

## **Inclusive Teaching – The Role and responsibilities in Primary School, Case of Kosovo (Early experience of inclusive teachers in Kosovo)**

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### **Education for children with special educational needs in regular schools- case of Kosovo**

#### **Introduction**

The essence of inclusive education is the human rights to education, defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which states that *"everyone has the right to education ... Education should be directed to the full development of the human personality and empowerment of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms ..."* (OKB, 1948, Article 26)

Education systems between states vary a lot, including the level of independence in decision-making in municipalities and in schools.

Education for children with different educational needs can be organized in many ways despite organizational, cultural, economic differences. The development of mechanisms for "school for all" does not happen by itself. This process requires great engagement and cooperation with different organisms.

There is no single and perfect model to follow. Each country develops the appropriate model for its context. The

main principle is to follow and observe the philosophy of all-inclusive education.

**Inclusive education** means providing education for children with special needs within the regular classroom education system with other children. This model recognizes that all students have the right to support and that the education system can implement teaching methods that meet the needs of all students while respecting the differences between their needs regarding age, gender, ethnicity, language, position socio-economic, disability and other characteristics. In the fight against discrimination, regular school has a special role in providing education for all - creating a community in which children with special needs can feel comfortable. Comprehensive school can provide effective education for a significant number of students, thus reducing the expansion of the separate education system.

Inclusion of special needs of students in primary education is a challenge that requires additional effort, training, motivation, a sufficient level of sensitivity and patience. Many other authors have written on this topic and we recommend Gardner (2005) that concludes that beliefs, norms, or values affect the role of the teacher in the classroom, his attitude to the children, and the procedures he used to help 'Qualified appropriate forms of educational support in a comprehensive inclusive process. "The challenge is not to classify skilled and least-skilled individuals, but to develop them in accordance with individual abilities" meaning that each child can learn and advance in accordance with their individual abilities.

Including children with special needs in regular schools can be achieved:

- socialization of children with disabilities
- integration of children with disabilities
- positive attitude of teachers towards the integration of children with disabilities

- raising children with special needs in natural environments
- acceptance of diversity
- developing tolerance
- courage in seeking and receiving help from others
- developing a full personality
- strengthening the personality of children with disabilities
- Strengthen the relationship I can

Inclusive Schools should aim to change their attitudes toward teaching children in a comprehensive way, forming the basics of a non-discriminatory society. Schools do more than "tolerate" the special need, they accept it, succeed and see it not as a problem to be solved, but as an opportunity to provide quality education. (Asian Development Bank, 2010)

Schools need to respond to the needs of all children, they must put themselves in the function of meeting the specific learning needs and behaviors of children with special needs and not the opposite (Montreuil N & Magerotte G (1994). A school must systematize all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and linguistic conditions, including children with special needs. (UNESCO, 1994)

### **The history of developing the role of Inclusive Teachers in Kosovo**

The education system in Kosovo can be described as a segregated system that functions in two separate systems: in the regular education system where there are regular schools managed by the municipality and the special education system for children with disabilities that is directly managed by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Most children with disabilities attend classes in special schools, where children are accrued according to the disabilities or disabilities

that they have (5 such schools) and attached classes that are distributed throughout Kosovo. These classes are organized so that children with different disabilities attend classes separate from their regular peers in the same school building. In both cases, children with disabilities are separated and isolated from their regular peers.

In 2008, following a statement on special education by the Special Education Office in Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Finnish Support (FSDEK), the decision was made to make changes, children with special needs having better opportunities for integration into regular schools. From this decision it turned out that there should be a new role within the regular school that will come to the aid of children with special needs and school staff. The role of the all-inclusive teacher will be the awareness of the school staff on the process of inclusiveness, the primary role of the inclusive teacher will be the direct assistance of special needs students in regular classes and regular teachers who have children in their classes special needs.

In October 2009, **three inclusive Teachers** at the country level worked in three different municipalities of Kosovo: Pristina, Skenderaj and Rahovec.

The objectives addressed for these positions were here:

- It compiles and reviews the individual education plan together with the regular teacher, the parent and, where appropriate, the students with special educational needs
- Ensures that the individual education plan of students with special educational needs is reviewed and evaluated in regular time periods and from time to time is reconsidered if needed
- Planning and organizing co-teaching with the regular teacher in the classroom where there are students with special educational needs

- Advise regular teachers on how to work with children with special educational needs
- Provide advice and compile alternative teaching materials together with the regular class teacher who will be used in teaching with students with special educational needs
- Assess the educational needs of students with special educational needs
- If needed, attract a small group of students to offer special teaching in a particular subject
- Helps educate school staff on the process of inclusiveness
- Assists the school principal and other staff to accommodate students with special educational needs
- Advise the director and other leading staff to meet the diverse needs of students
- Cooperate with Resource Centers on teaching methods, teaching materials and the support needed for special needs students in regular classes.

