Formative evaluation of implementation of inclusive practices in the Education System in Serbia (2009 – 2014)

Contract number: 43191116

EVALUATION REPORT

Version: V6.2

Budapest, 20 December 2016

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Formative evaluation of
implementation of inclusive
practices in the Education System
in Serbia (2009 – 2014)

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1. PROJECT REFERENCES

Project reference number	43191116
Project title	Formative evaluation of implementation of inclusive practices in the Education System in Serbia (2009 – 2014)
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2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. This report summarizes the results of the formative evaluation of the inclusive education policy of the Government of Serbia initiated in 2009. The main objective of the new policies and strategies has been to improve the quality and coverage of preschool and primary education, to enhance the educational achievement of all students in general, and children from vulnerable social groups in particular. Inclusion is the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education (Terms of Reference)

2. This Evaluation Report has been developed by the consortium of AAM Management Information Consulting Ltd. (leader) and Expanzió Human Consulting Ltd. (member) for UNICEF Serbia on the basis of the Request for Proposal issued on 15 September, 2015. The evaluation has been implemented on the basis of the Inception Report approved by UNICEF Serbia and the Steering Committee as of 31 March 2016.

The purpose, the objectives and the object of the evaluation

3. This evaluation project serves formative purposes. Therefore, the primary purpose of the evaluation is supporting the most important actors who are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the inclusive education policy. Especially, the evaluation intends to support reflection on the implementation process, and to identify the necessary interventions in order to ensure that the original goals of the policy are effectively served.

4. On the basis of the Request for Proposal (hereafter: RfP), the formative evaluation serves multiple goals:

- It should inform policy makers – especially the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (hereafter: MoESTD) – and the major stakeholder groups about the extent to which the original goals of the inclusion policy have been met in the course of implementation so far;

- It should identify the risks, challenges, obstacles and possible problems emerged in the course of implementation that may call for interventions or corrections;

- It should identify further development needs at all levels and in all relevant institutions involved in the implementation of the inclusion policy in order to inform donor coordination and the planning of donor activities;

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- It should identify those activities that have the potential of improving the work of all actors if shared and scaled-up;

- It should promote the professional discourse on educational inclusion, as well as the exchange and discussion among various stakeholders.

5. The Terms of Reference sets five evaluation objectives: (1) assessing relevance, (2) assessing effectiveness, (3) assessing sustainability, (4) assessing impact and (5) assessing efficiency. In addition to these main objectives the TOR determines three key cross-cutting issues. These are: the contribution of the measures to the promotion of child rights, the extent to which an equity focus is ensured and the reflection on gender mainstreaming issues.

6. The object of the evaluation is the development of the various elements of inclusive education that were addressed in the course of the implementation of the policy based on the 2009 new legislation. Successful inclusive education requires a great variety of conditions to be in place, such as differentiated teaching and individualized supplementary support, various educational and non-educational support schemes tailored to the needs of children and a supporting systemic environment. All these conditions create an "ecosystem" around the students, composed of various services, provisions, measures and resources.

7. The evaluated Serbian inclusion policy contains various systemic and supplementary measures. The most important systemic measures are the expansion of mandatory pre-school enrolment to 9 months; new enrolment procedure to primary education based on the abolishment of categorization; new regulations promoting the shift to differentiated teaching and formative pedagogical assessment; the introduction of individual education; the renewal of the special education profession and the transformation of the role of special schools; the introduction of free textbook provision; establishment of the "Inclusion Network". A new element was added in 2013: an amendment of legislation deployed the task to primary and secondary schools implementing dropout prevention programs.

8. The major supplementary measures are the introduction of the position of pedagogical assistants; new regulation allowing the presence of personal assistants in schools; the introduction of Roma language and culture as an optional subject. Also, the mandatory pre-school policy was supplemented with affirmative action measures in 2010.

9. The scope of the evaluation has been extended to the full spectrum of educational inclusion related matters. Therefore, the underlying analytical concept of the evaluation is based on a comprehensive analytical framework that addresses the matters in relation to all major groups of vulnerable students and three clusters of inclusion related matters: the identification of student needs, the extent of

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separation/integration and the inclusion related services provided to students. The evaluation matrix is based on 16 specific evaluation questions developed by the Evaluation Team and the six evaluation objectives determined by the Terms of Reference.

Methodology

10. The applied methodology is based on gathering evidences from multiple sources along the 30 evaluation questions of the ToR and 16 thematic clusters set by the approved Inception Report. The applied methodology includes document analysis, legal analysis, statistical analysis, focus group interviews, individual interviews and classroom observation. The use of multiple evaluation instruments provided information for answering each evaluation questions.

11. The fieldwork evaluation has comprised the following sources: a sample of 6 settlements and 7 educational institutions, the list of resource organisations and persons, a selection of documents for analysis (strategies, policy documents, reports, research publications and others), a selection of various level regulations for legal analysis, and data sources for statistical analysis. The sample has been determined in cooperation with UNICEF and the Inclusion Team of the MoESTD on the basis of predetermined criteria.

12. For fieldwork evaluation, four types of instrument have been developed and applied: (1) semi-structured guides for individual interviews, (2) semi-structure guides for focus group interviews, (3) assessment criteria, and (4) a classroom observation protocol. The evaluation process was based on the involvement of all major stakeholder groups and contained ethical safeguards in order to ensure the information of respondents, confidentiality and independence of the evaluators.

13. The Evaluation Report contains the description and analysis of the equity profile of the Serbian education system and the inclusion policy initiated in 2009. The detailed findings are presented in six sections organised according to the five evaluation objectives and the supplementary crosscutting issues determined by the ToR. These sections basically contain the results of data analysis, individual and focus group interviews and classroom observations. The conclusions of the evaluation according to the 6 evaluation objectives, the summary of the lessons learned and the Evaluation Team's recommendations are presented in separate sections.

Conclusions drawn from findings

14. Due to a clear shift towards a mainstreaming policy approach, the relevance of the policies and implementation measures against the challenges stemming from the equity related problems of the Serbian education system is very high. The inclusion

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policy is highly comprehensive; it addresses almost all relevant dimensions of societal disadvantages: low social status and poverty as well as ethnicity (Roma affiliation) and impaired individual capacities. The only dimension that was neglected by policy is the problem of gender inequities.

15. The 2009 inclusion policy, to some extent, was – and still is – driven by information: due to the lack of reliable information on educational outcomes (especially on dropout and learning outcomes), policy is focusing more on teaching for inclusion than on the reduction of outcome gaps emerging along societal disadvantages. The relevance of the policy was greatly improved by the 2013 amendment to the law that deployed the mandate of incorporating dropout prevention measures to their school development plans.

16. The relevance of the implementation strategies was largely determined by the political context. During the period of 2009-2012, the emphasis of implementation was on creating and developing local and school level mechanisms and provisions. In the period of 2012-2016, local and school level implementation efforts were sporadic; the emphasis has shifted toward policy advocacy, knowledge management and various further changes ensuring the sustainability of provisions created before 2012.

17. The various developments have created a large number of good practices – mainly in those schools that had the overall institutional and professional absorption capacity to apply the know-how. For the time being, however, the systemic impact of these good practices is limited. This constrained systemic impact is the result of the unified effect of many different factors: the lack of a sustained school level implementation effort, especially after 2012, the weakness of institutionalized external professional support system capable of balancing the weak absorption capacities, the weakness of the culture and practice of school-based self-evaluation and development, and the scarcity of resources available for implementation.

18. The external evaluation system operating since 2012 has a great potential in generating school level change, because its underlying standards properly incorporate inclusive education related elements. However, one of the obstacles to effective leverage at the school level still is that the failures of schools remain invisible.

19. The inclusion policy has built a supporting "ecosystem" around the children of vulnerable groups, but this system does not work properly for the children in practice. The implementation of inclusive education policy is hindered by contradictory policy messages of the government, such as the new textbook provisions, the reduction of the number of expert associates in the schools, and other rationalization related measures.

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20. The inclusion policy has created institutions with stable regulation backgrounds, such as the Intersectorial Committees (hereafter: ISCs) or the inclusion teams in schools. These institutionalized elements proved to be sustainable changes. There are other developments that have gained a legal status in the course of the implementation (e.g. the inclusion network or the status of pedagogical assistants) that ensures a certain level of sustainability. However, those elements of the implementation process which were project-based developments in larger donor-funded programs (e.g. the training programs provided by the DILS program) have not survived the phasing-out of these programs. The sustainability of the key elements of the policy has been weakened by the lack of financial incentives within the existing input-based financial allocation system.

21. One of the most important impacts of the inclusion strategy is its contribution to the gradual acceptance of the general goals and principles of inclusive education. Also, as a result of the inclusion policy, the overall proportion of children enrolled to special schools or to the special classes of regular schools has declined. This decrement is continuing in a slow but steady pace which gives the necessary time for all actors to adjust to the changes.

22. Promoting the transformation of the role of special schools and the renewal of the special education profession in general were those of the less successful elements of the policy. The impact of the policy on the extent to which the decision-making power of parents prevails, as well as on the intensity of parental involvement in the work of schools, was very limited. However, the extension of the legally ensured rights of parents is a good basis for improvements.

23. The policy increased the length of mandatory preparatory pre-school enrolment, but not increased pre-school attendance. The increment of attendance rate has resulted mainly by demographic changes; the absolute number of children attending kindergarten has not changed to a significant extent.

24. While the establishment of ISCs created an institutionalized framework for local cooperation, the practice of cooperation around the interests and needs of individual children has not improved significantly: sectorial separation is still prevailing. Although the inclusion policy introduced a potentially highly effective system of individual supplementary development of students, due to many different obstacles, such as the large competence gap between mainstream teachers and special education specialist, this provision is not able to meet the expectations.

25. The various projects serving implementation seem to have been very efficient, since some of them created sustainable elements of inclusive education with very limited funds and management capacities. The most important efficiency related problem

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comes from the prevailing "implementing by regulation" pattern. The efficiency of the implementation process was weakened by two major implementation bottlenecks: the lack of public resources and the lack of capable institutional framework and capacities. The lack of public resources was partially dealt with by the mobilization of donor resources; the lack of sufficient institutional capacities was mitigated by "institution substitutes", such as the Inclusion Network.

26. The expansion of the regulations onto the rights of children and parents provides a good basis for the work of those who are engaged in rights protection and creates a solid reference for policies aiming at ensuring these rights. In terms of the practical enforcement of these rights, the impact of the policy is weaker.

27. The inclusion policy has not achieved a significant move towards the elimination of the participation gap between the Roma and non-Roma children. In many respects the slow but improving tendencies of the second part of the previous decade that reduced participation gaps – mainly due to the impact of the economic crisis - were reversed after 2010. The inclusion policy achieved partial success by eliminating the segregation of Roma children to special schools. However, the findings of this evaluation revealed worrying cases of possible emerging new channels of segregation, such as the transfer of Roma students to the schools for adults of the discriminatory use of IEPs. Gender equity was not on the agenda of the inclusion policy and it is still largely missing from the educational policy discourse.

28. The evaluation of the Serbian inclusion policy provides for certain generalized lessons to be learned. For example, the Serbian case demonstrates the importance of the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in ensuring the sustainability of policy initiatives. Also, the Serbian policy is a good example of policy initiatives that are tailored according to the specific context of the country. Another lesson is that if implementation is largely driven by the very different absorption capacities of schools, that may result in rather isolated islands of good practices with limited systemic impact. Other important lessons can be learned in relation to the effects of the lack of financial incentives, of too strong central government control and of the narrow capacity building approach to the professionalization of teachers.

Recommendations

29. The recommendations for short-term corrections are as follows:

- The renewal of the work of the Intergovernmental Committee with the most important ministries;

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- The establishment a national small grant scheme for schools for the implementation of the inclusive education related components of school development plans;

- The creation of conditions in the Regional School Authorities (RSAs) for improved professional support services, especially for collecting, summarizing and analysing the development plans of schools and the IEPs for students, and annual planning of the provisions of professional support, capacity building and development related financial resource;

- The development of an operational scheme of the support functions of special schools.

30. The recommended long-term investments are as follows:

- Initiate a new wave of capacity building programs for teachers on the application of the methods of differentiated instruction both by in-service training and the initial training of teachers;

- The development of support manuals for each sub-domains and indicators of the Standards for Work Quality of Educational Institutions that are closely connected to inclusive education;

- The development of underlying data classifications, online reporting system and information management platform for individual student level data collection;

- The development of a comprehensive policy strategy for the systemic scaling up of isolated good practices on the basis of international experience applied to the specific Serbian context.

31. The recommendations for UNICEF Serbia are as follows:

- Preserve the current balance among grass root developments, piloting for the development of know-how, knowledge management and policy advocacy with a stronger focus on educational outcome gaps between students with different backgrounds;

- Initiate a series of events that provide the platform for intensive and open dialogue between educationalists working in any roles on the promotion of integration and inclusion and experts of special education on the required role of special education professionals and institutions.

- Initiate a larger scale research project in cooperation with other organizations on the magnitude of segregation of Roma students and on the changing patterns of discrimination.

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32. The findings of this evaluation have drawn the attention to the fact that certain characteristics of the existing Serbian education system do not provide a favourable environment for the successful integration and inclusion of vulnerable students or for the reduction of educational outcome gaps emerging along the various dimensions of disadvantages. While the above listed recommendations have been developed within the existing overall systemic context, the Report offers certain systemic changes for further consideration that may have the potential to improve the systemic environment of inclusive education. These areas are the following: (1) the democratization of the curriculum and standards; (2) making school failures visible by the regular assessment of competencies and the information system; (3) fiscal decentralization and normative financing; (4) an institutionalized network of professional support services; (5) bridging the competence gap between mainstream and special education by introducing the development teacher qualification; and (6) school structural reform in order to increase the length of the initial phase of education.

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3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Structure of the report

This chapter contains also the description of the background of the evaluation project. The main text of the report is organised into the following main chapters.

Chapter 4 contains the description of the object of the evaluation: the elements of successful inclusive education provisions (4.1), the Serbian education context in terms of its equity profile on the basis of data in connection of the progression and the learning outcomes of students (4.2), the educational policy implications of the specific Serbian education context (4.3), and the description and analysis of the composition of measures to be evaluated (4.4).

Chapter 5 outlines the purpose (5.1) and the objectives (5.2) of the evaluation. (The ToR of the evaluation projects is exhibited in the Annex – A1.)

Chapter 6 provides a detailed description of the methodology of the evaluation. It outlines the underlying conceptual approach (evaluation strategy – 6.1), the scope of the evaluation determined in terms of indicators (6.2), the methodological approach and the sources of evidence (6.3), the instruments of the evaluation (6.4), the participation of stakeholders (6.5) and the applied ethical safeguards (6.6). The evaluation matrix based on the evaluation questions is exhibited as an Annex to the report (A8). Detailed information on the methodology and the fieldwork of evaluation are also provided as annexes: the description of the institutional sample (A3), the most important data sources (A4), the list of interviewed persons (A5), the list of documents analysed/referenced (A6) and the instruments applied during the fieldwork (A7).

Chapter 7 contains the findings of the evaluation. The detailed summary of the findings of the evaluation is structured along the 5 evaluation objectives and the supplementary crosscutting issues determined by the ToR.

Chapter 8 contains conclusions that are drawn from the analysis of the findings in connection to the evaluation objectives.

Chapter 9 contains a list of a few generalised lessons learned from the evaluation of the Serbian inclusion policy.

Chapter 10 contains targeted recommendations for various stakeholders. The specific recommendations of the report serve the improvement of the implementation of inclusive education policy (10.1). This section also contains various overall systemic change related considerations in order to support more generalized reflection on the conditions of the further development of inclusive education (10.2).

Chapter 11 contains the annexes.

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3.2. Project background

The inclusive education initiative of the Serbian Government is part of a coordinated effort to overcome the serious equity problems of the education system. According to the data at the time of introduction of the new Law on the Foundations of the Education System, 85% of children with disabilities were not covered by any systematic education; primary education was attended by only 75% of rural children and no more than 37% Roma children. As many as 68% of Roma children were leaving elementary school early and were representing a majority in special schools (up to 80% of all students).

The problem of the prevailing separated education of children with Special Education Need (hereafter: SEN) was very much connected to the exclusion of Roma students; as in other South-East European and Central-Eastern European countries, special schools became one of the channels for the segregation of Roma students. The inclusion policy also connected to the efforts of the government to ensure full school enrolment for disadvantaged students in general. Also, SEN inclusion has been widely considered in Serbia as one of the drivers of the modernization of mainstream education in order to improve learning outcomes, as well as of ensuring the rights of children and parents.

The basis for the inclusion policy was set – among other strategic documents – by the 2008 Ministry of Education document *"Roadmap for Inclusive Education".* The problems to which the overall policies responded were: low quality of education according to the PISA results in 2003 and 2006; low level of inclusion of Roma children and children with disabilities; persistence of a parallel system of education in which the education of children with disabilities and developmental difficulties was still done in special schools or special classes in regular schools; a lack of attention and systematic solutions for providing additional support to vulnerable children in education; the low percent of GDP allocations for education, etc.

The main objective of the new policies and strategies has been to improve the quality and coverage of preschool and primary education, to enhance the educational achievement of all students in general, and children from vulnerable social groups in particular. Inclusion is the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education.

According to the Terms of Reference, the key elements of the policy were the following:

- Enrolment procedures - Abolishment of categorisation within the primary school enrolment process and enrolment of children from deprived groups without personal documentation.

- Provision of additional support through municipal Inter-sectorial Committees (ISC) responsible for assessment of the needs for educational, healthcare and social support, consisting of school psychologist (school), paediatrician (health centre) and

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social worker (centre for social work) as permanent members and two persons who know the child best as variable members; committees are responsible for the child and prescribing measures to support the child, including assistive technologies.

- Implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the practice of School Teams for additional individual student support. The new curriculum policy recommends that persons with developmental impairments or with exceptional abilities shall be entitled to education which takes into consideration their Individual Educational Needs (including adjustments in teaching methods, characteristics and organization of additional assistance; individualisation of learning outcomes and their specification ("modified program"); enriching the education provision for talented children - "enriched program").

- Creation of School Inclusive Education Expert Teams responsible for spearheading the implementation of inclusive policies at the school level as well as improving the quality of inclusive education in the school.

- Understanding the need for an inter-sectoral approach to inclusive education, a number of projects initially initiated and piloted by NGOs, and aimed at supporting student participation, were supported and scaled up through loans and grants. A number of development agencies, including UNICEF actively supported implementation of programs aimed at advancing inclusiveness and quality of education since well before 2009 and continued to do so once the new Law had been adopted.

The actual implementation of the policy started in 2010. Therefore, in spite of various interim corrections, this evaluation can build on the experiences of a 5-year implementation process.

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4. THE OBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

4.1. The elements of inclusive education

In absence of an underlying inclusive education development strategy determining a "theory of change", this evaluation will assess the design of the 2009 policy against a framework that describes the conditions of successful educational inclusion.

The evaluation addressed the development of the various elements of inclusive education in the course of the implementation of the policy based on the 2009 new legislation. Successful inclusive education requires a great variety of necessary conditions to be in place. All these conditions constitute an "ecosystem" around the students that is composed of various services, provisions, measures and resources (see Figure 1).

The core element of the "ecosystem" is a differentiated teaching practice that is the basis of responding to the specific individual development needs of students. These developments are as diverse as the possible obstacles to successful learning of individual students might be. They might be supplementary program elements provided to a certain group of students, remedial or developmental hours provided to individual children on the basis of individual educational plans, enrichment programs and projects for talented children, habilitation-rehabilitation developments for disabled children, psychological treatments or any other services beyond the regular contact hours.

The next layer consists of those provisions which are not necessarily educational in the narrow sense of the word, but are essential for successful learning; these are methods and institutionalized procedures of the medical, educational and social profiling of the children, habilitation-rehabilitation services for disabled children, various social allowances, the necessary technical conditions (such as those ensuring accessibility and the access to the use of assistive technologies), and the various forms ensuring the empowerment and involvement of parents.

The third layer is composed of those elements of the "ecosystem" which are necessary conditions of the improvement and maintenance of the inclusion capacity of schools. The key elements of this layer are as follows:

- Enrolment policies (regulations, incentives, local and school policies) that, by preventing separation, selection on the basis of student backgrounds and segregation, ensure the integrated education of students in heterogeneous schools and classrooms;

- Institutionalized and easily available professional support to teachers;

- A professional development system which is able to respond to the capacity building needs of teachers generated by inclusion;

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- A local cooperation framework within which various social, health and educational services and service providers are well-connected and which is built around the needs of individual families and children;

- Mandatory self-evaluation based school improvement, institutionalized cooperation among teachers and other professionals;

- All necessary elements of a full and effective anti-discrimination system that ensures that related regulations prevail;

- The availability of all the necessary financial and human resources.

Figure 1. The object of the evaluation

The "ecosystem" of successful inclusive education

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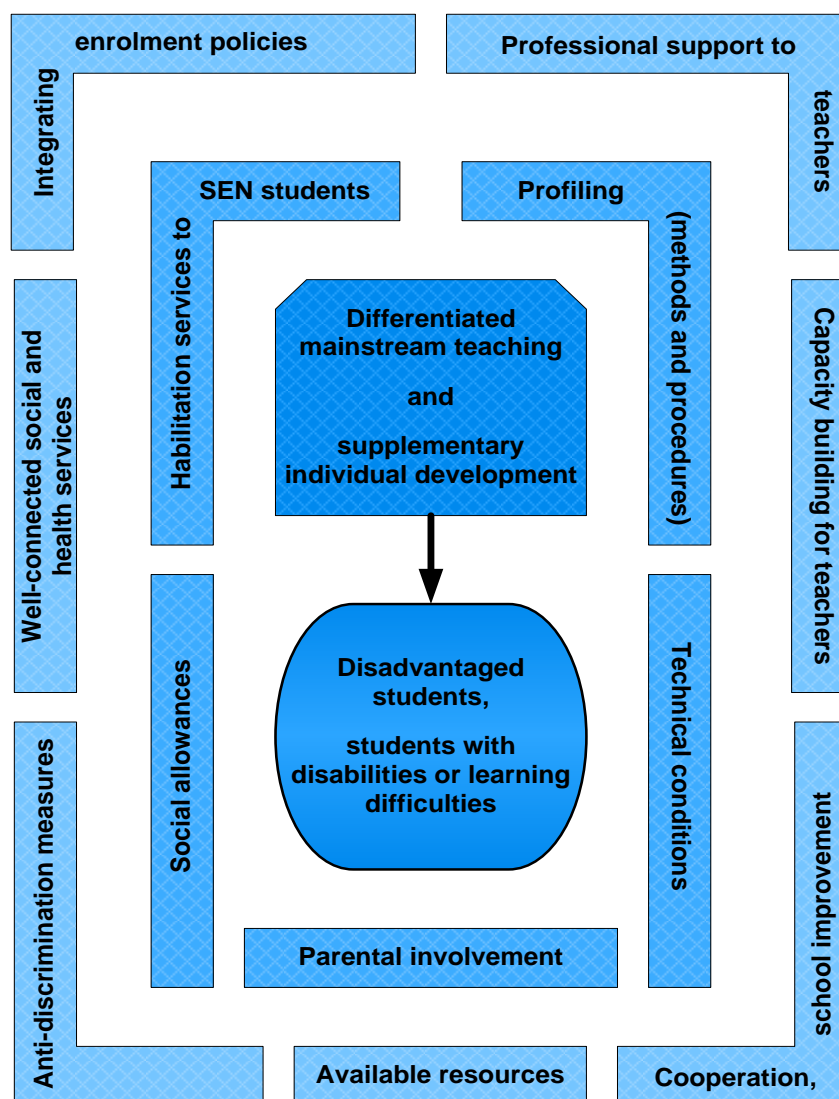
This evaluation has been designed to systematically map out all investments and measures that aim at improving the elements of the entire "ecosystem" of inclusive evaluation. Therefore, the specific evaluation questions have been developed on the basis of this comprehensive framework (see Section 3.2.1.2). However, it is important to keep in mind that the different layers and elements of this "ecosystem" work at their full potential only in a supportive governance environment. Thus, this evaluation has also addressed certain governance conditions, such as the flexibility of curricular regulations, the extent to which professional accountability systems strengthen the inclusion-related expectations towards schools and teachers, the necessary overall human resource management conditions and the flexibility and appropriateness of the allocation of financial resources.

4.2. The Serbian education context

4.2.1. Participation in education

Participation in primary education is almost universal in Serbia, the net primary attendance rate was, and remained over 98% during the last decade. Participation in upper-secondary education however – in spite of a significant improvement in the second part of the previous decade - is far from being universal.

Figure 2: Adjusted net attendance rate in upper-secondary education
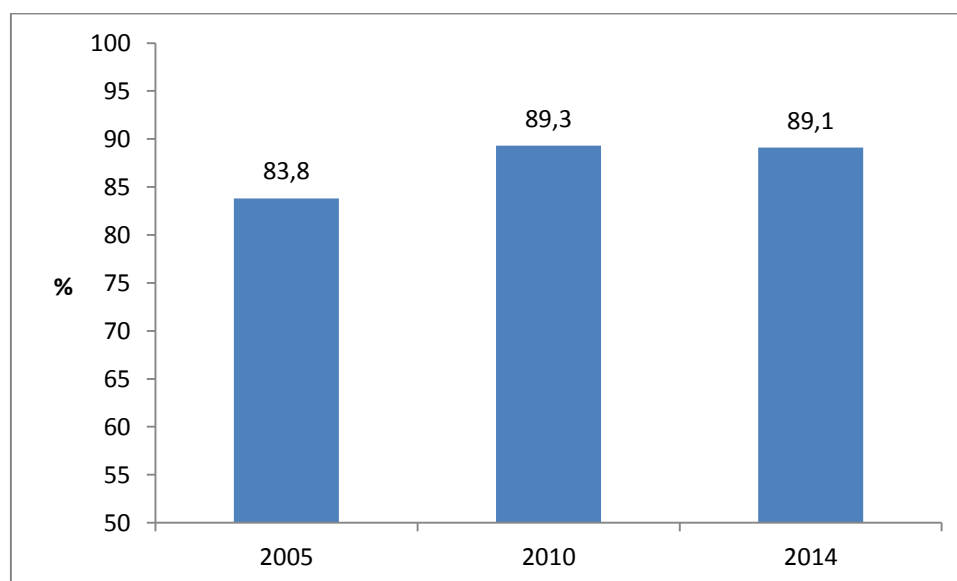
(Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, UNICEF, 2014 (hereafter: MICS))

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Bearing in mind the approximately 89% secondary education attendance ratio in Serbia according to various data sources, early school leaving rates are surprisingly low in international comparison. According to the data of the Statistical Office on the basis of the data of the Labour Force Survey, the proportion of early school leavers was 8.7% in 2013 that was much lower than the European average.

Figure 3: Early school leavers: the proportion of 18-24 years olds without completed upper-secondary qualification and not in the education system (LFS, 2013)
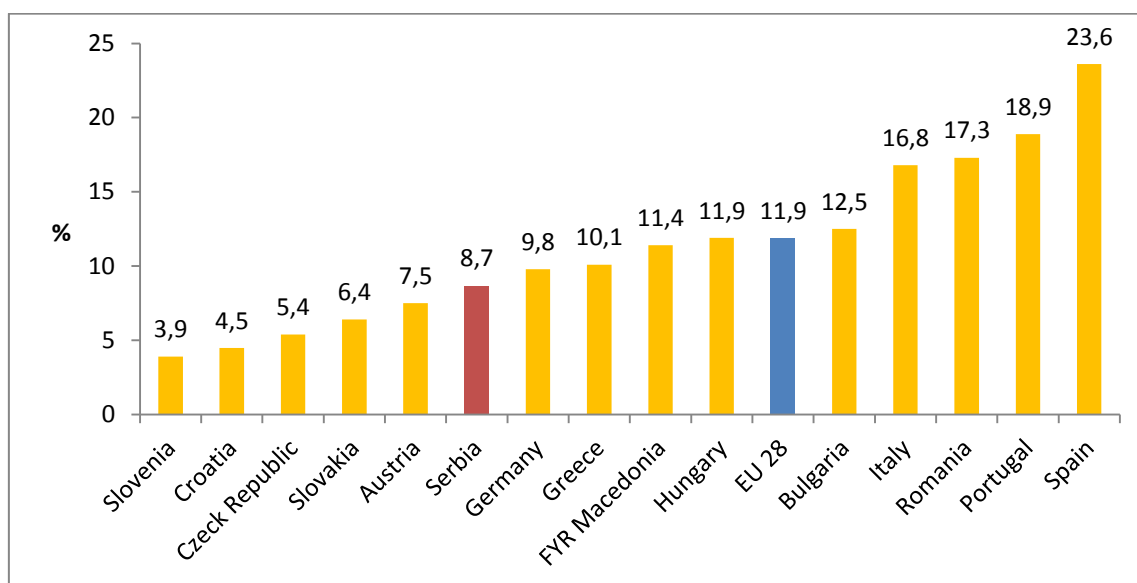
(Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (hereafter: SORS))

In the light of the estimations on primary level dropout rates and the secondary enrolment data for Serbia, the only explanation for the low proportion of early school leavers might be that the big majority of overaged students in primary education (11.9% in 2010 and 13.6% in 2014, according to the MICS data) complete successfully upper-secondary education, at least in a much bigger number than those who drop out from upper secondary schools before completion. Since these circumstances seem rather unlikely, the early school leaving data for Serbia should be handled with caution.

However, in spite of the doubts about the magnitude of the problem in Serbia, since the early school leaving data of the Statistical Office based on the Labour Force Survey are most probably calculated with the same methodology, they allow grasping certain attainment trends. There was a significant decline of early school leaving rates in the period of 2008-2010 that may reflect the improvement of upper-secondary participation rates in the second part of the previous decade.

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Figure 4: The change of the proportion of early school leavers in Serbia (LFS, 2004-2014)
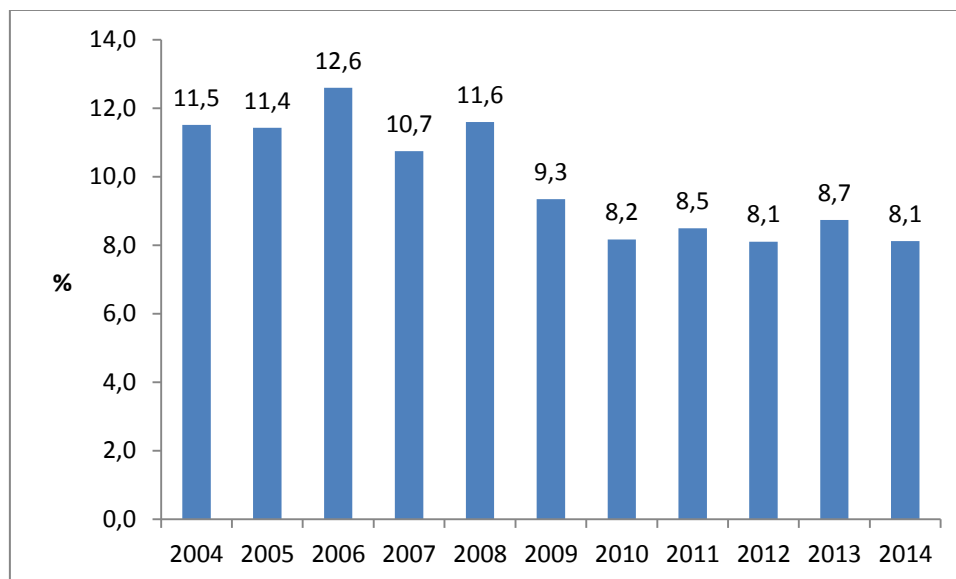
(Source: SORS)

As far as territorial differences are concerned in terms of participation in upper secondary education, the differences between students living in urban and rural settlement decreased during the last decade. This was partly the result of the continuous and significant improvement of the participation of students living in villages, and partly that of the declining participation in Belgrade which has a negative impact on overall urban participation. Regional differences became smaller, especially due to the very rapid growth of participation in Southern and Eastern Serbia. Disregarding this region, in all other regions improved participation rates in the second part of the previous decade were reversed by a minor fall-back after 2010.

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Figure 5: Territorial differences in upper-secondary participation
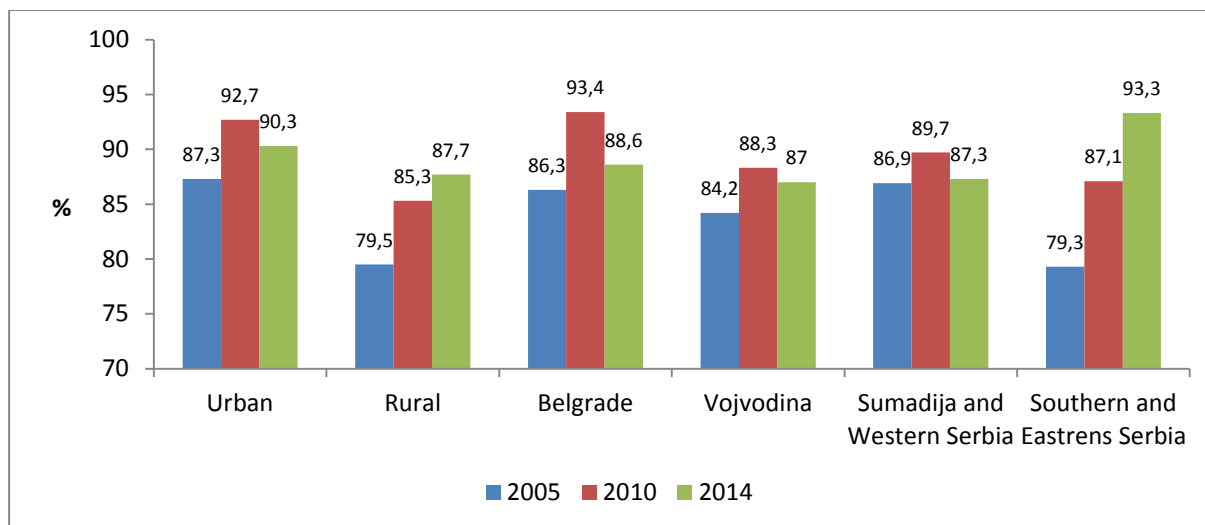
4.2.2. Learning outcomes

The overall performance of the Serbian 15 year old students in the 2012 PISA survey was significantly below the OECD average. As the following figure shows, while the distribution of students at the different performance levels shows a more or less equal distribution curve, in Serbia the this distribution is characterised by a precipitously declining proportion from the failing students to the students with outstanding performance. For example, in reading competencies 87.3% of the Serbian students performed at the level 3 or below.

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Figure 6: Percentage of students at each proficiency level in reading (2012)
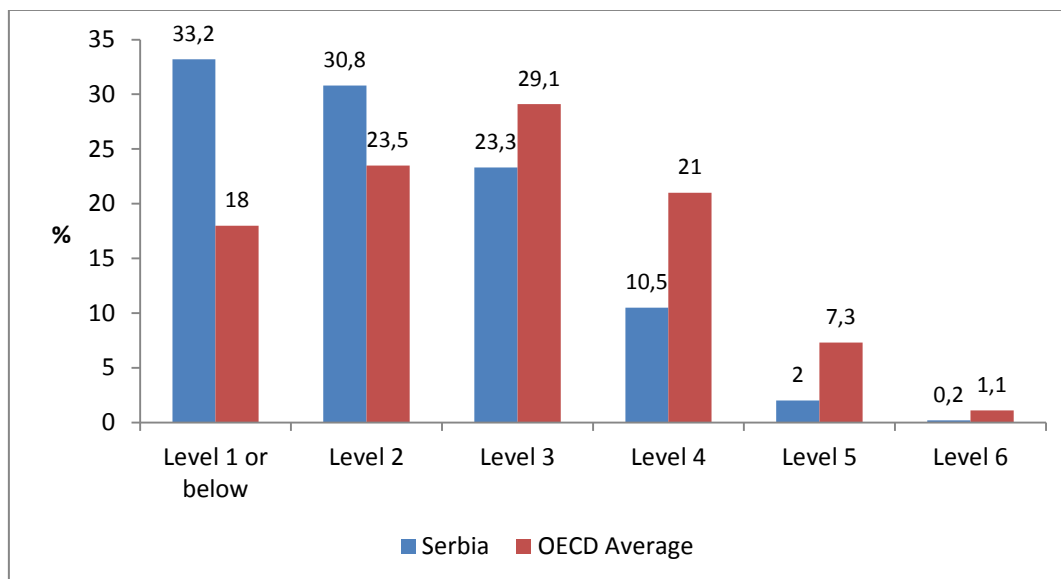
(Source: PISA, 2012)

In an equity perspective, the greatest problem is the large magnitude of learning failures. Apparently, the proportion of the students performing at the level 1 or below is very high in Serbia. The distribution of the proportion of students among the different performance level of PISA indicates a "ceiling effect" with far reaching policy consequences: with traditional educational practices (teaching and pedagogical assessment) the reduction of the proportion of failing students cannot be radically reduced.[1]

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[1] In this context the term „ceiling effect" is used by Aleksandar Baucal.

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Figure 7: Proportion of failing students: students performing at the PISA level 1 or below (2012)
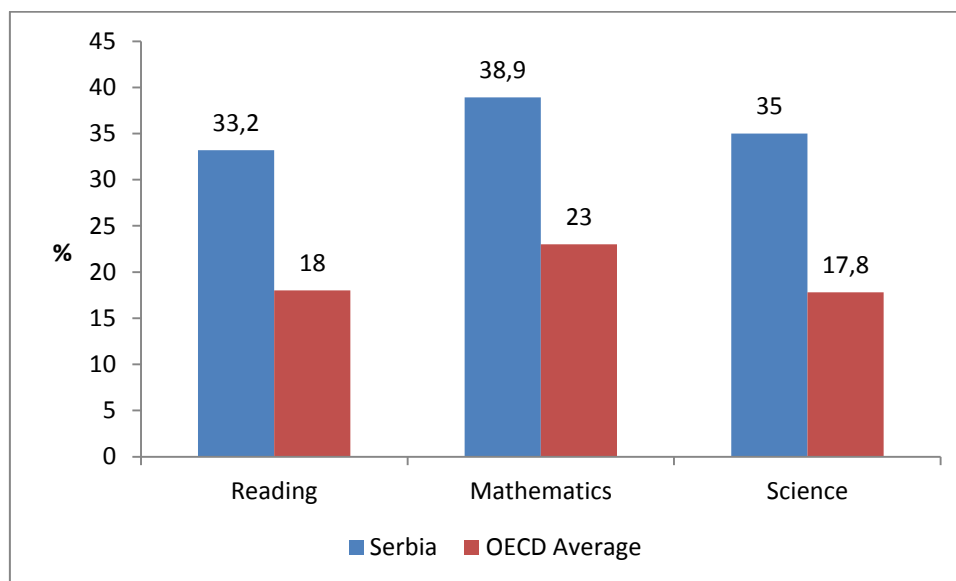
Most education expert respondents of this evaluation expressed the opinion that the biggest achievement gaps among students are emerging during the second cycle of primary education because of the relatively weak pedagogical preparedness of subject teachers and the strong lexical knowledge oriented teaching tradition. However, the results of the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (hereafter: TIMSS survey) contradict to this view. The assessment of the mathematics competencies of 4 grade students reveals very high achievement gaps among students. (Unfortunately, Serbia did not participate in the 8 grade TIMSS survey. Therefore, we are not able to determine the extent to which these early gaps are narrowed or widened during the second four years of primary education.)

