learning difficulties, and students whose difficulties stem from socio-economic, cultural and/or linguistic reasons) and to provide them with quality education in mainstream schools.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) started an analysis of the current implementation of policies and measures of inclusive education.

This questionnaire is a part of that analysis. Please respond honestly to the questions, because your opinion and experience will be valuable so that we can provide better support to teachers and schools in that area in the future. This questionnaire is anonymous and the data will be used for the purposes of monitoring and improvement of inclusive education.

General information

1. School name and place

2. You work in the school as a:

- ○ Class teacher
- ○ Subject teacher in elementary school
- ○ Secondary school teacher
- ○ Expert staff in an elementary school
- ○ Expert staff in a secondary school

3. How long have you been working in the school?

- ○ from 0 - 2 years
- ○ from 2 - 5 years
- ○ from 6 - 10 years
- ○ from 11 - 15 years
- ○ from 16 - 20 years
- ○ more than 20 years

4. Total number of students in your school?

- ○ up to 150 students
- ○ from 150 to 300 students
- ○ from 300 to 500 students
- ○ from 500 to 1000 students
- ○ more than 1000 students

5. Average number of students in a class?

- ○ up to 10 students
- ○ from 11 to 15 students
- ○ from 16 to 20 students
- ○ from 21 to 25 students
- ○ from 26 to 30 students
- ○ more than 30 students

6. Does the professional service in your school have a:

	YES	NO
School psychologist	○	○
School pedagogue	○	○
Defectologist	○	○
Social worker	○	○

General information

7. How many students with disabilities and learning difficulties do you have in a class (or average number of students in classes that you teach)?

- ○ 1 to 2 students
- ○ from 3 to 5 students
- ○ more than 5 students
- ○ the class doesn't have any children with disabilities

8. Did you and for how many students develop individualization measures (in the past two years)?

- ○ No students need it
- ○ For 1 student
- ○ For 2-5 students
- ○ For more than 5 students

9. Has it ever happened that the parents of a student for whom you have created measures for individualization, have refused to give their consent for the development of the IEP?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes. Please specify the reasons.

10. For how many students have you, along with other colleagues, developed an adapted IEP (IEP 1) in the last two years?

- ○ there is no such student with IEP 1
- ○ for one student
- ○ for 2 to 5 students
- ○ for more than 5 students

11. For how many students have you, along with other colleagues, developed an adapted IEP (IEP 2) in the last two years?

- ○ there is no such student with IEP 2
- ○ for one student
- ○ for 2 students
- ○ for 3 students
- ○ for more than 3 students

12. For how many students have you, along with other colleagues, developed a supplemented or expanded IEP in the last two years?

- ○ no student has an expanded IEP
- ○ for one student
- ○ for 2-5 students
- ○ for more than 5 students

13. Are you a member of one of the teams for additional support (IEP team) in your school?

- ○ YES
- ○ NO

14. Specify the number of teams for additional support where you are a member

[ ]

Knowing the legislation

15. The table below lists the laws, bylaws and school documents that are completely or in some part related to inclusive education. Rate your knowledge of these documents:

	Completely unaware of them	Mostly unaware	I'm familiar with the content	Completely aware of the document's content
Law on the foundations of the education system	○	○	○	○
Rulebook on the detailed conditions for establishing the rights to an individual education plan, its implementation and evaluation	○	○	○	○
Rulebook on the evaluation of students in primary/ secondary education	○	○	○	○
Rulebook on additional education, health and social support for children and students	○	○	○	○
School's annual work plan	○	○	○	○
School development plan	○	○	○	○
School curricula	○	○	○	○

Development and implementation of the IEP

16. Based on your experience so far, please assess who and to which extent is included in the creation and implementation of IEP in your school?

	Don't know	Not included	A little	A lot
Class teacher	○	○	○	○
Subject teachers	○	○	○	○
Expert staff (pedagogue, psychologist, social worker)	○	○	○	○
School team for Inclusive education	○	○	○	○
Head teacher	○	○	○	○
Parents of the children that need additional support	○	○	○	○
Student for which IEP is developed	○	○	○	○
Pedagogical assistant	○	○	○	○
Inclusion advisors from the school administration	○	○	○	○
Individual members of the inter-sectorial committee	○	○	○	○
Colleagues from the Network for support of inclusive education	○	○	○	○
Defectologist from a specialized school, service or PHC	○	○	○	○

17. Please assess to which extent the application of IEP has contributed to the:

	Can't assess	It hasn't contributed	To a small extent	To a large extent
Reducing premature dropout by students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
More regular attendance of students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Greater academic advancement of students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Better compatibility of students from vulnerable groups into a peer group	○	○	○	○
Increasing the number of students from vulnerable groups that enroll into secondary school	○	○	○	○
Increasing the number of students from vulnerable groups in your school	○	○	○	○

18. The table below lists the arguments concerning the opinions and practice of teachers. Please specify to what extent do you agree with these opinions and practices.

	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
I believe that, with adequate support, all students can learn and thrive.	○	○	○	○
I'm trying to make all my students feel good in school.	○	○	○	○
I believe that all children have the right to education in regular classes in regular schools.	○	○	○	○
I believe that incl. education contributes to understanding and tolerance.	○	○	○	○
I believe that learning in the classroom with children with disabilities can allow other students to learn some important things.	○	○	○	○
Because of the students with disabilities, I haven't been able to devote enough attention to other students.	○	○	○	○
I think that a well-drafted IEP enables the progress of children with disabilities.	○	○	○	○
I am willing to participate in the development of an IEP.	○	○	○	○
I think I'm skillful enough to be able to customize curricula to any child, without the IEP.	○	○	○	○
I'm able to define customized education standards for students with disabilities. .	○	○	○	○
I'm willing to change my lectures for one/several students.	○	○	○	○
I think that I personally do not favor working with children in an inclusive environment.	○	○	○	○

I think that the evaluation of students with disabilities is well defined in the Rulebook on evaluation.	○	○	○	○

Work conditions

19. Assess the work conditions for work with children with disabilities, in terms of accessibility of school premises and equipment, educational material and assistive technologies.