### **Inclusive teachers had 20 lessons per week**

As the post of supportive teacher is a new post, of course there is uncertainty about the role, description of work and the duties of these teachers at the moment. The original idea is that these teachers will not be in charge of classes, if they will not have classes, but will support all disabled students and their teachers within regular classes. Inclusive teachers had 20 lessons per week

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From 2009, in Kosovo, students with special needs are supported through supportive teachers in regular schools that are a comprehensive school. Comprehensive school means a school that encompasses all children in school, regardless of their nationality, the disability, the school with children with special needs receive directly in regular classes. By 2013, 20 regular schools were re-transformed into comprehensive schools and 9 comprehensive preschool institutions. In these institutions are employed supportive teachers who help school staff and preschool institutions to work with children with special needs and those who have difficulties in learning. In these schools, training is ongoing with the teaching staff for inclusion.

## **The role of the inclusive teacher**

### **Inclusive teacher has many roles**

#### **1. Work with other professionals at school**

- Consult and support staff
- To plan, to execute and monitor the development of the child's education together with the class teacher
- Provide concrete support in teaching during class hours.
- Provide concrete support; how to organize classroom teaching, what materials to develop and use, how to use teaching aids, what to consider about dating.
- Serves as a bridge between the school staff and the specialized staff of the municipality

#### **2. Work in the classroom with children with special educational needs**

- A child with special educational needs attends classroom classes
- Inclusive teacher supports the child or a small group of children during classes

- Teaching hours (goals and activities) are planned in advance in collaboration with the class teacher to support education and co-operation among children
- Intentional support is done in accordance with needs; longer or shorter periods of time, eg. transitional phase
- Comprehensive and classroom teachers change roles among all children
- The child's IEP is forwarded and re-evaluated

### **3. Work separately from classes with children with NVA**

- Providing special support exists mainly in regular classes, but in some cases even in separate environments
- The child / small group of children with NVA several hours of teaching separately from their class during the class
- Taking children out of the classroom should have a special understanding and a profound individual basis to be assessed
- Goals and activities for "separate teaching" should be carefully planned in cooperation with the class teacher
- Inclusive teacher draws the student from the classroom with a positive attitude; other students in the classroom are informed
- How regular it will be to work depends on the individual needs of the child
- The child's IEP is forwarded throughout the session and evaluated regularly.

## **Important tasks for the inclusive teacher**

### **Preparation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP)** Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

The Individual Educational Plan develops a program for the learner, prepared according to his or her unique needs, to overcome the obstacles in the lesson. It specifies the objectives for students with specific needs with parents, teachers, and pupils themselves, if possible, and aims to involve the student as an active student. Individual educational plans dissolve learning to better see changes in knowledge, life skills and socio-cultural developments. It can be written in free form or designed using certain structures created earlier. The general IEP education framework is based on the diagnosis and includes an individual curriculum and continuous work assessment.

As required by law, each student with special educational experiences involved in regular schools will have an Individual Education Plan. The IEP form helps to assess the progress of each student in particular in his class. It also lists the special needs that a child with special educational needs may have. Inclusive teacher is responsible for testing student progress and marking out results in any form of IEP. Each country regulates the frequency and amount of IEP testing required by a comprehensive teacher.

### **Accommodation in Classroom**

Comprehensive teachers are responsible for creating a classroom environment capable of accommodating each child's special needs. For example, a child who is in need of special vision may require the reading of larger fonts than normal. This is the duty of the comprehensive teacher to supply this student with special items. These special needs are described in the form of the Individual Child Education Plan-it is possible to discuss all the developments in the student's academic careers.

If necessary, the all-encompassing teacher can and should initiate a meeting to discuss any problems the student may have.

### **Modifies tasks and tests**

Pupils with special educational needs will need modified tasks. Changes can include reducing the number of problems or items, limiting multiple choice answers and not delivering certain items.

### **Collaborate with the regular teacher**

Pupils with special educational needs in the classroom of regular education will have a regular education teacher as well as a comprehensive teacher. Both teachers are required to work together to meet the needs of students. Comprehensive teacher and regular education teacher should often discuss to assess the progress of classroom students.