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Figure 8: Score point differences between the 5th percentile and the 95th percentile in mathematics in selected European countries. 4 grade (2011)
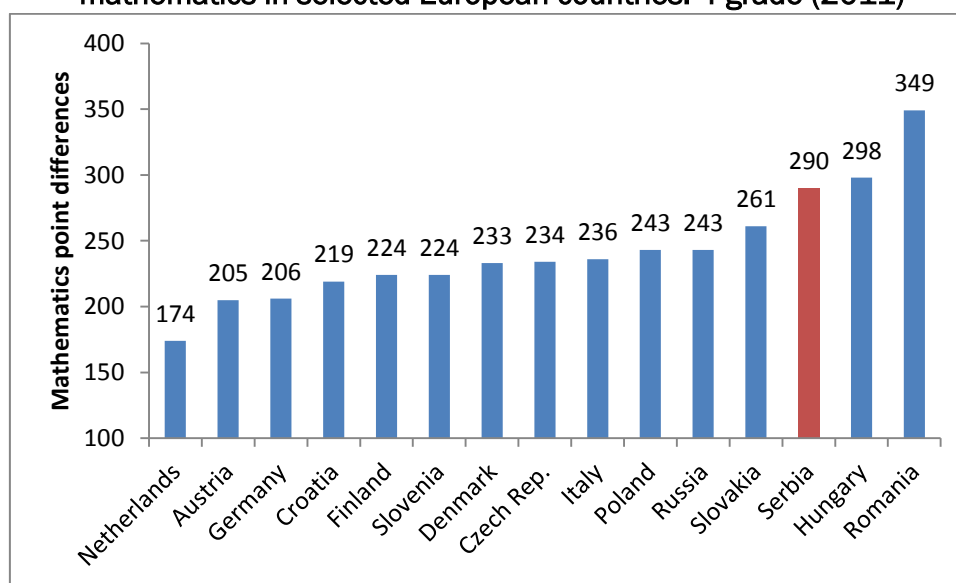
(Source: TIMSS, 2011)

As far as later stages are concerned, the achievement gaps at the age of 15 are very high in spite of the fact that more than 10% of the students are not in the education system. The performance gap in mathematic competencies measured by the PISA 2012 survey between the 10th and 90th percentile was 236 points in 2006, 206 points in 2009 and 241 points in 2012. Thus, the gap was narrowed by 30 points between 2006 and 2009; then it was widened by 25 points between 2009 and 2012.

One of the most important equity indicators of any student performance assessment programs is the impact of student background on achievement. The related PISA indicator is the number of score point differences associated with one point difference of the student background index: the capacity of school systems to compensate for disadvantages is stronger if the differences between students with different backgrounds are smaller.

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Figure 9: Impact of student background on learning outcomes (ESCS impact in score points) in selected European countries (PISA 2012)
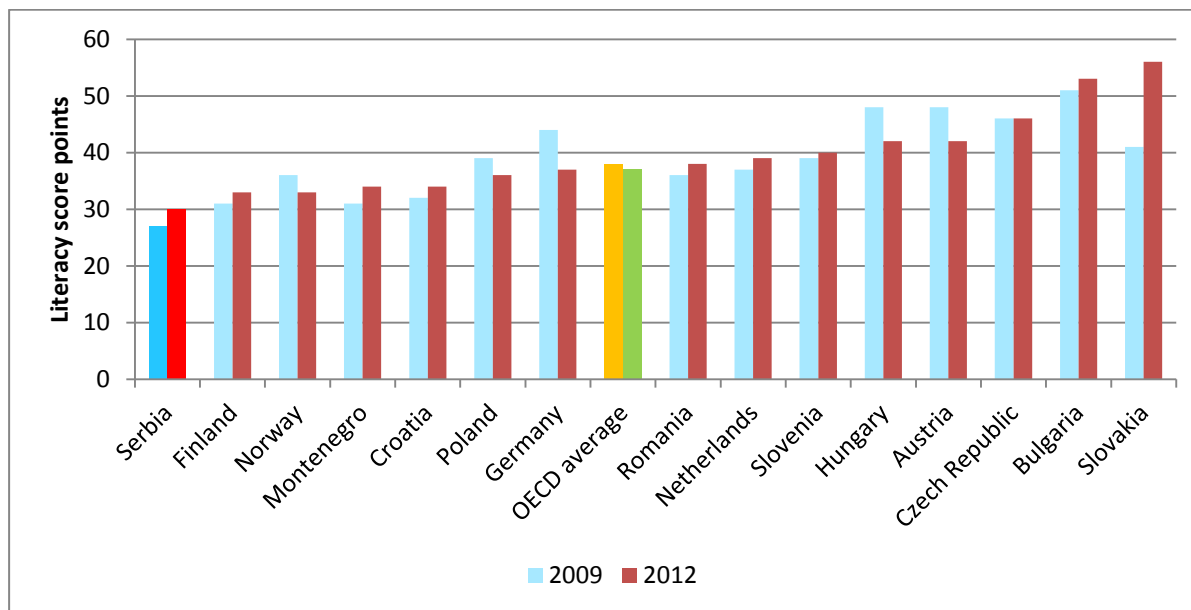
(Source: PISA 2012)

At the first sight, the international comparison suggests that the impact of student background on learning outcomes is much smaller in Serbia than in other European countries. However, the extent to which the Serbian education system appears to be rather equitable at the age of 15 of the students when the PISA surveys measure the competencies of students largely depends on the proportion of disadvantaged students who remain in the system until this age. According to estimates, more than 10% of students are not in education at the beginning of upper-secondary education. The data of this equity indicator seem to support this connection: a minor improvement of upper-secondary enrolment rates in the second part of the previous decade resulted in a 3 point increment of the impact of student background on learning.

The same connection applies to the other important equity indicator of PISA that measures the selectivity of education systems. This indicator is based on the variance of student performance explained by between and within school differences: bigger between school variance indicates stronger selection.

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Figure 10: The proportion of variance explained by between school differences in mathematics (2012)
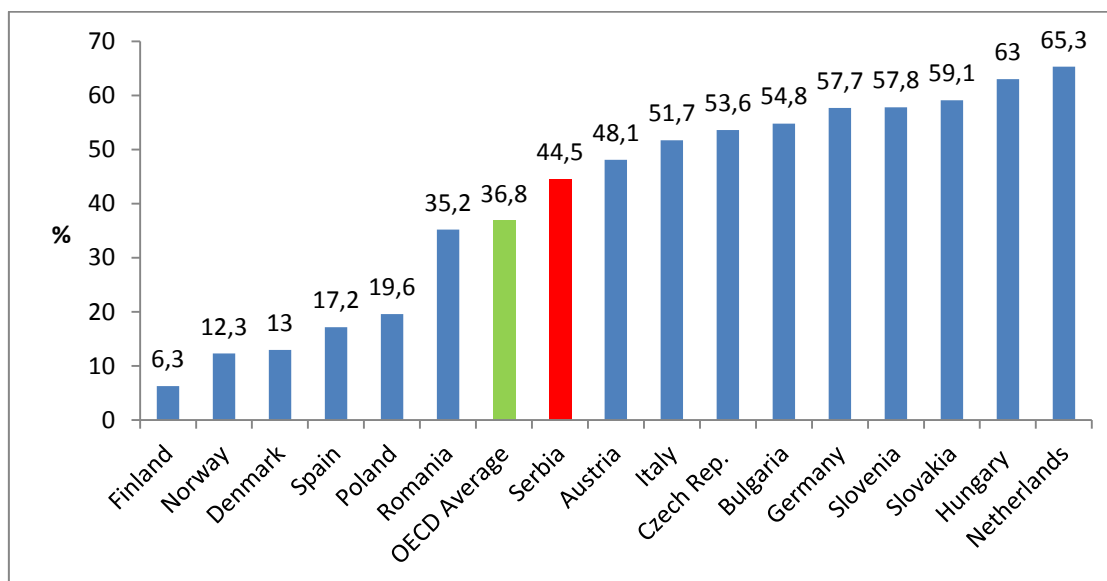
<div align="right">(Source: PISA, 2012)</div>

Again, at the first sight the Serbian education system is not much more selective than the OECD average. However, since a significant proportion of disadvantaged students are missing from the sample of PISA, this result is also misleading. Obviously, the improvement of participation rates in upper-secondary education almost immediately results in increasing selectivity. This connection was proven by the reading results for Serbia: between 2006 and 2009 the variance of the reading results explained by between schools differences grew from 40.5% to 45.1% that was the result of improved participation rates.

In relation to the differences between students with different residential status it is important to look at the magnitude of learning failures between students living in urban and rural settlements. As it was seen earlier, the proportion of underperforming students is very high in Serbia, but their proportion among those living in rural settlements is even much bigger: 54.3% in mathematics. The 18.1 points difference between the two student groups in Serbia is also very high in international comparison.

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Figure 11: The proportion of students performing at the Pisa level 1 or below in mathematics in the schools of villages and cities in selected European countries (PISA, 2012)

Country	Villages	Cities
Estonia	12	9,2
Finland	12,7	12,1
Denmark	16,2	17,9
Poland	17,1	11,4
Netherlands	18,8	15,5
Austria	19,4	18
United Kingdom	20,4	22,2
Slovenia	21,5	18,7
Germany	22,4	15,8
Czech Rep.	22,4	20,6
France	26,9	20
Spain	28,3	21,8
Italy	29,2	23,1
Sweden	30,1	25,2
Lithuania	34,1	20,2
Croatia	38,6	27,7
Slovakia	39,8	20,1
Hungary	46,9	23,2
Romania	50,9	36,3
Serbia	54,3	36,2
Bulgaria	65,9	37,3

(Source: PISA 2012)

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4.3. The policy implications of the education context

The above described general equity profile of the Serbian education system is the point of reference against which the relevance and appropriateness of the inclusion policy are to be judged. Therefore, the point of departure of the evaluation of the policy is a summary of the most important educational policy implications that can be drawn from the equity profile. These implications are as follows:

- The Serbian education system is facing a combination of mutually reinforcing quality and equity related challenges. Therefore, the equity policy has to be based on a clear mainstreaming approach that is focusing on the improvement of basic competencies of all students.

- Integration and inclusion of the students with any types of disadvantaged students (vulnerable student groups) is the precondition of the improvement of the quality of learning outcomes without further widening performance gaps.

- This policy has to focus on the early stages of the learning career of students: on pre-school education and the initial phase of primary education.

- Ensuring universal participation in pre-school education calls for the removal of all obstacles to participation and incentives for municipalities and parents, especially for vulnerable students.

- A coherent package of policy interventions aiming at improving the effectiveness of lower primary education is needed that addresses the renewal of teacher competencies, strengthens the learning outcomes based approach in the operation of schools, ensures professional accountability and improves the supply of professional services.

- Targeted intervention is required to radically improve upper-secondary participation rates for the Roma and for reversing the decline of secondary enrolment in cities.

- The support mechanisms designed to further reduce dropout rates during the second phase of primary education and in upper secondary education, as well as those aiming at ensuring full enrolment to upper-secondary education are to be strengthened.

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4.4. The composition of the measures of the Serbian inclusion policy

The composition of the interventions of an educational policy determines the required conditions of its effective implementation. Therefore, the point of departure of the evaluation of the implementation of educational inclusion policy of the Serbian government launched in 2009 is an understanding of the type and the scope of the policy.

There are two different approaches to equity policies. The first approach is based on student background and individual learning abilities; the second is based on the performance of students and aims at reducing school failure in terms of progression (i.e. reducing dropout and repetition rates) and in terms of learning outcomes (i.e. reducing the proportion of students with poor basic competencies). Policies of the first type are targeting schools educating students with low status, different ethnic backgrounds and impaired learning abilities or other criteria of student background. (According to the terminology widely used in Serbia: vulnerable students.) Policies of the second type are targeting failing schools and failing students basically regardless of the background of students. Due to the weak capacity of the governance of the Serbian education system to provide reliable information that allows identifying failing students, the prevailing approach in Serbia is based on student backgrounds.

Another distinction supporting the description of the Serbian inclusion policy is that between mainstream equity policies and supplementary targeted policies[2]. Due to the strong focus on student backgrounds, equity policies in the South-East and Central European countries are typically operating with supplementary targeted policies: preferential and developmental affirmative actions, minority education provisions, anti-discrimination policies and habilitation/rehabilitation provisions. The common feature of these policy instruments is that they address directly student-background related problems, such as social marginalization and poverty, different mother tongue and culture, discrimination and segregation or various disabilities.

Another policy pattern includes various mainstream equity policies aiming at two major goals: (1) increasing the capacity of schools and the system as a whole to compensate for the negative impact of student disadvantages on learning; and (2) reducing the selectivity of the education system. The traditional approach to mainstream equity has been based on equalisation: the standardization of inputs and processes in order to reduce achievement gaps. It is a well-documented fact for many decades that this traditional approach is highly ineffective and counter-productive. Contemporary equity policies typically apply a combination of the instruments of the following policy models: (1) school structure reforms in order to extend the length of the initial phase of education and in order to reduce selection; (2) accountability policies that are based on learning outcomes

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[2] Radó, 2010/b

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and quality standards, the identification of poorly performing schools by external assessment and external evaluation and targeted developmental intervention in these schools; (3) school development policies that are based on mandatory self-evaluation and on supporting the efforts of schools for solving their own problems by school improvement; and (4) differentiation and individualization: the development of students on the basis of their specific personal needs. (It is important to note that the term "individualization" as it is widely used in Serbia includes the differentiated teaching and assessment and the individualized development of children according to their specific needs. In line with the international terminology this evaluation will separate the two terms for the sake of clear argumentation.)

The taxonomy of the various types of equity policies is summarized in the following table.

Figure 12: Summary of the taxonomy of equity policies and measures

Scope of measures	Type of policies	
	Mainstream equity policies	Supplementary targeted policies
Interventions at the systemic scale	• Equality policies (standardization of inputs and processes) • School structure reforms (network rationalization, longer initial phase, etc.) • Accountability policies (standards-evaluation-intervention in failing schools) • School development (self-evaluation based school improvement) • Individual development (differentiation based supplementary individual development)	• Preferential affirmative action (quotas for the Roma, etc.) • Minority education provisions (intercultural, bilingual, etc.) • Anti-discrimination policies (regulations, monitoring, etc.) • Habilitation/rehabilitation provisions for disabled students.
Developmental programs	• Development of elements of the toolkit of systemic policies (teacher assistants, thematic supplementary inspection, etc.)	• Developmental affirmative action (remedial programmes for Roma, etc.) • Anti-discrimination developments (anti-bias trainings, multicultural programmes, etc.) • Development of disability specific rehabilitation provisions

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Former comparative policy analysis proves that supplementary targeted measures alone remain rather ineffective if they are not based on mainstream equity policies implemented at a systemic scale. This however does not question the relevance and importance of these supplementary policies.

The key mainstream policy elements of the original inclusion policy introduced in 2009 in Serbia are the following measures:

- The expansion of mandatory pre-school enrolment from 6 months (since 2003) to 9 months.

- New enrolment procedure to primary education based on the abolishment of categorization and the creation of new systems promoting integrated enrolment of special education needs children.

- New regulations promoting the shift to differentiated teaching and formative pedagogical assessment.

- The introduction of individual education plans in order to allow for flexibility in the application of the curriculum adjusted to the individual needs of children.

- The renewal of the special education ("defectologist") profession and the transformation of the role of special schools.

- The introduction of free textbook provision.

- Establishment of the Network of experts for the support of inclusive education ("Inclusion Network") that composed by experts in regional school authorities, schools and NGOs.

As far as mainstream educational policies are concerned, a new element was added in 2013: an amendment of legislation deployed the task to primary and secondary schools implementing dropout prevention programs.

Supplementary policies:

- Introducing the position of pedagogical assistants for Roma in the schools.

- New regulation allowing the presence of personal assistants in schools.

- The introduction of Roma language and culture as an optional subject.

- The mandatory pre-school policy was supplemented with affirmative action measures in 2010. (Affirmative measures for the Roma in enrolment to upper-secondary and higher education were introduced already in 2003.)

When considering the key elements of the Serbian inclusion policy in a wider context, it is clearly based on a shift of emphasis from supplementary policies towards a mainstream

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equity approach that combines the instruments of school development, accountability and individual development policies.

Before 2009 the various changes in the overall education system and the various policy measures addressing the education of different groups of vulnerable children were loosely connected which resulted in a strong reliance on supplementary targeted policies. However, already from 2003 there were efforts to establish self-evaluation based school development schemes in the schools. The equity focus of school development, however, was not strong. The 2009 policy wave introduced certain elements of differentiation based individual development, while from 2012 a new type of external evaluation was introduced based on a complex set of quality standards with strong focus on inclusion. This combination of policy instruments raises two important questions for the evaluation of the implementation process:

1. How much are these policy elements connected in order to maximize the school level impact of the inclusion policy by building on the synergy of the policies?
2. How much did the implementation process contribute to the establishment of the conditions of the effective use of these policy instruments?

One of the consequences of this wider policy approach – in line with the formative purpose of this evaluation – is that the implementation process in the 2009-2016 period will be considered as a segment of a longer transformation process. Since the inclusion policy was based on assumptions and overall goals that are widely accepted by international mainstream approaches but were rather new in the Serbian context, in the view of many expert respondents the most important element was the introduction of new concepts and its contribution to their gradual acceptance.

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5. THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

5.1.   The purpose of the evaluation

The six years of the implementation of the educational inclusion policy of the Serbian government is a long enough period of time for reflection and for the design of corrective interventions if necessary. The overall purpose of this evaluation is a formative one: it is aiming at providing insight on the strength and weaknesses of the implementation process so far. Therefore, the primary purpose of the evaluation is supporting the most important actors who are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the inclusive education policy. Especially, the evaluation intends to reflect on the implementation process, and to recommend the necessary interventions in order to ensure that the original goals of the policy are effectively served. As the ToR of this evaluation determines, the purpose of the evaluation is to "determine to what extent have key legal provision related to inclusive education translated into inclusive practices for children (at the individual and the systemic levels)".

Several aspects of the implementation of the inclusive education policy were monitored, researched and evaluated in Serbia during the previous six years. The intended added value of this evaluation is to provide a comprehensive overview by revealing the interplay among the various levels and strands of the development process. Overall, this report is designed for informing the professional and policy discourse on inclusive education.

On the basis of the Terms of Reference (hereafter: ToR), the formative evaluation should serve multiple purposes:

1. It should inform policy makers – especially the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (hereafter: MoESTD) – and the major stakeholder groups about the extent to which the original goals of the inclusion policy have been met in the course of implementation so far;

2. It should identify the risks, challenges, obstacles and possible problems emerged in the course of implementation that may call for interventions or corrections;

3. It should identify further development needs at all levels and in all relevant institutions involved in the implementation of the inclusion policy in order to inform donor coordination and the planning of donor activities;

4. It should identify those activities that have the potential of improving the work of all actors if shared and scaled-up;

5. It should promote the professional discourse on educational inclusion, as well as the exchange and discussion among various stakeholders.

Thus, the audience of this evaluation report is intended to be wide; it is to include decision makers working in various agencies of the government, members and

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organisations of different stakeholders groups, NGOs and international donor agencies, various local actors (e.g. municipalities, non-educational public service providers) and the staff of schools. A specific purpose of this evaluation is supporting UNICEF Serbia to further develop its strategy in the field of inclusive education.

5.2.   The objectives of the evaluation

The ToR for this evaluation determines five major objectives:

- Objective 1 - assessing relevance: to what extent are inclusive education measures relevant to the needs of stakeholders and right holders of the education system in Serbia?

- Objective 2 - assessing effectiveness: to what extent have the initial goals of inclusive education been met?

- Objective 3 - assessing sustainability: to what extent are the results achieved sustainable?

- Objective 4 - assessing impact: to what extent has the introduction of inclusive education impacted children at different levels of the education system, particularly children from excluded groups?

- Objective 5 - assessing efficiency: to what extent did the management of the project ensure timelines and efficient utilization of resources?

In addition to the above listed five main objectives, the ToR requires that there is a focus on assessing human rights based approach and relevant cross-cutting issues. More specifically, the evaluation should look to address three key cross-cutting issues:

- Do the implemented measures actively contribute to the promotion of child rights?

- To what extent and how the implemented measures ensure an equity focus?

- Do the measures reflect gender mainstreaming issues?

The ToR lists 30 concrete evaluation questions connected to each objectives as guides for the development of the methodology. In order to ensure a stronger link between the objectives of the evaluation and the evaluation instruments, the evaluation questions were amalgamated to 16 thematic clusters by the inception report approved by UNICEF Serbia. The thematic clusters cover all objectives and cross-cutting issues. Each specific evaluation questions are further specified by a set of indicators (see Section 4.2.1).

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6. THE METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

6.1. Evaluation strategy

6.1.1. An integrated evaluation approach

The scope of the evaluation has been extended to the full spectrum of educational inclusion related matters. Therefore, the underlying analytical concept of the evaluation is based on the framework that was described by the 2009 expert study of Péter Radó.[3] (This framework was also applied in the course of the planning of the inclusion component of the DILS programme in Serbia.) According to this framework, the evaluation will address the matters in relation to three major groups of students and three clusters of inclusion related matters. The three groups of students are as follows:

- Students with various organic disabilities;

- Students with various learning and behavioural difficulties;

- Students with social disadvantages and ethnic minority affiliation, especially Roma students.

The three clusters of inclusion related matters are the following:

1. Identification of special educational needs

    a. Classification

    b. Diagnosis

2. The placement of children

    a. Enrolment decisions, procedural rules, planning

    b. Incentives and disincentives

    c. Connection with health services and social benefits

3. The services to be provided for different groups of children in different educational settings

    a. The educational foundations of inclusion

    b. The inclusion of children with organic disabilities

    c. The inclusion of children with learning difficulties

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[3] Radó, P: Improving the inclusive capacity of schools in Serbia. Expert study for the DILS Program of the World Bank, Serbia, 2009.

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d. Necessary professional services

In accordance to this integrated approach in terms of targeted student groups, the evaluation will applied a broad equity framework; it includes the integration/inclusion related problems of all vulnerable student groups: socially disadvantaged students, special educational needs students and Roma students. Also, whenever the available information will allow for it, the evaluation addressed gender and territorial differences.

6.1.2. Thematic clusters

The bridge between the overall evaluation objectives and evaluation questions as determined by the ToR, and the actual design of the various instruments applied in the course of the fieldwork evaluation, is a set of thematic clusters. After the initial consultation with the representatives of UNICEF Serbia in Belgrade, the original 14 thematic clusters listed in the technical proposal have been supplemented with two additional clusters referring to gender inequalities and the contribution of UNICEF. (See: the evaluation matrix in Annex 5.)

The thematic clusters that guided the development of the evaluation instruments are the following:

1. The extent to which the decision-making authority of parents prevail. How much are the parents informed about their strengthened role in enrolment decisions? How much do the municipalities exercise their responsibilities in relation to enrolment? What are the changes in relation to parental decisions?

2. The impact of new regulations on enrolment. What are the actual changes in terms of the number of SEN children having different special educational needs and in terms of number of SEN children enrolled to special and regular schools? The number of SEN children in "individualized education" and supported by the two levels of IEPs.

3. Access to and application of information about the changing role of various non-educational actors. How much are the members of Intersectorial Commissions and other social and health service provider professionals informed about the implications of new regulations in relation to their new role in SEN children enrolment? What are the arrangements for cooperation between schools and non-educational actors?

4. Profiling the children. What kind of information from what sources contribute to the development of the educational profile of SEN children? Who are the specialists contributing to profiling, what are the methods they use? What kind of pedagogical assessment methods are used by teachers when observing the SEN children for profiling?

5. The perceived impact of the various developments in the course of the implementation of the inclusion policy on the quality and pedagogical methodological practice of mainstream teaching.
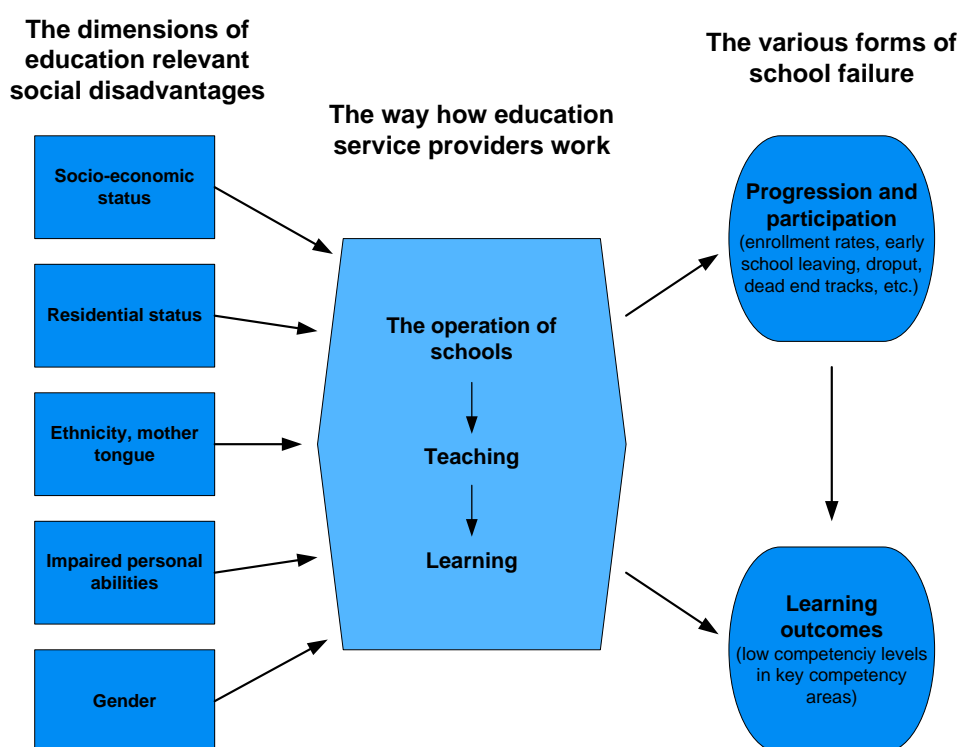
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6. The content and methodology of supplementary support to SEN children. What are the ways of providing individual support to SEN children in "individualized" education? What are the remedial and/or habilitation/rehabilitation supplementary supports provided to SEN children on the basis of IEPs. What are the objectives, content and method of remedial teaching? What are the major methodological difficulties that teachers encounter in any forms of inclusive education? What are the teachers doing in order to create a classroom climate that is favourable for the SEN children?

7. Parental involvement. How are the parents involved in the education of SEN children? What are the ordinary and specific ways of involving parents of SEN children? How is the satisfaction of parents with or without children with special need assessed?

8. The learning progression of the vulnerable children. What are the differences between the learning results of vulnerable and non-vulnerable children? What are the reasons? How are the learning of the children assessed in the classroom?

9. Internal and external professional support to teachers. Are there any specific needs of the SEN children for which the children need special professional support? Are there any specific needs of the SEN children for which the teachers need special professional support? Is this support available within the school? How it is organized? Is this support available outside the school? If yes, what are the arrangements for this? Are there any problems in the cooperation between teachers and specialist professionals within and outside of the school?

10. Capacity building needs. What are the perceived capacity building needs of teachers and other school specialists? How much are these perceived needs responded by DILS or any other INSET training providers?

11. Institutionalization of adjustments. How much are the necessary conditions of inclusive education institutionalized in the schools? Are their permanent forms of cooperation among school staff? Is there any institutionalized internal monitoring of educational inclusion related activities? Is the program and/or the development plan, or the annual plan of the schools amended? What are the ways of the regular assessment of the work with SEN children within the school? Are their permanent arrangements for the cooperation with parents with special educational needs?

12. Social allowances. Is the access of SEN children enrolled to regular schools to the required social allowances and benefits ensured? If not, what are the reasons?

13. Technical conditions. Are the necessary technical conditions (e.g. for accessibility) for integrated education of children actually enrolled in the schools in place? What are the necessary improvements in relation to the specific educational needs of children enrolled to the schools? What are the specific obstacles to enrol children with special educational needs?

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14. Discriminatory practices. Are the Roma children overrepresented among SEN children? How much are the identified special educational needs of Roma children sufficiently justified? Is there any educational practice that is based on biased expectations, double standards or prejudices?

15. What was the impact of the policy on gender inequalities?

16. What was the contribution of UNICEF to the implementation process?

6.2.   The scope of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation has been based on a broad equity framework. Equity of education refers to the educational outcome gaps that emerge along the dimensions of the most relevant societal disadvantages. Therefore, a comprehensive framework of equity in education – illustrated in the following figure - comprises all the relevant dimensions of disadvantages, the most important elements of the capacity of the education system of compensating for these disadvantages, and all forms of educational failures can emerge along the different dimensions of disadvantages.

Figure 13: Equity in education

(Source: Radó, 2010/a)

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The purpose of the following indicators was to guide the development of the evaluation instruments. The indicators connected to each thematic cluster are partly based on the ToR, and partly on the content of previous evaluations and studies. The indicators are harmonized with the 2014 inclusive education monitoring instrument.[4] The indicators are summarized in the following table.

Thematic clusters	Indicators
1. The decision-making authority of parents	The extent to which the decision-making authority of parents in relation to the enrolment of their children prevails
	Degree of parental involvement in curriculum adjustment in schools
	Degree of parental involvement in decisions on the organization of learning
	The extent to which parents are informed
2. The impact of the inclusive policy on enrolment	The change of enrolment patterns towards mainstreaming
	The number of children taught on the basis of IEPs
	The change of enrolment to special education
	The degree to which affirmative measures are applied
3. The role of non-educational actors	The degree to which inter-sectoral commissions support integration and inclusion
	The degree to which municipalities support integration and inclusion
	The degree to which regional education departments support integration and inclusion
	The degree to which schools have access to professional services supporting integration and inclusion
	The degree to which NGOs support integration and inclusion
	The availability of sufficient financial resources for the work of non-educational actors
4. The profiling of children	The degree to which teachers are able to use diverse pedagogical evaluation methodologies
	The appropriateness of Instruments and mechanism of profiling
	The degree to which various development programmes contributed to the improvement of profiling
5. The impact on mainstream teaching	The degree to which mainstream teaching is differentiated
	The degree to which the conditions for differentiation have been improved

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4 Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education in Serbia. UNICEF – SIPRU – FOS – Institute of Psychology, 2014

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		The degree to which various development programmes contributed to the improvement of mainstream teaching
6.	Supplementary support to children	The appropriateness of mechanisms for determining individual needs
		The degree to which classroom climate and management is favourable for SEN children
		The appropriateness of developmental support to children
		The appropriateness of habilitation/rehabilitation support to SEN children
		The degree to which the required human resources (e.g. specialists) are in place
		The degree to which the required professional services are in place
		The availability of sufficient financial resources in schools
7.	Parental involvement	The degree to which parents are informed on the learning of their child on a regular basis
		The appropriateness of the institutionalized and informal involvement of parents
		The degree to which parents are participating in the work and life of schools
8.	The learning of vulnerable children	The degree of participation of vulnerable children in learning activities
		Progression and dropout rates among vulnerable children
		The learning outcomes of vulnerable children
9.	Internal and external professional support to teachers	The appropriateness of professionals support in schools
		The appropriateness of professionals support provided by external service agencies
		The degree to which special schools provide professional support to teachers in mainstream schools
		The availability of sufficient financial resources in schools
10.	Capacity building	The degree to which teachers acquire the required competencies in initial training
		The degree to which INSET programmes contributed to the improvement of teacher competencies
		The appropriateness of mechanisms for determining capacity building needs
		The degree to which training programmes contributed to the preparedness of non-teaching professionals
		The availability of sufficient financial resources in schools, in NGOs and other training provider institutions
11.	The institutionalization of required adjustments	Established and operating school-based student monitoring system
		Operating school-based inclusion teams and management
		The degree to which co-operation among teachers is institutionalized
		The degree to which self-evaluation contributes to the improvement of school development plans in connection to inclusive education

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	The extent to which external evaluation results are used to improve school development plans in connection to inclusive education
	The degree to which school development plans are implemented
	The degree to which co-operation with external partners is institutionalized
12. Social support	The availability of scholarships
	The availability of social allowances
	The availability of sufficient financial resources for social support
13. Technical conditions	The degree of accessibility
	The availability of assistive technologies
	The availability and use of assistive technologies
	The availability of sufficient financial resources for assistive technologies and for improving accessibility
14. Discriminatory practices	The existence and degree of discrimination of Roma
	The existence and degree of discrimination on the basis of social status, special needs or gender
	The existence of effective prevention policies, measures and developments
15. Gender inequalities	The degree of gender inequities in terms of progression
	The degree of gender inequities in terms of learning outcomes
	The degree of biases in terms of socialization patterns
16. The contribution of UNICEF	The contribution of UNICEF to development
	The contribution of UNICEF to knowledge management
	The contribution of UNICEF to policy advocacy

The sources of information for the thematic clusters are described by the evaluation matrix (see Annex 7).

6.3. Methodological approach and sources of evidence

6.3.1. Methodological approach

6.3.1.1. Factors determining the methodology

The type of evaluation methodology that is used is determined by the following factors:

- The mostly soft character of the information required to answer the evaluation questions;

- The availability and reliability of relevant statistical information in Serbia;

- The scope of the evaluation: the big number of various groups and actors to be addressed by fieldwork inquiry;

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- The relatively short timeframe available for the whole evaluation project.

6.3.1.2. Evaluation instruments

The applied methodology is based on gathering evidences from multiple sources along the specific evaluation questions. The applied methods are the following:

- Document analysis

- Legal analysis

- Statistical analysis

- Focus group interviews

- Individual interviews

- Classroom observation

It is important to note that the use of multiple evaluation instruments provided information for answering each evaluation questions.

6.3.1.3. The limitations of the evaluation

The evaluation applied the usual methods of quantitative and qualitative empirical research. However, since the purpose of evaluation is different from that of an academic research, all methods applied in order to support the development of expert judgement based on evidences derived from multiple sources. As a consequence, all data gathered during the fieldwork should be interpreted as qualitative information without the ambition of representativeness. In this respect this evaluation project is very different from the established system of policy implementation monitoring, because it is only partially based on quantifiable indicators and benchmarking.

Due to the lack of an underlying "official" theory of change driving policy design and the implementation strategy this evaluation is referenced to the evaluation framework developed by the evaluation team.

This framework is a comprehensive model based on international experience that creates a further limitation: the lack of various types of administrative data that many other countries collect and make available on a regular basis. In certain cases the evaluation builds on proxy data, while in other cases – such as the lack of financial data in relation to public spending on inclusive education – certain evaluation questions remain unanswered. (This limitation flows from the input-based public financing of education that does not allow for the disaggregation of specific costs.)

The final limitation of this evaluation follows from the time and financial constraints of the evaluation: students haven't been asked during the fieldwork evaluation.

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6.3.2.   Samples and sources

The fieldwork evaluation comprised the following sources:

- The sample of 6 municipalities and 7 educational institutions;

- The list of resource organisations and persons;

- A selection of documents for analysis (strategies, policy documents, reports, research publications and others);

- A selection of various level regulations for legal analysis;

- The data sources for statistical analysis.

The sample was determined in cooperation with UNICEF and the Inclusion Team of the MoESTD on the basis of predetermined criteria listed in the inception report. The basis of selection of the local institutional sample is the selection of schools. In order to ensure grasping the local contexts, all other local institutions were selected in the municipalities where the sample schools were operating. Naturally, the diversity of settlement types and the regional distribution of municipalities were taken into consideration.

Two schools have been chosen for specific reasons:

- one in Novi Sad – Primary school 'Sonja Marinković' as a model school for inclusive education (best practice school);

- one in Belgrade – a school that was already visited during previous rapid assessment for the comparability purposes (Primary school 'Filip Višnjić', Palilula)

Criteria for school selection:

- School should have at least 550 students in all eight grades

- One school should be model school for inclusive education / member of support network to inclusive education

- One school should have a special class

- Four schools should have a mark on external evaluation 3 or 4, and three schools should have mark on external evaluation 1 or 2

.

The description of the settlement and institutional sample, the list of resource persons interviewed and the list of document analysed/referenced are listed in Annexes 1 to 3.

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6.4. Fieldwork evaluation instruments

For fieldwork evaluation, four types of instrument have been developed and applied: (1) semi-structured guides for individual interviews, (2) semi-structure guides for focus group interviews, (3) assessment criteria and (4) a classroom observation protocol. (The fieldwork evaluation instruments are exhibited in Annex 4.)

The following instruments have been applied in the course of gathering evidences at the institutional (school), local and national levels:

School level fieldwork evaluation instruments:

- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with school directors and school specialists
- Interview guide for semi-structured focus group interviews with teachers
- Interview guide for semi-structured focus group interviews with parents
- List of assessment criteria for the analysis of school development plans
- List of assessment criteria for the external evaluation reports if they exist
- Classroom observation protocol
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews for special education schools (only school directors and teachers)

Local level fieldwork evaluation instruments:

- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with municipality representatives (head and/or other representative of department for social affairs)
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with educational advisor form regional school authority of MoESTD (RSA)
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with members of inter-sectorial commission
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with municipality education inspector
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with local NGOs

National level fieldwork evaluation instruments:

- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with former and recent policy makers and relevant stakeholder organizations,
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews for international development program staff
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews for experts, researchers

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6.5. Participation of stakeholders

The list of key stakeholders whose views should be taken into consideration during the evaluation has been determined by the ToR of this evaluation. This list includes the following stakeholder groups:

- MoESTD (Group for SI, Group for ethnic minorities, Group for antidiscrimination and violence prevention, Sector for European integration)

- Education institutes and relevant institutions, including the National Education Council

- Schools and preschool institutions

- Regional School Administrations

- Universities responsible for teacher training

- Ministries of health, youth and social welfare

- Development partners

- Network of support to inclusive education

- CSOs

- Local authorities

- Independent bodies – Ombudsman and Commissioner for Equality

- SIPRU – Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government

- Rights holders – children and parents

- Parliamentary committee for child rights

- UNICEF and other international organisations

The participation of stakeholders has been ensured in two different ways. The first was involving the representatives of the various stakeholder groups by interviews and focus group discussions that allows for channelling in the views of all interested actors. The second was the operation of the Steering Committee of the evaluation project established by UNICEF and the MoESTD that is composed of government, international donor agency and research institution representatives. At all stages of this evaluation the members of the Steering Committee provided valuable input. Due to resource constrains there was one group that has not been involved: students were not addressed by any fact-finding activities.

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6.6. Ethical safeguards

- In the course of the fieldwork all respondents were properly informed about the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, as well as about the way how the information they provide will be used.

- Cooperation of the respondents with the evaluation team has been always voluntary.

- Information, views and opinions shared by individuals were used in a way that ensures anonymity.

- The report of the evaluation is developed for publication that ensures feeding back the results to those who contributed.

- The members of the evaluation team are independent experts able to provide unbiased judgements.

