INDEX FOR INCLUSION - FACTS AND OPINIONS

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List of acronyms

MEST- Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MDA – Municipal Directorate for Education
RAE - Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians
UNMIK- United Nation Mission In Kosovo
FSDEK – Finnish Support to the Development of Education in Kosovo
UNICEF - United Nation Children's Rights & Emergency Relief Organization
KCF (KKK) – Kosovo Curriculum Framework
KESP (PSAK) - Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
IEP- Individual Education Plan
NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

Introduction

Index for Inclusion is an instrument that supports schools to develop as inclusive schools and inclusive teachers. We have been fortunate to meet the first author of this document, Mr. Tony Booth, through "Save the Children" and in consultation with him we have adapted it for the Kosovo context. In addition, in order to be more concrete in this adaptation, we organized a workshop with educators and teachers of pre-school institutions and schools of Kosovo (primary and lower secondary schools).

In some Municipalities of Kosovo, based on this document, we also organized workshops for implementing the inclusiveness in accordance with the methodology of Index for Inclusion. At first, this was a challenge for us, since it is a new method, a new more practical and concrete method that requires that the concrete works in these institutions take place after the trainings.

After some workshops organized in pre-school institutions and primary and lower secondary schools, we conducted a *research,* too. Therefore, we have the pleasure to present some facts and opinions derived from the workshops and *open-end interviews, carried out with educators, teachers, students and parents, coming from the institutions and localities in Kosovo where the training programs have taken place, and a focus group, in which the following participated: the managing staff members from the municipal education department, directors of pre-school institutions and schools, educators, teachers, and the staff members from the Save the Children Office.*

The facts and opinions presented here will serve as a model and opportunity to encourage MEST, MED, pre-school institutions and schools, in a word, the whole education community, to initiate and implement the inclusion in compliance with the methodology of the Index for Inclusion.

On this occasion, we want to heartily thank all the *educators, teachers, students, parents, directors and education officials,* who, by their readiness and opinions, have contributed in the documentation of the implementation impact of the Index for Inclusion in our institutions.

Authors

1. Context

Inclusive education is a challenge for all the countries which aim at realizing the principle of creating equal opportunities for all children, regardless of religion, culture, race, sex, and any other diversity, which is a fundamental right of each human being.

In many educational systems of different countries, inclusiveness has already become a reality but accompanied with numerous difficulties. Kosovo is facing this challenge, too, and it is making efforts towards the realization of the concept of inclusive education.

The changes, that have taken place in Kosovo during the recent years, have also had a powerful impact in the education domain. The reformation of education, along with many novelties, has brought new notions and concepts in terms of treatment and the place which the inclusive education should have in the context of education system. Therefore, the inclusive education includes the adoption of a wide vision of the education for all, taking into consideration the needs of all children, including those who are in danger of marginalization and exclusion.

In the Republic of Kosovo, despite the very positive developments in education, the statistics about the non-inclusion of children in education may still be considered disturbing. This is primarily for children with special needs (with severe and multiple damages) and minorities, especially for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (RAE). MEST is continuously making efforts to improve the conditions in all directions, in order to enable the highest inclusion for all the children in educational institutions. In this regard, very positive steps have been undertaken in relation to the inclusion, the basis of which is found in the special education.

The special education in Kosovo has been running since 1950, when the running of special schools commenced. The education in these special schools was offered for a small number of children, considering the small number of schools and the non-professional context. During 1990-1999, four special schools, and four attached classes in the context of regular schools, have functioned. This education, which was still segregating in rapport with inclusion, as such continued until 2000. Since 2000, a new era has begun for education in Kosovo in general and for special education in particular. It is about a larger percentage of inclusion of children with special needs in education and the progress in legal infrastructure.

In the beginning of this period, in a parallel manner with the gradual establishment and function of the Ministry of Science and Technology (firstly under the governing of UNMIK), some international agencies started to support, among others, the sector of special education. It is worth mentioning here the following: Save the Children, Finnish Support to the Development of Education in Kosovo (known as "FSDEK"), UNICEF, Handikos, etc.