	Strongly disagree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
My school is fully accessible and adapted for students with disabilities (ramps, handrails, adapted toilets. etc.)	○	○	○
To make the information available to everyone, the school uses other forms of communication (Braille, sign language, augmentative and alternative communication, etc.)	○	○	○
The school is equipped with sufficient quantity of didactic material (teaching aids)	○	○	○
The school is equipped with assistive technology	○	○	○
General atmosphere in in the school is such that it encourages and supports teachers in the implementation of inclusive education.	○	○	○

20. Do students in your school use assistive technology?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No. since there aren't any students that need it
- ○ No, even though there are students that need assistive technology
- ○ I don't know

21. Whether and to what extent the existing textbooks support inclusive practices (different levels of complexity, didactic activities designed to encourage students, etc.)?

- ○ They are fully supportive
- ○ They mostly support inclusive education
- ○ They mostly don't support inclusive education
- ○ They don't support inclusive practices at all

22. Does your school have a pedagogical assistant?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No, but we need one.
- ○ No. because we don't need one.
- ○ I don't know.

Pedagogical assistant

23. If your school has a pedagogical assistant, how would you rate his/her contribution to the implementation of inclusive education ?

	Strongly disagree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
Pedagogical assistant has had a very positive contribution to the implementation of inclusive education.	○	○	○
Pedagogical assistant has had a very positive contribution to the implementation of inclusive education, but there are some minor difficulties in cooperation.	○	○	○
Pedagogical assistant has positively contributed to the implementation of inclusive education, but there are serious difficulties in cooperation.	○	○	○
Pedagogical assistant hasn't had any significant contribution to the implementation of inclusive education.	○	○	○

24. If you think that the pedagogical assistant has positively contributed to the implementation of inclusive education, how would you rate his/her contribution in the following areas of work on a scale from 1 to 5 (just like school grades):

	1	2	3	4	5
Enhancing cooperation with the family of those children that need additional support	○	○	○	○	○
Support in studying for students that need additional support.	○	○	○	○	○
Learning support for other students in the class.	○	○	○	○	○
Supporting teachers in adapting their classes to students who need additional support.	○	○	○	○	○
Support for the teacher in the implementation of classes.	○	○	○	○	○

Difficulties and modalities of overcoming these difficulties

25. In your opinion, what are the major obstacles to inclusive education? (mark 5 answers)

- ☐ A large number of students in one class.
- ☐ Lack of basic working conditions (inaccessibility, lack of teaching aids, assistive technology).
- ☐ Lack of competence of teachers working with children with disabilities.
- ☐ Teachers' fears of wrong decisions and procedures.
- ☐ Problem with evaluating student's achievements through an altered IEP (IEP 2)
- ☐ Insufficient or poor cooperation with parents of children with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of understanding and support from the parents of other children.
- ☐ Lack of support from colleagues at school.
- ☐ Insufficient support by the school staff (psychologist, pedagogues and defectologists).
- ☐ Lack of support and clear instructions from the MoESTD (advisors)
- ☐ Lack of cooperation with the inter-sectorial committee (ISC) (requirements are not clear/generalized opinions).
- ☐ Overburdened with the documentation.
- ☐ Something else. Please specify:

26. What type of support would you personally prefer? (mark 2 answers)

- ☐ Immediate help of another person in the class (pedagogical assistant, volunteer, intern, parent).
- ☐ Occasional presence of a psychologist in the classroom.
- ☐ Occasional presence of a pedagogue during classes
- ☐ Occasional presence of a defectologist in the classroom.
- ☐ Help through specific advice/consultations with the members of the school team for inclusion
- ☐ Help through specific advice/consultations with the inclusion advisor
- ☐ Additional training for inclusive education
- ☐ Additional manuals and other materials on inclusive education.
- ☐ Something else. Please specify:

27. Who do you expect should support you to overcome these difficulties?

(mark up to three answers)

- ☐ Professional service
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Head teacher
- ☐ Colleagues from the school
- ☐ School team for inclusion
- ☐ Pedagogical assistant
- ☐ Colleagues from some other school
- ☐ Colleagues from a specialized school
- ☐ Advisor from the School administration
- ☐ Colleagues from the Network for Support of Inclusive Education
- ☐ Someone else. Please provide brief description:

28. In the past five years, have you personally or your school received any of the listed types of support in the implementation of inclusive education through specific grants or projects? (please circle all the answers that apply to you and your school, and add the name of the project or donor that provided that support:

Money (through which donation/project)?

Equipment (through which donation/project)?

School refurbishing (through which donation/project)?

Trainings/seminars (through which donation/project)?

Study tours (through which donation/project)?

Direct assistance to students with disabilities and/or their families (through which donation/project)?

Something else, specify:

Training needs

29. How many seminars, trainings or lectures in the field of inclusive education have you attended so far?

- None
- One
- up to 3
- up to 5
- up to 10
- more than 10

30. Has professional training in this area contributed to your improvements in the work with all students?

- Yes
- In some segments
- No

31. Have trainings, seminars and training courses been available to you?

- Yes
- Partly
- No

32. List the reasons which affect the availability of trainings in the field of inclusive education (choose up to 3 answers)

- ○ Insufficient funding for professional development at the school level
- ○ When a training is organized on weekdays, we have a problem to reorganize our classes.
- ○ Individual participation in trainings, outside of the place of residence requires additional resources (transportation costs, accommodation costs, time)
- ○ The current trainings' curricula does not recognize any topic that would improve my knowledge and skills.
- ○ I don't have any problem with the availability of trainings.
- ○ Some other reason. Please specify:

33. Circle three topics that you would like to attend in the following period as a part of professional trainings, which you see as relevant for the development of competences in this area:

- ☐ Development characteristics of students with disabilities and their impact on the education process.
- ☐ Didactic and methodological knowledge and skills for working with children with disabilities.
- ☐ Individualization of the teaching curricula.
- ☐ Creating a pedagogic and individual education plan.
- ☐ Observation and other sources of data collection
- ☐ Monitoring and evaluating the achievements of students with disabilities.
- ☐ How to manage differences among the children in the classroom – strategies that teachers can use to respond to the diversity of children in the classroom.
- ☐ How to adapt the classroom and school environment to overcome the learning barriers that children with disabilities face.
- ☐ How to work with neglected students.
- ☐ Hyperactive child in the classroom.
- ☐ Children with autism.
- ☐ Children with intellectual disabilities.
- ☐ Children with sensory disabilities.
- ☐ How to tailor the curriculum and program to individual needs.
- ☐ Assistive technology and how to use it.
- ☐ Interactive models of teaching and learning.
- ☐ Partner relationship parent – teacher.
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Examples of good practice

34. Has your school, or one of your colleagues, been promoted as an example of good inclusive practice in other schools, school administration or the media?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

35. If your answer is YES, please provide brief description.

36. Please describe one good example from your personal practice in the implementation of inclusive education.

37. Do you have any suggestions, impressions or comments regarding inclusive education that you might find useful, and you haven't had a change to communicate it? Please provide brief description.

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Welcome!

Dear Sir/Madam,

In the past five years, great efforts were invested so that regular schools would increase the coverage of children who have been less involved in education in the previous years (children with disabilities, children from marginalized groups, children living in deep poverty, children living in remove and hard to reach areas, etc.) and that these children should be provided with good quality education in mainstream schools, in order to get a chance to be active and integrated member of society in the future.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) wants to analyze the implementation of policies and measures of inclusive education in order to provide more complete and better support to schools and teachers that will enable them to be more successful in the implementation of inclusive education.

Therefore, please respond to the following questions honestly, because that is the only way to help us get a better insight into the current situation and to learn how to provide greater support to teachers and schools and in their efforts to improve inclusive education in practice.

General information

1. Your gender:

2. Your position in school:

3. School location (place):

4. What type of school is the school you work in?

- elementary school
- special elementary school
- secondary school
- special secondary school
- special elementary and secondary school
- school for elementary education of adults

5. Total number of pupils in your school:

- up to 150 pupils
- from 150 to 300 pupils
- from 300 to 500 pupils
- from 500 to 1000 pupils
- over 1000 pupils

6. Has your school received any grant or has it participated in a project with the aim of improving inclusive education?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes. Please specify the name of the grant or project.

7. Does the school have an expert team for inclusive education?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

8. Does the school employ a pedagogical assistant?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

9. Has the school been promoted as an example of good inclusive practice (in other schools, school administration, the media)?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes. Please provide a brief description.

10. Overall, how would you rate your school in terms of the quality of inclusive practices on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means that the school provides equal learning opportunities for all students, while 1 means that the school is closed for students from vulnerable groups.

Development and implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

11. How many students in your school have an Individual Education Plan?

Customized IEP (IEP 1)	
Altered IEP (IEP 2)	
Supplemented or expanded IEP	

12. Who and to what extent is actively involved in the designing and implementation of IEP in your school?

	Very little	Little	A lot	Very much
Teachers	○	○	○	○
Expert staff	○	○	○	○
Head master	○	○	○	○
Parents of the children that need additional support	○	○	○	○
Students that need additional support	○	○	○	○
Pedagogical assistant	○	○	○	○
School administration inclusion advisors	○	○	○	○
Individual members of the Inter-sectorial committee	○	○	○	○
Colleagues from the Network for Support of Inclusive Education	○	○	○	○
Defectologist from a special school, support service or a PHC	○	○	○	○

13. Please specify how often do the listed IEP element change after a review process in your school:

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Pedagogical profiles of students	○	○	○	○
Targets	○	○	○	○
Outcomes	○	○	○	○
Steps/activities	○	○	○	○

14. The following items are related to the contribution of IEP in certain areas of education. Please indicate to which extent the implementation of IEP has contributed to:

	I cannot say	It hasn't contributed	It has contributed to a small extent	It has contributed to a large extent
Reducing premature dropout by students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Regular attendance of students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Greater academic progress of students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Better blending in of students from vulnerable groups with their peers	○	○	○	○
Increasing the number of students from vulnerable groups that enroll in high school	○	○	○	○
Increasing the number of students from vulnerable groups in our school	○	○	○	○

Physical and material support

15. Does the school record pupils' need for physical and material support?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

16. Does the school inform parents about the possibilities for obtaining physical and material support?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

17. In your opinion, to what extent are parents informed about the possibilities for receiving physical and material support?

- ○ They are well informed.
- ○ They are mainly informed.
- ○ They are mostly not informed.
- ○ They are not informed.

18. Please assess whether your school has or has had the need for the following types of support:

	There was no need	There is a need, but we cannot provide it	There was a need, but it was provided only in part	There was a need and it was fully provided
Free textbooks for students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Custom made textbooks (e.g. Braille, audio or in, electronic form with enlarged font)	○	○	○	○
Adapted technical aids (pictures, drawings, photographs, adapted timetables, special way of marking the seats in a classroom, special way of labeling material for work, models, etc)	○	○	○	○
Assistive technology (customized keyboards, touch screens, adapted mice, special software, timers and clocks, voice recorders, screen readers etc.(	○	○	○	○
Training for students to use Braille, independent movement, use of assistive technology tools, sign language or other alternative ways of communication	○	○	○	○
Hiring accompanying persons to help the child function and communicate with others	○	○	○	○
Engaging an expert with specialized knowledge (e.g. speech therapist, defectologist, physiotherapist)	○	○	○	○
Providing free participation for students from vulnerable groups in the activities organized by the school (e.g. field trips, cultural, sports and recreation activities).	○	○	○	○

Providing free meals within the school kitchen or school lunches for students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Providing free school accessories for students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Providing clothing and footwear for students from vulnerable groups	○	○	○	○
Providing transportation to/from the place of residence and education facility	○	○	○	○
Adapting the environment (entrance and interior space of the facility: setting up ramps, handrails, installation of elevators, adapting toilets, etc.)	○	○	○	○

Cooperation of the school with other institutions

19. Do you know what are the responsibilities of the inter-sectorial committee (ISC)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

20. Do you know what are the responsibilities of individual members of the ISC for your municipality?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

21. Has anyone from the ISC come to check how you implement Individual Education Plan?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

22. How many times have you contacted the ISC during this school year?

- ○ up to 5 times
- ○ 5 to 10 times
- ○ more than 10 times

23. Have you cooperated with the Network for Support of Inclusive Education so far?

- ○ No, because we didn't know it existed
- ○ We know it exists, but we haven't contacted them
- ○ We have contacted the Network

24. Have you cooperated with one of the model schools for inclusive education?

- ○ No, because we didn't know that such schools exist
- ○ We know they exist, but we haven't contacted them
- ○ We have contacted a model school for inclusive education

25. Have you collaborated with some of the schools for students with disabilities?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No. Please specify your reasons.