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7. THE FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

The findings of the evaluation are responding to the 30 evaluation questions of the TOR and collected along the 16 thematic clusters of the inception report. The findings are presented under the headings of the objectives of the evaluation determined by the TOR.
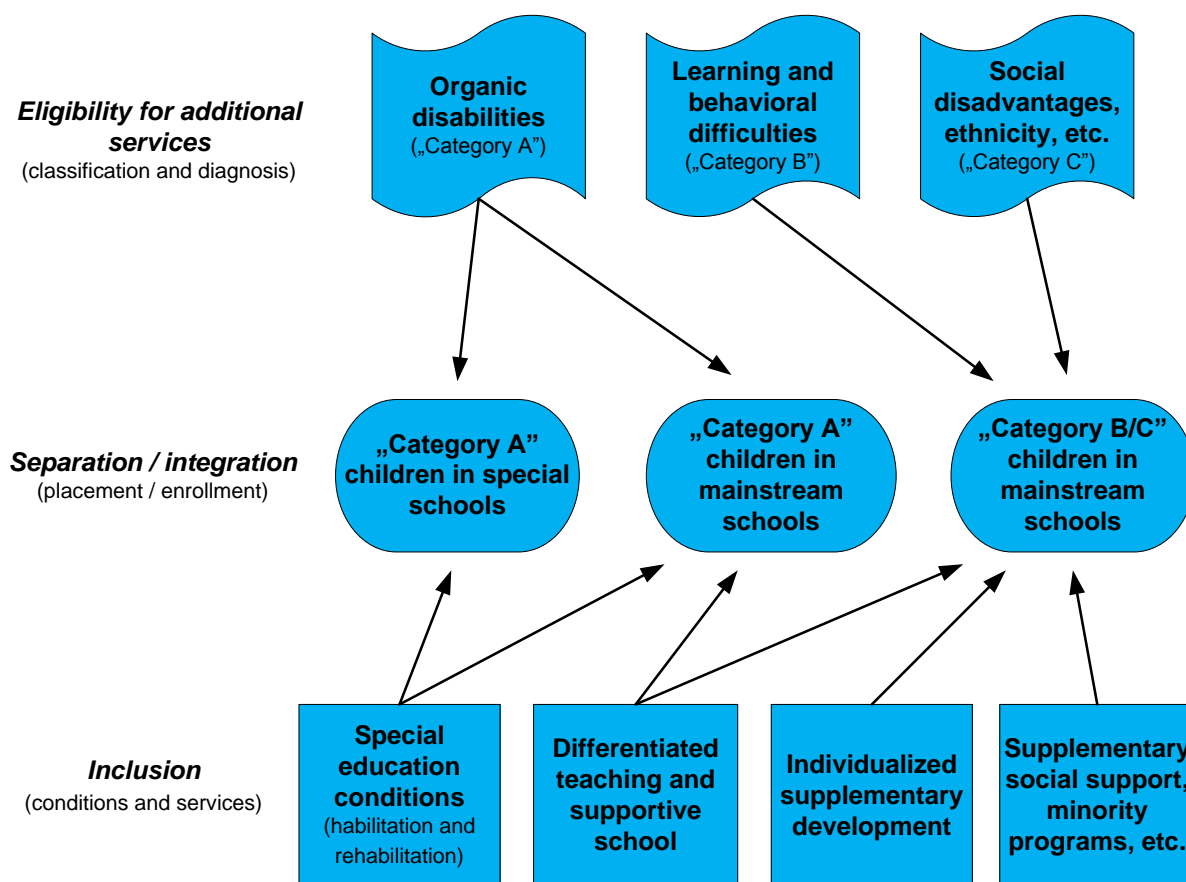
7.1. Relevance

Relevance related evaluation questions

- Have interventions/measures that were designed and implemented to influence inclusive policies and system changes, been specifically targeted the most marginalized children, those children whose right to education is violated, in particular children with disabilities, Roma children, girls, children from poor rural areas, children performing below academic standards, and children with multiple disadvantages?
- To what extent were different measures relevant for increasing inclusiveness of education and improving quality of education?

In terms of societal disadvantages, the Serbian inclusion policy is very comprehensive: with the exception of gender differences and with relatively weak emphasis on residential status, it addresses the most important dimensions. However, since policies tend to be information driven, the lack of reliable data on participation, especially on dropout rates and on the learning outcomes of students, the original inclusion policy as it was designed in 2009 was very much focusing on teaching and much less on educational outcomes. In this respect the 2013 supplement with measures for reducing dropout is a very important move towards a more balanced policy model.

As illustrated on the following figure, educational inclusion covers three layers of the related problems: the way how the eligibility for various services determined, the organization of education (i.e. the extent of separation or integration) and the preparedness of the schools for successful integration (i.e. inclusion).

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Figure 14: The framework for integration and inclusion

Eligibility for additional services
(classification and diagnosis)

Organic disabilities („Category A")

Learning and behavioral difficulties („Category B")

Social disadvantages, ethnicity, etc. („Category C")

Separation / integration
(placement / enrollment)

„Category A" children in special schools

„Category A" children in mainstream schools

„Category B/C" children in mainstream schools

Inclusion
(conditions and services)

Special education conditions (habilitation and rehabilitation)

Differentiated teaching and supportive school

Individualized supplementary development

Supplementary social support, minority programs, etc.

(Source: Radó, 2009)

The inclusion policy of Serbia is very much balanced and comprehensive in this respect, too: it equally emphasizes integration and inclusion related issues. Strengthening integration is served by the interventions of improving participation in pre-school education, mainstreaming through new enrolment procedures and by efforts for the prevention of segregation. The most important inclusion related elements are the promotion of differentiated teaching and assessment and individualized students support, the expansion of social support schemes, as well as promoting the transformation of the role of special schools.

If we assess the composition of the Serbian inclusion policy against the conclusions derived from the equity profile of the education system, we find that it obviously responds to the most important problems in an appropriate way by considering inclusion as a quality problem, by the strong mainstreaming approach, and by strong attention to pre-school participation. However, the relevance of the policy package is weakened by its relatively weak focus on the competence gaps emerging already in the initial phase of primary education.

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To an extent, the relevance of the inclusion policy should be assessed against the wider educational policy context. As former government officials and experts reported, during the government term of 2008-2012, inclusive education was in the forefront of educational policies. Government commitment was unambiguous and the MoESTD was the driving force of changes. The ministry successfully built a policy coalition of various stakeholder groups, NGOs, international donor agencies and academic institutions.

According to many education experts, the implementation of the inclusive policy lost momentum after the 2012 elections. As far as the government priorities after the 2014 elections are concerned, it is best described, according to an education expert, as *"the new government is flirting with the concept of inclusive education".* According to officials of the recent government the highest government priority in the education sector is ensuring employability by the expansion of the dual VET system. This policy priority is not necessarily contradicts to the equity goals of the ministry responsible for education if a holistic approach to employability is applied that emphasizes those basic competencies that are required for further learning and success at the workplaces. However, the prevailing government approach is very different with a narrow focus on work-specific skills. This policy leaves very limited space for combatting school failure in primary and lower-secondary general education.

A new overall education development strategy was approved in 2012 (Education Development Strategy 2020+) that was supplemented with an Action Plan in 2015. In certain cases the strategy represented a shift of emphasis towards a milder concept of inclusive education, especially in relation to the role of special schools. However, due to the unchanged legal foundations, the impact of the strategy on the actual overall goals of the inclusive education remained very limited without any changes in relation to the relevance of the policy.

In spite of the establishment of the Group for Social Inclusion, the unambiguous commitment of the government towards inclusive education since 2012 is questioned by various experts on grounds of certain rather contradictory educational policies delivering controversial "messages". Among other things, certain elements of the new law on textbook publishing allowing for separate textbooks for special needs students, the rationalization process resulting in the reduction of the number expert associates in schools and maintaining the rigidity of regulation on class sizes, or the maintained emphasis of factual knowledge in the course of the revision of standards for the primary school leaving examination are regarded by many as measures weakening inclusive education.

The weakening government commitment and support to the implementation of inclusive education resulted in a shift of emphasis from school level implementation to policy advocacy and knowledge management in the work of non-governmental actors in 2013. In the period of 2008-2012 the Ministry of Education has built a cooperation network

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partly on the basis of active donor coordination, and partly of various governmental and non-governmental organizations taking part in the implementation of the policy. Cooperation within this network remained strong after the government change in 2012, and its role has partially changed from an "implementation network" to a policy advocacy coalition. The most important actors of this policy advocacy coalition are UNICEF Serbia, the Fund for an Open Society, the World Bank and other donor agencies, different NGOs such as the Veliki Mali, Most and the Centre for Interactive Pedagogy, as well as academic experts, for example researchers of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Belgrade University. (As it will be outlined later, these organizations closely cooperate with government agencies, such as the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) and the Inclusion Team of MoESTD.) UNICEF Serbia played an outstanding role in ensuring cooperation within the network. Among the most active actors of this policy advocacy coalition a certain division of labour emerged that reflected the strategies of various donor agencies. For example, while UNICEF was focusing strongly on national level policy advocacy, the Open Society Foundation Serbia was investing more on policy advocacy at the local level. Also, while World Bank programs are focusing on access to education, the Open Society Foundation is focusing on the quality of education provisions.

The strong focus on policy advocacy and knowledge management resulted in a big number of evaluation, monitoring and research projects. The most important projects were the following:

- The 2010 Rapid Assessment of inclusive education for UNESCO
- The 2012 Monitoring project of the Centre for Educational Policy funded by the Fund for an Open Society (FOS)
- The 2013 Policy impact analysis of measures for vulnerable groups in pre-university education for SIPRU and UNICEF
- The development of a web based Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education in Serbia in 2014 by the cooperation of SIPRU, UNICEF, the Fund for an Open Society and the Institute of Psychology
- The World Bank report on Inclusive education in Serbia in 2015
- The 2016 special Edu research project of UNICEF
- League of Roma is preparing a program for the monitoring of the implementation of the newly approved Roma strategy in cooperation with SIPRU and FOS

- UNICEF and the Commissioner for Equality are preparing a comparative analysis of the models of good practice in tackling segregation research on segregation of the Roma

All of these projects accumulated a great deal of empirical knowledge on the practice of inclusive education, contributed to the perpetual fine-tuning of inclusive education

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strategies and were very instrumental in keeping inclusive education on the educational policy agenda. The only project that served more practice oriented objectives was the 2014 Monitoring Framework. This instrument intended to bringing coherence to various local and school-based activities. The framework did not become operational as an information gathering instruments. However, to a certain extent it served as an advocacy tool and contributed to a better understanding of related matters. Also, the revision of quality standards builds on the framework.

The results of the consecutive evaluation, monitoring and research results were feeding the policy advocacy activities of various international donor agencies, NGOs and expert networks. However, apart from a few important policy measures, the follow-up of various recommendations was rather weak: monitoring-based government interventions aiming at correcting implementation failures are extremely rare in general in Serbia. The primary reason for the relatively low impact was the overall weakness of institutional channels for providing evidence basis for policy making. The prevailing pattern of the development of policies remains to be planning through working groups that is an ad-hoc substitute to systematic and institutionalized policy analysis and planning. Due to the lack of an unambiguous support of the underlying goals of inclusion policy within the education profession, there are experts who perceived these monitoring and research results biased and uncritical.

Overall, in spite of the weakened government commitment and the "stop and go" nature of educational policy making, the work of the policy advocacy coalition proved to be surprisingly successful: inclusive education remained relatively high on the educational policy agenda and the most important measures of the inclusion policy were not removed from the system by the consecutive new governments. It resulted in a fairly stable legislative basis that allowed for continued lower intensity implementation and to certain legal changes supplementing the original policy framework. As already mentioned, beyond various minor supplementary measures the most important new element is the 2013 policy on the prevention of dropout.

Another aspect of the assessment of the relevance of the inclusion policy is the governance context. There are two government agencies that are playing a key role in formulating and implementing inclusive education policies. The first is the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) of the government that was established in 2009 with the mandate of policy development, monitoring and coordination. This department is well positioned to improve inter-governmental coordination and serves as one of the most important engines for keeping inclusive education on the policy agenda of governments. However, the lack of political stability is a major obstacle to such coordination; all elections have abolished already built coordination frameworks that should be re-established in each new government periods. The other government agency is the Inclusion Team within the MoESTD that was established at the beginning of 2015 with the support of UNICEF. Although the weight of the Inclusion Team within the ministry

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is rather limited, its intensive cooperation with various relevant stakeholders and the stable legal basis of inclusion provides some influence on policy making. Both government departments are serving as "interfaces" between stakeholders, donor agencies and NGOs on the one hand, and government decision-making procedures on the other.

The Inclusion Team of the MoESTD recently developed a draft Action Plan for inclusive education (see Box 1). The Action Plan is basically intended to further implement the original inclusion policy of 2009 without any deviations from its original concept.

Box 1: The draft Action Plan for inclusive education for 2015-2020

General Objective:

Improvement of impartiality, availability and quality of education through the development of inclusion culture, policy and practice encompassing all levels of educational system.

Specific Goals:

1. Enhancement of regulations governing the inclusive education and social inclusion

2. Development of support system for children and adolescents through the establishment of effective inter-sectoral cooperation

3. Enhancement of competencies of the teaching staff of the pre-school and school institutions, aimed at ensuring the high quality of (inclusive) education

4. Creating inclusive development, learning and participation environment

5. 5. Development and implementation of monitoring and quality assessment of inclusive education

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In spite of the operation of these two government departments, inter-institutional cooperation at the national level is weak. Beyond the already mentioned weak political stability, this is caused by the strong sectoral logic in the work of the government. The diverse approaches and institutional interests of different sectors that the ministries are supervising overwrite most inter-institutional coordination intentions. Due to the highly centralized and overregulated character of governance in Serbia, ineffective coordination and cooperation at the national level has a crippling effect on the improvement of local co-operations.

One of the most important governance instruments with outstanding policy implementation potential is the new system of inspection. The operation of the new

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external evaluation of schools since the 2012/13 school year is a very important monitoring instrument capable of generating change at the level of schools. In this respect it is essential that the original set of underlying standards for evaluation incorporate the key elements of the 2012 inclusive education monitoring project of FOS and the Centre for Educational Policy. At the end of the first cycle of external evaluations the revision of the underlying standards is foreseen from 2017. The development of the revised quality framework will open the opportunity to build on the various monitoring and evaluation results accumulated by the above listed programs since 2012. Better information fed to the evaluation standards and procedure – especially on progression, dropout and learning outcomes – may improve the government's capacity to identify poorly performing schools and combat the school failure of disadvantaged students in a more targeted way.

One of the bottlenecks of successful educational policy implementation in Serbia is the insufficient institutional network of knowledge management, development and professional support (the shortages of professional support provided to schools, teachers and students will be discussed later. While the two professional background institutions of the ministry, the Centre for Educational Policy, the Centre of Interactive Pedagogy and other institutions have accumulated outstanding professional capacities and know-how, their capacities are far from being enough to support the implementation of large scale policy initiatives, such as those of the inclusion policy. There are two major shortages in this respect. Due to the lack of resources and a financial allocation system that is able to generate demand, market-based organizations do not engage in educational development of any sort. The other shortage is the fact that most policies are supposed to be implemented through the network of Regional School Authorities (RSAs) (Skolska Uprava) that performs contradictory functions and is seriously understaffed. Due to the weakness of the institutional network there is an overreliance on legal regulations with insufficient effort to influence the behaviour of the actors on education in more effective ways.

The other very important obstacle to successful policy implementation in Serbia follows from the actual system of financing. Program financing is not applied in the course of budget planning in the MoESTD and there is no set aside scheme for the implementation of educational policies. The lack of state budget resources maintains donor-dependency of policy making in education. There are intentions for liberating resources by the removal of inefficiencies through the school network optimisation and channelling these resources back to educational development. However, it would require much more sophisticated governance of the available financial and human resources. In the view of Serbian experts of public financing and government officials at the moment, the overregulated sectoral human resource management system does not allow for more than cutting the number of jobs under the pressure of the public sector downsizing policy of the government (95% of the budget of the ministry is deployed for salaries.)

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The impression of the review team is that it is not only the lack of state budget resources for the implementation of any educational policies, but it is much more the input financing system that does not allow for the use of financial incentives for teachers, schools, municipalities or any other actors. Also, this ineffective system does not allow connecting resource allocation with the actual services that different institutions provide. This shortcoming of the actual education financing system has an impact on almost all aspects of inclusive education: on the willingness of teachers to provide supplementary individualized support to students, on the vested interest of schools to enrol and keep all students, on the willingness of municipalities to channel more resources through the framework of intersectoral committees or on the institutionalization of professional support services to teachers and students. Even school network optimisation for liberating resources hardly can be implemented effectively without the use of financial incentives.

The planning for the introduction of a normative education financing system was done as a component of the World Bank funded DILS program. According to the original plan the new system was to be piloted in 16 municipalities; however, this element was halted in 2012 by the new government. The unfinished piloting process was evaluated and the formula was finalized by World Bank experts. Overall, the introduction of per capita based financing was prepared, but it is still a pending element of the governance system introduced by the 2009 Act on the Foundations of Education.

7.2. Effectiveness

Effectiveness related evaluation questions

- How effective have been government's interventions in removing system bottlenecks that determined or contributed to the exclusion of marginalized children from education?
- Which measures have been the most effective in contributing to implementation of IE?
- To what extent implemented interventions contributed to the improvements in different dimensions of school quality that are related to inclusiveness of education?
- To what extent efforts so far contributed to the teachers' capacities to implement inclusive education through their work?
- To what extent was additional support effective in supporting inclusion of the most vulnerable children?
- To what extent interventions so far managed to increase access for the most vulnerable children?
- To what extent parents influenced implementation of inclusive education concept?

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- Have the implemented interventions provided any additional (not directly) significant contribution/outcomes towards improvement of access and quality of education?
- Which are the system bottlenecks that have not been addressed by either the government or its partners (including UNICEF), or which the government and its partners have not been able to remove? And what are the reasons for that?
- Have there been opportunities for programmatic synergies between MoESTD's interventions and those of its development partners that contributed to increase the effectiveness of government's efforts to remove system bottlenecks to inclusive education?

As it was mentioned earlier, the real bottleneck in terms of progression and participation of children with disadvantaged backgrounds is participation in pre-school and upper-secondary education. However, in the case of Roma children even primary education attendance is far from being universal. As the MICS data on the following figure indicate, the gap between Roma and non-Roma children in terms of primary participation was narrowed till 2010, but started to become wider afterwards.

Figure 15: Primary education attendance rate in Serbia and in the Roma settlements (2005-2014)
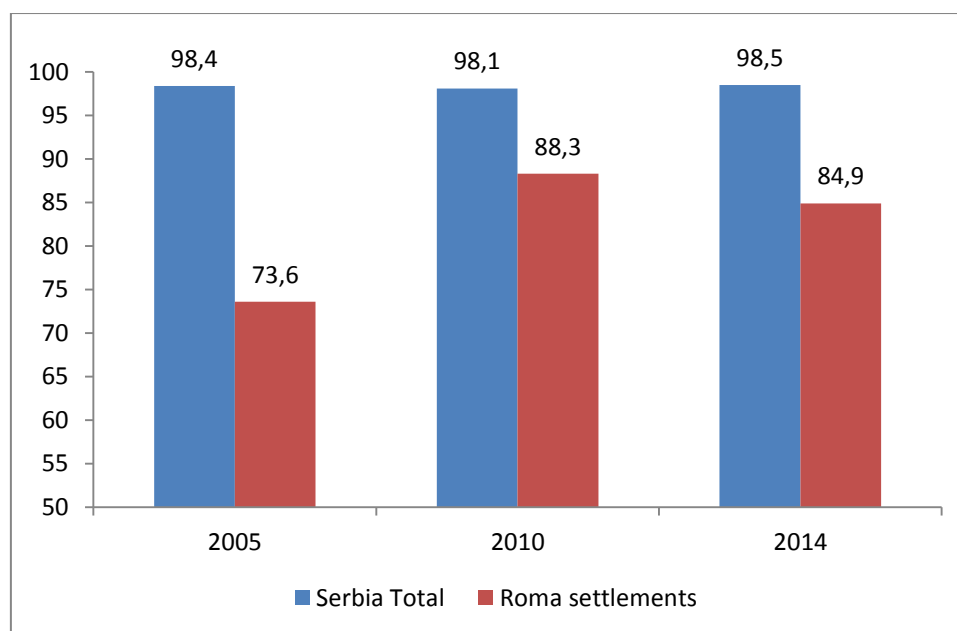
(Source: MICS)

As far as upper-secondary participation is concerned, in the same period the gap was slightly narrowed but remained wide.

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Figure 16: Upper-secondary education attendance rate in Serbia and in the Roma settlements (2005-2014)
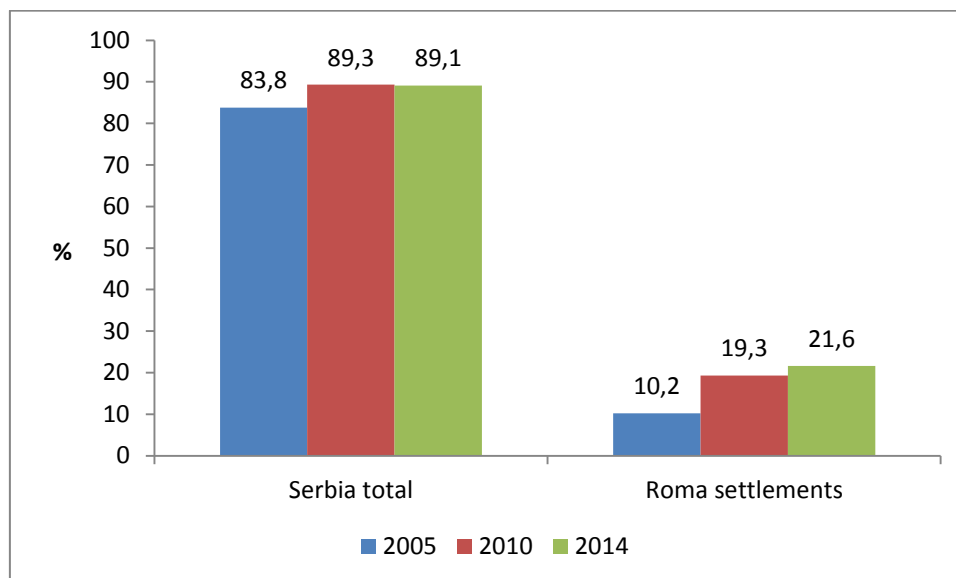
This large enrolment gap at the level of upper-secondary education is obviously the result of large achievement gaps at earlier stages of education. Again, it draws the attention to the relative failure of affirmative action policy: as a standalone policy without effective connected mainstream policy reforms, its potential to ensure school success for the big number of Roma students is limited. However, in this respect the impact of the inclusive education policy was limited, as well.

As mentioned earlier, due to the lack of reliable data we cannot draw the overall picture of the educational progression of vulnerable students.

Due to the lack of regular assessment of the performance in basic competencies of students in Serbia, earlier emerging achievement gaps among students with different backgrounds cannot be determined either. The analysis of the PISA results suggests that the odds of high status children to perform among the 20% top performers are four times higher than that of low status students. It proves, that the earlier presented TIMMS indicated performance gap in grade 4 arose along social status differences. That obviously applies to the performance of Roma students, too.

There is an initiative to introduce a sample-based regular assessment of the basic competences of students that, if implemented, may better inform policy making. However, school development and accountability information systems would require the testing of all students at the critical grades. It would be even more important since the introduction of the new external evaluation system uses the marks given by teachers

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when assesses the learning progress in schools. (Since marks are inadequate measures of learning progression this report does not exhibits the inspection result for the learning domain.) The introduction of the primary school leaving exam was a significant step forward. However, according to experts of the government the exam is only partially standardized and does not collect student background data, so it is not a reliable measure of inequities either. Also, determining achievement gaps at the end of primary schooling is rather late for designing effective policy intervention. (In addition, there are doubts about the reliability of the results of the school leaving exam because of potential cheating.) Unfortunately, Serbia did not participate in the 2015 PISA survey that will make policy making even less evidence-based in the future.

To sum it all up, the view of the evaluation team is that one of the most important weaknesses of the inclusion policy is that it does not make the learning failure of students and – as a consequence – the failure of schools visible. This is the reason for the weak learning outcomes oriented character of the overall policy and it hampers targeted intervention at the level of schools and teaching.

As far as the profiling of students is concerned, it is important to keep in mind that in Serbia, in spite of legally determined obligations, there is no established system of regular logopedics, dyslexia or any other screening of all children in kindergartens and primary schools. Therefore, beyond the help of the rather medical type of assessment available through the ISCs, a lot depends on the assessment preparedness of school staff. The basis for well-functioning inclusion is differentiated teaching. This is the kind of educational practice by which active student participation in learning activities provides the necessary amount of information for teachers. To capitalize on the potential of differentiated teaching, teachers must be prepared for the use of assessment methods other than the traditional summative marking. The development of IEPs also requires very sophisticated knowledge on the possible reasons and manifestations of learning difficulties.

Although, the use of formative assessment methods were incorporated to the relevant regulations, due to the very small weight of instruction and assessment components in the initial training of teachers, one cannot expect teachers to be prepared for its application. In the first years of the implementation of the inclusion policy, school teams received trainings on the development of the profile of children, but all experts agree that it was far from being sufficient for imposing an impact on the pedagogical assessment preparedness of practicing teachers.

According to the findings of the fieldwork of this evaluation in the sample schools (interviews and classroom observations) the main evaluation methodologies used by teachers are observing the behaviour of students in class, quality of responses, and the lack of progress in learning despite the use of different pedagogical interventions by teachers.

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"I notice that a child is not active and I ask myself why he is not active: lacking concentration, does not understand, it is too easy for him"... (Class teacher)

"Attention, motor skills, oral expression, movement ... In the beginning there is a period of adjustment, but it can be immediately seen whether a child needs EIP2. It used to be much easier to notice, with autism, for example." (Class teacher)

Very rarely, the comparison of achievement with other students as evaluation methodologies is used, as well as the assessment whether a child achieves the minimum standard for a given subject.

When profiling students, subject teachers rely on the information they receive from class teachers, i.e. take the criteria and information from them.

School specialists (expert associates) consider that the procedure for profiling the children is well regulated by law and that it is adequate. Deciding whether it is necessary for a child to have IEP is based on different sources of information. The main source of information is the one collected during the enrolment of the child in school (assessment of the child's health condition by general practitioners and other specialists; psychological assessments of cognitive, emotional and social development; evaluation of foreknowledge of the child, etc.). Where available, information from the kindergarten is used.

"During testing, a lot of information is collected, but also from pre-school institutions. We visit five kindergartens and talk with the teachers there and they focus our attention to particular children, which is valuable data. Everything registered in kindergarten continues in school". (School psychologist)

Since the law stipulates that all children should be enrolled in schools, after the enrolment the children the risk of poor integration into peer groups is monitored, as well as those that would have poor progress without additional educational support.

The sample of pedagogical profiles were analysed in the 2012 special education monitoring project of FOS and the Centre for Educational Policy. The key findings of the analysis were the following:

- Pedagogical profiles are very similar, poor, with insufficient information, no mention of life skills and the emphasis on learning.

- Profiles are clear and concise, but often lack specific details about the students, very similar, contain a clear concerted support measures that are largely focused on the objectives to be achieved, rather than focusing on methods to achieve the desired goal, child's possibilities are shown in great detail, however, the activities to be implemented to achieve the desired outcomes are largely concerted.

As far as preparation for profiling is concerned, DILS is the only project mentioned by principles and school specialists in the context of the development of teachers'

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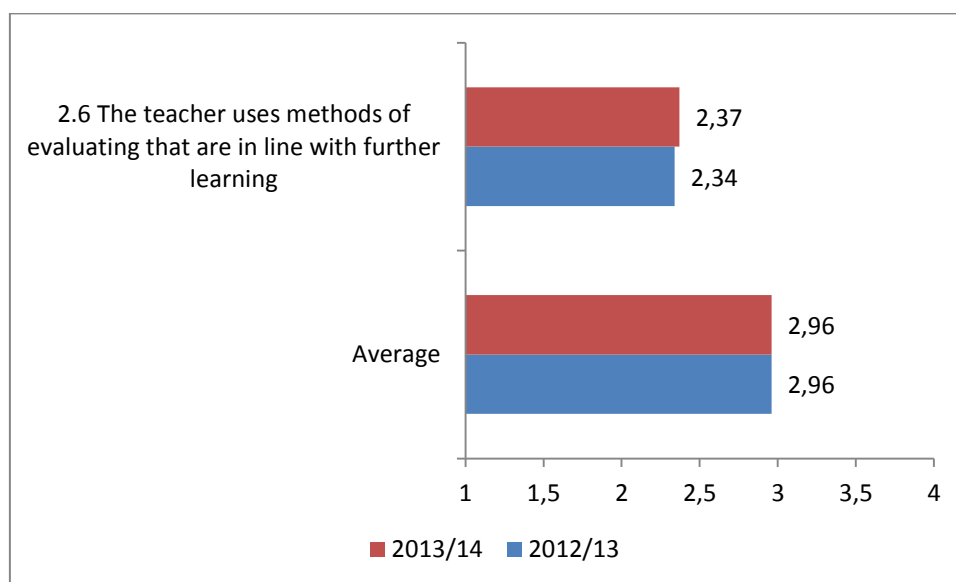in Serbia (2009 – 2014)

competences for inclusive practice, and only in the schools that have participated in the DILS project. They believe that teachers then acquired the basic knowledge for the development of pedagogical profile and EIP. On the other hand, teachers had difficulties to remember the participation of their schools in the DILS project and to assess the contribution of training within the DILS project to the improvement of profiling. The impression is that most of the teachers who participated in the evaluation are poorly informed about the projects in which their school participates.

Since the 2012 monitoring project, there has been no systematic government investment into these capacities of teachers. However, there are many available in-service training programs for teachers that within the framework of teaching methods for active learning cover diagnostic and formative assessment technics (for example, the "Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking" trainings provided by the Centre of Interactive Pedagogy).

In the view of an educational advisor, in certain schools there is formally good documentation and IEPs, but their use is questionable; they can be even considered as an obstacle for children's development, because goals are very much under the real potential of children. In her view teachers are not competent enough to determine realistic goals.

As it is shown on the following figure, the inspectors' judgement on the quality of the assessment practice of teacher is well below the average scores of all domains.

Figure 17: The external evaluation results in relation to pedagogical assessment practice of teachers

(Source: External evaluation report, 2015)

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The findings of a study that piloted the Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education in 28 schools suggest that one of the most successful interventions of the inclusion policy was the change of the enrolment procedure. According to the results, the overwhelming majority of schools adjusted their enrolment policies to the regulations. In addition, 96.5% of parents agreed that the schools enrol each student, while only 1.7% reported that they have heard about discrimination of students at enrolment[5].

Different experts expressed rather contradictory opinion about the impact of the inclusion policy on the extent to which the decision-making authority of parents prevails in relation to the enrolment of their children. In the view of a special education expert, parental choice is ensured only in Belgrade and in a few other bigger cities where the educational offer is wider. Many experts indicated that there is a gap between the theoretical power of parents provided by regulations and the option they really can consider in the practice. It was mentioned in multiple interviews that parents do not receive enough information before enrolment. Most parents are given the advice to enrol their children to regular schools – that is in line with the overall goals of the policy – but they do not receive detailed information about the pros and cons of the options they may consider. The role of Inter-sectorial Committees (ISC) is ambiguous in this respect. In the view of many respondents, informing parents is not even their task. The members of ISCs however report about strong efforts to inform parents about their options and their working with parental associations.

The point of departure of the support to parents of children with disabilities provided by the Veliki Mali NGO is the rights of the children ensured by various regulations. However, in their view the mechanisms for dealing with the violation of law are lacking. Therefore, they are engaged in children rights awareness campaigns and prepare to establish a free hotline for parents.

According to the results of school interviews, parents of SEN children mostly enrol their children on the basis of the recommendation of friends or because they have heard from several sources that the school is inclusive. A smaller number of parents enrolled their children in a particular school because they had a positive experience with the previous child's education in the same school, because it was the nearest school or the only school in the settlement. Some parents have a negative experience as other primary schools refused to enrol their children. One mother was even rejected in three different schools:

> "I enrolled my son in this school it had been recommended as a good school and that our child would be best accepted here" (A parent of a SEN children with autism);

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[5] Cerovic, 2015.

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"We were rejected in a school nearest to us, and they even did not see the child. Upon the recommendation we came to this school even though it was not near us" (A mother of a blind girl)

Parents are involved in curriculum adjustment in schools only during the creation of the individual education plan (hereafter: IEP). Even in this period they act more as a source of information for the development of a psychological profile of students than as a factor of influence on curriculum adjustment.

On the basis of the parent interviews, the general impression is that parental involvement depends on the child's developmental disorder. Some parents are very much involved (especially those of children with cerebral palsy).

"Our child has had IEP1 since the kindergarten, she has cerebral palsy, we have doctor's and psychologist's recommendation that she is for a regular school, and we think it is good for her. We are involved in everyday bases." (A parent of a SEN child).

Most parents mainly leave the decisions on the organisation of learning to teachers. This is especially emphasised with parents of Roma students.

"I'm the only Roma in this school, and I am really glad that everybody wants to help me. I have three children in this school. Everyone in school is giving their best. I am satisfied with their success, given that my husband and I are without any education. So they study by themselves and with the help of teachers and school, I don't interfere" (A parent of a Roma child)

Due to the lack of enough kindergarten places, the enrolment problems that parents encounter are much more serious than those in relation to primary enrolment.

As far as local cooperation frameworks are concerned, there are two underlying goals served by the establishment of the ISCs: they are to work as gatekeepers for special schools in order to reduce the number of the Roma children they enrol and they are supposed to channel in more municipality resources to the various services provided for vulnerable children. According to experts, the first goal is rather well served by the Committees. However, there are very few examples documenting bigger municipality spending on vulnerable children. One positive example is Pancevo, where the municipality has set aside a budget line for the support of disabled children.

The ambiguity of the role of the ISCs is partly caused by the weak harmonization of the rulebook regulating the work of local public service providers represented in the inter-sectorial framework. In certain cases the establishment of the ISCs considered to be the initiative of the education sector that other sectors have very little to do with. Therefore,

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for example, the social welfare system developed a case management system, which was not expanded to the services provided by the ISCs.

The role of ISCs is basically providing recommendations, and they do not have decision-making authority and nor do they control resources. In legal terms, their primary role is working as an expert assessment committee. According to the view of a special education expert, by the abolishment of categorization ISCs became "political bodies", they do not really serve the interests of children. Special school experts claim that the effectiveness of the work of ISCs is reduced because there are no "defectologists" in the Committees.

There are other experts who consider the operation of the ISCs still too much based on a medical approach. According to an advisor, ISCs are more of barriers to inclusive education because of the lack of good understanding of inclusive education. It is often the case, especially when ISCs have paediatrician members who were also member of the commissions of categorization and have not changed their views ever since.

In the view of another expert, the members of ISCs are overloaded in their regular workplaces and since they are not properly paid for their work in the ISCs, they consider it as a "free time activity". Due to this the Committees do not have meetings as often as would be required and sometimes they just fill in medical records without proper assessment. Due to the lack of a case management regime, the recommendations of the ISCs are not followed up, and they do not monitor what happens to the child later on.

Due to the lack of direct cooperation in regular and special schools, municipalities are supposed to transmit the demand from regular schools to special schools if a child has habilitation/rehabilitation support needs. However, this transmission role does not work properly. In very general terms, since most of the local public service provider organizations are not municipality operated services, it is not obvious that municipalities have a local coordination role to be performed. Due to the weak information exchange among sectors and the ambiguous role of ISCs, they are not able generate real cooperation among institutions, in many settlement they are operating in a certain cooperation vacuum.

It is often heard that in many cases the ISCs do not register student needs because of the lack of financial resources. There are a few settlements, where inter-sectorial cooperation within the Committees works very well. In these cases the initiatives of the ISCs generate higher demand for municipality funding that is responded by pressure on the Committees to remain within the determined financial frameworks. In addition to this, the law on social protection forbids municipalities to give any direct cash benefits; this can be done only by Centre for social work. Municipalities can only provide services.

In the view of an expert of public financing, in the large majority of cases low municipality spending is the result of priorities, not the lack of resources. According to estimations only approximately 10% of the municipalities have serious financial issues preventing them to spend more on services for vulnerable children. One of the reasons for low

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spending is the lack of serious further steps towards fiscal decentralization. Not only education, but all locally provided public services are funded on the basis of input financing. Therefore, the margin beyond covering salaries is very small in the budget of municipalities that narrows the space within which they can consider to reallocate funds according local priorities.

The role of regional school authorities has become ambiguous for the recent years, too. They are performing a large number of different administrative, professional support and inspection related tasks but they are seriously understaffed the number of employees has been reduced. Therefore, it is not expected that these authorities will be able to play an active role in building local cooperation frameworks.
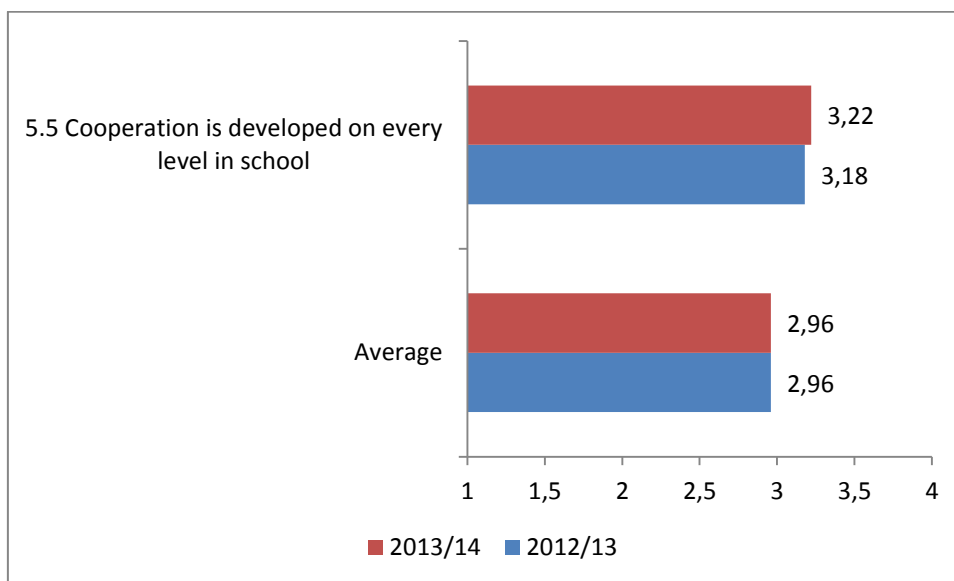
Due to the weak cooperation between schools and centres for social work, if school have problems with enrolment, regular school attendance or dropout, they cannot rely on the support of the social providers who – at least according to regulations – may hold the parents accountable. There are a few examples when the centre for social work applied the method of case conference for school aged children with the involvement of teachers and it proved to be very efficient. However, it is not mandatory; therefore, it is not applied in a systemic scale.

According to regulations cooperation with other local actors falls under the realm of autonomous operation of the schools. However, the channels for these cooperation efforts are not clear; therefore, this attempts are rare and ad hoc.

In very few settlements NGOs are filling in the gaps that the lacking or very weak cooperation frameworks among public service providers. In many cases they mediate among various actors and also act as local watchdogs. There are cases when without NGO interventions teachers would avoid develop the IEP for children - that makes them eligible for additional support - in order to avoid administration.

The active cooperation of the schools is one of the requirements incorporated to the quality standards. In the two years when we have access to external evaluation results the average results of the inspected schools in this domain was higher, than the average points given to all domains together. Most probably this relatively high average score is the result of good inspector judgments on other aspects of institutional cooperation, such as the operation of school boards, organized students' participation, etc.