The period after 2000, marks the progress towards the development of a series of documents by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (the special education sector functions as a separate unit), which have been oriented towards the inclusion.

2. Inclusive Education – definition

There are many ideas and definitions for inclusion and it is difficult to analyze all of them, but we will rely on the definitions that reflect, what we call, "inclusion".

The Inclusive education aims at the education of all the children according to their age, in compliance with their capacities, and their special needs in the common school settings. This is an international contemporary practice, accepted as the most suitable form for the realization of the right to education, as a basic right for all the children "without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal carer's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status" (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). The inclusive education means much more than the mere presence of children with special needs in regular schools. It has been developed throughout a long history of education novelties and represents the improvement of schooling in many levels for all the children (Skrtic, Sailor and Gree, 1996), and it is related to the promotion of dignity and differences (Barton, 1997).

The inclusive education is in favor not only of children who come from marginalized groups, but also of those who have learning difficulties. All the students benefit from the inclusive education, regardless to the fact whether they have special needs or not, since it is known that all the children have their peculiar style of learning and expression. Inclusive education, not only accepts all the children in the general education system, but it also encourages them to adapt to the special needs of all the students. According to the Index, the inclusion is related to the education of all children and youth. The following are the basic components of the definition of inclusion, according to the Index for Inclusion[1] (Both and Ainscow).

- Equal assessment of all students and workers.

- Increase of the level of active participation of students in the learning process and the decrease of their non-inclusion in cultures, curricula and in the school communities.

- Restructure of cultures, policies, and practices in schools, so that they respond to the diversity of children in the locality.

- Decrease of obstacles to learning and active participation in the learning process for all children, thus not only for those with impediments, or those who are called "students with special needs in education"

- Gain of experience from the attempts to overcome the obstacles (barriers) in the approach and participation of some students in the creation of changes in favor of students in general.

- Understanding the differences among the students as a source of support to learning, rather than as the problems that should be solved.

- Acknowledgement of the student's right to education in the place of residence.

- Enhancement of schools for both the education employees and the students.

- Emphasis of the school role in building the communities and creation of values, as well as in the increase of results.

- Advancement of mutual relationship between schools and communities.

- Acknowledgement of the fact that inclusion in the education system is an aspect of inclusion in society.

Therefore, the inclusive education is not merely a partial regulation of the education system, but its entire renovation, and a deep reform of schools (Stangvik, 1997), a school for everyone. The implementation of the inclusive education reform creates the conditions for an education system which integrates in itself a variety of students and differentiates the education according to this diversity.

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1   Booth, Tony. Ainscow, Mel. Adapted in Albanian language by Zabeli, Naser, and Behluli, Lulavere. 2011. Index for Inclusion Prishtina: Save the Children.

3. Inclusive Education in Kosovo

Important steps have been made towards the opening of regular schools, both for the children with special needs and other children. This process, however, is facing some obstacles especially in the correct understanding of the inclusive education concept by the education institutions starting from the central level to the school levels.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, included the inclusive education as a philosophy which permeates all its policies, from the legislation to the other accompanying documents promoting the inclusive education.

- Law on Pre-university Education in the Republic of Kosovo 2011 – "Inclusion" as a concept permeates the whole law, which is based on the Salamanca Statement on inclusion and the Convention on Human Rights.

- Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) (2010) – One of the main principles upon which the KCF is developed is the inclusion. The KCF is in line with the Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals.

- Early Learning Development Standards for Children Age 0 to 6 (2011) – Provides an inclusive approach to early education, which focus are the children and their achievements in different development fields in accordance with his/her age.

- Standards for child-friendly schools (2012) – The concept of child-friendly schools is grounded on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and represents an inclusive approach that integrates the aspects of education reform and puts the child in the center of attention in all the activities that take place and are implemented in school.

- Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (PSAK) (2011-2016) is a five-year plan which integrates the lifelong learning with the inclusion in education. It is a model for reaching all the students and it provides everyone with equal opportunities to quality education. In this strategic plan, the education of children with special needs refers to the Strategic Plan for Organizing Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs in Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2010-2015, which was compiled in 2010.

- Individual Education Plan (IEP) (2013) is an official pedagogical document which is compiled for children with special education needs, for whom the evaluation team of experts of different development fields have decided to provide suitable education for children with special needs.

In addition to the development of policies, this process has also been assisted by the cooperation with various projects which have been implemented in Kosovo and the gained experience enabled the establishment of positive and functional models for our context and circumstances, especially in the inclusion of children/students with special needs in the regular educational institutions, such as the pre-school institutions and schools. A particularly important contribution was given by Save the Children, Finnish Projects, UNICEF, etc. Some of the important activities are as follows:

- carrying out a considerable number of trainings for teachers

- transformation of special schools in Resource Centers

- establishment of inclusive pre-school and school institutions

- involvement of educators and teaching assistants

- publication of works, books and guides on the issue of inclusive education, etc.

- commencement of the implementation of the Index for Inclusion in pre-school and lower secondary school institutions, by Save the Children in partnership with the MEST.

4. Index for Inclusion

What is Index for Inclusion2?

The Index for Inclusion is an instrument which helps the schools to develop through the inclusive model, ensuring long-term changes in structure, learning, and various areas of schooling.
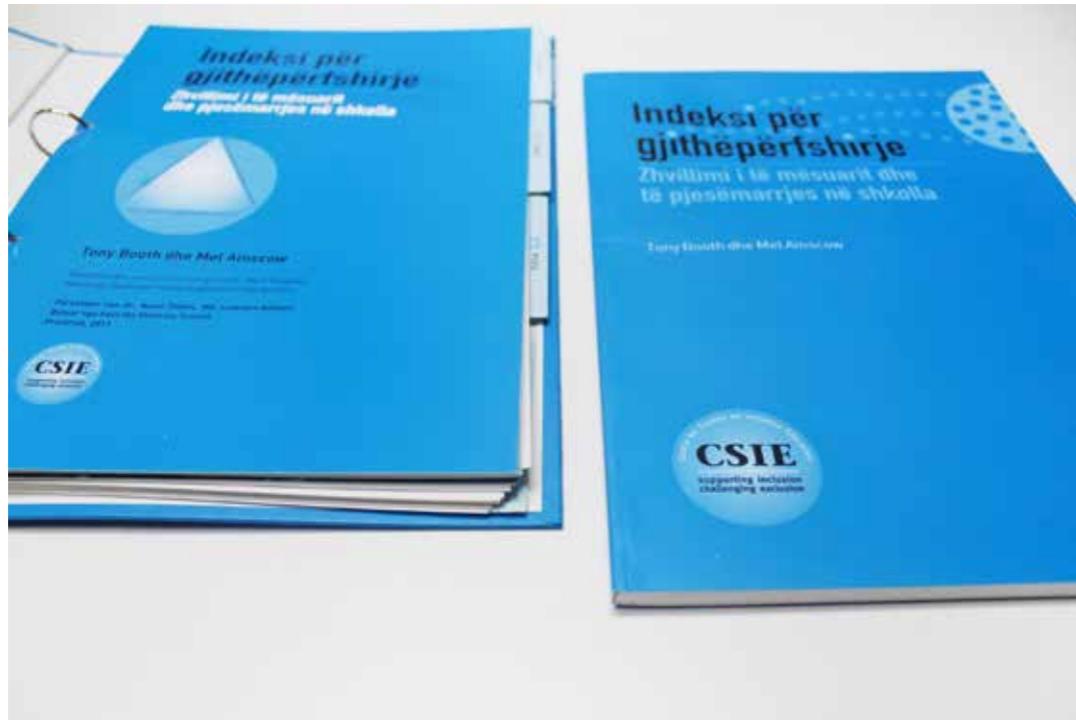
Context of Index:

- Main notions (inclusion, barriers to learning and active participation in the learning process, support of diversity),

- Dimension and areas:

A) Establishment of an inclusive culture,

B) Establishment of inclusive policies,

C) Establishment of inclusive practices.
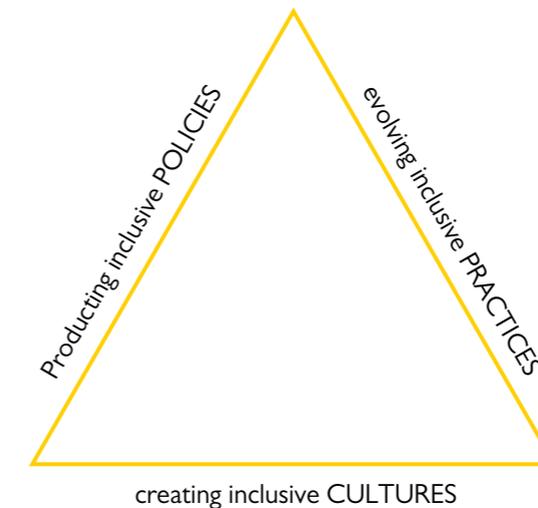
Figure 1. Triangle inclusion

Indicators and questions

The Index for Inclusion is composed of sections, with each of them containing 5-11 indicators. Each indicator represents an important aspect for the school even though some more sensitive issues, such as minorities, children with special needs, are reflected in all the indicators. The meaning of each indicator has been explained by a number of questions, which crystallize the current situation in school, provide additional ideas for developmental activities, and serve as criteria of progress.

The inclusive process is composed of five phases:

1. Getting started with the Index,

2. Obtaining Information about school,

3. Compiling the school plan for inclusive education,

4. Implementing the priorities,

5. Reviewing the process of the Guide – Evaluation.

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2   Brief extract from the Index for Inclusion in Albanian language.

DIMENSION A – *Creating inclusive cultures,* refers to the development of common inclusive values and cooperation rapports.

Field A.1 – Building Community,

Field A.2 – Establishing inclusive values.

DIMENSION B – *Producing inclusive policies,* enables the inclusion to be integrated in the school plans and provides strategies for changes.

Field B.1 – Establishing the school for all,

Field B.2 – Organizing support for diversity.

DIMENSION C – *Evolving inclusive practices,* develops school practices which reflect the inclusive culture and policies of the schools.

Field C.1 – Organizing teaching and learning process,

Field C.2 – Mobilizing of resources.

Phase 1 - Getting started with the Index (the half of the tem):

- Setting up a cooperation-coordinating group;
- Reviewing the approach to school development;
- Analysis of existing knowledge using the elaborating notions and review framework;
- Deepening of the analysis using the indicators and questions;
- Preparing to work with other groups.

Phase 2 - Obtaining information about school (one term):

- Exploring the knowledge of employees;
- Exploring the knowledge of students;
- Exploring the knowledge of parents/carers and members of local community;
- Setting priorities for development.

Phase 3 - Compilation of an inclusive school development plan:

- Reviewing the inclusive school development plan,
- Analysis and setting the priorities in the school development plan.

Phase 4 –Implementing priorities:

- Implementing priorities into practice;
- Sustaining development;
- Assessing the process of the Guide.