26. How many times, in the past year, have you requested and received material resources from the municipality intended to promote inclusive education (for vocational training, removal of physical barriers, assistive technologies, transportation of students, free meals, etc.)?

Received in full amount	
Received in part	
Haven't received anything	

27. Please rate the cooperation of your school with these organizations and institutions with the purpose of improving inclusiveness in your school.

	We haven't cooperated	Cooperation is unsatisfactory	Good cooperation	Great cooperation
Parents' association	○	○	○	○
Association of disabled persons	○	○	○	○
Roma association	○	○	○	○
Organizations involved in charity work (UNICEF, Red Cross, private foundations)	○	○	○	○
Professional associations (Teachers' association, Serbian Association of Psychologists, Pedagogical associations, Association of	○	○	○	○
Local businessmen	○	○	○	○
School administration	○	○	○	○
Primary health center	○	○	○	○
Center for social welfare	○	○	○	○
Ministry of Interior	○	○	○	○
National Employment Service	○	○	○	○
Inter-sectorial Committee	○	○	○	○
Model school	○	○	○	○
School for students with disabilities	○	○	○	○
Municipality (local government)	○	○	○	○

School's inclusive policies

28. The table below lists various sources of information on inclusive policies. Please rate how informative each source of information has been for your school.

	Very low informativeness	Low informativeness	High informativeness	Very high informativeness
Media	○	○	○	○
Educational review	○	○	○	○
NGOs	○	○	○	○
Conferences of the Ministry of Education	○	○	○	○
Conferences/letters from projects' representatives	○	○	○	○
Information from the municipality	○	○	○	○
Trainings	○	○	○	○
Information from colleagues from other	○	○	○	○
Manuals, information booklets and other similar publications	○	○	○	○

29. Does the school development plan of your school include the development and improvement of school inclusiveness?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

30. Does the Annual plan of your school for this year stipulate specific activities that serve the improvement of school's inclusiveness?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

31. Does the Report on implementation of the annual plan include a section on the progress of students who need additional support?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

32. Are the annual reports on implementation of the school development plan related to inclusive education presented to the employees?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

33. Do the teachers' councils discuss the work with students that need additional support?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

34. The program of professional development of the school staff in the field of inclusive education is planned on an annual basis.

- Yes
- No

35. Teams that provide additional support to student exchange experiences among themselves as well as good practices.

- Yes
- No

36. The school encourages the enrollment of children from vulnerable groups in the school.

- Yes
- No

37. The school and the teachers implement measures to ensure social integration of students from vulnerable groups in the class and school.

- Yes
- No

38. The school has teachers who avoid having children in their classes that need additional support.

- Yes
- No

39. We understand that schools are facing various difficulties in the implementation of inclusive education. Please list the main difficulties that your school has faced in its practice?

40. Do you have any suggestions, impressions or comments regarding inclusive education that you might find useful, and you haven't had a change to communicate it? Please provide brief description.

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Welcome!

Dear Madam/Sir,

In the past five years, great efforts have been invested so that regular schools would increase the coverage of children who have been less involved in education in the previous years (children with disabilities, children from marginalized groups, children living in poverty, children living in remote and hard to reach areas, etc.) and to provide quality education to these children in regular schools. The main objective of all policies and measures that were implemented was for these children to exercise their right to a quality education and to get a chance in the future to be active and integrated members of society.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) wants to analyze the implementation of the policies and measures of inclusive education in order to provide comprehensive and better support at the school level that will help them overcome the existing problems and difficulties. In order to get a more objective and complete image, the MoESTD wants to systematize the experiences of parents, as well as their proposals and suggestions on how to improve the current situation.

Therefore, please respond sincerely to this questionnaire because you will thus enable us to gain better insight into the current situation and to learn how the MoESTD can provide greater support to all those that invest additional efforts to promote inclusive education in practice.

General information

1. Your gender:

- ○ Female
- ○ Male

2. Age

- ○ 25 - 30
- ○ 31 - 40
- ○ 41 - 50
- ○ 51 - 60
- ○ over 60

3. What is your level of education?

- ○ unfinished primary school
- ○ completed primary school
- ○ completed secondary

school

- ○ college or university
- ○ MBA or PhD

4. Are you employed?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

5. Please assess your family's living standards. Mark just one answer.

- ○ We barely cover the costs of food.
- ○ We can cover the costs of food, while all other costs represent a problem for our family (clothing, utilities, etc.)
- ○ We have enough money for basic needs (food, clothing, utilities, etc.), but all additional costs are a problem (technical equipment, going out, vacations, etc.)
- ○ We have enough money for normal everyday life, as well as going out, modest summer vacations, children's interests and additional activities, etc.
- ○ We have enough money for a luxurious life, including summer and winter vacations, travel and the like.

6. Please indicate how old are your children, which grade they are in as well as whether they have an Individual Education Plan

	Age	Grade	Does the child have a IEP
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			
Child 4			
Child 5			

If any of your children is studying based on an IEP (Individual Education Plan), please answer the following questions bearing in mind your experience as well as the experience of your child, and if none of your children attend school according to the IEP, please select a child that you will have in mind when answering the following questions.