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Figure 18: External evaluation results on institutional co-operations in the inspected schools

Due to the weakness of local cooperation framework, the Fund for an Open Society has been implementing a program since 2013, which organized the "Network of inclusive education friends" as visible platform for defending IE and advocacy tool for other teachers and parents as well as though media. The program organized 78 local actions to promote child rights, improve school ethos and problem solving in education inclusion; out of 78, 5 preschool institutions, 1 preschool teachers association received the grant and 5 organizations are dealing with pre-primary inclusion.

Overall, in spite of the established new institutionalized frameworks for inter-sectorial cooperation for vulnerable children, this aspect remains to be one of the weakest points of the inclusion policy. The highly centralized character of the management of all locally provided services prevents developing the channels and the culture of cooperation to be built around the specific needs of individual children. Due to the rather closed operating logic of the key service provider institutions, the potential of local self-governments to promote the development of cooperation is limited which reduces the willingness of municipalities to deal with the problems of vulnerable children as a financing priority. The ambiguity of the role of different actors and that of the ISCs gives space for strong responsibility shift attitudes.

Due to the widely use of the term "individualization" in the meaning that incorporates differentiated teaching of entire classes and the supplementary individual support to children with any difficulties impeding successful learning, this aspect of inclusive education receives less attention. (Since the inclusive education policy model toward which Serbia made a huge step in 2009 is based on the combination of differentiation

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and supplementary individual development, it is worth keeping in mind that in Finland that applies the same model approximately 40% of the students receive a sort of supplementary individual support.)

Among other things, this relatively weak emphasis on supplementary individual development is one of the reasons, why special education specialists ("defectologists") claim that the model of inclusion introduced in regular schools in Serbia does not necessarily serve the interest of children. When interviewing special education specialists, it is often heard that mainstream teachers are not prepared properly for children who have organic disabilities. In their view the unpreparedness of teachers for developing disabled students creates a gap between regulations and practice. According to this approach, the development of IEP2 for children is a critical point when the mainstream and special education approaches are to be combined, however, the few days training for this that teachers participate is far from being sufficient. The examples for "defectologists" participating in the development of IEP2s are very rare. In their view, in the education practice of regular schools the development of IEP2s is rarely more than the reduction of the curriculum for these children. As far as less serious impairments are concerned, in the view of a special education specialist, teachers of regular schools are able to recognize them, but they are not able to adjust to the needs of these children and to provide the appropriate development.

In spite of various developments, the competence gap between mainstream teachers and special education specialists is still very large. (The use of the term "defectologist" indicates a surviving strong medical approach to the development of children with disabilities.) The faculty for special education at Belgrade University started a program for training special education teachers for mainstream schools already in 2005, but this did not impose a strong impact on the alignment of the profession yet. The divide between the two professions is still very strong. This divide, amplified by the institutional interests of the special education system, generated resistance against the 2009 inclusive education policy initiative. The expressed reason for this resistance is the lack of involvement of "defectologists" in the design and implementation of the policy. (However, there are many special education experts who agree the goals of inclusion policy and are actively seeking ways to contribute to its implementation.)

Due to this resistance – and to other obstacles – the transformation of the function of special schools towards a combined educator and service provider role - that is one of the key components of the inclusive education policy – is proceeding very slowly. An important legislative step was an amendment of law in 2013 that supplemented the function of special schools with the task of providing support to mainstream schools. The implementation of this measure is slow and the examples for special schools building a professional support service are sporadic and basically confined to bigger cities. In 2015 with the support of UNICEF and the MoESTD, disability specific protocols were developed for special education specialist working on the development of IEPs for children in

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mainstream schools, but due to the lack of the expansion of such services these protocols were rarely applied. (The problems related to the support service function of special schools will be further discussed in the section on evaluation question 9.)

There are many obstacles to the expansion of the system of individual development of students in the regular schools. For example, several respondents suggested that too high curricular expectations and too ambitious standards in general push the use of IEP2 as a way to reduce expectations towards children and to institutionalize double standards. Teachers are almost unanimous in their assessment that they have problems with classroom/time management in the classrooms that have SEN children.

> *"SEN children should be given more time than the teacher can provide. For example, in the fifth grade, the Serbian language curriculum is difficult and if I don't give the foundations to students I cannot catch up later. This means that I also must devote a lot of attention to other children. Be as it may, someone suffers – either a student with IEP or the rest of the class."* (Serbian language teacher)

Another obstacle is connected to the compensation system of teachers. In theory, teachers are paid for a 40 working hours per week, but in fact it is a basic salary that is connected to the regulated number of contact hours. Any supplementary work, such as working with individual children or small groups of 2-4 children, remedial classes or talent care activities, is regarded as "overwork" for which teachers are not paid. The lack of financial incentives and the administrative requirements connected to this work are reducing the willingness of teachers. (Most probably this low willingness is reflected in the decline of the number of IEPs after 2012 developed for first graders.) As the school interviews revealed, teachers with children who have IEP mainly work with them during the classes because they believe that it would be additional burden for them to stay at additional classes.

Finally, since the expert associates employed by the school play – or should play – a key role in the supplementary individual development of students, the reduction of their number in the course of rationalization endangers this very important capacity of schools. In the course of the interviews in schools parents and teachers emphasised the need for various professionals to be more present in school, such as special educators, speech therapists and physical therapists.

The lack of incentives strengthens the impact of strong negative attitudes of many teachers. According to the 2015 monitoring research report: "Negative teacher attitudes hinder development of inclusive practice in Serbia, since in every fifth school in our research negative attitudes toward inclusive education are prevailing, whilst more than 50% of teachers show no willingness to provide additional support for the students who need it. Moreover, 6 schools from the sample report that some of their classes include more than 3 students educated by IEP. Hence, results suggest that classrooms managed

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by teachers who have positive attitudes toward inclusive education, can become isolated and are under higher risk of burning out".[6]

Effective management of the classroom climate is a key factor for the learning of SEN children in mainstream schools. Subject teachers point out that SEN children are accepted well in their classes (that other students take care of them, help them and support them) and that it is the merit of class teachers who have built cohesive relationships among students and positive classroom climate. This is particularly apparent in the fifth grade, and at older ages the level of peer support gradually declines, because students begin to have more diverse interests and different priorities.

Parents who are interviewed are generally satisfied how their children have been accepted in classes.

> *"The class teacher did a great job from the beginning when it comes to creating an atmosphere of acceptance in the classroom."* (Parent of a SEN child)

> *"My son did not talk by the age of four, and in the park he was not accepted by other children, and he used to spend time alone at home. In this school it is different and it means a lot to him. Other children are happy for his success."* (Parent of a SEN child)

> *"My son has two friends who always carry his backpack and his jacket. Children learn to accept differences, and then instinctively start helping."* (Parent of a SEN child)

> *"The teacher has made a big effort to bring the class closer to my son and vice versa. I have not noticed any negative reactions with my child, and I think that he often feels at the same level with his peers although he is aware that he is different."* (Parent of a SEN child)

However, there are examples where children have not been well accepted:

> *"She could be better accepted. For example, sometimes they throw erasers at her during class. So she comes home crying and asks me to take her out of school. Mostly she is neither insulted nor harassed by anyone. Nevertheless, some children behave as if she did not exist. They do not greet her in school and on the street. The teacher was informed about that and she has spoken with children, but this is still happening."* (Parent of a SEN child)

Bearing in mind all these problems and shortcomings in connection to supplementary support provided to children, the external evaluation results in connection to student

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[6] Cerovic at alia, 2015.

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support – that obviously includes all students in a school – are surprisingly somewhat better than the average scores.

Figure 19: External evaluation results in the domains related to student support in the inspected schools
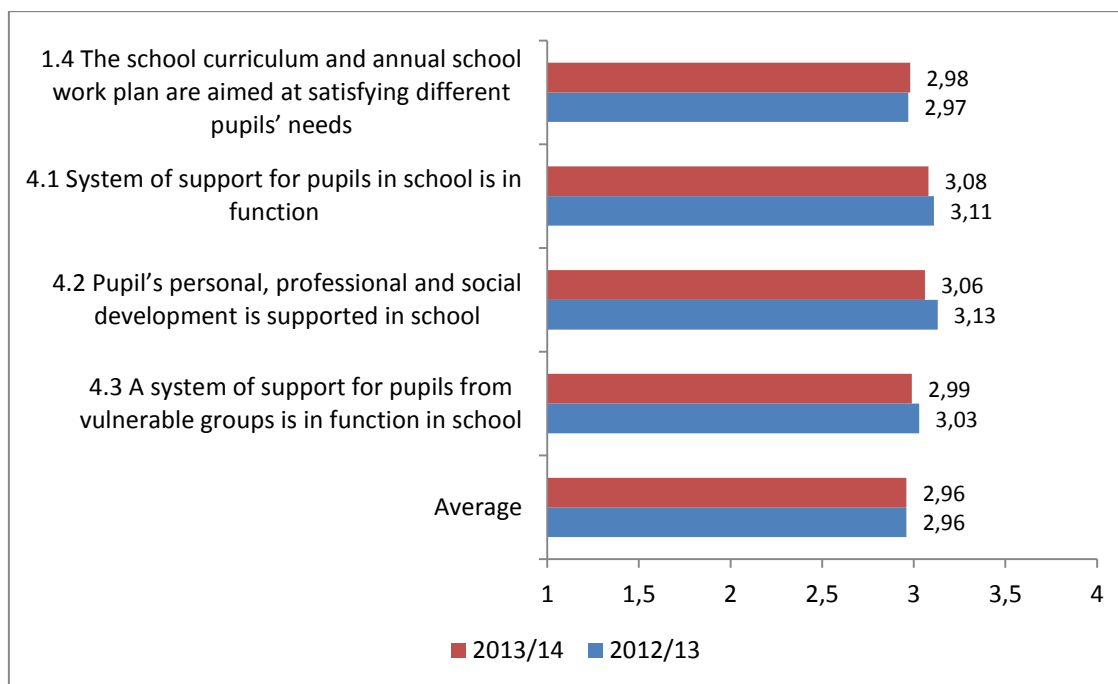
(Source: External evaluation report, 2015)

7.3.   *Sustainability*

Sustainability related evaluation questions

- To what extent legislation in this area supports implementation and further development of inclusive education?
- To which extent is inclusive education concept supported by other systems, was synergy with supporting initiatives in other sectors achieved?
- To what extent are new knowledge and skills integrated into regular activities of professionals working with children and their families?
- Does the pre-service and in-service teacher trainings support inclusive education?
- To what extent were national and local level stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the inclusive education?
- What is the likeliness that the national and local self-government will allocate sufficient resources needed to support inclusive education?

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- To what extent have the schools and preschools endorsed inclusive education as a dominant concept?
- To what extent civil society supports the concept of inclusive education?

The sustainability of the measures and developments of the inclusion policy basically depends on the extent to which the various practices, procedures, cooperation frameworks and services are institutionalized.

In the light of evaluation findings one of the most successful elements of the 2009 inclusion policy is the establishment of inclusion teams (IT) in schools. The ITs provide a stable institutionalized framework for all inclusion-related activities, strengthen the cooperation within the school staff and with external partners, it is a very useful management instrument and – at least in theory – it might serve as an appropriate knowledge and know-how import and internal sharing. This judgment of teachers and experts is supported by the findings of the 2015 inclusion research: "Results of our study show that 93.2% of teachers perceive that the school principle is actively engaged in improvement and promotion of inclusive education. Additionally, teachers (96.4%) recognize school councillors as the most effective source of support in the field of inclusive education (e.g. cooperation with parents, development of individualized approach/IEPs)."[7] The school level fieldwork found many good practices that grew out from the work of the ITs.

> "Team for support of inclusive education after the first trimester analyses the number of poor grades, behaviour during classes and monitors the students with more than three poor grades. Then the team for support of inclusive education gathers and lists all these children and each team member select one child to monitor. They meet again after some time to see the progress." (A school director)

> "At the beginning of fifth grade meetings are organised where teachers transfer to subject teachers everything they need to know about a particular SEN child." (A school director)

However, it is important to keep in mind that if inclusion related efforts were losing momentum within a school for any reasons, the inclusion team may magnify the changing or unfavourable climate in the school. In order to avoid this phenomenon, it is essential that schools are reflecting on their work in the course of self-evaluation. At the time of the start of the implementation of the inclusion policy ITs were heavily used as targets and

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[7] Cerovic and alia, 2015

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interfaces and in the model schools developments were typically embedded to school development. However, in general building the inclusion capacities of schools was very loosely connected to school development.

As it was already mentioned, one of the pillars of the Serbian inclusive education policy is the institutional adjustment to the teaching of vulnerable children imbedded to self-evaluation and school development planning. In theory, school development is an existing practice of Serbian schools already since 2003. However, due to the weakness of professional support provided to self-evaluation and school development on an institutionalized and permanent basis, self-evaluation, planning and the implementation of development plans have not become a cyclical routine part of the operation of the majority of schools. According to educational advisors, in most schools it is only an administrative duty to be performed. There are schools that temporarily take it very seriously in periods when the school is facing a trouble of any sorts. And of course, there are school in an unknown number which are reforming high quality self-evaluation and planning.

In the view of inspectors, in many cases self-evaluation is not objective enough. In many schools the staffs is aware of various problems, but they do not reveal them because they do not intend to give themselves low marks. (The fact that schools are applying the marking scale of external evaluation makes self-evaluation over-regulated and counter-productive.)

The findings of this evaluation are identical with the conclusions of the 2015 inclusion research: „Furthermore, the culture of school self-evaluation, based on monitoring and evaluation of school in the area of inclusive education appears to be poorly developed. Significant number of schools report that school self-evaluation does not take into account perspectives of students and parents (10 schools), and perspectives of students and from vulnerable groups even less present (19). At the same time, 4 to 7 schools, depending on the type of the school document, do not include in school documents activities aimed at improving inclusive education."[8]

Since 2012 the government operates the external evaluation system that is an effective driver for seriously managed self-evaluation and school development planning, as well as for strengthening the weight of inclusive education related matters. (According to experts more and more educationalists recognize this potential of external evaluation that results in a pressure for incorporating more-end more aspects of education into the underlying standards.) The impact of external evaluation on the content of school development plans was noted by many experts.

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[8] Cerovic et alia, 2015

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"Situation with school development plans varies, but more and more schools are putting support to students in their development plans, and in a reasonable way." (An educational advisor)

The results of the first cycle of inspection seem to be proving the above described contradiction between improved cooperation within the schools and weak reflection on this cooperation; while the results of first related sub-domain are higher than the average, the self-evaluation and internal monitoring related inspection results are weaker than the average.

Figure 20: The external evaluation results in relation to within school cooperation and self-evaluation
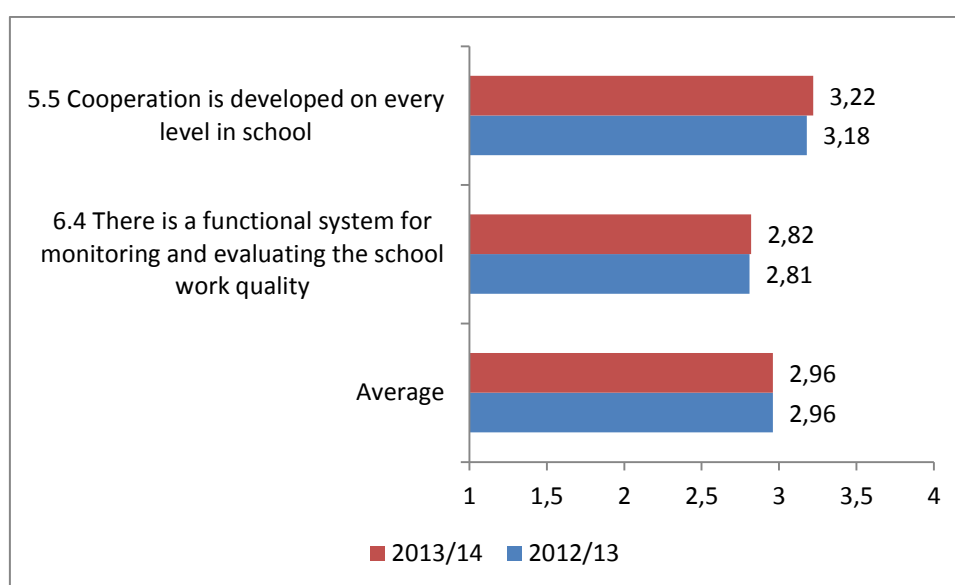
(Source: External evaluation report, 2015)

According to a government expert one of the weakest points of the existing system is the implementation of school development plans. As it was already mentioned in the previous section, decisions on the professional development of individual teachers are typically not connected to the development goals of the schools. Due to this and to other problems, such as the lack of resources for the implementation of plans, the weakness to external professional support and the weak accountability of school directors on the basis of the success of development planning, planning remains to be an administrative task of directors in a big number of schools.

The observation of the evaluation team is that at the intermediate level between municipalities/schools and the national governance an important institutional adjustment failure is the narrow capacities of the Regional School Authorities. While the inclusion policy generated a huge demand for professional support and many advisors received coordinating role in the Inclusion Network, the capacities of the RSAs are kept at a very

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low level and they received the additional task of external evaluation. As a consequence, the responsive capacity to the regional management system to emerging needs is very weak. For example, the RSAs do not analyse and summarize the development plans of schools that would be a solid basis for planning development and professional support. It would be even more important in a period of time, when external evaluation feedback generates new momentum and demand for development.

The implementation of the inclusion policy requires the development of a big number of various instruments that are easily applicable by schools and other local actors of education: instruction methods, thematic program packages, school innovation know-how, service protocols, accredited training packages and training manuals, self-evaluation instruments, quality assurance instruments and protocols, diagnostic and formative pedagogical assessment instruments, school level monitoring instruments, data collection and reporting instruments, teaching materials, teaching and learning technologies, online and offline knowledge management platforms, methodological guides, collections of evaluated good practices, collections of international know-how, etc. The more ambitious the educational policies are, the bigger demand they generate for such instruments. In Serbia there are very good examples for the development of such instrument in the field of inclusive education, such as the thematic self-evaluation package for inclusive education developed by the Centre for Educational Policy, the adaptation of successful international training know-how by the Centre of Interactive Pedagogy, or the monitoring framework developed in cooperation by many institutions. However, the number and types of such instruments applied in the course of implementation are not sufficient. One of the reason for this is that such developments are typically rely on donor funds; therefore, the "background institutions" of the ministry do not have access to sufficient funds for building the necessary human capacities, establish the necessary quality assurance standards and procedures and implement such development projects. The shortage of institutionalized "development of development capacities" results in a big number of policy initiatives by regulation without proper investment to their implementation.

7.4. Impact

> **Impact related evaluation questions**
>
> - To what extent have the introduced changes contributed to openness of "regular" schools towards children with additional education needs – Roma, children with disabilities?
> - How has introduction of inclusive education impacted different actors in the education process (schools – regular and "special", teachers, children, parents, decision makers, local community, society…)?

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- What are the interventions that had the most prominent impact on children?
- To which extent initiatives and support provided supported scaling up in other schools?

One of the priorities of the inclusion policy is increasing pre-school education participation. Due to the measures under the umbrella of the Roma Decade, the participation of Roma children has increased in the second part of the previous decade. According to the UNICEF MICS data, the overall proportion of children enrolled to preparatory pre-school education has increased after 2010, but this proportion at the Roma settlements has decreased to a significant extent. This suggests that the policy based on mandatory attendance failed to compensate for the negative impact of the economic crisi among the most vulnerable children. In theory disadvantaged children should have an advantage in pre-school enrolment. However, in the practice this advantage is typically secured only for the children of single parents.

Figure 21: The change of pre-school enrolment in Serbia and in the Roma settlements (2010-2014)
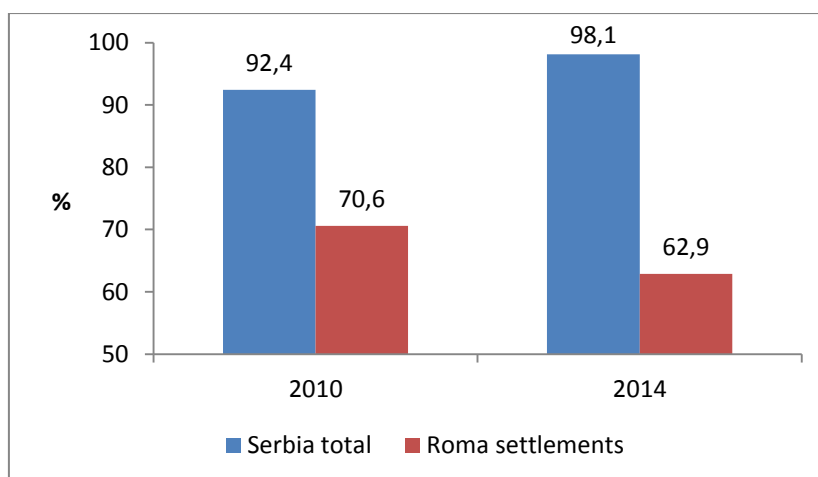
(Source: MICS)

If we look at overall pre-school attendance trend in absolute numbers, it appears that the increasing participation rate is caused by demographic reasons and not by the increment of the number of children attending pre-school education. It also applies to participation in the mandatory preparatory program. According to the head of the Belgrade Education Authority only in the capital there are approximately 5000 children not enrolled to kindergarten due to the lack of places.

Figure 22: The number of children attending pre-school education 2009-2013

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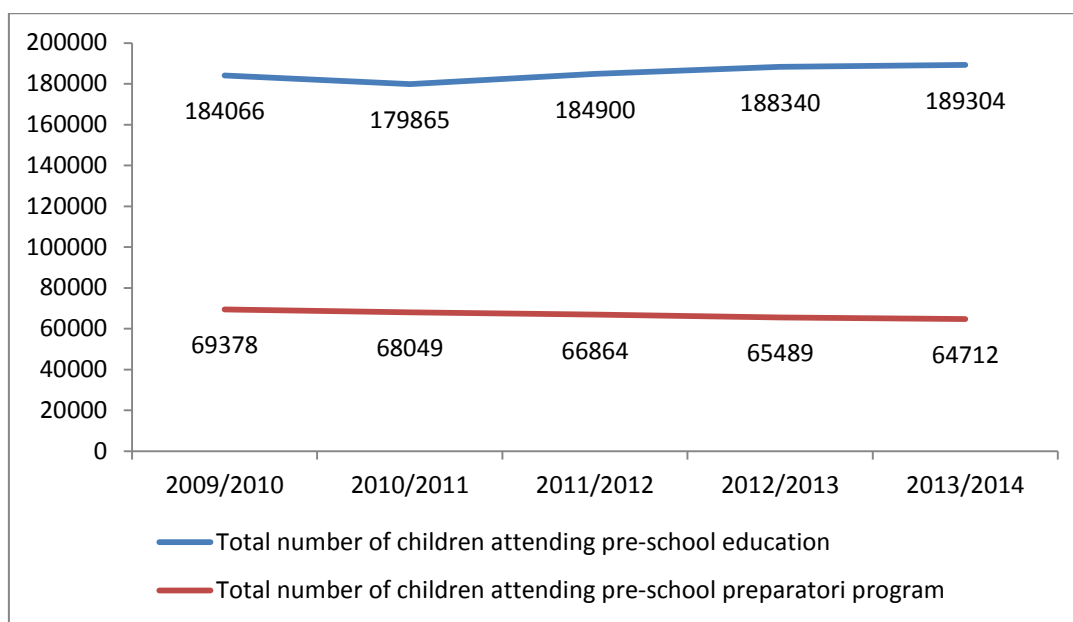
(Source: SORS)

The stagnation of the number of children participating in pre-school education applies to the number of SEN children in pre-school education too; their number in kindergartens did not increase.

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Figure 23: The number of SEN children attending pre-school education
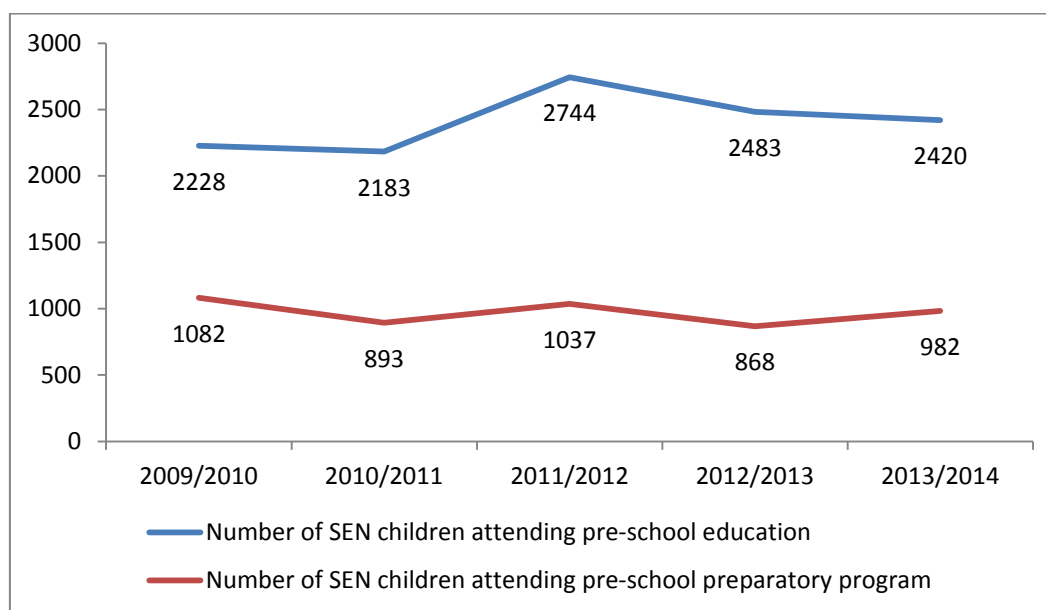
As far as gender differences are concerned, the participation of girls is higher than that of boys, but not significantly. Urban-rural differences decreased in the first part of the decade, basically because of the significant 10% increased attendance rate in urban settlement.

Figure 24: Mandatory preparatory pre-school enrolment: gender and territorial differences

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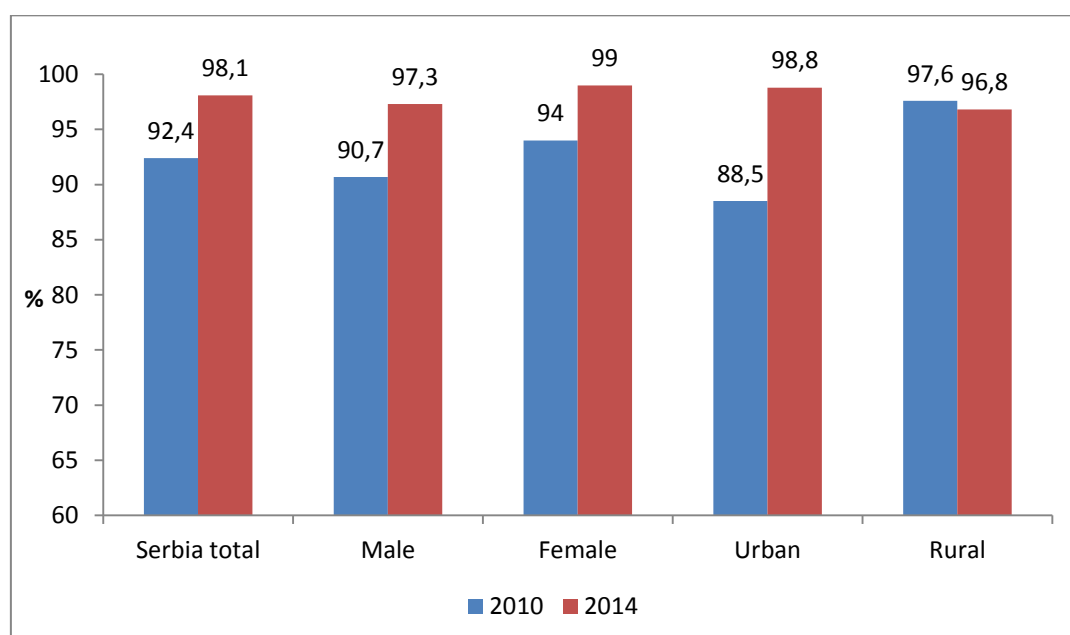
Overall, the impact of the inclusion policy on pre-school participation was relatively limited. It increased the length of mandatory pre-school preparatory program attendance but did not achieved a significant increment of the number of children attending pre-school institutions, especially among the most vulnerable Roma and SEN children.

Primary attendance rate is generally high in Serbia. However, primary education attendance of Roma is far from being universal. In the second part of the previous decade there was a significant increment of attendance rates in the Roma settlements. However, after 2010 primary participation in these settlements started to decline again. The only exception from this worrying trend is the still growing attendance rate in rural Roma settlement that caught up to the urban Roma settlements.
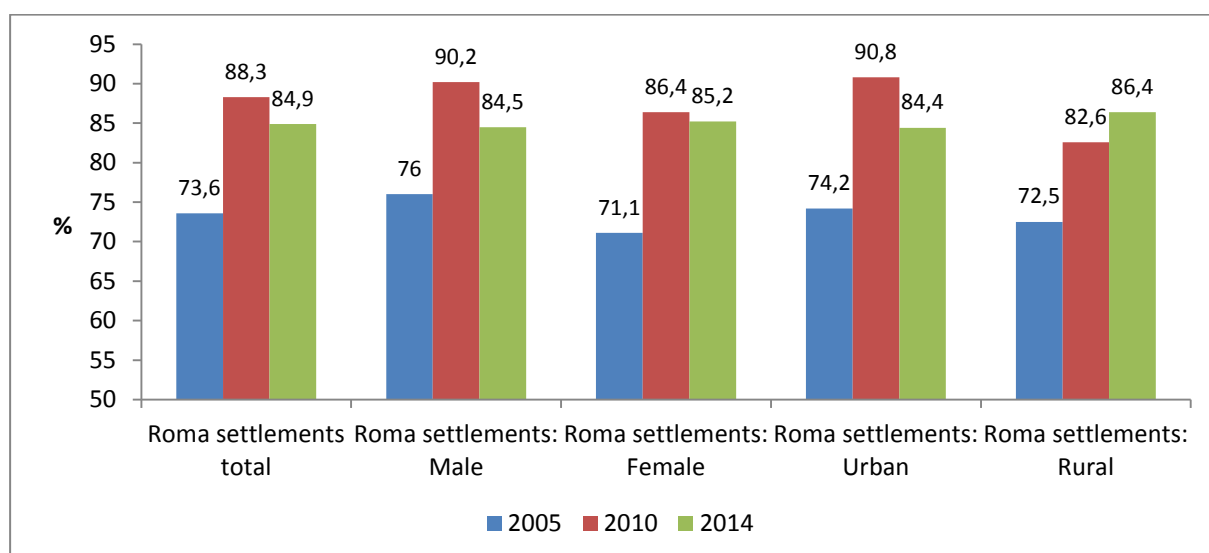
Figure 25: Impact on the primary enrolment of Roma

(Source: MICS)

As far as upper-secondary education enrolment is concerned, the data presented in the section describing the overall equity profile of the Serbian education system suggest that the affirmative action measures may have contributed to increase the upper-secondary enrolment chances of Roma students. However, the enrolment gap between Roma and non-Roma children is still wide. This suggests that the potential of this supplementary support scheme is limited.

One of the most important enrolment related problems is dropout in primary and secondary education. Unfortunately, due to the lack of reliable data, the magnitude of this problem cannot be assessed. The 2013 amendment to the law deployed the mandate to schools to operate dropout prevention systems, but the introduction of this mandatory task has not been supported by any implementation programs so far. The implementation is prepared by a program of the Centre for Educational Policy operated in partnership with UNICEF that on the basis of an in-depth study in 10 schools aims at

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developing a model for early warning and prevention systems in schools. (The pilot program in the 10 schools managed to halve the number of dropouts.)

The Central Statistical Office provides data on the number of students with IEP1 and IEP2 only for two school years that offers only very limited opportunity to map out trends. The overall number of students with these two forms of IEPs was 6942 in the 2012/13 school year that grew to 7886 in the 2013/14 school year.

Figure 26: Number of students with IEP1 and IEP2 in primary schools
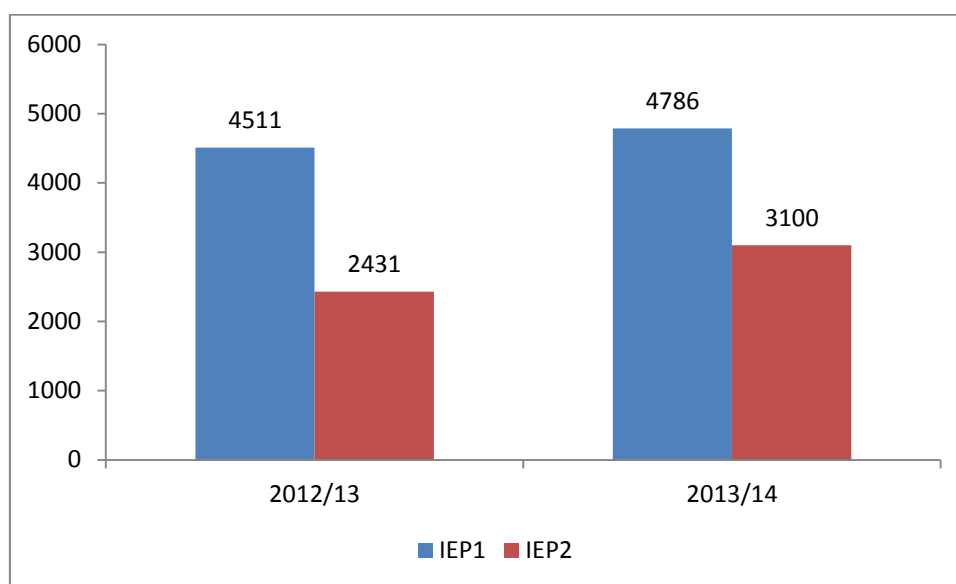
(Source: SORS)

Looking at the number of students with IEP1 and IEP2 in each grade of primary schools, it is salient that the highest number of students received IEP1 and IEP2 status at the beginning of the implementation of the policy in the 2010/2011 school year. However, the number of first grade students in both categories has declined to a significant extent in 2012 and 2013 that suggests a weakening impact of the policy. The overall increase of the number of students with IEP1 and IEP2 is explained by the fact that the number of new entrants in grade 1 is still higher than the number of outgoing students with IEP. However, if this weakening impact sustains, the overall number of students with IEP will decline in the following years. Therefore, the data of the following two figures suggest that when the school level implementation of the policy lost momentum, the willingness of schools to provide supplementary support to children declined immediately.

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Figure 27: Number of students with IEP1
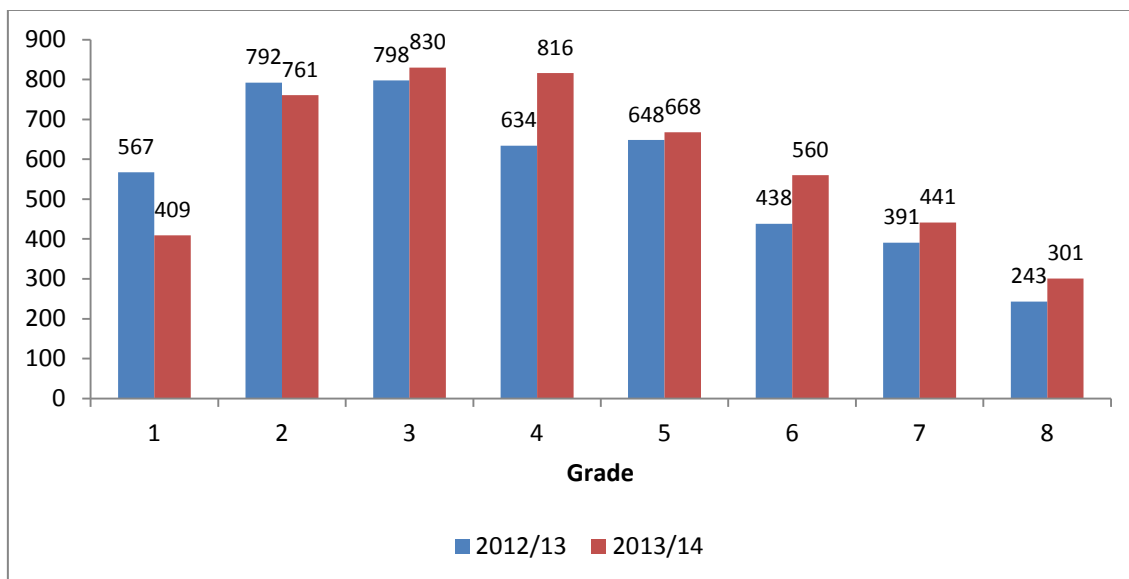
(Source: SORS)

Figure 28: Number of students with IEP2
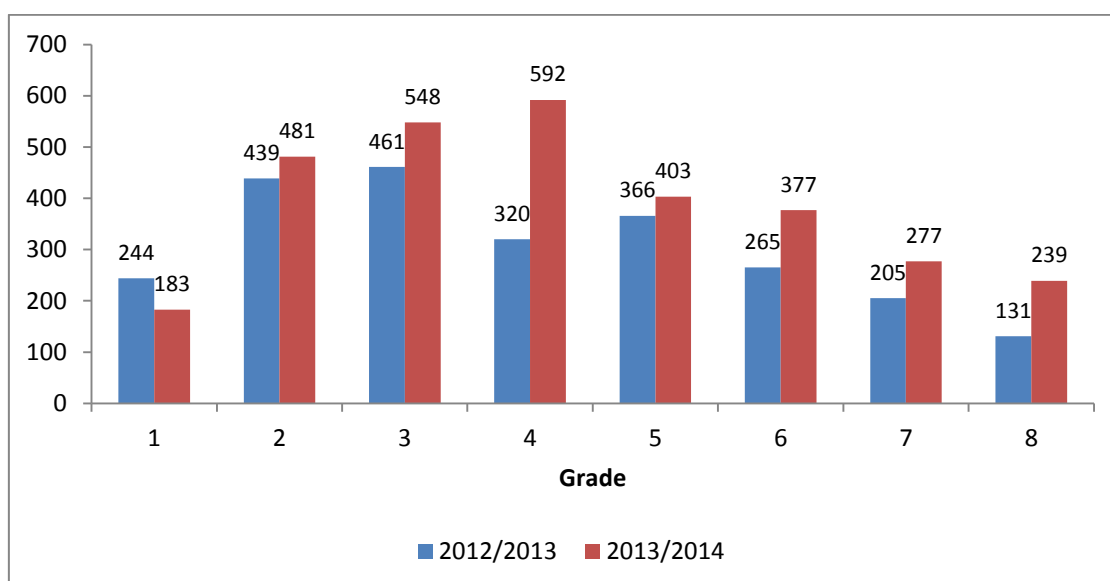
(Source: SORS)

The 2016 UNICEF research on the special schools suggests a more sustained impact of the policy in relation to participation in separated special education. The data on the impact on enrolment of students with development disorder or disability in special education shows a slow but steady decline of the number of students in special schools and special classes of regular schools.

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As the following figures demonstrate, the number of students in any forms of separated special education declined only by 1237 students in five years, whereas the proportion of students with any development disorders or disability in special education declined by approximately 18%.