### **Challenges**

- Large number of students at school for example in Primary School "Ismail Qemali" in Pristina there are a total of 2,300 students, out of which 40 are students with special educational needs and only one comprehensive teacher
- Creating physical conditions within the school
- Appropriate trainings for school staff to have some of the competences of comprehensive teachers and receive regular teachers
- Educate the leading school staff on the process of inclusiveness and the role of the inclusive teacher in the school
- Collaboration of resource centers with the comprehensive school at the best level
- Define the role of private assistants (private assistants paid by parents of special needs nursing parents for their classroom children) at school

## **CONCLUSION**

New discoveries have changed the basic educational objectives, concepts and strategies of teaching and learning.

To ensure the normal rhythm of the life of children with disabilities the development of all segments of society are obliged to contribute to their inclusion in society.

Involvement of an inclusive teacher should start as early as the age of the kindergarten, continuing in the primary and secondary education, creating employment opportunities so that involvement can be made in the full sense of the word.

It is therefore necessary to raise awareness of society to respect diversity, this fact should spread as a positive energy. We have already said that children with disabilities can and want to contribute to society, and it does not depend on them.

Every day we live and respect the diversity of each child, respecting different cultures, socio-economic, national, linguistic diversity, racial diversity, as a great professional challenge.

The introduction of inclusive teachers in regular schools means that we are one step closer to achieving this goal

## **CASE STUDY**

### **Individual description**

A.S is a 10 year old boy, a fourth-grade pupil at Primary and Middle School "Ismail Qemali" in Pristina. A.S has problems in sight. There are significant difficulties in writing and reading. He has the best skills in math and especially in basic actions. He has many absences during his school attendance.

### **Family Description**

A.Ş. lives with both parents and brother who has social problems (there are problems with the abuse of narcotic substances). He lives in very difficult social and economic

conditions. A.Ş. we can sometimes see it on the streets of the city asking alms along with his mother.

### **Description of difficulties in writing and reading**

A.S, names almost all alphabetically alphabets, but has problems identifying the letters m, n, p, g, gj, nj, th, sh, ll. A.Ş. writes in big and small prints with a larger size and also the words in the sentence mark very close to each other. The letters you know had the problem of linking them to syllable. His notebooks were not very regular, he did not write on each page in a row. A.Ş. there was poor attention and concentration, a small class movement and distracted attention.

### **Class teacher's approach**

The teacher who followed this class was on maternity leave. The substitute teacher was young and had no information and experience with children with learning difficulties. A.Ş. was sitting at the end of the class, rarely in any group with classmates and friends. He did not associate with other classmates. He in the classroom during a lesson depicted a single sentence from the first line of the notebook until the end of that page. The sentence he wrote was nonsense to him, he wrote it only as a graphic.

### **Activities of the Inclusive Teacher with A.S.**

I went twice a week at student A.S., Monday and Thursday, in the second hour, in the subject of Albanian Language. A.Ş. he waited very well, had been close to me, wanted to stay longer in his class. Along with our school psychologist, we have conducted a standardized individual testing for writing and reading difficulties to investigate where the need is to be helped.

On A.S. we have worked with some of the activities that are specially tailored to children with learning and writing difficulties. The activities that were provided by the Finnish Edu-Cluster project and we also held trainings on how to work

with these materials. Learning materials that we have modified with our class teacher and adapted to our needs.

A.Ş. is not sufficiently involved in activities without my assistance. But it was a lot of fun activities to start the next task.

### **Achievements of A.S.**

After work and activities I developed with A.S. there have been improvements in;

A.Ş. Identifies all letters of the alphabet Read the words we have learned through syllable activities for example; Dera, Dora, Lisa, Topi, Mom, Nora, Pata, Bora, Dogs, Trains, Meters ... etc. Now dictating also writes the words we have learned.

Dice to make short sentences with the words learned. The size of the letter is normal as we have collaborated with the NGO Terre Dez Hommes and they have provided the checklist to the dentist and the glasses as well. The teacher has now managed to create a better atmosphere in the classroom where student A.S. is closer to his teacher and classmates and friends. Our co-operation with his parents remains a challenge, although after many efforts they have never come to the meetings we have organized together with his teacher and the school's professional staff. I was forced to go to their home, but their reception at the beginning was very pale, and now more and more people have begun to create an affinity and willingness to cooperate but still not at the right level.

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