7. Which one of your children will you have in mind when filling out the questionnaire (please specify the child's number in the above table):

8. Specify the location and name of the school attended by your child:

9. What type of school does the school belong to?

- ○ primary school
- ○ special primary school
- ○ special secondary school
- ○ vocational secondary school (three-year program)
- ○ vocational secondary school (four year program)
- ○ grammar school
- ○ school for elementary education of adults

Additional support in education

10. How would you generally rate the school attended by your child in terms of quality of inclusive practices on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means that the school provides equal learning opportunities for all students, while 1 means that the school is closed for students from vulnerable groups.

11. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
My child looks forward to going to school	○	○	○	○
My child feels good in school.	○	○	○	○
I'm glad that my child attends this particular school.	○	○	○	○
I think that his/her fellow pupils have accepted my child in the right way.	○	○	○	○
Teachers are trying to make my child comfortable at school (to feel good, to be satisfied).	○	○	○	○
My child feels that he/she Is not well accepted In school.	○	○	○	○
It seems to me that the teachers are neglecting my child in classes..	○	○	○	○

12. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Yes	No
School encourages positive attitude of parents toward inclusive education.	○	○
I know that the school organized at least one activity, seminar or lecture for parents related to the support for children in learning activities.	○	○
The school helped me get the necessary support in some other departments in the municipality (e.g. health care and social protection, assistance from the NGO sector etc,).	○	○
Parents of children with disabilities are involved in the work of the Parents' Council.	○	○

13. Please indicate the degree of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
I feel free to contact the school regarding anything that concerns me	○	○	○	○
There is a good two-way communication between the staff and the parents in my child's school	○	○	○	○
School employees respect my opinion	○	○	○	○
I feel welcome in the school	○	○	○	○

14. Please indicate whether your child needed any of the following and whether you received appropriate support from an institution or organization.

	I'm unaware of such support	There was no need	It was needed, but it was not provided	It was needed and it was provided
Personal assistant	○	○	○	○
Pedagogical assistant	○	○	○	○
Needed clothing and footwear	○	○	○	○
Free school supplies	○	○	○	○
Free textbooks	○	○	○	○
Free transportation to school	○	○	○	○
Free meal at school	○	○	○	○
Free participation in cultural, sports and recreational activities organized by the school	○	○	○	○
Free field trip	○	○	○	○
Professional treatment (e.g. speech therapist,	○	○	○	○
Homeschooling	○	○	○	○

15. How satisfied are you with the physical and material support that is provided to you?

- ○ They did all that was possible in the given circumstances
- ○ They could have done more
- ○ They haven't done anything
- ○ There was no need for any physical and material support

16. Did you have to provide goods and/or services at your own expense that are necessary for the education of your child in the previous year?

- Yes
- No

17. List the resources and/or services that are necessary for the education of your child that you have provided yourself in the past year.

18. I am a member of the IEP team for my child.

- Yes
- No

Development and implementation of the Individual Education Plan

19. If your child is attending school based on the Individual Education Plan (IEP), specify to which extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
My child's IEP team meets at least once during the semester.				
The needs of my child, that I recognize as important, have been taken into account by the team members when drafting IEP.				
I'm encourage to include The people who know my child very well in the drafting of IEP (experts outside of the institution, relatives, neighbors, peers, etc.)				
Members of the team are trying to understand my child better.				
Members of the team perceive and emphasize the good sides of my child.				
Team members recognize my child's progress.				
My child's IEP relies on his/her progress in the previous period.				
Generally speaking, I am satisfied with the progress of my child.				

20. To which extent do you agree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Strongly agree
Teacher/head teacher Invites me to the team meetings regularly	○	○	○	○
I recognize that my Team members respect me and to have a cooperative relationship with me.	○	○	○	○
Other team members appreciate and consider my opinion.	○	○	○	○
Overall, I am satisfied with the team's work	○	○	○	○

21. Does the school you child is attending have a pedagogical assistant?

Pedagogical assistant

22. Do you know who the pedagogical assistant in your child's school is?

- ○ Yes, I know.
- ○ I know that the school has a pedagogical assistant, but I don't know who that is.
- ○ I don't know if the school has a pedagogical assistant

23. How often do you have to opportunity to talk to the pedagogical assistant?

- ○ Whenever I need to.
- ○ Rarely.
- ○ Never or almost never.

24. Has the pedagogical assistant been engaged in one of the following ways so far?

	Yes	No
He informed me what I need for enrollment.	○	○
He informs me about my child's progress in school.	○	○
He invites me to parents' meetings.	○	○
He follows my child's school attendance.	○	○
He works with my child on school assignments.	○	○
He got free textbooks or school supplies.	○	○
He helped me get clothes, footwear and other items for the child	○	○
He helped me with enrollment and/or other health checkups	○	○
He helped me get social assistance and/or child allowance	○	○
He helped me get personal documents.	○	○

25. Please rate to what extent you are satisfied with the work of the pedagogical assistant so far?

- ○ I'm not satisfied
- ○ I'm somewhat satisfied
- ○ I'm satisfied

26. Do you have any suggestions, impressions or comments regarding inclusive education that you might find useful, and you haven't had a change to communicate it? Please provide brief description.

ANNEX 3: REGIONAL CONSULTATION MEETINGS

Table A3.1. Regional consultation meetings by location and date

No of meetings	Region	City	Schedule	Premises
1	Southern Serbia	1. Leskovac	**6 April 2015**	CSU Leskovac, Leskovackog odreda 6
1	Eastern Serbia	2. Zajecar	**7 April 2015**	Hotel Srbija TIS, Nikole Pasica бб
2	Central Serbia	3. Kragujevac	**17 April 2015**	Hotel Kragujevac, Kralja Petra 21
		4. Nis	**20 April 2015**	Regionalni centar Nis, Pariske komune bb
2	Western Serbia	5. Valjevo	**22 April 2015**	Hotel Grand, Trg Zivojina Misica 1
		6. Uzice	**23 April 2015**	Regionalni centar Uzice, Nemanjina 52
2	Vojvodina	7. Sombor	**24 April 2015**	Narodno pozoriste Sombor, Trg Koste Trifkovica 2
		8. Novi Sad	**27 April 2015**	Hotel Park, Novosadskog sajma 35
2	Belgrade	9. Stari Grad	**29 April 2015**	Hotel Zira, Ruzveltova 35
		10. Obrenovac	**30 April 2015**	Sportsko kulturni centar, Kralja Aleksandra 36