Figure 29: Change of the number of students in special schools and special classes of regular schools (2009/10 = 100%)

(Source: UNICEF Special Schools Research)

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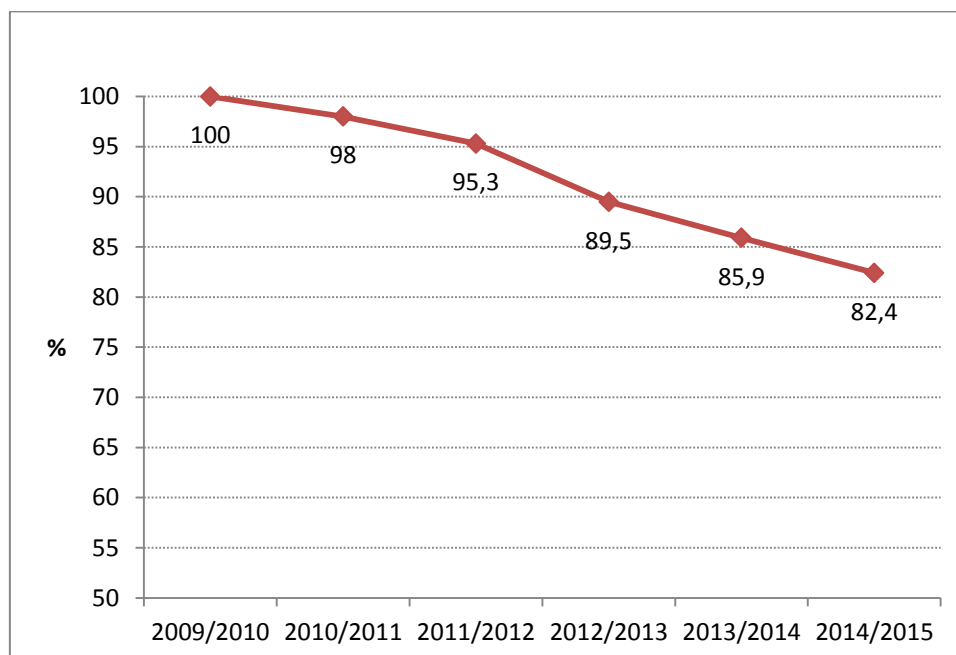
Figure 30: Change of the number of students in different forms of the education of SEN students
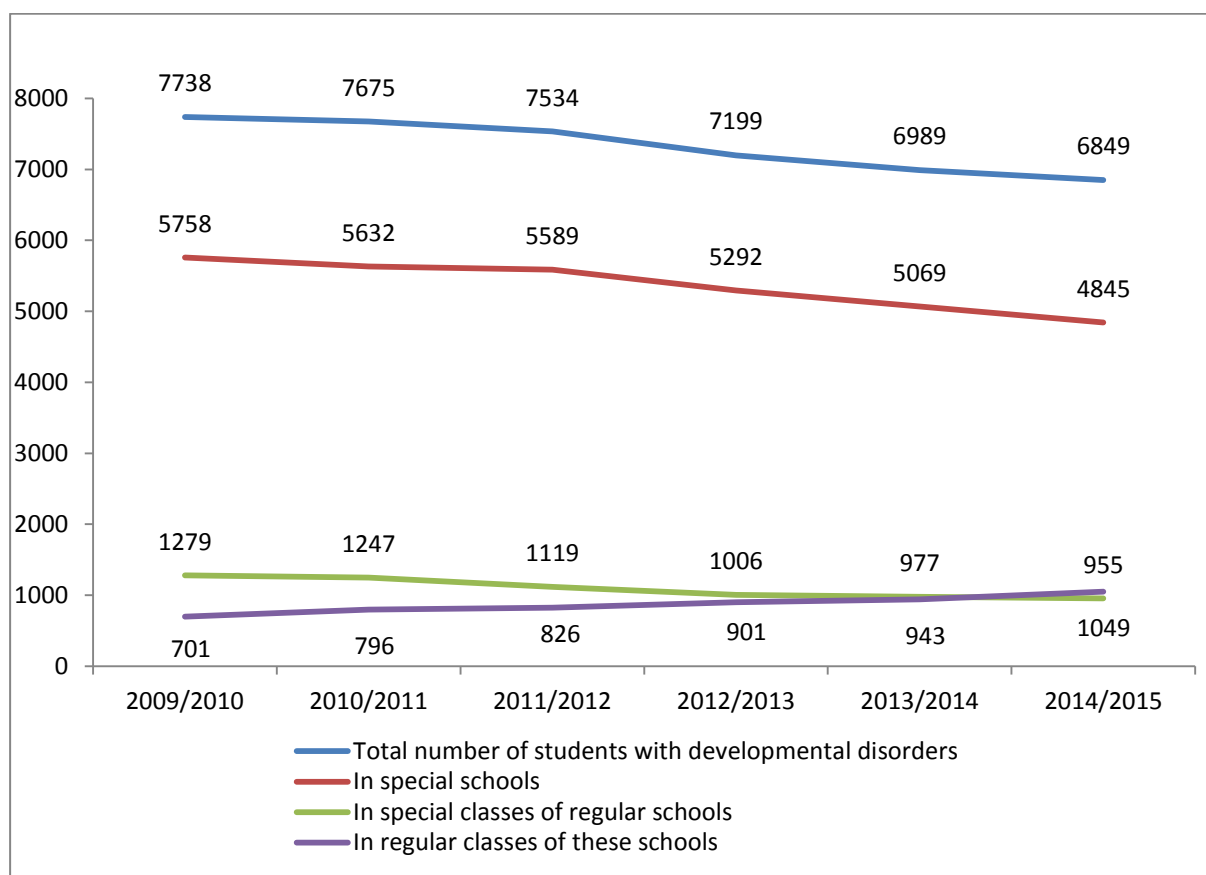
(Source: UNICEF Special Schools Research)

Bearing in mind the slow development of the conditions of their successful inclusion in mainstream education, this slow pace of decline is a positive change; it is instrumental for avoiding those individual tragedies that may discredit the inclusion process. Also, the relatively slow integration process leaves sufficient time and latitude for all actors to adjust to the changes.

However, on the basis of these data it is hard to decide that the declining proportion of students in special education is caused by the overall decline of the number of students with determined development disorder or disability or by the increasing enrolment of these children into the regular classes of regular schools. In case of Roma children, the first option appears to be probable, but overall an increasing enrolment to mainstream settings is the more likely explanation.

An alarming case that was revealed by the fieldwork interviews is a school in which the number of SEN students is high because other schools in the city refuse to accept SEN students or accept them only in small numbers. This school avoids properly informing the parents of SEN children because it could result in their higher interest in choosing that

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particular school, and then there would be a danger for some parents to be rejected due to the lack of capacity. This case suggests that the inclusion policy may trigger very similar processes to those by which certain schools in a bigger settlement are spontaneously becoming Roma ghetto schools.

A specific problem that calls for attention is that of those children with IEP who have been transferred to schools for students with disabilities from regular schools for any reason. According to the data provided by the SORS, the overall number of students with IEP1 transferred declined, but the number of students with IEP2 increased. However, as the proportion of students with IEPs the rate of transferred students declined in both categories: from 1.6% to 1.1% among students with IEP1, from 3.1% to 2.7% among students with IEP2.

Figure 31: Number of students with IEP1 and IEP2 who have been transferred to a school for students with disabilities
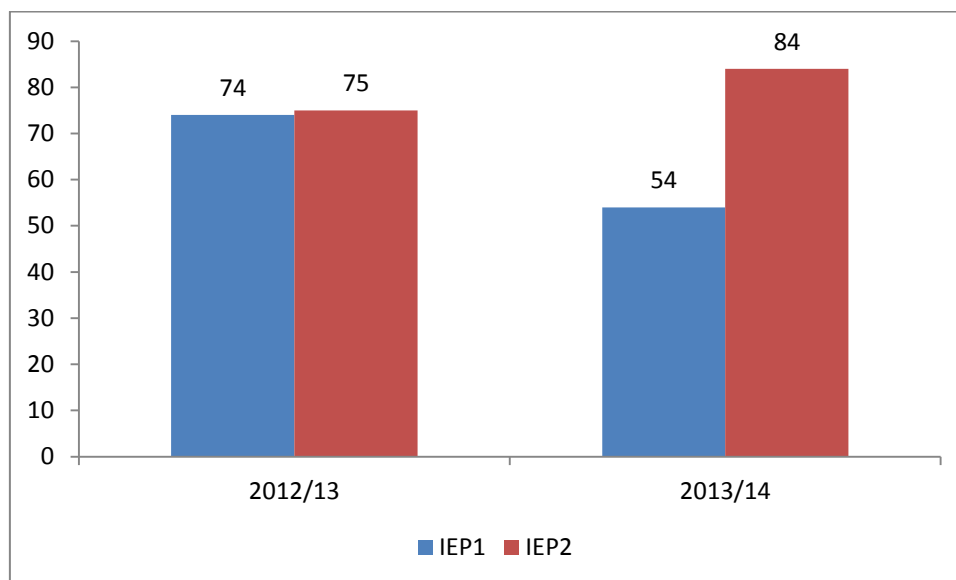
(Source: SORS)

Due to the small number of cases, it is hard to draw any far reaching conclusions from the grade distribution of students who were transferred from regular schools to special schools. This phenomenon calls for more in-depth research.

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Figure 32: Number of students with IEP1 who have been transferred to a school for students with disabilities

(Source: SORS)

Figure 33: Number of students with IEP2 who have been transferred to a school for students with disabilities

(Source: SORS)

It is not realistic to expect that the implementation of the inclusion policy brings about a big improvement of the pedagogical preparedness of teachers in a short period of time.

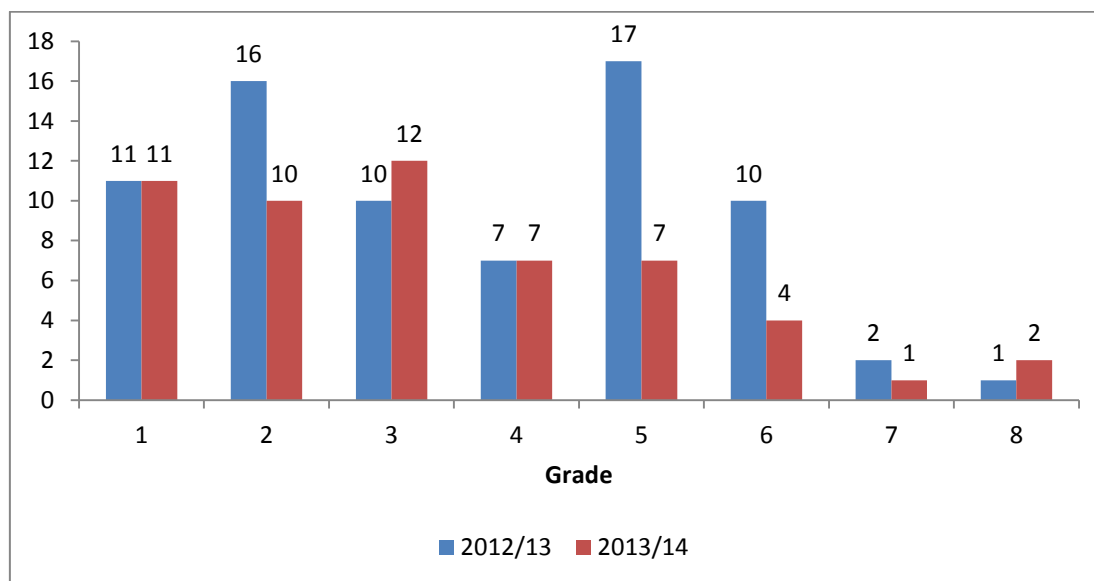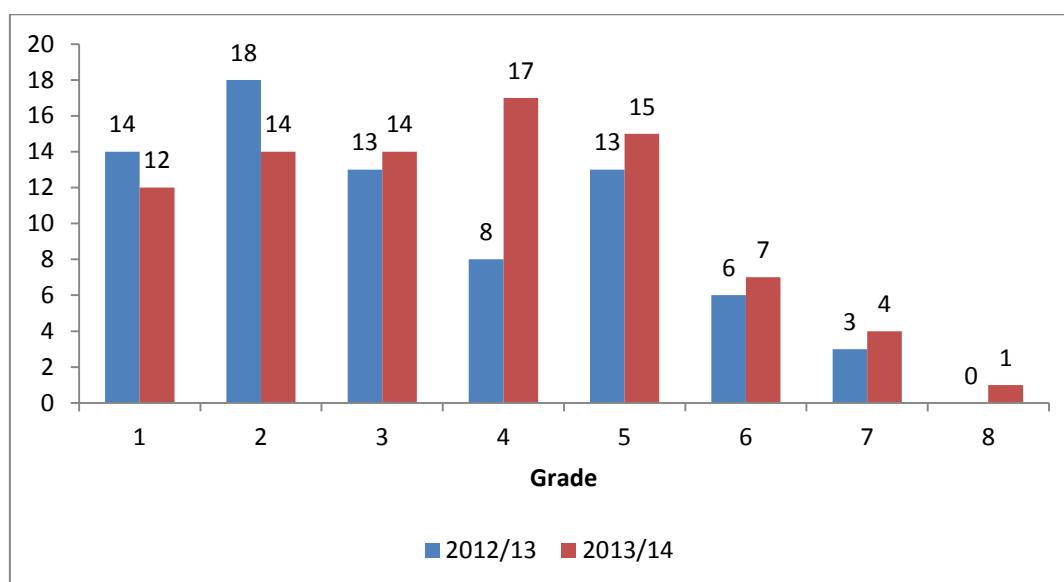Formative evaluation of
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However, the instruction methods used by teachers in regular schools are critical aspects of the success of the policy that is oriented towards the Scandinavian model's differentiation based individual development.

All educational experts interviewed in the course of this evaluation agree that in terms of the preparedness of teachers the very foundations of the inclusion policy are weak. Most experts say that the most important reason for this weakness is the very traditional initial teacher training system at master's (MA) level that is still focusing strongly on subject knowledge leaving only 30+6 credits space for training in instruction methodologies.

Beyond the problems relating to teacher preparedness, there are many other elements of the education system that work against differentiation. The most important ones are the factual knowledge overload of curricula and standards putting a pressure on teachers to deliver more with less time for active learning and the fact that the majority of textbooks do not allow for differentiation. The overly ambitious curricula and textbooks largely determine teaching strategies by forcing teachers towards a strong quantity of knowledge focus.

The other problem is that a rather radical shift towards more differentiated teaching would require a great deal of surplus effort from teachers, both in terms of professional development and in terms of daily time management. Contrary to this expectation, many experts note that the willingness of the majority of teachers is rather weak. This problem is further aggravated by the fact that the current human resource management system in education does not allow for the use of incentives of any sort.

> *"Teachers are demotivated; they are working on the minimum level"* (An education researcher)

Integrated enrolment of students of different vulnerable groups, especially those of SEN children, is a big challenge for teachers that in many cases confront them with the weaknesses of their own teaching competencies. Many respondents reported the perceived unpreparedness of teachers trigger strong responsibility shift. The teacher respondents of the 2015 monitoring study reported high self-efficacy in the area of inclusive education[9]. At the same time it is an often heard complaint of teachers that they are good enough but they do not receive enough support. Also, according to research results, teachers attribute much weaker student motivation than they in fact have, that is also a type of responsibility shift.

According to the results of the interviews in the schools, teachers believe that differentiation in teaching was present already before the introduction of inclusive education in schools.

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[9] Cerovic at alia, 2015

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"Teachers say that they had always implemented inclusion, but it was never recorded. Now it takes a lot of documentation." (School principal)

"There was adjustment even before the introduction of inclusive education, but was not called like that. Now we need to write IEP and fill in forms. Adjustments were made without paperwork and it was even more successful back then. Today it is more associated with paperwork than with a child, which was not the case." (Physical education teacher)

However, there are teachers and school specialist in some schools who believe that the inclusion policy has contributed to the significant improvement of pedagogical practices of teachers, because while working with SEN children, teachers have created different pedagogical innovations that can be applied in the work with other students and contribute to the quality of teaching in general.

"Inclusive education has empowered teachers and it was an eye-opener for teachers related to the measures of support for other students. Teachers can better recognise what forms of support to provide to students" (A class teacher).

The document analysis and the interviews of this evaluation revealed that in spite of the poor results of Serbian 15 year olds in the PISA survey and the repeatedly expressed doubts of experts about the extent to which the prevailing instruction methods of teachers in mainstream schools is differentiated, surprisingly little academic research was done in Serbia on the teaching practice of teachers providing representative evidence based on classroom observation.

One of the main new instruments with a high potential to generate demand for the improvement of the teaching competencies of teachers is the external evaluation system. The quality of teaching is a strong aspect of the underlying standards for inspection. As the results exhibited in the following figure show, teaching quality related sub-domains scored below the overall average. Especially, the practice of teachers in adapting to the educational needs of children received rather low inspection results. This calls for renewed and sustained investment into the preparedness of teachers in the types of competencies that are essential for successful inclusion.

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Figure 34: Teaching quality results of the external evaluation of schools

Figure 34: Teaching quality results of the external evaluation of schools
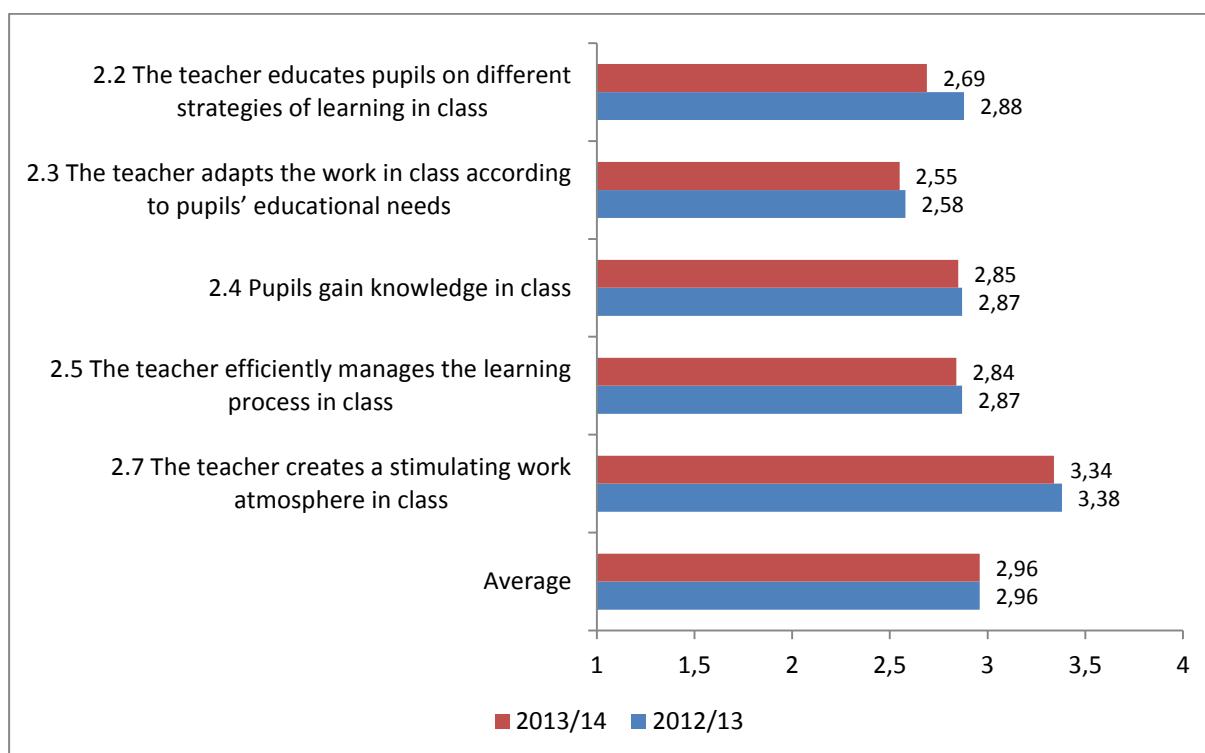
(Source: External evaluation report, 2015)

According to the findings of the 2015 monitoring research, parental involvement is very weak. "The results of the current study also show that parents' engagement is alarmingly low. Both teachers and parents report low cooperation between these two groups, while less than 20% of schools have formally included parents from vulnerable groups in school bodies despite the legal requirement. Parents from vulnerable groups significantly less frequently report that they are involved in school life. /.../ Cooperation between schools and parents from vulnerable groups remain almost absent although this partnership is of utmost importance for attainment of educational goals."[10]

In the view of an expert of pedagogy working with schools, the intensity and quality of parental involvement have not changed since the initiation of the inclusion policy. The participation of parents is still very much confined to traditional rituals and to the organisation of certain extracurricular activities and excursions. However, in her view, the parents of SEN children are more active than others. This observation is verified by the school interviews according to which parents of SEN children are attending "open doors"

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[10] Cerovic et alia, 2015.

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opportunities more often than other parents. In spite of this, the mandatory participation of the parents of SEN children in the school board is not ensured in many cases.

According to educational advisors, there is a big difference between the involvement of parents with different educational attainment and social status. While highly educated parents are actively participating in the life of schools, the involvement of low status parents largely depends on the active efforts of the schools.

There is a problem reported by experts that in many cases parents strive to avoid that IEP is developed for their children because they consider it stigmatizing. This is the reason why in certain cases parents do not approve the IEP2 for their children. In certain cases, the parents are their personal assistants for their children, so they are maximally involved because they are in school with the children all the time.

A network of counselling service for parents is basically non-existent in Serbia. The parents of SEN children can turn to three specialized diagnostic centres only that are operating in Belgrade. With the participation of the Centre for Educational Policy, the Fund for an Open Society has been operating a program since 2013 that aims at supporting the self-organization of parents through which they may receive important information and there are NGOs (such as Velik Mali in a UNICEF project) working on counselling parents of SEN children and establishing a hotline for parents. Also, members of the network of inclusive education often inform parents. However, these initiatives do not substitute for a permanent and institutionalized service network with full outreach. As a consequence, most parents of SEN children are relying on the information they receive from schools that makes their involvement an even more important matter.

A member of an ISC drove the attention to a positive impact of the inclusive education policy: parents and general public are much more sensitized, and there is a huge difference how it used to be. This change is the precondition of more heavy involvement of parents.

As the following figure demonstrates, the inspectors are basically satisfied with the performance of schools in connection to that domain of the quality standards which includes cooperation with parents.

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Figure 35: External evaluation results in relation to the sub-domain of cooperation in the schools
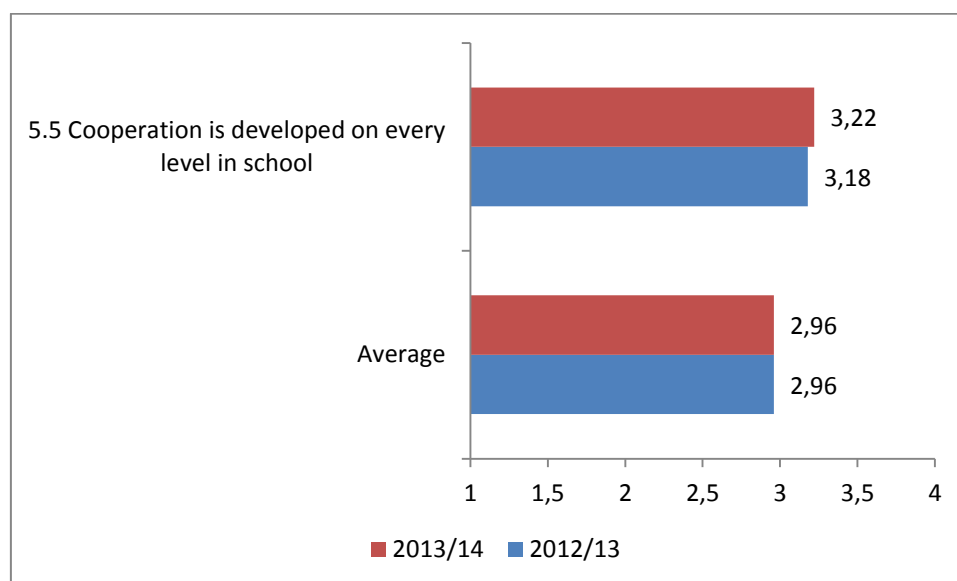
7.5. Efficiency

> **Efficiency related evaluation questions**
>
> - Have available resources invested in support of more inclusive education policies and plans been used in a strategic and cost-effective manner?
> - Was the use of resources well-coordinated to encourage synergy and avoid overlaps? More specifically, has MoESTD been successful in playing a catalytic role and using its core resources strategically to leverage partners' funding for inclusive education reforms?
> - Would there have been a more cost-effective way to obtain the expected results?

In the view of various experts, in the course of the implementation of the policy there was a gap between the large amount of resources (support, trainings and developments) invested and the widely shared perception of teachers of being poorly supported. According to these experts, the reason for this perception is the poor public relations and information sharing element of the various implementation programs. Nevertheless, the findings of this evaluation suggest that professional support provided to schools in the course of the implementation of the policy was inadequate in many respects. The burning need to respond to the external professional support needs that the implementation of the inclusion policy generates in regular schools was already indicated by the 2010 Rapid

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Assessment for UNICEF[11]. According to the findings of school level evaluation, everyone agrees that schools do not receive sufficient support from the external service agencies:

"If we are not provided everything that the regulations on inclusion say we should have, everything will collapse. Everything will remain a list of good wishes because without adequate resources we cannot realise what the regulations foresee." (A school psychologist)

The integrated education of "Category A" SEN children (i.e. children with organic disabilities) requires an extended system of habilitation/rehabilitation type of services that mainstream schools are not able to accumulate and maintain. The two possible options for ensuring the adequate outreach of such services is the operation of a network of service provider institutions or the transformation of special schools to a partially support provider function. In the Serbian case the appropriate decision was the second option. However, as it was already mentioned in relation to the supplementary individual support provided to students, this process proceeds very slowly. The World Bank funded DILS program had a separate component for the development of such services in special schools, but due to the lack of adequate resources, the weak communication between mainstream educators and the "defectologist" profession and to many other obstacles of institutional obstacles this program element did not result in significant improvements.

One of the obstacles to building the support function of special schools is that they are very much specialized to one specific type of disability. The fragmentation of the professional profile of special schools does not allow offering specialist support in the scope that responds to the diverse needs emerging in regular schools. The impact of the 2011 amendment to the law recognising the function of special schools of providing support to students in regular schools on the funding of special schools is somewhat ambiguous. There are special schools directors who report that the number of positions in their schools is determined strictly on the basis of students they enrol. However, a director of a Belgrade special school that has successfully built such a service reports about an agreement with the ministry that allows employing more specialists for the support activity of the school that would be allowed on the basis of the number of students in the school. The underlying assumption of the policy on the transformation of special schools is the expectation that the declining number enrolled to special schools will free up professional capacities that can be used for building the support centre function of the institutions. Special school directors claim that the shift in the functions of the special schools can be implemented if an operational model of such support services will be incorporated into lower level regulations. the insufficient involvement of the special education profession ("defectologists") – combined with high transformation

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[11] Lazetic-Radó, 2010

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expectations towards the profession and their institutions – resulted in the perception of being left out.

Another key initiative of the inclusive education policy was the establishment of the Inclusion Network (hereafter: IN) that consist of coordinators in the RSAs, of practicing teachers in schools and of experts working for NGOs (altogether there are approximately one hundred persons in the network). A 2013 amendment to the law made a step towards the institutionalization of the network by introducing the position of external advisor to schools. Since most of the members of the IN are not full-time service provider experts, the potential of this network to respond the large demand for support generated by the policy is very limited. Although the support provided by the network is essential, in fact it is not more than a temporary substitute to an institutionalized professional support service network with much bigger outreach to students, teachers, schools and parents.

In the view of local actors weak cooperation between the inclusion team and special schools professionals is a very problematic issue.

> *"I do not like the attitude of the support network because they believe that special education teachers do not have their place in school. There is a special school in the neighbourhood and these people help us a lot with advice on the methods of working. Special education teachers need to be resources for all of us, not just speech therapists, but other profiles as well."* (A school psychologist)

> *"Although the medical model is losing its strength, I think that special schools are key obstacle towards full transition to social model. These schools are sticking to the medical model. They are still dealing with the segment of a child, and this often does not have anything to do with what is written in IEP and its goals. They are considered and consider themselves as a separate institution just doing exercises and treatments."* (An educational advisor)

One of the most often mentioned components of the 2009 inclusion policy is the introduction of the position of pedagogical assistants. On the basis of a widely shared misperception of the role of pedagogical assistants, they are often counted as professional support staff. However, pedagogical assistants are not qualified professionals. This role much more a matter related to the efficient use of the working time of qualified teachers than to professional services. Nevertheless, the opportunity of employ pedagogical assistants is very instrumental in supporting individual disabled students as personal assistant, supporting the work of the teacher in the classroom while applying active or cooperative teaching methods or – in the case of pedagogical assistants of Roma background – when working with Roma students. According to the fieldwork evaluation results there is a consensus among teachers, school principals and school specialists that there are insufficient numbers of pedagogical assistants in schools. Personal assistants are perceived as missing resources.

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One of the main obstacles to building such an institutionalized support network is the tradition of accumulating supporting professionals within the schools as expert associates. The following quotation indicates how strong this tradition among the actors of education.

> *"It would be good to have defectologist employed in schools, for a percentage of time, for the time when school has SEN children".* (An educational advisor)

While in bigger schools their contribution is one of the most important professional assets of the inclusion policy, employing these professionals as school staff does not ensure the efficient use of their work and leaves a big number of students and schools underserved. The input-based financing system freezes this situation because it is not able to recognize other service related costs than salaries.

However, as the following quotation illustrates, the role of expert associates (pedagogues, psychologists) in improving the inclusion capacities of schools is essential.

> *"Expert associates are a significant support for teachers as they have more expertise. It is easier for them to recognise the needs of SEN children, help teachers in defining the characteristics of the child. They are also great support to teachers in writing documentation. They are a link among parents, class teachers and subject teachers. They have better communication with special education teachers than other teachers, and thus they mediate there as well. They provide cooperation with the Interagency Commission, health centre, school administration, secondary and preschool institutions and other institutions".* (A class teacher)

There are advisors working in the RSAs who – in theory – compose the main line of publicly funded professional support services. However, the number of advisors is extremely small and they are performing a lot of other administrative and external evaluation related tasks. Especially, performing a supporting role as an advisor and an accountability ensuring role as an inspector are highly contradictory and weakens both functions.

Adding up the number of professionals working in positions of providing support to students, teachers, schools and parents in the RSAs, in special schools working also for regulars schools, in the IN and in NGOs, it is approximately two hundred persons that is smaller with one order of magnitude than a Serbian size education system would require. The most important shortage in this system is the weakness of professional support provided for school directors and whole schools, as institutions.

At the same time, in 2011 approximately 1600 psychologists and pedagogues were working in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools[12]. It is important to see that the

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[12] Policy Impact Analysis, 2013

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role of expert associates in schools and professional specialists providing external support are not interchangeable. The extent to which the number of expert associates was reduced recently is not known. Parallel to the reduction of the number of expert associates the draft amendment to the Law on the Foundations of Education contains an element that would open the opportunity for municipalities to employ expert associates for the schools. The possible impact of this measure cannot be assessed.

An attempt to overcome the weakness of professional support services is promoting horizontal learning across schools. Already the DILS SEN inclusion component contained such an element. Recently the SHARE program of UNICEF, the Institute for the Evaluation of Education Quality and the Centre of Educational Policy intend to connect well performing schools with poorer evaluation results. Due to the questionable capacity of well performing schools to describe the know-how behind their success and the not less questionable capacity of poorly performing schools to absorb know-how, this instrument has the potential to generate horizontal learning if it is properly supported by the contribution of external professional support.

As mentioned earlier, in spite of the recent increments, the weight of learning instruction methodology is still very small in the initial training of teachers: 30 credits for pedagogy and 6 credits for school practice. (According to experts the way of the implementation of the increased weight of teaching methodology does not necessarily serve the better preparedness of beginner teachers.) In addition, in Serbia only 71% of teachers have completed some teacher education program that is far below the 90% TALIS average. In the view of many experts, the renewal of initial teacher training is one of the less successful terrains of the overall process of change in education.

During the first period of the implementation of the inclusive education policy, the capacity building efforts were basically focusing on the immediate needs generated by the new legislation, such as the development of IEPs. When the most important provider of INSET programs, the DILS project – that trained 17.000 teachers - phased out, the implementation process had to rely on the existing program offer and mostly on those resources that fed the regular system of professional development. For many programs teachers have to pay, and the resources provided by municipalities and the EU funds available for providing free participation are not sufficient. Due to the lack of a normative financial allocation system, the state budget is not able to contribute to the costs of professional development by a supplementary earmarked grant provided on a normative basis. The mandatory participation of teachers in professional development programs is still prescribed by regulation, but the minimum amount of its time in five years was recently reduced from 120 to 100 hours.

One of the underlying dysfunctions of the existing INSET practice that is – in theory – a demand driven system is the lack of connection among the assessment of the personal performance of teachers, institutional goals as they are determined by the school

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development plans and the decisions related to the participation of individual teachers in any types of professional development activities.

> *"We are trying to secure finances for teacher training; we understand that it is important for them. Of course their financial plans ae always bigger than we can cover, but we are trying to save money somewhere else, and keep that as priority. Their financial plan becomes a part of municipal budget. During that process we are in contact with principals or school accountants, so we talk about it, trying to find the best solution, so if it has to be cut down, they suggest or decide on what they will give up of trainings. They are the ones, who decide on priorities, but I am not sure how much schools take this serious enough, how much they analyse their needs and make choice based on that."* (A municipality employee)

The offer of INSET programs is fairly rich. However, as an expert described the situation, the system works as a "social game"; the potential of "seminars" to bring changes into schools is limited, quality assurance of programs and program providers is weak, the incentives for participation are weak and in the vast majority of cases there is no follow-up activity supplementing the trainings. A large proportion of the available professional development programs are one day seminars without any active participation.

> *"There are huge problems with the quality of INSET. We have providers that overtly say that not all children are capable for learning. That is a great obstacle, a large number of pointless trainings. Accreditation has to be much better."* (An educational advisor)

An additional problem recorded by educational advisors is the weak indirect outreach of the training programs of the initial phase; although the members of the inclusion teams of schools participated in training, their activity to share knowledge and information in their own schools was rather ineffective. According the 2013 TALIS survey report, the participation of Serbian teachers in professional development activities is around the OECD average[13]. However, the impact of these training is questioned by many experts.

As it was documented many times, the demand for professional development generated by the inclusion policy is very high. According to the TALIS survey result, the areas in which teachers in Serbia report the highest need for professional development are teaching students with special needs (35% of teachers) and teaching for new technologies in the workplace (21% of teachers)[14].

As far as the potential of in-service teacher training in the renewal of the instruction practice of teachers is concerned, it is underestimated by many experts. (This perceived relative failure is the reason, why many respondents emphasize investment to initial

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[13] TALIS, 2013

[14] TALIS, 2013

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training as a long-term solution, instead of emphasizing INSET as a possible medium term policy instrument.) However, according to the results of the TALIS survey, the great majority of Serbian teachers share the constructivist approach to teaching that is a good basis for INSET programs on active teaching and learning instruction methods.

This evaluation has been focusing on the educational aspects of the inclusive policy. Its connections to the system of social allowance were touched upon already in relation to the operation of local cooperation frameworks and the financial latitude for municipalities.

The 2013 policy impact analysis provided a detail overview on the system of social support for poor children. The only change in this respect that our findings revealed is the increasing number of beneficiaries of such support schemes.

> *"From year to year a number of children receiving child allowances and financial social assistance are growing. In Novi Sad in 2009 there were 6000 children and in 2016 there was 9000."* (An NGO expert)

Since the beginning of the implementation of the inclusion policy, there has not been any full surveying of the stock of assisting technologies in the schools, of their actual use in the teaching-learning process and on the accessibility of school facilities.

The DILS program deployed certain amount of resources for purchasing such instruments, but obviously it was not sufficient for a big improvement at a systemic scale. Since the closure of the DILS program, there has been no central financial scheme created for the improvement of inclusion related technical conditions. The development of the technical conditions in the school basically depends on the willingness and financial power of the municipalities. According to our respondents, municipalities typically do not finance the purchase of assistive technologies or technical facilities for the education of disabled children.

Nevertheless, the information collected in this respect is contradictory. Overall, we have the general impression of slowly improving technical conditions, but that is very uneven across the country and that is still far from the required level. According our observations, there is progress compared to the beginning of the introduction of inclusive education, but in schools the degree of accessibility is still not at a satisfactory level. Schools mostly have ramps that allow children in wheelchairs to enter the school and use the classrooms on the ground floor. The schools with SEN children who use wheelchairs still lack independent access of disabled children to toilets, and they also cannot use classrooms on higher floors (which makes it difficult or completely prevents the realisation of classroom teaching). In some schools the use of gymnasium is also hindered because they are spatially separated, i.e. located in another building.

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"When you say accessibility, people usually think of entering the building. This is reasonable. The situation in this respect is generally bad, it is better than it used to be." (An educational advisor)

"A substantial progress has been made in terms of accessibility of our schools, and we have done much in that respect. Not one school has physical barrier, all children can at least enter the school. They have special toilets." (A municipality employee)

"Since 2009 we have been trying to get funds for the ramp that would connect the ground floor and first floor, but we have not succeeded. We have even addressed the UNICEF. Because of the students in wheelchairs we had to organise classes for the whole class in a classroom on the ground floor, and this class does not have a teaching space as other classes in the school. As a result, some parents are dissatisfied" (A school director)

The problem in many cases not necessarily the lacking resources for purchasing new assisting technologies, but the efficient use of existing ones. Since the professional support function of special schools has not developed much, the use of assistive technologies available in special schools are not made available for children in mainstream school.

"There is a special school which is incredible good resource for assistive technology, it is so rich, but it works almost like a museum exhibition, they are not using it enough even for their own children, let alone for children from regular schools." (An educational advisor)

While the required technical conditions for disabled children are not fully provided by schools, the overall school environment is rated above the average by the inspectors. (Among others this sub-domain of the quality standards includes the indicator of the adaptation of the school area to the needs of disabled children.)