Table A3.2. Participant composition of regional consultation meetings

	Stakeholders	No of participants per meeting	Remarks
1.	Center for social work	1-2	Child and Youth Protection Service Case worker
2.	Health center	1	Pediatrician
3.	Kindergartens	3	
4.	Municipal authorities	5-7	Heads of Sector for Social Affairs
5.	Network for Support of Inclusive Education	1	
6.	NGOs	1-2	Including one representative of parents' association, where possible
7.	Primary and secondary schools	20 schools x 2-3 participants	In the case of secondary schools it would be recommendable to invite one student from the Student parliament
8.	Regional school administration	1	Coordinator for Inclusive Education
9.	Secondary schools	2-3	Including one representative of student parliament, where possible
10.	Special schools	2-3	

Reporting forms for discussion groups at regional consultation meetings

Working group 1: QUALITY OF MEASURES WHICH SUPPORT INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION – **INTER-SECTORIAL COMMITTEES (ISC)**

Date and place: _____

1. Please try to look at the quality of implementation of these measures from different perspectives. Based on your own experience and insights, describe the effects that have been produced.
1.1. Children with individual education plans: • Has the measure produced effects on academic achievements? How can this be seen? • Are there any effects on integration into the peer group (doing activities together with other children, child is accepted by the other children, not isolated and does not suffer from discrimination)? How can this be seen? • Does it contribute to self-confidence? Does it contribute to a sense of belonging to the school? How can this be seen?
1.2. Parents of children with individual education plans: • Does the measure engage parents in a meaningful way and use their capacities? How? • Is the measure useful to the parent? Does it increase the quality of life for families? How can this be seen? • To what extent and in what way does it encourage cooperation between school and parents, involvement in school life and community life?
1.3. Educational institution: • Does this measure help employees in an educational institution to better respond to the educational needs of students who need additional support? To whom? How?
1.4. Municipal authorities: • What has been done so that this measure is successfully implemented? • What else should be done?
1.5. Center for social work: • What has been done so that this measure is successfully implemented? • What else should be done?

1.6. Pediatric service: • What has been done so that this measure is successfully implemented? • What else should be done?
2. The overall impression of the measure and the quality of its implementation
2.1. What is the quality of support measures proposed by the ISC in your municipality? (individually assessed for each municipality on a scale 1-5, and then enter a frequency score) 5: ____ 4:_____ 3:_____ 2:_____ 1:_____
2.2. What are the positive, visible key effects of the ISC's work? (separately for each municipality, i.e., ISC)
2.3. What are the key difficulties in implementing this measure? What are the recommendations for removing these difficulties? (individually for each municipality, i.e., ISC)

Working group 2: QUALITY OF MEASURES WHICH SUPPORT INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION – **INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)**

Date and place: _____

1. Please try to look at the quality of implementation of these measures from different perspectives. Based on your own experience and insights, describe the effects that have been produced.
1.1. Children with individual education plans: • Has the measure produced effects on academic achievements? How can this be seen? • Are there any effects on the integration into the peer group (doing activities together with other children, child is accepted by the other children, not isolated and does not suffer discrimination)? How can this be seen? • Does it contribute to self-confidence? Does it contribute to a sense of belonging to the school? How can this be seen?
1.2. Parents of children with individual education plans: • Does the measure engage parents in a meaningful way and use their capacities? How? • Does the parent understands the meaning of measure and whether he/she is involved in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation? • Is the measure useful to the parent? Does it increase the quality of life for families? How can this be seen? • To what extent and in what way does it encourage cooperation with school and teachers, involvement in school life and classroom life?
1.3. Classmates: • Are classmates involved in the implementation of activities planned by IEP? If so, how? • Do classmates benefit from this measure? How? Illustrate by an example.
1.4. Teachers • Does this measure help teachers to better respond to the educational needs of students who need additional support? How? • Does the measure contribute to better work with other students and / or improve the classroom management? • Does this measure help teachers to improve their competence? How can this be seen?

- To what extent are teachers able to implement an IEP? What kind of support do they need to successfully realize the measure?

1.5. The school management:

- Does the school management support teachers enough, through curricular and extracurricular activities resulting from measures? How?

- What else could the school management do to in order to support the effective implementation of IEP activities?

1.6. Municipal authorities:

- What has been done so that this measure is successfully implemented in educational institutions?

- What else should be done?

1.7. Ministry of Education and Regional school departments:

- What has been done so that this measure is successfully implemented in educational institutions?

Ministry of Education:
Regional school departments:

- What else should be done?

Ministry of Education:
Regional school departments:

2. The overall impression of the measure and the quality of its implementation

2.1. How would you rate the quality of implementation of IEPs, based on your own experience? You can use the numeric marks. (on a scale 1-5, enter the individual marks or frequency score).

5: ____ 4:_____ 3:_____ 2:_____ 1:_____

2.2. What are the positive, visible key effects of implementation of IEPs?

2.3. What are the key difficulties in implementing this measure? What are the recommendations for removing these difficulties?

Working group 3: QUALITY OF MEASURES WHICH SUPPORT INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION – **SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAMS:** School Inclusive education expert team and Teams for additional individual student support (IEP team)

Date and place: _____

1. The overall impression of activities of IE school support teams?
1.1. How would you rate the quality of engagement of the teams for additional individual student support in your school/institution? You can use the numeric marks. (on a scale 1-5, enter the individual marks or frequency score). Mark for School inclusive education expert team: 5: ____ 4:_____ 3:_____ 2:_____ 1:_____ Mark for Team for additional student support (IEP team): 5: ____ 4:_____ 3:_____ 2:_____ 1:_____
1.2. Did team members, working in teams, A) develop the skills to assess the need for additional support and propose adequate adaptation?? B) become more willing to engage in the implementation of IE? C) become more open and flexible to new approaches and new experiences?
1.3. How would you rate the quality of cooperation A) within each team? B) between School Inclusive education expert team and IEP teams in the educational institution?
1.4. What are the positive, visible key effects of engagement of these teams?
1.5. What are the key difficulties in implementing this measure? What are the recommendations for removing these difficulties?
2. Please try to look at the quality of implementation of these measures from different perspectives. Based on your own experience and insights, describe the effects that have been produced.
2.1. Parents of children with individual education plans: •• How useful is the measure for the parent? How we can see that? • To what extent and in what way does it encourage cooperation with school and teachers, involvement in school life? • Does the IEP team engage parents in a meaningful way? How?