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Figure 36: External evaluation results for school environment
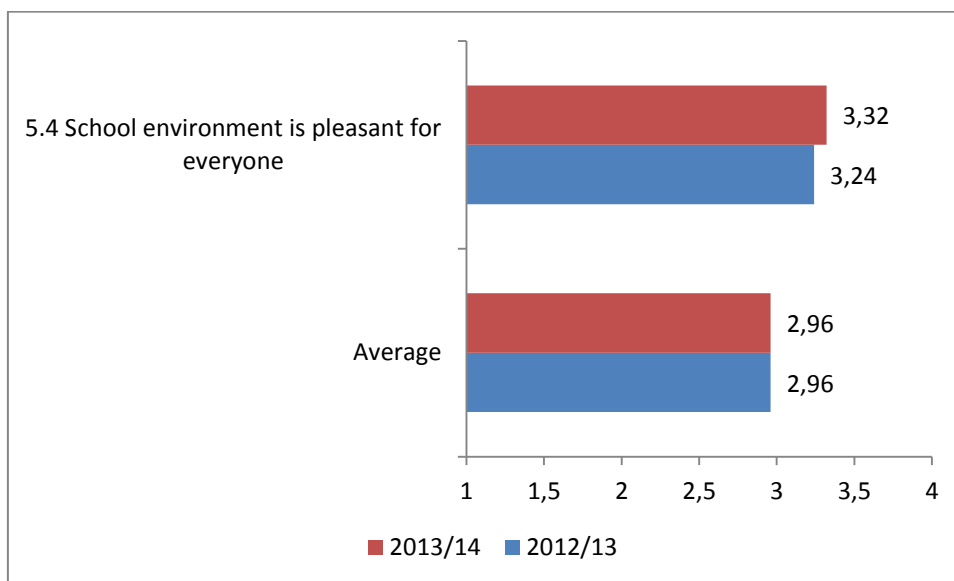
As far as the contribution of UNICEF is concerned, the many decades long work of UNICEF in Serbia is created the image that it is an agent of good pedagogy. This image well positioned UNICEF for a supportive role of the implementation process and for policy advocacy. As mentioned earlier, UNICEF became an active member of the coalition that was created by the donor coordination efforts of the MoESTD for supporting the implementation of the inclusion policy. After 2012 this coalition shifted the focus on policy advocacy and knowledge management – partly also for the sake of policy advocacy purposes. UNICEF became one of the most active partners of this coalition playing a strong coordinating role. This deliberate shift of emphasis from grass-root development to a knowledge and know-how brokering role was highly relevant in the changing educational policy context and proved to be very effective.

The policy advocacy strategy of UNICEF was adjusted to the circumstances: by referencing the existing legislative basis, the policies of EU and international good practices, UNICEF did not directly advocated for the importance of inclusive education; instead, it offered support to all actors from the governments to teachers to implement their legally determined mandates in relation to inclusive education properly. This supportive attitude proved to be much more effective than policy advocacy by pressure. For example, in the view of the members of the Inclusion Team of the ministry, the knowledge basis of their work is provided by UNICEF. Also, the high prestige of UNICEF in connection to inclusive education is nicely demonstrated by the quotation shared in a previous section of this report about a school asking financial support from UNICEF when they do not get access to resources for a ramp for students with wheelchair.

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While the impact of the strategies of international donor agencies largely depends on the amount of resources they are able to deploy, the leverage of UNICEF goes far beyond of its financial contribution. By connecting small grants funded pilot programs with the secondary use of the results for knowledge management and policy advocacy, the impact of UNICEF contribution is much larger than its financial investments. The best recent example for this the project of the Centre for Educational Policy implemented in partnership of UNICEF that by a pilot project in 10 schools develops a model with extremely strong policy relevance. In addition to that, evaluation, monitoring, research and communication programs are relatively low cost projects with potentially high indirect policy impact. Finally, the continued donor coordination allows for the sharing of cost of certain projects, while maintains the access of UNICEF to the results and contributes to the communication of the organisation.

"In inclusive education UNICEF is the big boss." (A special education experts)

7.6. Crosscutting issues: discrimination and gender inequalities

Evaluation questions related to crosscutting issues

- Do the implemented measures actively contribute to the promotion of child rights?
- To what extent and how the implemented measures ensures an equity focus?
- Do the measures reflect gender mainstreaming issues?

Due to lack of systemic data on the concentration of Roma children in schools, there is no available information to the extent of segregation within education. For example, there is no data on the number and change of ghetto schools, in which the proportion of Roma children is higher than 50%. As a consequence, policies and studies are applying residential proxy data on Roma settlements. This is the reason, why the anti-discrimination alignment of the inclusion policy is very strong, and its only desegregation element is the reduction of the number of Roma children in special schools. Between 2012 and 2016 the government did not initiate any new anti-discrimination or desegregation measures. In 2016 however a new rulebook was approved by the government on the recognition of different forms of discrimination in the education system that strengthened the legal basis of anti-discrimination policies.

According to special education experts, the number of Roma children significantly declined in special schools. However, the same experts indicated that the number of children with autism is increasing in the regular schools, which generates the suspicion that this diagnosis may have become a substitute segregation way replacing enrolment to special schools. Roma children are still overrepresented in special schools. One of the special education experts justified it with the weaker language competences of Roma

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children which suggests a weak agreement with the basic principles of inclusive education. Nevertheless, the expectation that the Intersectorial Committees will serve as gatekeepers against the enrolment of Roma children in special schools appears to be fulfilled.

The danger that IEP2 will be determined for Roma children in order to institutionalize double standards was already indicated in 2010 by the UNICEF Rapid Assessment of the Inclusion Policy[15]. Many experts indicated that this discriminatory practice exists, although there is no reliable information about the magnitude of the problem. For example, experts reported cases when an IEP was provided for Roma children to cover absenteeism by the reduction of the mandatory school time. Typically, IEP2 was determined for Roma children from the second grade if schools manage to convince parents that this serves the interest of the child. The misuse of the IEPs may lead to strengthened social isolation of children.

According to Roma NGO experts, the dropout rate among Roma children – especially in grade 5 – is still very high, because they still have reading difficulties when subject teaching starts. Those who leave the primary schools are enrolled to the schools for adults in a big number, even if they are not yet in the age of 15. Although, it may improve participation statistics, the actual learning in these schools is very poor; students in these schools finish two grades in one year, the number of subjects is limited and education is provided only 2-3 days per week. There are cases, when adult schools open affiliated school premises in Roma settlements. There is the danger that due to the still very high pressures for separation and segregation those Roma children they are not enrolled to special schools but end up in the schools for adults after a few years.

> *"All of Roma who are not in the system, or are overaged, are going in adult education school in the building in Roma settlement."* (Member of the mobile team for Roma inclusion)

However, apart from anecdotal information, there is no evidence proving this phenomenon, because the overall increment of enrolment to the school for adults might be the consequence of an IPA program for the restoration of the capacities of these schools independent from the enrolment of Roma students.

Affirmative action is a support for those children who perform at a minimum level at the age of primary school leaving exam that sets the threshold for enrolment to upper-secondary education. However, the measures preventing school failure of Roma children at much earlier stages are weak. The accumulating lag of Roma students often results in discriminatory practices "in the interest of the child".

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[15] Lazetic-Radó, 2010

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The overall picture is somewhat contradictory. While one form of segregation of Roma students in special schools is reduced by the inclusion policy, due to the high selection/segregation pressure – that is fuelled by the school failure of Roma children and the biased way of thinking of many actors of education – the system opens new channels for segregation, such as the application of IEP2s or the enrolment to the schools of adults.

As far as gender differences in upper-secondary enrolment rates are concerned, the participation of girls is higher than that of boys. This gender gap has been narrowed till 2010, but became wider again in the first years of this decade.

Figure 37: Gender differences in upper-secondary participation
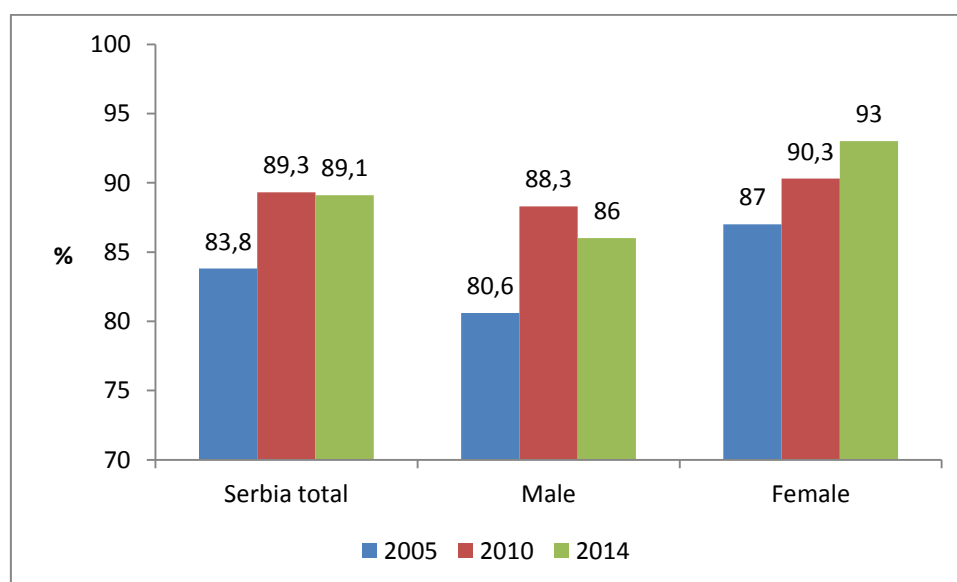
(Source: MICS)

The situation is very much different when looking at the data on upper-secondary enrolment of Roma boys and girls. The enrolment rate of boys in the Roma settlements was increasing through the last decade, while the increment of the participation of Roma girls has stopped after 2010. The gender gap in participation in upper-secondary education among Roma is still very high: the proportion of boys is still almost two times bigger than that of girls.

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Figure 38: Gender differences in upper-secondary participation in the Roma settlements
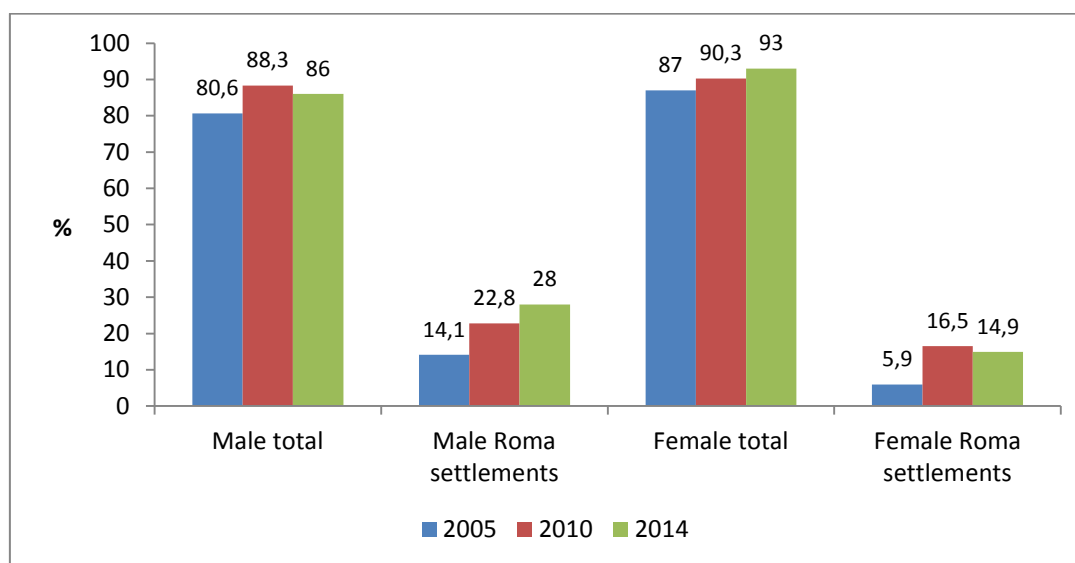
<div align="right">(Source: MICS)</div>

In terms of learning outcomes the gender differences are depending on the type of measured competencies: in reading typically girls have much higher performance, while in mathematics boys have a smaller achievement advantage. Gender differences in the initial years of education are generally small. However, performance gaps emerged between boys and girls are predicting bigger differences in later stages. As the following figure shows, the advantage of boys in mathematics in Serbia is around the average difference.

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Figure 39: Gender differences mathematics in selected European countries: the performance advantage of boys (2011)
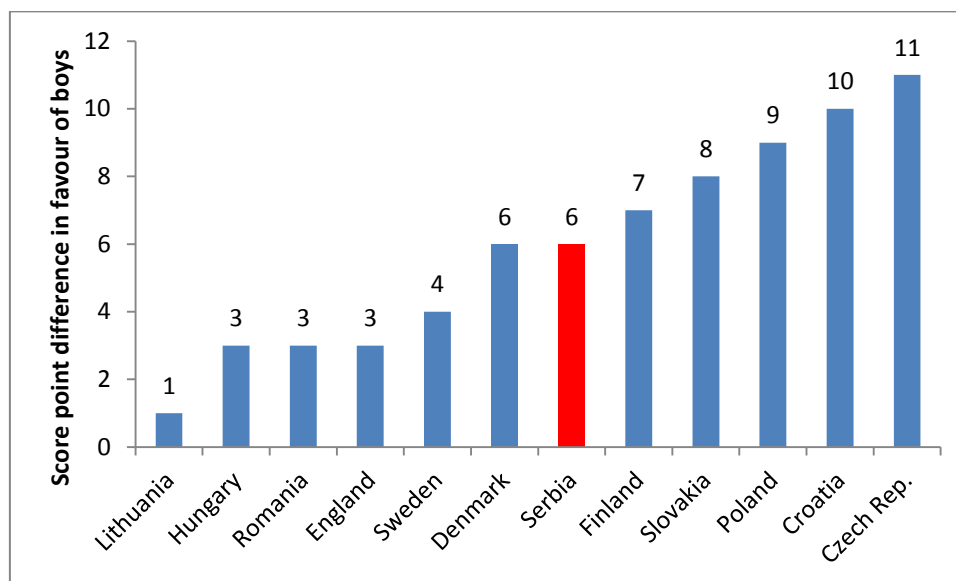
(Source: TIMMS, 2011)

According to the PISA data, in reading girls have a clear performance advantage to boys in all of the countries that is much bigger than the minor advantage of boys in mathematics. In 2012 Serbian girls performed better than boys by 46 points, that is 8 points higher difference than the OECD average.

These participation and learning outcomes differences between boys and girls are not big enough to cross the "stimulus threshold" of the educational policy discourse in Serbia and this matter was not addressed by the 2009 inclusion policy either. However, the real gender differences are not emerging in terms of overall participation rates or measurable learning outcomes; generally they are much more invisible: they can be described as different learning pathways or in terms the socialization patterns that schools are transmitting. These issues are beyond the scope of this evaluation, they require empirical research.

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8. THE ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS: CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the analysis of the findings described above and structured according to the objectives determined by the ToR of the evaluation.

8.1. The relevance of policies and implementation measures

- The analysis of the equity profile of the Serbian education system reveals that the major policy challenge is the combination of quality and equity related problems. In the light of this challenge, the partial shift towards mainstream equity policies is highly relevant.

- At the same time, the relatively weak quality foundations of teaching and learning are major obstacles to successful inclusion. The elements of the policy addressing broader quality problems (such as the typically rare use of the instruction and assessment methods of differentiated teaching) are rather weak.

- The inclusion policy is highly comprehensive; it addresses almost all the relevant dimensions of societal disadvantages: low social status and poverty, as well as ethnicity and impaired individual capacities. Inequities along residential status were addressed by certain projects, but it was in the focus of the policy. The only dimension that was neglected by the policy is the problem of gender inequities.

- The relevance of the policy was further strengthened by an equal emphasis on integration and inclusion. This is very much in line with educational science and international mainstream approaches to education, but it was rather alien for many actors of the Serbian education system. The later weakened the contextual relevance of the policy.

- The 2009 inclusion policy to a certain extent was – and still is – driven by information: due to the lack of reliable information on educational outcomes (especially on dropout and learning outcomes), the policy is focusing more on teaching for inclusion than on the reduction of outcome gaps emerging along societal disadvantages.

- The relevance of the policy was greatly improved by the 2013 amendment to the law that deployed the mandate of incorporating dropout prevention measures to their school development plans. However, the learning failure of a large proportion of disadvantaged students has not been addressed properly.

- The relevance of the implementation strategies was largely determined by the political context. During the period of 2009-2012, the emphasis of implementation was on creating and developing local and school level mechanisms and provisions. In the period of 2012-2016, local and school level implementation efforts were sporadic;

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the emphasis has shifted to policy advocacy, knowledge-management and various further changes ensuring the sustainability of provisions created before 2012.

8.2. The effectiveness of the policies and implementation measures

- While the establishment of Intersectorial Committees created an institutionalized framework for local cooperation, the practice of cooperation around the interests and needs of individual children has not improved significantly; sectorial separation is still prevailing.

- Promoting the transformation of the role of special schools and the renewals of the special education profession in general was one of the less successful elements of the policy. Apart from various institutional, legal and financial obstacles, this relative failure is caused by the still weak communication and cooperation between the representatives of the two professions.

- Although the inclusion policy introduced a potentially highly effective system of individual supplementary development of students, due to many different obstacles, such as the large competence gap between mainstream teachers and special education specialist, this provision is not able to meet the expectations.

8.3. The sustainability of the policies and implementation measures

- The inclusion policy has created institutions with stable regulation backgrounds, such as the Intersectorial Committees, the individual education plans or the inclusion teams in schools. These institutionalized elements proved to be sustainable changes. There are other developments that have gained a legal status in the course of the implementation (e.g. the inclusion network or the status of pedagogical assistants) that ensures a certain level of sustainability.

- Those elements of the implementation process that were project-based developments in larger donor-funded programs (e.g. the training programs provided by the DILS program) have not survived the phasing-out of these programs. There was very little effort to ensure to continuous provision of the training elements either by creating spin-off training provider organizations or by ensuring that existing training providers are taking them over.

- The sustainability of the key elements of the policy has been weakened by the lack of financial incentives within the existing input-based financial allocation system that prevents creating interest in sustaining certain educational provisions, such as the individual supplementary support provided on the basis of IEPs or certain professional services.

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- The previous problem is the most possible explanation for the declining number of first grade students with IEP1 or IEP2 in 2012 and 2013, which suggests a weakening impact of the inclusion policy. Without the use of incentives and the renewal of school level implementation efforts, inclusion may lose momentum in the schools, as it happened with school development in the second part of the previous decade.

8.4. The impact of the policies and implementation measures

- The policy increased the length of mandatory preparatory pre-school enrolment, but not increased pre-school attendance. The increment of attendance rate is resulted mainly by demographic changes; the absolute number of children attending kindergarten has not changed to a significant extent.

- One of the most important impacts of the inclusion strategy is one that is well documented by this evaluation, but hard to prove by representative evidence: its contribution to the gradual acceptance of the general goals and principles of inclusive education. In spite of the slowly changing attitudes in favour of inclusion, responsibility shift is still very strong among the actors of education.

- As a result of the inclusion policy, the proportion of children enrolled to special schools or to the special classes of regular schools has declined. This decrement is continuing in a slow but steady pace which gives the necessary time for all actors to adjust to the changes.

- The impact of the policy on the extent to which the decision-making power of parents prevails, as well as on the intensity of parental involvement in the work of schools, was very limited. However, the extension of the legally ensured rights of parents is a good basis for improvements.

8.5. The efficiency of implementation measures

- The various developments have created a large number of good practices – mainly in those schools which had the overall institutional and professional absorption capacity to apply the know-how. By now it has become rather visible that the systemic impact of these good practices is limited: they have reached the border created by the large number of schools with weak absorption capacity.

- This limited systemic impact is the result of the combined effect of many different factors: the lack of a sustained school level implementation effort, especially after 2012, the weakness of institutionalized external professional support system capable of balancing the obstacles caused by weak absorption capacities, the weakness of

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the culture and practice of school-based self-evaluation and development, and the scarcity of resources available for implementation.

- On the other hand, the external evaluation system operating since 2012 has a great potential in generating school level change, because its underlying standards properly incorporate inclusive education related elements.

- The need for scaling-up efforts is felt and reflected upon by many experts and organizations. (This is the underlying consideration led to the development of the SHARE project.) However, no appropriate systemic scaling-up strategy has been developed so far.

- The most important constraint to high impact is the gap between regulated mandates, institutions and procedures on the one hand, and the daily operational practice on the other. As it was documented by the findings of this evaluation in relation to many issues, the implementation efforts often proved to be insufficient for high quality or problem-free practice. In other words: a supporting "ecosystem" has been built around the children of vulnerable groups that very often does not work for the children yet.

- One of the obstacles to effective leverage at the school level that the implementation process has not been able to overcome is the fact that the failures of schools remain invisible. The introduction of external evaluation is a great improvement, but the inspection itself is poorly served by basic data and information.

- The implementation of the inclusive education policy is hindered by contradictory policy messages of the government, such as the new textbook provisions, the reduction of the number of expert associates in the schools and other rationalization related measures.

- The major implementation projects seem to be very efficient, since some of them created sustainable elements of inclusive education with very limited funds and management capacities.

- The most important efficiency related problem comes from the prevailing "implementing by regulation" pattern. In all cases, when the regulation of new mandates to local actors or school staff was not matched by heavy investment to make the actors willing to and capable of changing their practice according to the expectation, the result was always a strong implementation deficit.

- By the broken sustainability of intensive school level developments since 2012 the government took the risk of causing harm to children by forcing the enrolment of children to schools where the conditions of inclusive education were not yet in place. Indeed, there were a limited number of parents who decided to move their children from regular schools to special schools. However, the relatively slow pace of the

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increment of the enrolment of SEN children to mainstream classes gives time to reduce these risks.

- The efficiency of the implementation process was weakened by two major implementation bottlenecks: the lack of public resources and the lack of capable institutional frameworks and capacities. The lack of public resources was partially dealt with the mobilization of donor resources; the lack of sufficient institutional capacities was mitigated by "institution substitutes", such as the Inclusion Network.

- For the time being the most important obstacle to further monitoring of the implementation of the inclusion policy is the lack of reliable data. Therefore, ensuring the efficiency of further efforts largely depends on the improvement of the education information system in line with international data classifications.

8.6.   Cross-cutting issues: children rights, equity focus and gender equity

- The inclusion policy by its mainstreaming approach has contributed greatly to placing the problems concerning different student groups into a comprehensive equity framework that mitigated the earlier strong separation of issues connected to poor, Roma and disabled children. This comprehensive approach is gaining acceptance among the local actors of education.

- The expansion of the regulations on the rights of children and parents provides a good basis for the work of those who are engaged in rights protection and creates a solid reference for policies aiming at ensuring these rights. In terms of the practical enforcement of these rights, the impact of the policy is weaker.

- The measures of the Roma Decade and those of the inclusion policy have achieved a significant move towards the elimination of the participation gap between Roma and non-Roma children in the second part of the previous decade. However, in many respects the slow but improving tendencies of the second part of the previous decade were reversed after 2010.

- The inclusion policy achieved partial success by eliminating the segregation of Roma children to special schools. However, the findings of this evaluation revealed worrying cases of possible emerging new channels of segregation, such as the transfer of Roma students to the schools for adults of the discriminatory use of IEPs.

- Gender equity was not on the agenda of the inclusion policy and it is still largely missing from the educational policy discourse.

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9. LESSONS LEARNED

The findings and conclusions of this evaluation allow for establishing certain generalized lessons that may valuable inputs for the design and implementation of inclusion policies elsewhere. The most important lessons learned are as follows:

- Building the necessary conditions of successful inclusive education requires a sustainable effort, both in terms of the stability of government commitment and the institutionalization of the key elements of the „ecosystem" of inclusion. The Serbian case demonstrates the long-term benefits of intensive involvement of the NGO sector to policy design and implementation; in periods of times, when government commitment is weaker, strong ownership among non-governmental actors have the potential of ensuring certain stability of the implementation process through various policy advocacy activities.

- Although the underlying principles of inclusive education are generalized requirements, actual policies have to be tailored according to the specific problems and the context of a given education system. The Serbian inclusive education policy is a fairly good example of interventions with high contextual relevance. In addition, the perpetual monitoring of the implementation process in Serbia allowed for certain corrections and for new initiatives (i.e. addressing dropout) without weakening the basic underlying goals.

- In order to effectively use the available limited resources, policy interventions tend to be incremental in their character which results in strong targeted interventions. However, the Serbian case proves that the relatively weak pedagogical and institutional foundations of inclusion call for very intensive overall modernization and development efforts. By being successful mostly in schools with already high absorption capacities, targeted interventions may widen the gap between schools with stronger and weaker pedagogical and institutional competencies.

- This gap results in a large pool of isolated "good practices", while the overall capacity of the school system is not necessarily improving to a visible extent. Therefore, the systemic scaling-up of good practices has to be carefully considered. Various activities aiming at establishing horizontal learning frameworks between schools with strong and weak inclusion capacities might be good first steps. However, systemic scaling-up requires a more institutionalized governance approach.

- The gradual shift to more inclusive educational practices requires a great deal of change from all individual and institutional actors of education. The Serbian example demonstrates that without being able to use financial incentives for teachers, schools,

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municipalities and for the providers of professional support services the effect of the use of all other policy instruments may remain limited. The negative impact of lack of a mainstream financing system allowing for the use of incentives might be temporarily balanced by incorporating incentives into project-based large-scale national development schemes. However, as these schemes are phasing out, the positive effect of these incentives are vanishing.

- Due to the centralized character of governance of education in Serbia, the intensity and quality of the necessary local-institutional cooperation frameworks largely depend on the intensity of inter-governmental cooperation at the national level. This feature of the implementation process in Serbia is in line with the experience of many other countries, i.e. that further steps towards decentralization of management and fiscal decentralization are the preconditions of improving such local co-operations.

- Achieving positive change in the instruction practice of teachers is a key element of the success of inclusive education reforms. To a large extent, it depends on the preparedness of teachers that most policies of the similar type address by heavy investments to professional development. However, the Serbian case demonstrates that these efforts are much more effective, when capacity building is supplemented with providing easily applicable practical tools for teachers, such as manual, templates, description of various methods, guidelines, etc.

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10. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MAJOR POLICY CHALLENGES

This chapter contains recommendations that have been developed to remedy certain shortcomings of the implementation process in three groups: short-term recommendations, long-term recommendations, and recommendations for UNICEF. These recommendations are formulated within the recent overall systemic context. The second section of the chapter offers a list of various systemic reforms for consideration that have the potential of improving the environment for successful inclusive education.

This formative evaluation is designed to identify key challenges and opportunities for further progress, as well as a set of clear recommendations for improvement to be implemented. As such, this evaluation will inform discussions among the key stakeholders on future areas of action. According to the ToR, the audience of the following recommendations are the following:

- The MoESTD, in charge of further planning and operationalizing the implementation of inclusive education policies and address recognized weaknesses;
- All stakeholders supporting the process of inclusive education;
- Parents and parents' groups and associations;
- The Parliament of the Republic of Serbia, especially the Child Rights Committee, which is active in monitoring and promoting right to education;
- UNICEF and other development partners supporting inclusive education.

10.1. Recommendations

10.1.1. Recommended short-term corrections

1. Further efforts are recommended for the MoESTD and SIPRU for the renewal of the work of the intergovernmental committee ("joint body") with the most important ministries in order to monitor the cooperation of different local public service provider organizations and in order to prepare the necessary amendments of various lower level regulations for the improving of the work of the ISCs and for strengthening the coordination role of municipalities.
2. As an incentive, it is recommended for the MoESTD and for the major international donor organisations that a national small grant scheme for schools for the implementation of the inclusive education related components of school development plans be established. The grants should serve as a matching fund for municipality funds. The scheme may operate by the combined use of state budget funds and the contributions of international and foreign national donor agencies.
3. It is recommended for the MoESTD that the necessary human resource conditions in the Regional School Authorities for improved professional support services, as well as

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for collecting, summarizing and analysing the development plans of schools and the IEPs for students be created. On the basis of this analysis, annual plans are to be produced for responding to the professional support, capacity building and development related financial resource needs of schools. Regional School Authorities may also get the task of coordinating the implementation of these plans.

4. The development of an operational scheme for special school support to regular schools is recommended for the MoESTD. The scheme should include the description and standards of services, the necessary human and financial conditions, the planning of service areas that each special school should serve and the draft of the required amendments to regulations.

10.1.2. Recommended long-term investments

5. In order to strengthen the foundations of the inclusion policy, it is recommended for the MoESTD and the major donor organisations that a new wave of capacity building programs for teachers on the application of the methods of differentiated instruction be launched. The program should contain 60-120 hours accredited in-service training programs with intensive and extensive periods with very strong emphasis on easily applicable instruction and assessment methods. The INSET programs can be developed on the basis of the know-how that is already applied in Serbia, such as Step by Step, the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking or Cooperative Learning. The program should include further efforts for the modernization of initial teacher training and for strengthening the pedagogical character of the initial training of special education teachers.

6. In order to improve the quality of inclusion related school development planning, it is recommended for the MoESTD, for the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation and for the major donor organisations that new support manuals and connected support services (among others: accredited in-service training programs) be developed for each sub-domain and indicator of the Standards for Work Quality of Educational Institutions that are closely connected to inclusive education. The new instruments may contain self-evaluation tools, the description of teaching methods, good teaching and institutional practices from other schools or from abroad, etc.

7. The development of underlying data classifications, online reporting system and information management platform for individual student level data collection system is recommended for the MoESTD in order to provide reliable student progression data for schools, municipalities, Regional School Administration and policy makers.

8. The development of a comprehensive policy strategy is recommended for the systemic scaling up of isolated good practices on the basis of international experience applied to the specific Serbian context is recommended to the MoESTD with the involvement of the experts of academic institutions and donor organisations.

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10.1.3.   Recommendations for UNICEF

9. It is recommended to preserve the current balance among grass root developments, piloting for the development of know-how, knowledge management and policy advocacy. In the course of the design of new UNICEF programs and activities, it is recommended that the recent strong focus on mainstreaming approaches and a stronger focus on educational outcome gaps between students with different background be applied.
10. UNICEF is in a good position to initiate a series of events that provide the platform for intensive and open dialogue between educationalists working in any roles on the promotion of integration and inclusion and experts of special education on the required role of special education professionals and institutions. On the basis of the organized dialogue, it is recommended that a report on partnerships for SEN children be developed and published.
11. It is recommended for UNICEF to initiate a larger scale research project in cooperation with other organizations on the magnitude of segregation of Roma students and on the changing patterns of discrimination.

10.2. *Major policy challenges*

The primary purpose of this evaluation is providing recommendations that have the potential to remedy the various shortcomings that have emerged in the course of the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, the above listed recommendations have been developed within the framework of the existing systems and governance instruments.

However, the findings of this evaluation have drawn the attention to the fact that certain characteristics of the existing Serbian education system do not provide a favourable environment for the successful integration and inclusion of vulnerable students or for the reduction of educational outcome gaps emerging along the various dimensions of disadvantages. This section provides an overview about possible systemic changes that the Evaluation Team believes to be instrumental for creating a more favourable context for the further development of inclusive education. The purpose of this list and the few international good practices is to offer inputs for considering the critical elements of the overall transformation of the pre-university education in Serbia.

The democratization of the curriculum and standards

As mentioned in this report, the overly high expectations towards children in terms of traditional knowledge (i.e. factual information) are hindering the transition to a more differentiated teaching practice. In fact, the impact of overly high expectations set by curricula and standards is exclusion. Therefore, in the course of the revision of curricula and the underlying standards of the 8 and 12 grades school leaving examinations, it is

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important to strive for setting real minimum requirements for all students that they have the chance to meet. (Of course, it does not mean low ambitions in relation to the learning of students.) Minimum curricular requirements and standards cannot be developed with the only participation of academic experts of the subjects. The process should be managed with the equal participation of practicing teachers, the experts of pedagogy and various stakeholders. The revision should allow for testing and standardization.

Making school failures visible: regular assessment of competencies and information system

Although the introduction of the new type of inspection is a significant move towards an effective and intelligent accountability system, due to the lack of reliable feedback on the successes and failures of schools, external evaluation is very much input and process oriented. Beyond the development of the statistical information system, there is a great potential in building and operating a regular system of standardized assessment of the basic competencies (reading literacy, mathematics and science) of all students in order to make the results of schools comparable. In the current school structure it is best placed at grade 6.

Financing

As mentioned several times in this report in connection to a few issues, one of the obstacles of the effective implementation of inclusion policies is not simply the shortage of financial resources, but the still input-based financial allocation system. The major negative consequences of this financing system are the following:

- Service specifications (tasks) and financing are not connected; the operation of schools and other service providers is funded, rather than the program or service they provide.
- There is no space for incentives or disincentives which weakens the implementation of any policies.
- Basically all services that schools consume are supplied and funded by the state.
- As a tendency, all SEN student groups are streamed to separate schools, because this is the only way to recognize the different specific costs of their education.

In contrast, fiscal decentralization and normative financial allocation would offer the following advantages:

- Financing at the national level is technically simple, easily planned and managed and not confused by program diversity.
- A basic level of efficiency is ensured because the money follows the student.
- It allows for flexibility at the local level in order to recognize the differences of specific costs of different programs.
- It channels in additional resources at the local level.

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- It allows for strategic steering by objectives (i.e. by curriculum targets and service standards).
- It allows for the use of incentives by allocating supplementary per capita funding for specific programs as a percent of the per capita formula.
- It can be supplemented by earmarked targeted support to generate demand for different services in accordance to the developmental needs of the schools.
- It can be supplemented by earmarked targeted support for central development programs for policy implementation.

Professional support services

Another shortage revealed by this evaluation is the poorly developed external professional support service network. It applies both to the types of professional services provided to children, parents, teachers and schools (see Box 2) and to the outreach of the existing services. In order to ensure a stable institutionalized network of publicly operated professional service providers, it is suggested to consider detaching professional support functions from the Regional School Authorities and establishing an education centre in each region. This separate network would allow the gradual improvement of the scope and capacities of professional services and provide the institutional background for their professionalization and quality assurance.

Box 2: The types of professional support services

There are certain professional support services that are provided in almost all of the European countries regardless of the actual pattern of service provisions. The most typical service types are the following:

- In-service teacher training. In-service training (often call professional development)
- School management training
- Counselling or advisory service for teachers
- Assessment (supporting school-based assessment and monitoring systems)
- Content development and application (offline and online providing raw material for teaching and learning)
- Infrastructure and professional support to extracurricular activities
- Expert support to innovation projects
- Parent/family involvement
- Resource centres, libraries
- Induction support to new teachers
- Mentoring, tutoring, correpetition
- Guidance
- Disabled student services

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- Special needs support (diagnostic and treatment services for students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, perceptual problems, emotional problems or other difficulties and for their teachers)
- Support to gifted children, art and music education
- Non-educational (social, health, etc.) services connected to education
- School supplies

Bridging the competence gap

Due to the growing diversity of specific development needs of students, even in the case of the renewal of the special education profession the competence gap between mainstream teachers and habilitation/rehabilitation experts will remain wide. A possible solution to narrow this competence gap is the introduction of a new type of teaching professional working in mainstream schools. The Hungarian example is described in the following Box.

Box 3: A new profession in Hungary: the developmental teacher

In order to reduce the competency gap between special needs teachers and mainstream teachers a new profession, the developmental teacher emerged. Developmental teachers are able to apply the pedagogical and psychological diagnostic instrument of learning difficulties and able to apply the various forms of prevention and correction. The three major forms of the work of developmental teachers are: (i) two teachers model, e.g. the teacher and the developmental teachers are working with divided groups; (ii) individual development; and (iii) consultation with other teachers, school psychologists, social workers and parents. The developmental teacher is not competent in providing habilitation and rehabilitation servicing; this is the competence of special needs teachers and therapists. However, she/he should be able to recognize disabilities and should direct the child to the appropriate professionals. The actual tasks of developmental teachers are described in the pedagogical programs of the schools and in the individual development plans. The training of developmental teachers is a post-graduate university program on the basis of completed studies in pedagogy, special education pedagogy or psychology after minimum two years working experience in the field of the original qualification. Developmental teachers are employed in mainstream kindergartens and schools, in special schools and in professional service provider institutions (such as the Educational Advisory Services). Completion of the developmental teacher postgraduate studies automatically results in salary scale promotion.[16]

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[16] Radó, 2009.

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School structure reform

As discussed earlier, in international comparison large performance gaps are emerging already in the initial phase of education. As the following map illustrates, in the majority of European countries the length of the initial phase (ISCED 1) characterized by prevailing classroom teaching is 1-3 years longer than in Serbia. Therefore, it is worth considering a combination of other efforts for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the initial phase of education with a school structure reform.

The length of the initial phase of education

- 7 years
- 6 years
- 5 years
- 4 years

(Source: Eurydice)

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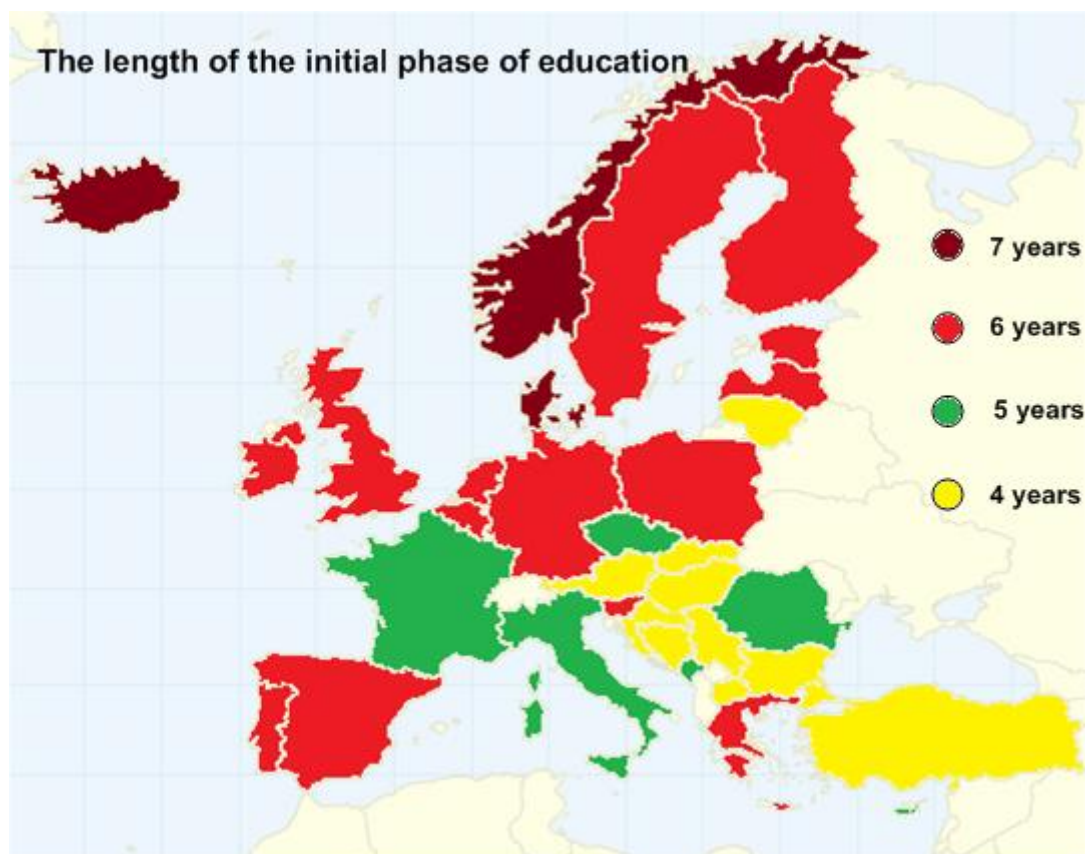
11. ANNEXES

11.1. Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Terms of References

Formative evaluation of implementation of inclusive practices in the Education System in Serbia
(2009 – 2014)

Date of preparation of ToR – 12 June, 2015
Draft of Final version of ToR – 5 August, 2015

I Context

In the past 10 years, Serbia undertook extensive changes and reforms of its educational system. The reforms were initiated with an aim to increase the accessibility of education to every child, creating conditions for quality education in accordance with students' needs. The orientation of the Ministry of Education has been to introduce and foster an inclusive education approach, and various parallel and supportive initiatives that would eliminate all forms of barriers and discrimination, related to gender, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic background, ability, health condition or any other personal characteristic of the individual, as well as to enhance social cohesion.

This inclusive orientation is set upon a number of international conventions and initiatives to which Serbia is a signatory (e.g. the Salamanca Statement, the Decade of Roma Inclusion; UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), as well as on a set of national strategies and legislative framework that have focused on the need for including all persons, regardless of individual characteristics or cultural/social background, in the education system (e.g. the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper; the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia).

Before 2008

Between 2000 and 2004, Serbia witnessed a great number of education reforms that were initiated after the period of a complete economic and social collapse of the country during 1990s.   Education system related concerns varied from complaints about unprofessional teaching staff, to obsolete syllabi and textbooks, inadequate and outdated network of schools, a non-transparent system of education financing, and overall low achievement rates. In trying to respond to these concerns, a comprehensive reform of the educational system was envisaged, with three strands of identifiable changes: (a) investment in a stable growth in financing of the education system, including wage growth and investment in reconstruction of facilities, (b) taking steps towards decentralization of the education system, and (c) development of education policies and reforms.[17] These activities were supported through World Bank loan in the period 2002-

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[17] Quality Education for All – Challenges of Education Reform in Serbia, Ministry of Education and Sport, 2004.

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2004 (School development planning, first steps in decentralisation of education system and in the building of Education Management Information System – EMIS). Extensive cooperation with civil society organisation and development partners was initiated, especially in the area of social inclusion, child-cantered learning and multi-cultural education.

From 2004 to 2008, a series of Amendments and changes in the Law on the Foundations of the Education System stalled the ongoing reform agenda. Curricula became again content-regulated, the structure of education remained as a 2-cycle instead of moving towards the planned introduction of a 3-cycle approach, renewal of teachers' licences stopped. Further, it partly postponed anticipated changes such as the external school leaving examination. However significant changes continued to occur, some of which developed further than expected, among them: the implementation of mandatory preschool education started in 2006, continued attention given to school development planning, professional development of teachers aimed at inclusive practices, liberalisation of the textbook market, development of an Education management information system, etc.

A number of important initiatives also took place before 2008, all of which had an important impact in the preparation of the education system for implementing more inclusive practices. Initiatives of the non-governmental organisation were main drivers for inclusive practices in schools that later on resulted in inclusive legal framework. Pilot projects initiated by NGOs had very important role in future legislative changes (e.g. Roma Pedagogical Assistants). During this period, several activities took place to enhance the competences of schools and teachers through the introduction of active learning trainings, aimed to support teachers in introducing up-to-date child-oriented teaching methods, and individualizing teaching. These initiatives also served to build competencies of teachers and set the stage for IE.

Importantly, within the framework of the Roma Decade, the Ministry of Education implemented a range of measures that fostered the concept of inclusive education, such as: affirmative measures for enrolment to secondary and higher education for Roma students, some anti-discriminatory measures at the school level, staff (educational advisers) made responsible for Roma education improvements, implementation of local action plans on Roma education, and the introduction of the first Roma assistants as teaching assistance.

However, by 2008, several challenges persisted as highlighted in the Ministry of Education document "Roadmap for Inclusive Education". Despite ongoing reforms, amendments and changes in the law, the main areas of concern included: low quality of education according to the PISA results in 2003 and 2006; low level of inclusion of Roma children and children with disabilities; persistence of a parallel system of education in which the education of children with disabilities and developmental difficulties was still done in special schools or special classes in regular schools; a lack of attention and systematic solutions for providing additional support to vulnerable children in education; the low percent of GDP allocations for education, etc.

After 2008

As a part of implementation of the "Roadmap for Inclusive Education" and with intention to integrate successful pilots and models developed by NGOs in the system, several important laws were adopted in 2009 and the immediately following years, which

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impacted the adoption and implementation of inclusive practices in Serbia[18]: 1) The Law on the Foundations of the Education System; 2) the Law on Textbooks and Teaching Materials; 3) the Law on Preschool Education; 4) the Law on Pupil and Student Standard. These, in combination with a widespread interest and emphasis on issues related to inclusion, on the part of the Serbian Government (as expressed in the Strategy for Roma Integration, a priority area after 2009), resulted in several activities to support early access and participation of Roma in higher education levels, including better regulated affirmative action for entering secondary and tertiary education, increased access to scholarships and stipends, and easier access to preschool.

The most important legislative change was the adoption of the new Law on the Foundations of the Education System in 2009, that stressed the equal right to education to all children, as well as access to education without discrimination and segregation/tracking of all children, students and adults, from marginalized and vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities. At the time when the new Law was introduced, 85% of children with disabilities were not covered by any systematic education, primary education was attended by only 75% of rural children and no more than 37% Roma children. As many as 68% of Roma children were leaving elementary school early and were representing a majority in special schools (up to 80% of all students) [19].

With the new Law on the Foundations of the Education System an inclusive education policy was regulated, enabling the inclusion of children and students in the regular system without categorization (a practice which was common in SEE and Eastern Europe, whereby children categorized as having special education needs were referred to special schools or declared as uneducable). According to the new legislation, as of the 2010 academic year, all children deemed to have a Special Education Need (among them children with disabilities, children with disadvantages, or children with learning difficulties) should be enrolled in regular schools with the support of individual educational plans, tailored to each student's strengths and needs, including different types of additional educational, health or social support.

Of special importance in the new Law, were provisions included to protect all participants in the education system against discrimination, violence, abuse, and neglect. The law defines anti-discrimination measures, and establishes mechanisms for early detection, comprehensive response (family inclusion, community inclusion...) and complaint, as well as retribution. The new Law on the Foundations of the Education System in 2009 also introduced the pedagogical assistant, who provide assistance and additional support to students in accordance with their strengths/needs, as well as to their teachers with the aim to support their school participation.

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[18] The policies relevant for the area of inclusive education in Serbia and the reference framework for its implementation are defined by the following legal and strategic documents adopted at the national level, namely: Law on the Foundations of the Education System (amended in 2010, 2013); Law on Preschool Education (2010); Law on Primary Education (2013); Law on Secondary Education (2013); Strategy for Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia until 2020 (2012); Strategy for Improvement of Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia (2009); Action Plan for Implementation of Strategy for Improvement of Status of Roma until 2015 (2009, 2013); National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2015 (2004); Millennium Development Goals; By-law on Individual Education Plan; By-law on additional educational, health and social welfare support; By-law on the training program for pedagogical assistants.

[19] The overall plan for the introduction of the inclusive education, the Ministry of Education, February 2010.

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The provisions of the new umbrella law were amended in 2011 and 2013 (with expected amendments in 2015), and further elaborated through a set of secondary legislation and special laws, with the most important being the Law on Preschool Education (2010), the Law on Primary Education (2013) and the Law on Secondary Education (2013). These led to significant progress in implementation of provisions regarding fostering inclusion and preventing discrimination, as well as quality of education, among which (besides above mentioned):

- Enrolment procedures - Abolishment of categorisation within the primary school enrolment process and enrolment of children from deprived groups without personal documentation.

- Provision of Additional support through municipal Inter-sectorial Committees (ISC) responsible for assessment of the needs for educational, healthcare and social support, consisting of school psychologist (school), paediatrician (health center) and social worker (center for social work) as permanent members and two persons who know the child best as variable members; committees are responsible for the child and prescribing measures to support the child, including assistive technologies.

- Implementation of Individual Education Plans and the practice of School Teams for additional individual student support. New curriculum policy recommend that persons with developmental impairments or with exceptional abilities shall be entitled to education which takes into consideration their Individual Educational Needs (including adjustments in teaching methods, characteristics and organization of additional assistance; individualisation of learning outcomes and their specification ("modified program"); enriching the education provision for talented children - "enriched program").

- Creation of School Inclusive Education Expert Teams responsible for spearheading the implementation of inclusive policies at the school level as well as improving the quality of inclusive education in the school.

- Understanding the need for an inter-sectoral approach to inclusive education, a number of projects initially initiated and piloted by NGOs, and aimed at supporting student participation, were supported and scaled up through loans and grants. A number of development agencies, including UNICEF (Annex 1- Key projects supporting Inclusive Education in Serbia) actively supported implementation of programs aimed at advancing inclusiveness and quality of education, since well before 2009, and continued to do so once the new Law was adopted.

The latest results of the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in Serbia show equity gaps between the general population and vulnerable groups in the education. At the pre-school level, majority of children from vulnerable groups, especially Roma, children in formal care, and those in the poorest households are excluded from early education programmes. During the last five years, the number of preschool facilities has increased by about 30%, but this still fails to satisfy the needs of children and families, especially in rural areas and of vulnerable families.

The same trend continues at primary and secondary school levels – primary school enrolment for the general population is 97 per cent, while for Roma it is 69 per cent. The

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completion rate for the general population is 93 per cent, compared to only 64 per cent for children from Roma settlements. 89 per cent of the secondary-school aged adolescents among the general population attend secondary school, while this is the case for only 22 per cent of adolescents from Roma settlements (only 15 per cent of girls). According to the statistical data – (Republic Statistical Office 2011, DevInfo), the secondary school completion rate is 84 per cent (88 per cent for girls, 81 per cent for boys); it is significantly lower for children from vulnerable groups. Children with disabilities have insufficient support throughout schooling despite the existence of the inclusive education legal framework. Inclusion is hampered by the lack of resources and capacity, as well as by negative attitudes towards the full inclusion of children with disability.

Despite the significant efforts towards improving the quality, education system still fails to equip students with the competencies necessary for active participation in society and lifelong learning - PISA study shows that one third of 15 years old students are functionally illiterate. The children and adolescents from marginalized communities that manage to stay in school often experience barriers to learning.

Throughout the reform process, the Ministry of Education has been the main driver for change, with funding from various sources. The estimated public expenditures on education were around 5.2% of the GDP in the period from 2010-2012 what equals public allocations in the EU 27. However, allocations in Serbia are much lower in absolute terms[20] and almost 96% of resources is spent to cover staff salaries leaving very limited resources for education development and additional support. Difficult economic situation triggered by the economic crisis that hit Serbia in 2008 and austerity measures introduced as a response to high fiscal deficit and public debt are narrowing space for higher investments and support measures aimed at the most vulnerable children.

Besides its own budget resources, the Ministry of Education utilized a World Bank loan of 12 million Euro (Delivery of Improved Local Services Project – DILS) to support implementation of priority measures. The activities supported by the loan were clustered into 4 components: 1) preparation for introduction of the new model of education financing in line with the Law on Foundations of the Education System - LFES; 2) support to introduction of innovative measures, based on the LFES, primarily those supporting inclusive education, education of Roma and children from rural areas; 3) support in increasing learning outcomes (testing programs, final exams, development of standards); 4) support to establishment of Education Management Information System. Each of the components had resources for the capacity building of staff employed in education system, as well as public and media campaigns aimed at increasing awareness and acceptance of the introduced changes by the public. These activities were implemented in the period from 2009 to the end of 2013.

Furthermore, some of the main activities supporting the introduction of inclusive education were funded through the European Commission Instrument of Pre-Accession

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[20] Annual expenditures per student combined for all education levels on the basis of the FTE (full-time equivalent number of students) in Serbia are one third of those allocated in EU 28 – The Second National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2011-2014, Government of the Republic of Serbia.

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funds and projects, as well as through programs of other development partners, including UNICEF[21].

Throughout the process, the Ministry of Education coordinates a number of actors, including development partners, who support inclusive education. This process involves a number of different actors all of which support inclusive education within their specific mandates.

Right holders benefiting from the introduction of inclusive education - are all school age children of Serbia with the particular emphasis on the most vulnerable children for whom the concept of inclusive education means equal opportunities and true realization of the right to education. Parents are the second important group of rights holders that is directly impacted by the inclusive education implementation.

The main stakeholders on the side of duty bearers are:

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) – managing entity for policy change and its implementation, as well as coordination of all actors within and outside the education system.
- Teachers - through participation in training activities, development, implementation of inclusive policies, provision of direct support to children in a teaching process, mobilization of parents etc.
- Other education system institutions such as: Institute for the Education Quality Evaluation on; Institute for the Improvement of Education; National Education Council; VET and Adult Education Council, Schools and regional school administrations
- Education institutions - Schools and pre-school institutions

Other relevant stakeholders

- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit
- Independent bodies – Commissioner for Equality and Ombudsman
- Parliamentary Committee for Child Rights
- Development partners – Open Society Foundation, Roma Education Fund, OSCE, World Bank, UNICEF, etc.
- Network of support to inclusive education
- National and local civil society organizations, particularly Roma CSOs, CSOs of persons with disability etc.
- Academic institutions – Institute for Psychology, Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy, Institute for Pedagogical Research
- Professional associations

II The focus of the evaluation – Implementation of inclusive practices in Serbia
Rationale for the evaluation

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[21] The detailed mapping of donor supported projects is contained in Annex 1 – Key projects supporting inclusive education in Serbia, developed within the study "Providing additional support to students from vulnerable groups in pre-university education" (T. Kovac-Cerovic at all, 2013).

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Inclusive education was introduced in Serbia as an overall education reform effort to improve equity, quality, competitiveness and efficiency of the education system. The main directions for the development and implementation of inclusive education were those defined and articulated in the legislation, through the provisions of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System, with the Law effectively serving as benchmark – the main reference - when evaluating progress. Thus, there were no explicitly strategic documents articulating the anticipated steps of this process. Thus, the initial steps towards education reform in Serbia happened much like in other contexts[22], without a clear set of targets or indicators, or guidance for how to accomplish prospective milestones.

The main objective of the new policies and strategies has been to improve the quality and coverage of preschool and primary education, to enhance the educational achievement of all students in general, and children from vulnerable social groups in particular. Inclusion is the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education.

Main directions and priority actions were aimed at measures to improve the education status of the most vulnerable children (Roma, children with disability) assuming the spirit of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action that implies that once successfully implemented, measures have a spill-over effect on improving the overall quality of education for ALL children, as well as their learning outcomes.

Intended Audience

This evaluation is undertaken 6-7 years after the "formal" introduction of inclusive education in Serbia with the support of a legislative framework. Various key stakeholders have expressed interest in completing an evaluation that can provide an overview of the extent to which legislative changes have led to the implementation of inclusive practices. Although it is fully recognized that education reform is a lengthy process, it is expected that this <u>formative evaluation</u> will be able to identify key challenges and opportunities for further progress, as well as a set of clear recommendations for improvement to be implemented in the forthcoming 5-year period. As such, this evaluation will inform discussions among the key stakeholders on future areas of action. The knowledge it generates can be used by:

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[22] For more on this see:

Kellert, S. H. (1993). In the wake of chaos: Unpredictable order in dynamical systems. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Reigeluth, C. M. (1993). Principles of educational systems design. International Journal of Educational Research, 19(2), 117-131.

Tyack, D. B., & Cuban, L. (1995). Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

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- the MoESTD as an important source of information for the further policy work and programming - more specifically to further plan and operationalize implementation of inclusive education policies and address recognized weaknesses;
- Schools and teachers
- Other institutions in the education system
- All stakeholders supporting the process of inclusive education to inform them on which approaches were the most successful in advancing inclusive culture, what were the main weaknesses and how could they be addressed
- Parents and parents' groups and associations
- Parliament of the Republic of Serbia, especially the Child Rights Committee, which is active in monitoring and promoting right to education;
- UNICEF and other development partners supporting inclusive education– for future programming and support.

The main evaluation findings and recommendations will be presented and discussed with key stakeholders and the full text of the evaluation report will be shared with all relevant stakeholders.

III Purpose and Objectives
The evaluation purpose is:

> To determine to what extent have key legal provision related to inclusive education translated into inclusive practices for children (at the individual and the systemic levels).

More specifically, the main objectives of this formative evaluation are to:
1. Provide evidence to the Ministry of Education and other key stakeholders on the progress achieved so far related to inclusiveness of the education system, to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the inclusive education measures in the current moment:
    a. Identify main results in the implementation of inclusive education so far for different groups (children, teachers, parents, schools...)
    b. Identify the 10-15 the most important measures/key legal provisions (and resulting inclusive practices) as they conceptually support the development and implementation of inclusive education in Serbia;
    c. Provide evidence of implementation of the identified inclusive practices vis-a-vis the core mission set forth in Article 3 of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System;
2. Provide evidence of implementation of the identified inclusive practices (1 a, 1 b above) vis-a vis participation of children in education, as measured according to: 1) relevance of activities to the individual child; 2) comparability of activities to activities expected of and carried out by children in general; 3) general relevance or importance of activities in context of social, developmental and educational goals. Participation of children should be demonstrated for:
    a. ALL children, as a whole;

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    b. Disaggregated by gender;

    c. Disaggregated by specific groups of children (i.e. Roma, children with disabilities, children in rural settings, etc.)

3. Additionally, provide evidence of implementation and coherence of the identified inclusive practices (1.b above) by level of the system (i.e. teacher, classroom, parents, school, district, region, etc.)
4. Identify main drivers for change, and main bottlenecks for advancement of implementation of inclusive practices and gaps in approaches, system-wide
5. Identify best-practices and lessons-learned
6. Provide feasible recommendations to advance the implementation of inclusive practices in the next 5 years, based upon a retrospective analysis to include data gathered in points 1-6 above including recommendations for further revisions of the national Action Plan for Inclusive Education.

IV Scope

While the "formal" introduction of inclusive education in Serbia can be traced to the Law on the Foundations of the Education System, it is well understood that inclusive education in Serbia and elsewhere is an ongoing process of learning and progressive improvements. Thus, this formative evaluation's scope should include the time period from 2009 to present.

The evaluation should be envisioned as nation- wide, and include all levels of administration from the national to the local one. The evaluation should cover pre-university education (pre-school education, primary and secondary education).

V Methodology

The evaluation methodology will be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nation Evaluation Group (UNEG)23.
(http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/indexs.isp?doc_cat_source_id=4).

Approach

The approach followed from the onset of the evaluation will be as participative as possible. Stakeholders will participate at all levels of the evaluation, through discussions, consultations and revisions of draft documents. In gathering data and views from all relevant stakeholders, the evaluation team will ensure that it considers a cross-section of stakeholders with potentially diverse views to ensure findings are as impartial and representative as possible. The evaluation will employ relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, early impacts, and sustainability. Further, the evaluation shall have an equity focus on implementation of

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23 UNEG Norms: http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1491

UNEG Standards:

http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1496

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inclusive practices that benefited children of different backgrounds (Roma children, children with disabilities, children of parents with lower education and socio economic status, from rural and urban areas, living in the poorest municipalities, boys and girls).

The methodology should demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources (e.g. stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.) and using a mixed methodological (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, participatory) to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. It will be the task of the evaluators to propose a methodology that will be used for information gathering to ensure adequate territorial and administrative representation.

When designing the methodology, the evaluation team should take into consideration the lack of reliable data at the national and local levels, particularly as it relates to the total numbers of children from different vulnerable groups (Roma, children with disabilities and developmental difficulties, poor children, etc.). It will be necessary for the evaluation team to consider ways in which to use available data by triangulating from different sources.

While there is no fully developed and documented inclusive education "theory of change" for Serbia, the set of adopted legislation as well as specific documents developed in the observed period provide information on what was the status at the beginning of the process and what were the changes that were envisioned. It will be the task of evaluators to develop appropriate methodology that will use available data to reconstruct the inclusive education "theory of change" for Serbia.

However, because inclusive education was introduced conceptually, there is no pre-defined framework of goals, targets, benchmarks, expected results, or indicators. After a number of fragmented attempts to monitor progress, SIPRU, Open Society Foundation and UNICEF, partners supported the Ministry of Education to develop a Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education (developed in 2014 with the first data collected in 2015). This framework has defined a set of targets and indicators at the input, output and outcome levels, and at the level of school, municipality and republic in a number of domains. It is expected that the evaluation team will give the Monitoring Framework consideration, including it in the proposed methodology.

The evaluation team will be responsible to ensure the evaluation reflects UNICEF's human rights-based approach to programming – principles, policies and standards. Special measures will be put in place to ensure that the evaluation process is ethical and that participants in the evaluation process can openly express their opinion. The sources of information will be protected, and known just to the evaluation team, as stated in the UNEG Guidance on Integrating human-rights and gender equality in evaluation (see link below) - and complies with the organization's commitment to gender mainstreaming as expressed in the Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls. http://www.uneval.org/documentdownload?doc_id=980&file_id=1294

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Further, the evaluation team is responsible to ensuring the evaluation procedure respects the UNICEF's Evaluation Technical Note "Children Participating in Research, Monitoring and Evaluation". The evaluation methodology will be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nation Evaluation Group (UNEG).
(http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/indexs.isp?doc_cat_source_id=4).
The contractor should develop more precise evaluation work plan that will allow insight into all key elements of the process of inclusive education.
The key stakeholders whose views should be taken into consideration during the evaluation include:

- MESTD (Group for SI, Group for ethnic minorities, Group for antidiscrimination and violence prevention, Sector for European integration.)
- Education institutes and relevant institutions, including the National Education Council
- Schools and preschool institutions
- Regional School administrations
- Universities responsible for teacher training
- Ministries of health, youth and social welfare
- Development partners
- Network of support to inclusive education
- CSOs
- Local authorities
- Independent bodies – Ombudsman and Commissioner for Equality
- SIPRU – Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government
- Rights holders – children and parents
- Parliamentary committee for child rights
- UNICEF and other international organisations

The guiding questions for the evaluation against defined evaluation criteria will be further elaborated through evaluation matrix and used as a basis for development of the main data collection instruments (interviews, focus groups and observations).

Evaluability assessment

As mentioned before, the overall intention of the Ministry of Education and approaches towards introduction of inclusive education are not articulated in a single document that would serve as a Theory of Change and the evaluation reference framework. However, the set of adopted legislation as well as specific documents developed in the observed period provide information on what was the status at the beginning of the process and what were the changes that were envisioned. It will be the task of evaluators to develop appropriate methodology that will use available data to reconstruct the ToC and assess progress in the implementation of new policies.

As EMIS is not functional in Serbia, evaluators will have to rely on the education administrative data collected by the statistical office and the Ministry of Education. These

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data have limited disaggregation, particularly related to disability and ethnicity. Data collected through multiple rounds of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey offer disaggregated and reliable data sets (except related to disability) that can also be used to track progress over time.

The range of reports and materials listed below provide additional sources of data describing the situation in education.

Main reliable data sources include:

- Administrative statistics on education, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
- Government of the Republic of Serbia (2011), "The First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia," Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade.
- Rapid assessment on the introduction of inclusive education, UNICEF 2010
- Government of the Republic of Serbia (2014), "The Second National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia," Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade
- Government of the Republic of Serbia (2013), Strategy for Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia 2020.
- Final reports of Serbia Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys from 2005, 2010 and 2014
- MCE on inclusive education, UNICEF, 2014
- Roadmap to inclusive education, the Ministry of Education, 2008
- The Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education, Final report from the baseline data collection, Institute of Psychology, 2015
- Inclusive education in Serbia: policies, practice, and recommendations, World Bank 2015
- DILS reports and materials
- Donor reports etc./

Other literature that provides reference framework:
- Council of the European Union (2009), "Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020)," Council of the European Union, Brussels.
- Government of the Republic of Serbia (2003), "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)," Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade.
- Government of the Republic of Serbia (2004), "National Plan of Action for Children (NPA)," Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade.
- Government of the Republic of Serbia (2006), "National Millennium Development Goals (NMDG)," Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade.
- UN Millennium Goals, http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals

Full list of data sources and documents is listed in the Annex 2 List of documents and data sources.

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All needed documents, together with a contact list of key stakeholders whose views should be taken into consideration, as well as project implementing partners and consultants will be provided to the evaluation team once a contractual agreement has been made. Because field visit cannot cover all education institutions/stakeholders, criteria for selection of evaluation sample should be proposed by the evaluators within the Inception report and approved by the Steering Committee.

VI Evaluation Questions

The bellow question should serve as an indication and a guide to evaluators in developing the full set of questions and the evaluation matrix that should respond to evaluation objectives.

Objective 1 - assessing relevance / to what extent are inclusive education measures relevant to the needs of stakeholders and right holders of the education system in Serbia?

- Have interventions/measures that were designed and implemented to influence inclusive policies and system changes, been specifically targeted the most marginalized children, those children whose right to education is violated, in particular children with disabilities, Roma children, girls, children from poor rural areas, children performing below academic standards, and children with multiple disadvantages?
- To what extent were different measures (identified in section III) relevant for increasing inclusiveness of education and improving quality of education?

Objective 2 - assessing effectiveness / to what extent have the initial goals of inclusive education been meet?

- How effective have been government's interventions in removing system bottlenecks that determined or contributed to the exclusion of marginalized children from education?
- Which measures have been the most effective in contributing to implementation of IE?
  - To what extent implemented interventions contributed to the improvements in different dimensions of school quality that are related to inclusiveness of education?
  - To what extent efforts so far contributed to the teachers' capacities to implement inclusive education through their work?
  - To what extent was additional support effective in supporting inclusion of the most vulnerable children?
  - To what extent interventions so far managed to increase access for the most vulnerable children?
  - To what extent parents influenced implementation of inclusive education concept?
  - Have the implemented interventions provided any additional (not directly) significant contribution/outcomes towards improvement of access and quality of education?

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- Which are the system bottlenecks that have not been addressed by either the government or its partners (including UNICEF), or which the government and its partners have not been able to remove? And what are the reasons for that?
- Have there been opportunities for programmatic synergies between MoESTD's interventions and those of its development partners that contributed to increase the effectiveness of government's efforts to remove system bottlenecks to inclusive education?

Objective 3 - assessing sustainability / to what extent are the results achieved sustainable?

- To what extent legislation in this area supports implementation and further development of inclusive education?
- To which extent is inclusive education concept supported by other systems, was synergy with supporting initiatives in other sectors achieved?
- To what extent are new knowledge and skills integrated into regular activities of professionals working with children and their families?
- Does the pre-service and in-service teacher trainings support inclusive education?
- To what extent were national and local level stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the inclusive education?
- What is the likeliness that the national and local self-government will allocate sufficient resources needed to support inclusive education?
- To what extent have the schools and preschools endorsed inclusive education as a dominant concept?
- To what extent civil society supports the concept of inclusive education?

Objective 4 - assessing impact / to what extent has the introduction of inclusive education impacted children at different levels of the education system, particularly children from excluded groups?

- To what extent have the introduced changes contributed to openness of "regular" schools towards children with additional education needs – Roma, children with disabilities?
- How has introduction of inclusive education impacted different actors in the education process (schools – regular and "special", teachers, children, parents, decision makers, local community, society...)?
- What are the interventions that had the most prominent impact on children?
- To which extent initiatives and support provided supported scaling up in other schools?

Objective 5 - assessing efficiency / to what extent did the management of the project ensure timelines and efficient utilization of resources?

- Have available resources invested in support of more inclusive education policies and plans been used in a strategic and cost-effective manner?
- Was the use of resources well-coordinated to encourage synergy and avoid overlaps? More specifically, has MoESTD been successful in playing a catalytic role and using its core resources strategically to leverage partners' funding for inclusive education reforms?

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- Would there have been a more cost-effective way to obtain the expected results?

In addition to the 5 main evaluation criteria, the evaluation shall also focus on *assessing human rights-based approach and relevant cross-cutting issues.* More specifically, it should look into the *extent of the project outcomes' contribution to achievement of children's rights and how the project contributed to addressing key cross-cutting issues?*

- Does the implemented measures actively contribute to the promotion of child rights?
- To what extent and how the implemented measures ensures an equity focus?
- Does the measures reflect gender mainstreaming issues?

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11.2. Annex 2. The Evaluation Team

Gábor Markovits (Project Director), Certified Management Consultant, Project Director of AAM, an economist and expert in public services, program management and evaluation. Mr Markovits has vast working experience in many SEE countries (e.g. Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Croatia, etc.) and in international project management in many different areas.

Péter Radó (Team Leader), expert of policy and program evaluation in education, education of children with special educational needs and the education of minorities. Mr Radó has an excellent track record in education sciences, educational policy analysis and the analysis of education systems. He has internationally renowned experience in the field of education, including more than 15 years of work experience in Serbia, especially in the fields relevant for this assignment.

János Setényi (Key Expert 1), CEO of Expanzió, expert in policy and program evaluation and educational development. Mr Setényi has long-time experience in the planning, managing and evaluating various large-scale educational development programs at European scale in various SEE countries (e.g. Romania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, etc.) and in Hungary.

Danijela Petrovic (Key Expert 2), Associate Professor of Educational Psychology. She has a rich experience in pedagogical research and evaluation in Serbia with an outstanding experience in the field of research in SEN inclusion.

Dejan Stankovic (Key Expert 3), Researcher in the Centre for Educational Policy. He has vast experience in empirical educational research, in educational policy analysis and in educational evaluation.

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11.3. Annex 3. The settlement and institutional sample of the evaluation

The institutional sample of the evaluation consisted of six Regional School Authorities, seven municipalities and seven primary schools.

Regional school authorities	Settlements (municipalities)	Schools
Belgrade	Palilula	OŠ "Filip Visnjic"
Belgrade	Zvezdara	OŠ "Ćirilo i Metodije"
Novi Sad	Novi Sad	OŠ "Sonja Marinkovic"
Zrenjanin	Zrenjanin	OŠ "2. oktobar"
Uzice	Sevojno	OŠ "Aleksa Dejović"
Jagodina	Jagodina	OŠ "Ljubiša Urošević"
Leskovac	Leskovac	OŠ "Vuk Karadžić"

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11.4. Annex 4. Most important data sources

The evaluation was partly based on the analysis of data from various sources. Valuable data was provided by the reports of various international donor agencies, the respondents of the interviewees in the course of the fieldwork and various research reports. The main line of statistical analysis was based on the data from the following sources:

1. UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2014. (Stankovic, 2015.)

2. Data provided by the Central Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

3. OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012.

4. IEA TIMSS survey, 2011.

5. UNICEF special schools research. ("Education in schools and classes for education of children with developmental disorders in Serbia") IPSOS, 2015.

6. The report on the external evaluation result in the 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years. Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, 2015.

7. Policy Impact Analysis. Providing additional support to students from vulnerable groups in pre-university education. UNICEF, 2013.

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11.5. Annex 5. The list of persons interviewed

Respondents of interviews at national level

Government authorities and agencies

- Jelena Markovic, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government (CIPRU)

- Angelina Skarep, EU Department of the MoESTD

- Ljerka Dordevic, Regional School Authority, Belgrade

- Gordana Cvetkovic, Inclusion Team of the MoESTD

- Ljlijana Simic, Inclusion Team of the MoESTD

- Gordana Capric, Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation

- Zdenka MIlivojevic, Roma program of DILS

- Ivana Ceneric, head of the cabinet of the minister, MoESTD

- Borislava Maksimovic, director of DILS

- Zdenka Milivojevic, program manager of DILS

Experts and researchers

- Aleksandar Baucal, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade University

- Gordana Nikolic, Pedagogical Faculty of Sombor University

- Dragica Pavlovic Babic, Institute of Psychology

- Tinde Kovac-Cerovic, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade University

- Sunica Macura, Faculty of Pedagogy, Jagodina

- Milena Mihajlovic, Center for Interactive Pedagogy

- Jasminka Cekic Markovic, Center for Educational Policy

- Vitomir Jovanovic, Center for Educational Policy

- Mihajlo Babin, Faculty for Economy, Finance and Administration

NGOs and international donor agencies

- Snezana Mrse, MOST

- Tanja Stojic, Fund for and Open Society

- Jadranka Stojanovic, Fund for and Open Society

- Valentina Zavisic, Veliki Mali

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- Tanja Rankovic, UNICEF

- Slavica Lola Vasic, Roma league

Directors of special schools

- Olivera Arsenijevic, School Bosko Buha

- Leposava Petrovic, School Stefan Decanski

- Radmila Laban, School Veljko Ramadanovic

Respondents of interviews at local and regional actors

Novi Sad

- Sonja Miladinović, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Novi Sad

- Vesna Radulović, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Novi Sad

- Milka Budakov, paediatrician, Primary Health Centre, Inter-sectorial commission, president

- Suzana Mićić, psychologist, Inter-sectorial commission

- Mira Kačavenda Kljajić, social worker, Centre for Social work, Inter-sectorial Primary Health Centre Novi Sad, Inter-sectorial commission, president commission

- Tatjana Lazor Obradović, founder, NGO Know How Center, Provincial institute of social welfare

Zrenjanin

- Ana Božinović, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Zrenjanin

- Vesna Popović, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Zrenjanin

- Olivera Lisinac, Head of the Department for social services, Municipality of Zrenjanin

- Jelena Dragić, Department for social services, coordinator of Inter-sectorial commission

- Olivera Ristić Kostić, Head of Unit for social services

- Ružica Tapavički, educational inspector

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- Ivana Atanacković, educational inspector

- Nikoleta Kovačev, paediatrician, Primary Health Centre, Inter-sectorial commission, president

- Nada Kralj, social worker, Centre for Social work, Inter-sectorial commission

- Jasna Jahura, psychologist, Primary Health Centre Zrenjanin, Inter-sectorial commission

- Verica Barbul, founder of NGO 'Ostanimo budni', Health mediator in the municipality

- Jelena Panić, president of NGO 'Centar za društvene aktivnosti'

Zvezdara/Belgrade

- Ljerka Đorđević, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Beograd

- Vesna Petrović Urošević, Head of Department for social services

- Pejana Bulović, coordinator of Inter-sectorial commission

- Dimitrije Petrov, coordinator of Mobile team for Roma inclusion

- Vera Kovačević, Head of educational inspection, City secretariat for education

- Tereza Moličnik, psychologist, Inter-sectorial commission, president

Užice

- Jelena Pavlović, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Užice

- Milica Timotijević, Head of Department for social services

- Ljiljana Jovnović, coordinator of Inter-sectorial commission

- Radica Blagojević Radovanović, psychologist, Inter-sectorial commission, president

- Ljiljana Tucović, pedagogue, Centre for Social work, Inter-sectorial commission

- Novka Garabinović Vukašinović, paediatrician, Primary Health Centre, Inter-sectorial commission

- Milenija Marković, educational inspector

- Jelena Žunić, programme manager, NGO Užički centar za prava deteta

- Ana Đokić, secretary, NGO Udruženja distrofičara Zlatiborskog okruga

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- Čedomir Cicović, Public relations manager, NGO Udruženja invalida cerebralne i dečije paralize Užice

Jagodina

- Dubravka Jovanović, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Jagodina

- Tatjana Backović, Head of Unit for education, culture, information and sport

- Nadežda Radosavljević, coordinator of Inter-sectorial commission

- Nadežda Mitrović, social worker, Centre for Social work, Inter-sectorial commission

- Gordana Todorović, psychologist, Inter-sectorial commission

- Danijela Jevtić, paediatrician, Primary Health Centre, Inter-sectorial commission

- Zorica Radivojša, educational inspector

- Jelena Nešić, educational inspector

- Snežana Mitrović, NGO Četri boje duge

Leskovac

- Lidija Nešić, educational advisor, Regional school administration of MOESTD Leskovac

- Bratislav Nešić, Head of Unit for education, social and health protection, culture, information, sport, youth and physical culture

- Dejan Mitić, Unit for education...

- Biljana Marinković, coordinator of Inter-sectorial commission

- Vesna Petrović, psychologist, Inter-sectorial commission

- Vera Ratković, social worker, Centre for Social work, Inter-sectorial commission

- Maja Janković, educational inspector

- Nebojša Stojanović, president of NGO Ringeraja (parents' association)

- Aleksandar Veselinović, NGO Ringeraja

Respondents of the interviews at the institutional level

Classroom observations

School 1: Primary school „Sonja Marinkovic", Novi Sad

- Jovana Ivanović, German language teacher, student with IEP1, V-3

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- Sonja Paripovic, class teacher, children with IEP2, IV-2 (Serbian language class)

School 2: Primary scool "Ćirilo i Metodije", Beograd

- Zaklina Ivanovic, class teacher, children with IEP1, II-4 (mathematic)

- Lidija Rolovic, Serbian language teacher, student with IEP 2, V-2

School 3: Primary school "Filip Višnjić", Beograd

- Mirjana Bodrozic, class teacher, children with IEP2, I-1 (Serbian language class)

- Ljiljana Gligorijevic, Serbian language teacher, five students with IEP1, VII-2

School 4: Primary school "Aleksa Dejović", Sevojno (Uzice)

- Mira Nikolic Matovic, biology teacher, two students with EIP2, V-5 (school department in Krvacvi)

- Dragica Maricic, Serbian language teacher, student with EIP1, V-2

School 5: "2. oktobar", Zrenjanin

- Tatjana Popov, Serbian language teacher, student with EIP2, V-2,

- Vojislva Protic, class teacher, IV-1, children with EIP2, (Serbian language class)

School 6: Primary school "Ljubisa Urosevic", Ribare (Jagodina)

- Ivana Radosevic, math teacher, student with EIP2, VIII-2

- Sonja Pavlovic, class teacher, III-1, children with EIP2 (Serbian language class)

School 7: Primary school "Vuk Karadzic", Leskovac

- Ivana Kocic, history teacher, VIII-5, student with EIP2, (school department in Bobiste)

- Jadranka Srckovic, class teacher, III-3, children with EIP1, (Serbian language class)

Interviews and focus groups

School 1 : Primary school „Sonja Marinkovic", Novi Sad

- Branislav Davidovic, school principal

- Tatjana Surducki, school specialist (pedagogue)

- Sonja Paripovic, teacher, coordinator of the team for support of inclusive education (team coordinator), member of the team for school development planning, children with IEP2

- Petra Gligorijevic, teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education; the team for school self-evaluation and the team for school development planning

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- Žužana Puškaš, teacher (Hungarian classroom), member of the school board and the team for support of inclusive education,

- Smiljana Rakić, Serbian language teacher, work with SEN children, members of the team for support of inclusive education

- Dušica Tot, mathematics teacher, work with SEN children, deputy school principal

- Dragica Miražić–Nemet, psychologist, civic education teachers, member of the team for support of inclusive education and member of the team for protection from violence

- Danijel Takač-Profesor, physical education teacher, (Hungarian classroom), work with SEN children

- Olivera Parabucki, biology teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education, work with SEN Children (IEP1 and IEP2)

- Petar Čubrilo, geography teacher, deputy school principal (ex-school principal)

- Ivana Groško, teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education and the team for school self-evaluation, work with SEN Children (IEP1 and IEP2)

- Ljiljana Čoban, teacher, work with SEN Children (IEP1)

- Suzana Nikolić, parent, SEN children, 8-2

- Jakšić Željko, parent, SEN children 4-2

- Eremić Zlata parent, SEN children 4-5

- Stajić Miroslav, parent, members of the Parents' Council, children 5-3

- Staničkov Ljubica, parent, SEN children 2-2

- Nović Zorica, members of the Parents' Council, children 6-2

- Đerić Aleksandar, parent, SEN children 7-4

- Berić Vesna,parent, SEN children 7-2

- Nataša Majlaht, parent, SEN children 2-5

School 2: Primary scool "Ćirilo i Metodije", Beograd

- Manuela Ilic, school principal

- Radmila Kastratovic, school specialist, pedagogue

- Jelica Markovic, school specialist, psychologist

- Ljubica Petrović, mathematics teacher, work with children following IEP1 and IEP2

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- Anka Stanković, geography teacher, member of the school board, work with children following IEP1 and IEP2

- Gordana Trajković, Serbian language teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Mira Jovanović, English language teacher, member of the team for school development planning and member of the team for protection from violence

- Dušan Popović, physical education teacher, work with children following IEP1 and IEP2

- Milena Milanović, mathematics teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Nevena Lazarević, teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education, work with children following IEP1

- Slavica Borisavljević, teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Sandra Simić, parent whose children are following IEP1,3-4

- Olivera Jovanović, parent whose children are following IEP1, 2-4

- Biljana Ilić, parent whose children are following IEP2, 5-2

- Gordana Stojanović, parent, Roma children, 7-2

- Dalibor Lalovic, parent, member of the Parents' Council 6-4

- Dragan Milivojević, parent, member of School board, 6-1

- Marija Damjanović. parent, member of School board, 5-3

School 3: Primary school "Filip Višnjić", Beograd

- Vesna Milic, school principal

- Sonja Subotic, school specialist (psihologist)

- Ana Balaban, school specialist (pedagogue)

- Mirjana Bodrožić, teacher, member of the team for development of the school curriculum

- Tatjana Adamović, teacher, member of the team for protection from violence

- Milena Radivojević, teacher, member of the team for school developmental plenining

- Slavka Tomić, special education teacher (defectolog)

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- Ljubica Rangelov, mathematics teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Ljiljana Gligorijević, Serbian language teacher

- Željko Janković, biology and chemistry teacher

- Snežana Svorcan, physical education teacher, member of the school board

- Dragica Milonjić , parent whose children are following IEP2

- Emin Ramosaj, parent whose children are following IEP1

- Violeta Petković, parent whose children are following IEP2

- Nataša Korolija, parent, member of the school board

- Fatmir Gaši, parent, Roma children, following IEP1

School 4: Primary school "Aleksa Dejović", Sevojno (Uzice)

- Vlada Zivkovic, school prinicipal

- Gordana Timotijevic, school specialist (pedagogue)

- Radica Blagojevic-Radosavljevic, school specialist (psychologist)

- Ivana Matijevic, Spanish language teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Bojana Kuzovic, mathematics teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Vesna Milicevic, biology teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Dragica Maricic, Serbian language teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Slavica Pejic, Serbian language teacher, member of the team for development of the school curriculum

- Bobosav Mihajlovic, technical education teacher, member of the school board

- Dusanka Hristovski, English language teacher, member of the team for school development planning

- Srdjan Marinkovic, English language teacher, member of the team for protection from violence

- Dragana Gajevic, parent whose children are following IEP

- Marija Panic, parent whose children are following IEP

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- Ika Migic, parent, Roma children

- Ljiljana Veizovic, parent, member of the school board

- Slavica Jesic, members of the Parents' Council

School 5: "2. oktobar", Zrenjanin

- Natasa Zivojin, school principal

- Vida Grujic, school specialist (psychologist)

- Kosana Rauski, school specialist (pedagogue)

- Marija Barna, teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Jelena Radišić, German language teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Jelica Čokić, technical education teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Dušica Radočaj, Serbian language teacher, member of the school board.