2.2. Teachers

- Does this measure help teachers to better understand the educational situation of students who need additional support? How?

- Does this measure help teachers to improve their competence for additional educational support? How can this be seen?

2.3. The school management:

- Does the school management support IE School teams enough? How?

- What else would the school management could do in order to improve the work of the IE School teams?

2.4. Ministry of Education and Regional school departments:

- Do the Ministry of Education and Regional school departments support IE School teams enough? How?

Ministry of Education:
Regional school departments:

- What else could the Ministry of Education and Regional school departments do in order to improve the work of the teams?

Ministry of Education:
Regional school departments:

Working group 4: QUALITY OF MEASURES WHICH SUPPORT INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION – **PEDAGOGICAL ASSISTANT (PA)**

Date and place: _____

1. Please try to look at the quality of implementation of these measures from different perspectives. Based on your own experience and insights, describe the effects that the measure has produced.
1.1. Children with individual education plans: • Has the measure produced effects on academic achievements? How can this be seen? • Are there any effects on the integration into the peer group (doing activities together with other children, child is accepted by the other children, not isolated and does not suffer discrimination)? How can this be seen? • Does it contribute to self-confidence? Does it contribute to a sense of belonging to the school? How can this be seen? • Does the measure contributes to increasing coverage / reducing dropout from the education system?
1.2. Parents of children with individual education plans: • Is the measure useful to the parent, Does it increase the quality of life for families? How can this be seen? • Does the measure help parents to better support the child in education? How? • To what extent and in what way does it encourage cooperation between school and parents, involvement in school life and community life?
1.3. Classmates: • Do classmates participate in the activities of the PA? Which activities? In what circumstances? • Do classmates benefit from this measure? How? Illustrate by an example.
1.4. Parents of classmates • Do parents of classmates benefit from this measure? How? Illustrate by an example.
1.5. Teachers • Does this measure help teachers to better respond to the educational needs of students who need additional support? How?

- Does this measure help teachers to improve their competence for additional educational support to children which work with PA? How can this be seen?

- How do teachers align their work with the work of PA in the classroom? Illustrate by an example.

1.6. The school management:

- Does the school management support PA enough? How?

- What else should school management do to successfully implement PA activities?

1.7. Municipal authorities:

- What has been done so far that educational institutions in need received PAs?

- What else should be done?

1.8. Ministry of Education:

- What has been done so far that educational institutions in need received PAs?

- What else should be done?

2. The overall impression of the measure and the quality of its implementation

2.1. How would you rate the quality of implementation of this measure? You can use the numeric marks. (a scale 1-5, enter the individual marks or frequency score).

5: ____ 4:_____ 3:_____ 2:_____ 1:_____

2.2. What are the positive, visible key effects of PAs' engagement?

2.3. What are the key difficulties in implementing this measure? What are the recommendations for removing these difficulties?

Working group 5: FUNCTIONING OF THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE

Date and place: _____

1. Overall assessment of system functionality:

1.1 To what extent is the system of support to inclusive education flourishing? How would you rate the system functionality? (rate on scale 1-5)

5: ____ 4:_____ 3:_____ 2:_____ 1:_____

Explanation:

- The main problem:
- Good solutions that work:

1.2 Is there avoidance of obligations? If so, who avoids them and why? Illustrate by an example.

2. How does cooperation in the education system work? Have the institutions established a procedure that facilitates the transition of students from one educational level to another?

2.1. Describe, based on your knowledge or experience, examples of good practice.

The transition from kindergarten to primary school:

The transition from IV to V grade of elementary school:

The transition from primary to secondary school:

2.2. What would you recommend to be done in order to make transition of students from one educational level to another easier? Who should do this?

3. Do the following actors have the proper place and role in the education system in order to ensure quality and equity of education for all?

Stakeholders	Yes	No / Partially	Recommendations for improvement
Children with individual education plans:			
Parents of children with individual education plans:			
Classmates:			
Parents of classmates:			
Teachers:			
Pedagogical assistants:			
School management:			
Municipal authorities:			
Ministry of Education:			
Regional School Department:			

Center for social work:			
Inter-sectorial committee:			
Pediatric service:			

ANNEX 4: CASE STUDIES

Questions for focus groups

Focus group with children that have an IEP and their parents

1. How many children in the class have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? How many children in the class don't have an IEP?

2. How have you been involved in the development of the IEP? To what extent are you satisfied with the process of developing an IEP? (What was good? What was not good?)

3. What is an IEP used for? How is the IEP helpful to children? Parents? How do you see it?

4. How does the IEP affect school achievements? How do you see it?

5. How does the IEP affect the relationship with the school? Teacher? How do you see it?

6. How does the IEP affect the children's self esteem?

7. How does the IEP affect the acceptance of other children? How do you see it?

8. To what extent are you satisfied with the implementation of IEP? (What was good? What was not good?) What would be necessary for better implementation of IEP?

Focus group with other children and their parents

1. How many children in a class have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? How many children in a class don't have an IEP?

2. What is the IEP used for? How is IEP useful for children who have an IEP? How do you see it?

3. How does the presence of children with IEP affect the school achievements of children who don't have an IEP? How do you see it?

4. What are the benefits of the IEP for children that don't have an IEP?

5. How does the presence of children with IEP change the quality of teaching? How does this circumstance affect the relationship between teachers and students?