- Dušan Novakov, history teacher, member of the team for protection from violence

- Bojana Molnar, biology teacher, team for school development planning

- Snežana Sekulić, physical education teacher

- Etus Virag, parent, Roma children

- Ana Marija Prokic, parent whose children are following IEP2

- Bojana Beric, parent whose children are following IEP2

- Dejan Beric, parent whose children are following IEP2

- Milena Filep, parent whose children are following IEP2

- Mirjana Kavlak, members of the Parents' Council

- Angelina Antic Dundjerski – parent, member of the team for school development planning

School 6: Primary school "Ljubisa Urosevic", Ribare (Jagodina)

- Gordana Zlatanovic, school principal

- Milena Nedeljkovic, school specialist (psychologist)

- Ivana Radosevic, mathematics teacher, member of the team for protection from violence, children with EIP2

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- Sonja Pavlovic, teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education, work with children with EIP2

- Milica Milutinovic, art education teacher, member of the school board

- Zoran Ilic, physical education teacher

- Nevena Milic, Serbian language teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education, work with children with EIP2

- Kosta Popovic, teacher, member of the team for school development planning

- Biljana Milosevic, teacher, member of the team for school development planning

- Lela Vasic, parent, member of the school board and the team for for school development planning

- Silvana Momirovic, parent whose children are following IEP2

- Arsic Slavica, parent whose children are following IEP2

School 7: Primary school "Vuk Karadzic", Leskovac

- Slavica Gavrilović, deputy school principal

- Dragana Stanisavljević, school specialist (pedagogue)

- Siniša Smiljković, teacher, member of the team for support of inclusive education

- Nataša Dojčinović, teacher, member of the team for school development planning

- Bojan Ivković teacher, member of the team for school development planning

- Vesna Petković, teacher, coordinator of the team for support of inclusive education

- Slađana Kostić, Serbian language teacher

- Srđan Petković, physical education teacher, member of the school board

- Dejan Savić, geography teacher, member of the team for school developmental planning

- Tatjana Petrović, mathematics teacher

- Saša Stojanović, parent whose children are following IEP

- Jelena Mitrović, parent whose children are following IEP

- Aleksandar Radivojević, parent whose children are following IEP

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11.6. Annex 6. The list of documents analysed/referenced

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- Monitoring Framework for Inclusive Education in Serbia. UNICEF – SIPRU – FOS – Institute of Psychology, 2014

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11.7. *Annex 7. The instruments of the fieldwork evaluation*

11.7.1. School level evaluation instruments

11.7.1.1. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with school directors and school specialists

- To what extent is your school inclusive and advocates for inclusive education?

- What have been the greatest difficulties in your school in the implementation of inclusive education? Have there been any differences in implementation in relation to Roma students and SEN students? Have you noticed any specific difficulties related to the gender of students? Or a place of living of students? (rural area)

- The introduction of inclusive education has been supported by a number of educational policy measures. Which of the following measures have largely contributed to the development and implementation of inclusive practice in your school?

    o Preparatory Preschool Program (PPP)

    o Enrolment procedures (enrolment without child categorisation, possibility to enrol without adequate documentation, registration of children over 7 years of age on the basis of prior knowledge tests)

    o Educational profiles of students, individual educational plans and differentiation of teaching

    o Educational assistants

    o Reducing class size

    o Free textbooks

    o Health and social protection

    o Training for teachers

    o Expert team for inclusive education

    o Internal support by professional services (psychologist, educator, etc.).

    o Self-evaluation of school and School Development Plan

    o External evaluation

    o Network of support to inclusive education

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- o Inter-sectional commission
- o DILS project

- Why have these measures contributed the most? What measures have contributed the least and why?

- How do you see the contribution of principals to the development and implementation of inclusive practice in your school? /How do you see the contribution of school specialists, primarily psychologists and educators, to the development and implementation of inclusive practices in your school?

- How have the reduction of number of school specialists in schools affected this type of support to IE?

- How do you see the contribution of educational assistants to the development and implementation of inclusive practices in your school? In which activities related to inclusion do educational assistants participate?

- How do you see the contribution of parents to the development and implementation of inclusive practice in your school? In which activities related to inclusion are the parents involved? What difficulties arise when establishing cooperation with parents? Are you satisfied with the achieved level of cooperation? Please provide examples of good cooperation?

- In your opinion, what is the level of cooperation in your school between parents of children with special needs and parents of other children?

- To what extent are educational inclusion and the specific characteristics of SEN children taken into account in creating the curriculum and school development plan in your school? Please provide examples.

- How does your school ensure that students from marginalised groups, for example Roma students exercise their right to a quality education? Who is responsible to detect and react to potential discriminatory practices?

- What would you single out as the most important positive experience, i.e. good examples from your school related to the implementation of inclusive education?

- In your opinion, how could inclusive practice in your school be improved in the next five years?

- Based on the previous experience what would you do differently in relation to the introduction and implementation of inclusive education in your school?/Based on the previous experience what would you do differently with regard to providing support to teachers for the introduction and implementation of inclusive practice in the classroom?

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- What would motivate teachers the most to introduce inclusive practices in their classes?

- Generally speaking, what is in your opinion the greatest weakness and disadvantage of inclusive education in Serbia?

- What is in your opinion the greatest contribution, result of inclusive education for different actors in the educational process - For students? Parents? Teachers? School as a whole?

11.7.1.2. Interview guides for semi-structured focus group interviews with teachers

- To what extent is your school inclusive and advocates for inclusive education?

- What have been the greatest difficulties in your school in the implementation of inclusive education?

- Which of the educational policy measures have largely contributed to the development and implementation of inclusive practice in your school? (see list above). Why have these measures contributed the most? What measures have contributed the least and why?

- How do you see the contribution of school principals, school specialists, pedagogical assistant and parents to the development and implementation of inclusive practice in your school?

- How have the reduction of number of school specialists in schools affected this type of support to IE?

- What would you single out as the most important positive experience, i.e. good examples from your school related to the implementation of inclusive education?

- Based on what criteria do teachers assess whether any of the students need additional educational support?

- What information and data do teachers rely on when developing educational profiles of students?

- What are the difficulties teachers face when developing educational profiles?

- Besides teachers, which experts are usually involved in the development of educational profiles and what is their contribution?

- What are the typical problems in creating Individual Educational Plan (IEP)?

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- What are the most common difficulties in working with students with IEP?

- How do you assess your competence for working with students with IEP? What competencies do you have and what are you still lacking?

- To what extent have professional training programs contributed to the development of the competences required for working with children with IEP? What programs have contributed the most? How do you assess the contribution of DIL project?

- What teaching methods you use most often?

- What approaches and teaching methods have proven to be most effective in dealing with students with IEP?

- What kind of stimulation do you usually use to motivate students i.e. when you want to support the outcome, effort and progress of students?

- What kind of stimulation has proven to be effective for students with IEP?

- What kind of grading do you usually practice?

- What are the difficulties you face when grading students with IEP?

- How do you ensure that students with IEP are accepted in the class and have the support of other students?

- How do you establish cooperation with parents of SEN children? Are you satisfied with the achieved level of cooperation? What difficulties usually occur when establishing cooperation with parents of SEN children?

- What are the school activities that include parents of SEN children?

- In your opinion, what is the level of cooperation in your school between parents of children with special needs and parents of other children?

- To what extent are educational inclusion and the specific characteristics of SEN children taken into account in creating the curriculum and school development plan in your school?

- How does your school ensure that students from marginalised groups, for example Roma students exercise their right to a quality education? Who is responsible to detect and react to potential discriminatory practices?

- In your view what were the major improvement in your school during the last five years in relation to its inclusion practice?

- In your opinion, how could inclusive practice in your school be improved in the next five years?

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- What would motivate teachers the most to introduce inclusive practices in their classes?

- Generally speaking, what is in your opinion the greatest weakness and disadvantage of inclusive education in Serbia?

- What is in your opinion the greatest contribution, result of inclusive education for different actors in the educational process - For students? Parents? Teachers? School as a whole?

11.7.1.3. Interview guides for semi-structured focus group interviews with parents

- To what extent is school that attend your child inclusive and advocates for inclusive education?

- What have been the greatest difficulties in the school in the implementation of inclusive policy?

- Which of the educational policy measures have largely contributed to the development and implementation of inclusive practice in the school? (see list above). Why have these measures contributed the most? What measures have contributed the least and why?

- How do you see the contribution of school principals, school specialists, pedagogical assistant and parents to the development and implementation of inclusive practice in the school?

- How have the reduction of number of school specialists in schools affected this type of support to IE?

- When you were enrolling your child in primary school, how did you learn (or were informed) about the given possibilities?

- What was the biggest difficulty you encountered when enrolling a child in primary school?

- To what extent does the school your child attends support inclusive education?

- To what extent are parents of SEN children involved in the decision-making process in the school you child attends?

- In what ways are you personally involved in the decision-making process in the school?

- Are you and in what way involved in various school activities?

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- How are teachers trying to establish cooperation with parents of SEN children?

- How are you satisfied with the achieved level of cooperation?

- In your opinion, what is the level of cooperation achieved between the parents of children with special needs and parents of other children?

- What do you think about IEP as a way to provide SEN children with the necessary educational support?

- Except through IEP what are the other ways to help SEN children?

- Has IEP been developed for your child?

- To what extent have you been involved in developing IEP?

- In your opinion, to what extent does IEP help the development and progress in learning of your child?

- In your opinion, how could IEP for your child be improved?

- What are the teachers' approaches and teaching methods that contribute most to the progress of your child?

- According to your knowledge, how does the school monitor and evaluate SEN children?

- In addition to learning difficulties, what other difficulties does your child face in school?

- How is your child accepted by the peers in school?

- How do you ensure that students with IEP are accepted in the class and have the support of other students?

- Have your child been discriminated against in school in any way? What have you done about that?

- In your opinion, how could inclusive practice in the school be improved in the next five years?

- What would motivate teachers the most to introduce inclusive practices in their classes?

- Generally speaking, what is in your opinion the greatest weakness and disadvantage of inclusive education in Serbia?

- What would you single out as the most important positive experience, i.e. good examples related to the implementation of inclusive education?

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- What is in your opinion the greatest contribution, result of inclusive education for different actors in the educational process - For students? Parents? Teachers? School as a whole?

11.7.1.4. List of assessment criteria for the analysis of school development plans

- The school has a defined policy and systematic plan of inclusive education development, incorporated in the school development plan and other school documents.
- Parents and students from vulnerable groups are involved in school planning.
- The evaluation of the previous School Development Plan and the creation of the new one integrate the opinions and assessments of the parents of children from vulnerable groups, as well as of the children themselves.
- The school has a plan for the support to children from vulnerable groups and this plan is incorporated in the School Development Plan.
- School development plan is revised upon recommendations of the external evaluation

11.7.1.5. List of assessment criteria for the external evaluation reports if they exist

- Which results school was obtained on quality standards related to inclusive practice?
- What suggestions school obtained in order to improve inclusive practice?

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11.7.1.6. Classroom observation protocol[24]

1. BEFORE OBSERVATION

Please fill in this section before lesson observation.

Date: _____   Grade and class: _____

Number of pupils/students in the class: _____

Number of pupils/students present in the lesson: _____

Number of pupils/students following:

    a) individualisation _____

    b) IEP1 _____

    c) IEP2 _____

Place of the lesson in the timetable: _____

Subject: _____   Teacher: _____

Didactic unit: _____   Lesson type: _____

	Completely disagree	Mainly disagree	Mainly agree	Completely agree
The lesson plan contains a clear overview of the required adaptations.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
The work plan for a student who follows an IEP enables the student to be included in class work.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				

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[24]Based on *Monitoring framework for inclusive education in Serbia*, UNICEF, 2015, pp.205-208 and *Educational inclusion of Roma children*, COP, 2013, pp. 141 -146

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2. DURING OBSERVATION

Remarks:

3. AFTER OBSERVATION

	Completely disagree	Mainly disagree	Mainly agree	Completely agree
1. The activities in the lesson rely on prior students' knowledge and experiences.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
2. The teacher encourages students to be actively involved in the learning/instruction process.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
3. The teacher encourages students to link the contents in the lesson with the contents of other subjects and/or real-life phenomena.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				

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4. The teacher uses different teaching methods and forms of work	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
5. The teacher uses different teaching aids and materials to enhance students' understanding of the contents.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
6. The teacher uses different incentives to motivate students	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
7. Students formulate predictions, assessments and/or hypotheses and devise ways of verifying them.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
8. The teacher encourages students to think about how they acquire new knowledge/skills.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
9. Problems and questions are challenging to students.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
10. The questions asked by the teacher encourage divergent thinking.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
11. Exchange on the topic among students constitutes a significant part of the lesson.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
12. Pupils/students' questions and comments often define the focus of the lesson.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				

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13. Students actively listen to what other students have to say on the topic of the lesson.	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
14. The teacher uses different methods of assessment	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
15. The teacher gives time-bound and clear feedback	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
16. _____	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
17. _____	1	2	3	4
Comment:				
In general, the lesson has been organised in a way that: a) ensures successful learning by all students b) ensures successful learning by most students c) ensures successful learning by a few students d) does not ensure successful learning	1	2	3	4
Comment:				

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11.7.1.7. Interview guides for semi-structured interviews for special education schools (only school directors and teachers)

- In your view what were the most important elements of the government inclusion policy?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the institutional network of special education?

- How the inclusion policy did affect your school in relation to enrolment, tasks, program, employment composition and budget?

- Did the school participate in any programs in the course of the implementation of the policy? If yes, what program and how?

- Did the school developed its capacities for and practice of serving the habilitation/rehabilitation of children learning in mainstream schools?

- In your view did the capacity of mainstream school for teaching SEN children improved since the beginning of the implementation of the inclusive education?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the education of Roma students? Especially, did the policy positively affect the level of discrimination and segregation?

- Did the policy affect in any ways the learning of boys and girls?

- What were the most important changes in the education system (management, financing, curriculum and standards, examinations, quality evaluation, textbooks, etc.) that directly or indirectly affected the implementation of the inclusion policy?

- Overall, in your view what were the most important positive and negative results of the inclusion policy so far?

11.7.2. Local level evaluation instruments

11.7.2.1. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with municipality representatives (head and/or other representative of department for social affairs)

General questions

- In your opinion, what are the main ideas and goals of the current national policy on inclusive education?

- How would you describe the situation at the level of municipality in relation to inclusive education (IE)? How inclusive are your primary schools? How do you explain that?

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- In which aspects of IE are achievements biggest? How do you explain that?

- In which aspects there was the least progress? How do you explain that?

- What are the biggest challenges that SEN children and their parents are facing with in the education?

- What are the biggest challenges that schools are facing in efforts to become more inclusive?

- What are the biggest challenges that municipality administration is facing when it comes to promoting inclusive education?

Areas from Framework for monitoring inclusive education

Area 1 - institutions and inter-sectorial cooperation

- How do you assess the work of inter-sectorial commission (IEC)? Which aspects of its work do you find most successful? What are the biggest challenges the IEC is facing at the moment?

- How do you assess cooperation between municipality, schools, primary health centre, and centre for social work? Has this cooperation been formalized in any way? How? Are there clear set of procedures, division of roles and responsibilities? What are the main bottlenecks and challenges in this respect?

- What kind of cooperation exists with between municipality and regional school authority of MOESTD? What could be improved?

- How do you assess the work of NGOs in the field of inclusive education? In which areas do you find your collaboration with NGOs most fruitful? What could be improved?

Area 2 - local policies

- Is there a Local action plan (LPA) on promoting inclusive education / social inclusion?
    o If yes, what are its main goals? To what extent have they been met? How do you know that / is there a monitoring practice? (a copy of LPA should be taken)
    o If no, have they considered adopting LPA? Why?

Area 3 - human resources

- In municipality, is there a person responsible for coordination and work specifically with vulnerable groups?

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- If yes, what does his/her work entails, what are the responsibilities? What are the tangible results?

- If no, have you considered having such job position? Why?

- When delegating municipality representatives to school boards what criteria are used? Do they report in any formal / non-formal way to department of social affairs on the status of education and inclusion in a given school?

- Do you support trainings aimed at enhancing sensitivity and competencies of school staff for IE? How extensive this support is? How do you explain that? Do you organize meetings and trainings for parents of SEN children? Do you provide peer and/or teacher mentoring?

Area 4 - support for inclusive education

- Does the municipality regularly provide funds for pupil/student transportation, with special focus on poorer pupils/students and those with mobility problems? To what extent?

- Does the municipality regularly provide free meals to lower SES pupils/students? To what extent?

- Does the municipality provide lower SES pupils/students with scholarships? To what extent?

- Does the municipality provide textbooks to lower SES pupils/students? To what extent?

- Does the municipality assist in the delivery of extracurricular activities, with special focus on vulnerable pupils/students (excursions, school trips, outings, plays etc.)? To what extent?

- Does the municipality provide adequate clothing and footwear to lower SES children? To what extent?

- Does the municipality provide assistive technologies and the necessary modifications (e.g. ramps, toilets) to schools that need them? To what extent?

Area 5 - funding measures

- Does the budget plan foresee the funds for ISC operation and recommendations?
    - If yes, is it stable / increasing?
    - If not, why not?

- Does the budget plan foresee funding measures and activities relevant to IE?

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- How do you assess effectiveness of cash benefits (e.g. child allowance)? What are the biggest challenges in this respect?

Area 6 - data and reporting

- What kind of data, relevant to IE, do you possess and/or collect? (after that show the card with the following list - do you collect this):

  o the coverage of vulnerable children by preschool, primary and secondary education at the municipal level

  o vulnerable children's academic performance improvement

  o effects of education according to individual education plans

  o vulnerable pupils/students' dropout rate

  o vulnerable pupils/students' absenteeism

  o vulnerable pupils/students' motivation for school and their satisfaction with school

  o violence against vulnerable pupils/students

  o discrimination against vulnerable pupils/students

  o vulnerable students' participation in school bodies

  o vulnerable children's parents' participation

- Do you and whom do you report on the status of inclusive education at the municipality level (parents and pupils/students, schools, the general public, media)?

- What are your plans regarding data collection and reporting practices?

11.7.2.2. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with educational advisor form regional school authority of MoESTD (RSA)

General questions

- In your opinion, what are the main ideas and goals of the current national policy on inclusive education?

- How would you describe the situation at the level of RSA in relation to inclusive education (IE)? How inclusive are schools? How do you explain that?

- In which aspects of IE are achievements biggest? How do you explain that?

- In which aspects there was the least progress? How do you explain that?

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- What are the biggest challenges that SEN children and their parents are facing with in the education?

- What are the biggest challenges that schools are facing in efforts to become more inclusive?

- What are the biggest challenges that RSA is facing when it comes to promoting inclusive education?

Area 0 - national policy and legal framework

- From the standpoint of educational advisor what has shown to be the most robust and effective elements of national policy on IE? And what needs to be changed and how? What in terms of policy direction and what in terms of more effective implementation?

- What are the biggest dilemmas caused by the current legal framework on IE? What needs to be changed and how?

Area 1 - institutions and inter-sectorial cooperation

- With witch national level institutions do you cooperate regarding IE? What does this cooperation consists of? How much is it formalized / with clear procedures? How it can be improved?

- How would you assess the cooperation with local actors - municipality, centres for social work, primary health centres - in relation to IE? What does this cooperation consists of? How much is it formalized / with clear procedures? How it can be improved?

Area 3 - human resources

- How many educational advisors are employed in RSA?

- Have they participated in PD in relation to IE? What competencies of educational advisors in your RSA are needed to be further developed in order to effectively support schools for IE?

- What other resources is RSA missing to successfully support schools in IE?

Area 4 - support for inclusive education

- What kind of support do the teachers need the most in order to improve their IE practices? What kind of professional development?

- What kind of support do the schools as organizations need the most to improve their IE practices? What kind of organizational development?

- How do you assess the role of external evaluation in improvement of IE? Is it good diagnostic tool in this respect? How can it be improved?

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- How effective EE is in terms of facilitating school improvement?

- How proficient are schools in performing self-evaluation? How useful is that exercise in relation to improving IE? How can be it more improved?

- How much of educational advisor role do you spend in actual supporting and advising schools? How do you explain that? And how much do you advise and support in terms of IE practices?

- Do you intervene in specific conflict cases in relation to IE? Who usually contacts you and with what requests?

Area 5 - data and reporting

- What kind of data, relevant to IE, do you possess and/or collect? (after that show the card with the following list - do you collect this):

  o the coverage of vulnerable children by preschool, primary and secondary education at the municipal level

  o vulnerable children's academic performance improvement

  o effects of education according to individual education plans

  o vulnerable pupils/students' dropout rate

  o vulnerable pupils/students' absenteeism

  o vulnerable pupils/students' motivation for school and their satisfaction with school

  o violence against vulnerable pupils/students

  o discrimination against vulnerable pupils/students

  o vulnerable students' participation in school bodies

  o vulnerable children's parents' participation

- Do you and whom do you report on the status of inclusive education at the RSA level (parents and pupils/students, schools, municipality, MOESTD, national level institutions, general public, media)?

11.7.2.3. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with members of inter-sectorial commission.

General questions

- How long have you been involved in in the work of ISC?

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- What are the differences between the work of ISC and previous Commission for categorization (if you know the practice of the latter)?

- What are the main principles, basic values which steer your work in the inter-sectorial commission?

- How satisfied are you with the overall experience so far?

- What are the biggest results of ISC you are most proud of?

- What were the biggest challenges you faced so far in the work of ISC?

Specific questions that researches have shown to be critical

- What elements of assessment procedure prescribed by the rulebook is difficult to follow? Are you forced to make some adjustments to the procedure?

- Are you able to meet the 45 days deadline for giving an opinion? Does it happen that you do not make this deadline? How do you explain that?

- How often do members of ISC meet?

- How often do you get complaints on your opinion? How do you address these complaints?

- Where do you usually observe children? Does it happen that you make observation in the municipality offices? How do you explain that?

- What sources of information do you consult while making assessment?

- How often do you engage temporary members in the work of ISC?

Area 1 - institutions and cooperation

- How would you describe your cooperation with municipality administration? Do you get the support you need for your work? Space for meetings, print & copy, other logistics? How do you assess your cooperation with ISC coordinator?

- How do you assess your cooperation with schools? Are schools well informed about the ISC, their responsibilities, procedures? What percentage of requests for ISC assessment comes from schools? What are the biggest challenges in terms of communication and cooperation with schools?

- What is the extent to which the decision-making authority of parents prevail? How much are the parents informed about their strengthened role in enrolment decisions?

- Are you involved in activities to inform all relevant partners (parents, schools, other institutions) about the work of ISC (responsibilities, procedures, results)?

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- How do you arrange ISC duties with your regular job in home institution? Are there some open issues (e.g. do you work in ISC in your free time or is it part of your job description)?

Area 3 - human resources

- How were you selected to become a member of ISC?

- Is the current organization of ISC in terms of number of people involved adequate to produce expected results?

- How many days/hours per month do you devote to ISC responsibilities?

- Do you feel you would need more professional development in order to perform quality assessment of SEN? What kind of professional development of which competencies would you need?

Area 4 - support for inclusive education

- What kind of direct support measures (requesting finances) have you been proposing so far? Which ones do you propose more often, which less often?

- What kind of indirect support measures (requesting finances) have you been proposing so far? Which ones do you propose more often, which less often?

- Do you monitor/follow whether these measures have been taken, how and with what results?

Area 5 - funding measures

- Is your engagement in ISC paid? How much? Is that fair and adequate compensation?

- Do the municipality officials consult you when the annual municipality budget is created? Is there earmarked money for the support measures that you propose?

- To what extent are the measures you propose actually financed? How do you explain that?

- What has been most often financed, and what most rare?

- Do you restrict your proposals, knowing the funding history of some measures?

Area 6 - data and reporting

- Do you keep your records of your work in a systematic way? Is it in a form that you can easily extract data for different reporting purposes?

- Whom do you report on your work? How often? What do these reports contain?

- Is there any follow up after submission of the reports?

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11.7.2.4. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with municipality education inspectors

Legal framework

- In your opinion, what are the main assumptions of the current legal framework regarding the enrolment of SEN in schools and the education support they are given?

- How do you assess legal framework in this respect? Does it give you clear guidance in your work?

- Are legal documents mutually compatible, coherent? Is there some contradictory provisions?

- What are the biggest problems in executing existing legal provisions?

- What aspect are overregulated, what are under regulated? What should be legally regulated better and in what way?

- How well are these legislations known by parents, teachers?

Scope of work

- To what extent the decision-making authority of parents prevail in respect of school enrolment?

- What kind of issues have shown up in this respect? What are those that are most often? What were most severe cases?

- Could you give some examples? How they have been resolved?

- To what extent are the parents informed about their rights to obtain special support for their children from the school and municipality (to file a request to ISC)?

- What kind of issues have shown up in this respect? What are those that are most often? What were most severe cases?

- Could you give some examples? How they have been resolved?

- What issues have shown up in your work in relation of discrimination in schools? What are those that are most often? What were most severe cases?

- Could you give some examples? How they have been resolved?

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Institution and cooperation

- With whom from the local actors do you cooperate the most in your work?

- How would you describe this cooperation? Where are the biggest bottlenecks in communication and cooperation? How would you explain that?

Human resources

- How many education institutions are within your jurisdiction?

- How many individual cases, complaints you work on average in one year? Is the number steady? If not, how can you explain that?

- Are you in the position to work effectively with than number of cases?

- What kind of support do would be welcome to you?

- What kind of professional development would be welcomed by you?

Data and reporting

- Do you keep your records of your work in a systematic way? Is it in a form that you can easily extract data for different reporting purposes?

- Whom do you report on your work? How often? What do these reports contain?

- Is there any follow up after submission of the reports?

11.7.2.5. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with local NGOs

NGO whereabouts

- To which goals is your organization committed in relation to inclusive education?

- What kind of projects you work on?

- What are the results you are most proud of?

- What are the main lessons learned from these projects?

General evaluation

- How would you describe the situation at the local level in relation to inclusive education (IE)? How inclusive are schools? How do you explain that?

- In which aspects of IE are achievements biggest? How do you explain that?

- In which aspects there was the least progress? How do you explain that?

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- What are the biggest challenges that SEN children and their parents are facing with in the education?

- What are the biggest challenges that schools are facing in efforts to become more inclusive?

Institutions and cooperation

- How would you describe your cooperation with municipality administration? What is good in that, and where are biggest challenges?

- How do you assess your cooperation with schools? What is good in that, and where are biggest challenges?

- How do you assess your cooperation with other local partners (Centre for social work, Primary health centre…)? What is good in that, and where are biggest challenges?

- How do you cooperate with SEN children and their parents? What is good in that, and where are biggest challenges?

11.7.3. National level evaluation instruments

11.7.3.1. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with former and recent policy makers and relevant stakeholder organizations

- What provided the strategic and legislation basis of inclusion policies? What were the original overall goals and the concrete policy objectives?

- Were there any changes in terms of strategic goals and policy objectives since 2009, especially after the previous elections?

- In your view what were the most important elements of the inclusion policy?

- What were the most important student groups whose learning was affected by the policy?

- What were the most important stakeholders groups of the inclusion policy? How was their involvement ensured? Which were the groups basically supported and opposed the new inclusion policy? What were the most debated issues in relation to the inclusion policy?

- How was the implementation of the policy monitored? What were the most important indicators of monitoring? What is the impact of the implementation of the policy on the basis of these indicators?

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- What were the most important positive and negative side-effects of the policy? How these side-effects did influence the implementation of the policy?

- How did the policy change the latitude for parents, municipalities, students, minority organizations, schools and other local educational and non-educational actors?

- What were the major changes in relation to the local co-operation frameworks among various relevant actors?

- What were the most important problems encountered during the implementation of the new enrolment system?

- What were the most important problems encountered in relation to the profiling of students? What kind of professional support teachers and schools received for improving their assessment practice?

- In your view how much were the teachers prepared for differentiated teaching and for the specific additional tasks (e.g. development of IEP, individualized supplementary development, curriculum adjustments, etc.) in relation to the inclusion policy?

- What were the most important professional support needs (pedagogical, habilitation/rehabilitation related) generated by the implementation of the inclusion policy? How much was the system of professional support able to respond to these needs?

- What was the impact of the policy on the institutional/organizational working of schools?

- What was the impact of the policy on the technical preparedness of schools for inclusive education?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the institutional network of special education?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the education of Roma students? Especially, did the policy positively affect the level of discrimination and segregation?

- Did the policy affect in any ways the learning of boys and girls?

- What were the most important changes in the education system (management, financing, curriculum and standards, examinations, quality evaluation, textbooks, etc.) that directly or indirectly affected the implementation of the inclusion policy?

- Overall, in your view what were the most important positive and negative results of the inclusion policy so far?

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11.7.3.2. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews for international development program staff

- What were the original objectives of the program? How were they related to the inclusion policy of the government?

- Was the program initiated on the basis of a donor co-ordination and consultations with the government? Who were the most important actors of this co-ordination framework?

- Who were involved in the planning and implementation of the program? (organizations, institutions, domestic and foreign individuals)

- How big was the budget of the program? What were the sources of the financial means deployed for the program?

- What was the resources allocation for the different components of the program?

- What were the most important indicators for the monitoring of the program? How was the program successful in connection to these indicators?

- What was the number of the members of Institutional and/or individual target groups to which the program reached out?

- What were the most important obstacles and problems encountered in the course of the implementation of the program?

- In your view what were the most important elements of the government inclusion policy?

- What were the most important student groups whose learning was affected by the policy?

- What were the most important positive and negative side-effects of the policy? How these side-effects did influence the implementation of the policy?

- How did the policy change the latitude for parents, municipalities, students, minority organizations, schools and other local educational and non-educational actors?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the institutional network of special education?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the education of Roma students? Especially, did the policy positively affect the level of discrimination and segregation?

- Did the policy affect in any ways the learning of boys and girls?

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- What were the most important changes in the education system (management, financing, curriculum and standards, examinations, quality evaluation, textbooks, etc.) that directly or indirectly affected the implementation of the inclusion policy?

- Overall, in your view what were the most important positive and negative results of the inclusion policy so far?

11.7.3.3. Interview guide for semi-structured interviews for experts, researchers

- What provided the strategic and legislation basis of inclusion policies? What were the original overall goals and the concrete policy objectives?

- In your view what were the most important elements of the government inclusion policy?

- Were there any changes in terms of strategic goals and policy objectives since 2009, especially after the previous elections?

- Were the planning and the implementation of the policy properly supported by data and research evidences?

- What were the most important student groups whose learning was affected by the policy?

- What were the most important positive and negative side-effects of the policy? How these side-effects did influence the implementation of the policy?

- How did the policy change the latitude for parents, municipalities, students, minority organizations, schools and other local educational and non-educational actors?

- What were the most important problems encountered during the implementation of the new enrolment system?

- What were the most important problems encountered in relation to the profiling of students? What kind of professional support teachers and schools received for improving their assessment practice?

- In your view how much were the teachers prepared for differentiated teaching and for the specific additional tasks (e.g. development of IEP, individualized supplementary development, curriculum adjustments, etc.) in relation to the inclusion policy?

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- What were the most important professional support needs (pedagogical, habilitation/rehabilitation related) generated by the implementation of the inclusion policy? How much was the system of professional support able to respond to these needs?

- What was the impact of the policy on the institutional/organizational working of schools?

- What was the impact of the policy on the technical preparedness of schools for inclusive education?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the institutional network of special education?

- How the inclusion policy did affect the education of Roma students? Especially, did the policy positively affect the level of discrimination and segregation?

- Did the policy affect in any ways the learning of boys and girls?

- What were the most important changes in the education system (management, financing, curriculum and standards, examinations, quality evaluation, textbooks, etc.) that directly or indirectly affected the implementation of the inclusion policy?

- Overall, in your view what were the most important positive and negative results of the inclusion policy so far?

11.8. Annex 8. Evaluation Matrix

No.	Thematic cluster	Indicator	Source of information
EQ1	The decision-making authority of parents	The extent to which the decision-making authority of parents in relation to the enrolment of their children prevails	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
		Degree of parental involvement in curriculum adjustment in schools	
		Degree of parental involvement in decisions on the organization of learning	
		The extent to which parents are informed	
EQ2	The impact of the inclusive policy on enrolment	The change of enrolment patterns towards mainstreaming	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
		The number of children taught on the basis of IEPs	
		The change of enrolment to special education	
		The degree to which affirmative measures are applied	
EQ3	The role of non-educational actors	The degree to which inter-sectoral commissions support integration and inclusion	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
		The degree to which municipalities support integration and inclusion	
		The degree to which regional education departments support integration and inclusion	
		The degree to which schools have access to professional services supporting integration and inclusion	
		The degree to which NGOs support integration and inclusion	
		The availability of sufficient financial resources for the work of non-educational actors	
EQ4	The profiling of children	The degree to which teachers are able to use diverse pedagogical evaluation methodologies	• Document analysis • Legal analysis
		The appropriateness of Instruments and mechanism of profiling	

		The degree to which various development programmes contributed to the improvement of profiling	• Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews • Classroom observation
EQ5	The impact on mainstream teaching	The degree to which mainstream teaching is differentiated	• Document analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews • Classroom observation
		The degree to which the conditions for differentiation have been improved	
		The degree to which various development programmes contributed to the improvement of mainstream teaching	
EQ6	Supplementary support to children	The appropriateness of mechanisms for determining individual needs	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
		The degree to which classroom climate and management is favourable for SEN children	
		The appropriateness of developmental support to children	
		The appropriateness of habilitation/rehabilitation support to SEN children	
		The degree to which the required human resources (e.g. specialists) are in place	
		The degree to which the required professional services are in place	
		The availability of sufficient financial resources in schools	
EQ7	Parental involvement	The degree to which parents are informed on the learning of their child on a regular basis	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
		The appropriateness of the institutionalized and informal involvement of parents	
		The degree to which parents are participating in the work and life of schools	
EQ8	The learning of vulnerable children	The degree of participation of vulnerable children in learning activities	• Document analysis
		Progression and dropout rates among vulnerable children	

		The learning outcomes of vulnerable children	• Legal analysis • Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews • Classroom observation
EQ9	Internal and external professional support to teachers	The appropriateness of professionals support in schools	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
		The appropriateness of professionals support provided by external service agencies	
		The degree to which special schools provide professional support to teachers in mainstream schools	
		The availability of sufficient financial resources in schools	
EQ10	Capacity building	The degree to which teachers acquire the required competencies in initial training	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews • Classroom observation
		The degree to which INSET programmes contributed to the improvement of teacher competencies	
		The appropriateness of mechanisms for determining capacity building needs	
		The degree to which training programmes contributed to the preparedness of non-teaching professionals	
		The availability of sufficient financial resources in schools, in NGOs and other training provider institutions	
EQ11	The institutionalization of required adjustments	Established and operating school-based student monitoring system	• Document analysis • Legal analysis • Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
		Operating school-based inclusion teams and management	
		The degree to which co-operation among teachers is institutionalized	
		The degree to which self-evaluation contributes to the improvement of school development plans in connection to inclusive education	
		The extent to which external evaluation results are used to improve school development plans in connection to inclusive education	
		The degree to which school development plans are implemented	
		The degree to which co-operation with external partners is institutionalized	

EQ12	Social support	The availability of scholarships	• Document analysis
		The availability of social allowances	• Legal analysis
		The availability of sufficient financial resources for social support	• Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews
EQ13	Technical conditions	The degree of accessibility	• Document analysis
		The availability of assistive technologies	• Legal analysis
		The availability and use of assistive technologies	• Statistical analysis
		The availability of sufficient financial resources for assistive technologies and for improving accessibility	• Focus group interviews • Individual interviews • Classroom observation
EQ14	Discriminatory practices	The existence and degree of discrimination of Roma	• Document analysis
		The existence and degree of discrimination on the basis of social status, special needs or gender	• Legal analysis • Statistical analysis
		The existence of effective prevention policies, measures and developments	• Focus group interviews • Individual interviews • Classroom observation
EQ15	Gender inequalities	The degree of gender inequities in terms of progression	• Document analysis
		The degree of gender inequities in terms of learning outcomes	• Legal analysis
		The degree of biases in terms of socialization patterns	• Statistical analysis • Focus group interviews • Individual interviews • Classroom observation
EQ16	The contribution of UNICEF	The contribution of UNICEF to development	• Individual interviews
		The contribution of UNICEF to knowledge management	
		The contribution of UNICEF to policy advocacy	