6. How are other children involved in acitivities stipulated by an IEP?

7. How does the presence of children with an IEP in a class affect other children that don't have an IEP? How do you see it?

8. How does the presence of children with an IEP in a class accepted by the parents of other children? How do you see that?

Questions for interviews

1. *Context*
   - 1.1. What is the average number of children in a class in this institution?
   - 1.2. What is the attrition rate in this institution?
   - 1.3. What percentage of children, that finish primary education in the institution, goes to secondary education?
   - 1.4. What are the teaching languages in the institution?
   - 1.5. How many children in this facility need additional support?
   - 1.6. Which categories of needs for additional support are present in this institution?
   - 1.7. How many children in this institution:
     - 1.7.1. have intellectual disabilities?
     - 1.7.2. have physical disabilities?
     - 1.7.3. are from a rural area?
     - 1.7.4. belong to the Roma population?
     - 1.7.5. are members of some other national minorities?
   - 1.8. What is the financial situation of the institution?
   - 1.9. Which projects does the institution take part in?
   - 1.10. What are the achievements of the institution in inclusive education?
   - 1.11. What are the difficulties the institution is facing regarding inclusive education?

2. *Inter-sectorial committee (ISC)*
   - 2.1. When was the ISC established in this municipality?
   - 2.2. How does the work of the ISC affect:
     - 2.2.1. children that need additional support?
     - 2.2.2. parents of the children that need additional support?
     - 2.2.3. the education institution?
   - 2.3. How is the work of the ISC supported by:
     - 2.3.1. the local self-government?
     - 2.3.2. the Center for Social Welfare?
     - 2.3.3. the primary health center?
   - 2.4. What are the positive effects of the work of the ISC?
   - 2.5. What are the difficulties in the work of the ISC?
   - 2.6. How would you rate the quality of cooperation within the ISC?
   - 2.7. How would you rate the quality of support suggested by the ISC?
   - 2.8. What would be needed for the ISC to propose better quality support?

3. *Individual Education Plan (IEP)*
   - 3.1. How many children in the municipality have an IEP?
   - 3.2. How many children in the institution have an IEP?
   - 3.3. How does the implementation of IEP in the institution affect:
     - 3.3.1. children that need additional support?

3.3.2. parents of the children that need additional support?
3.3.3. other children?
3.3.4. teachers?

3.4. How is the implementation of the IEP supported in the institution by:
3.4.1. the school management?
3.4.2. the local self-government?
3.4.3. the school administration?
3.4.4. the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development?

3.5. What are the positive effects of the IEP implementation in the institution?
3.6. What are the difficulties of the IEP implementation in the institution?
3.7. How would you rate the quality of implementation of the IEP in the institution?
3.8. What would be needed for a more effective implementation of the IEP in the institution?

4. *Teams to support inclusive education*

4.1. When was the expert team for inclusive education established?
4.2. How does the work of the expert team for inclusive education affect:
4.2.1. parents of the children that need additional support?
4.2.2. teachers?
4.2.3. members of the team?

4.3. How does the work of the team for additional student support (IEP team) affect:
4.3.1. parents of the children that need additional support?
4.3.2. teachers?
4.3.3. members of the team?

4.4. How are the IE support teams supported in the institution by:
4.4.1. the school management?
4.4.2. the school administration?
4.4.3. the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development?

4.5. What are the positive effects of the work of the IE support teams in the institution?
4.6. What are the difficulties of the work of the IE support teams in the institution?
4.7. How would you rate the quality of cooperation in the institution:
4.7.1. within the expert team for inclusive education?
4.7.2. within the IEP team?
4.7.3. between the expert team for inclusive education and IEP teams?

4.8. What would be needed for a more successful work of the IE support teams in the institution?

5. *Pedagogical assistant (PA)*
   - 5.1. How many institutions in the municipality have a PA?
   - 5.2. How many PAs there are:
     - 5.2.1. in the municipality?
     - 5.2.2. in the institution?
   - 5.3. Since when do PAs work in institutions?
   - 5.4. How does the work of a PA affect:
     - 5.4.1. the children that need additional support?
     - 5.4.2. parents of the children that need additional support?
     - 5.4.3. other children?
     - 5.4.4. other children's parents?
     - 5.4.5. teachers?
   - 5.5. How does the school management support PA?
   - 5.6. What has been done so that the institution can have a PA by:
     - 5.6.1. the local self-government?
     - 5.6.2. the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development?
   - 5.7. What are the positive effects of a PA involvement in the institution?
   - 5.8. What are the difficulties in engaging the PA in the institution?
   - 5.9. What would be needed for a more successful involvement of a PA in the institution?

6. *The functionality and efficiency of the inclusive education system*
   - 6.1. To what extent do inter-sectorial committee, individual education plans, IE support teams and pedagogical assistants function together as a system?
   - 6.2. How and how much does the implementation of each measure affect the implementation of other measures?
   - 6.3. Do the measures for inclusive education support facilitate the transition of students from one educational level to another?
   - 6.4. Do stakeholders that are the most relevant for inclusive education have a proper place in the system? (Is there anything missing?)
   - 6.5. How would you rate the functionality of the system of inclusive education?
   - 6.6. What would be needed to have a systematic support to inclusive education?

School observation matrix

	DIMENSION	OBSERVATIONS
1	Municipality and date of visit	
2	Name and type of school	
3	Location within municipality (central vs. non-central)	
4	Settlements served (names)	
5	Location relative to settlements served (inside, on the border, outside)	
6	Distance to settlements served and availability of transportation	
7	School surroundings (main vs. side street, nearby public institutions, enclosure by fence, official symbols of an educational institution)	
8	School courtyard (material, condition, cleanliness, overall appearance)	
9	School buildings (construction materials, quality and condition of walls, floors and furniture, cleanliness, overall appearance)	
10	School infrastructure: □ Wheelchair ramps □ Running water □ Indoor toilets □ Central heating □ Library □ Computers □ Specialized classrooms (e.g., laboratories)	
11	Languages of communication between teaching staff and pupils	
12	Languages of communication among pupils	

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