Phase 5 – Follow-up of the work and reviewing the process (ongoing):

- Evaluating developments;
- Reviewing work with the Guide;
- Continuing the Guide process.
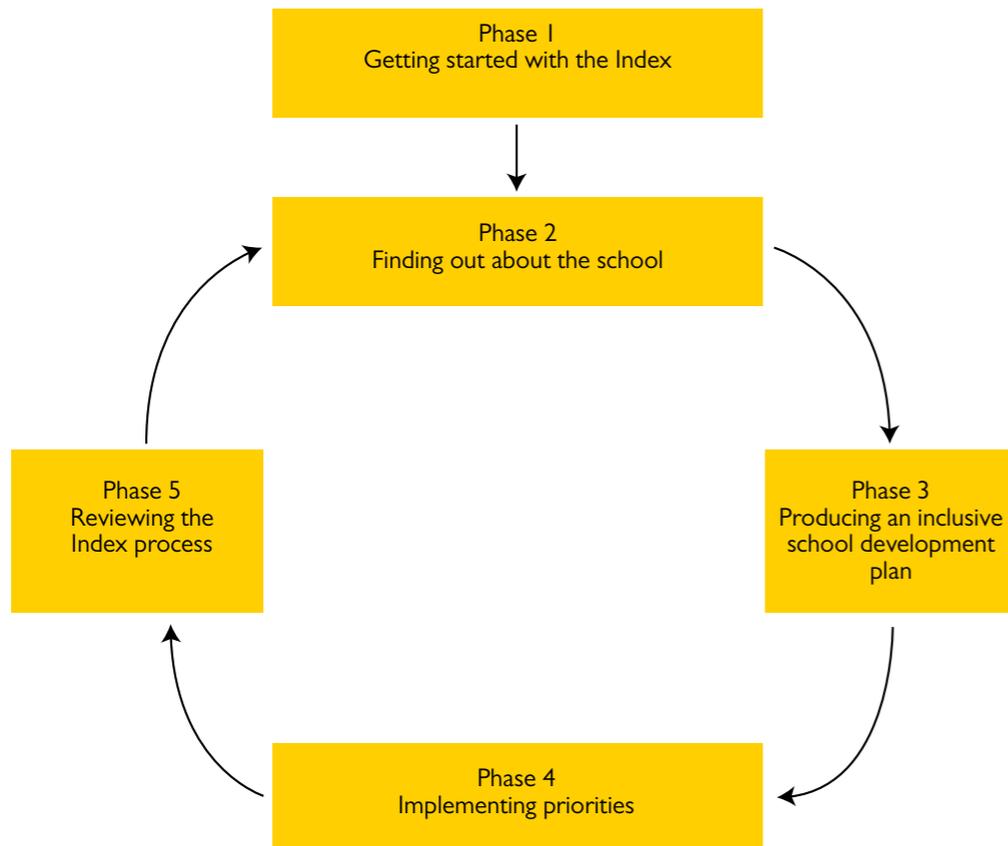
Figure 2. Implementation Phases of Index for Inclusion

5. Process of implementation of the Index in pre-school institutions and schools

The Index for Inclusion is used in many countries in the world as a suitable instrument for the development of inclusive schools and the document is adapted and has started to be used in Kosovo also since 2007, with the support of Save the Children. The Index for Inclusion is part of the Strategic Plan for Organizing Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs in Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2010-2015, which is part of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2010-2016 (PSAK). In the beginning, the Index for Inclusion started to be implemented by Save the Children in 2006 in two schools of the Municipality of Prizren ("Ibrahim Fehmiu" and "Haziz Tolaj").

Later, in 2010, Save the Children signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MEST, related to the implementation of the Index for Inclusion. Firstly, the Manual (Guide) had to be adapted for the needs of Kosovo and a study visit to London, England, was organized in 2010 prior to the process of the adaptation of the manual. During the visit, the opportunities to be acquainted and exchange experience with one of the authors of the Index for Inclusion, Tony Booth were given. This visit also enabled a clear reflection of the priorities that its use has in schools and other educational institutions. Upon the return from the visit, the work to adapt the Index started and schools also became a part of it, so that this instrument could be useful and suitable in the context of the school culture in Kosovo.

Photograph from the first workshop with teachers of "Ibrahim Fehmiu" and "Haziz Tolaj" Schools in Prizren

Work in the context of schools, due to the realization of the Index for Inclusion

- Prizren– 2006/2007
- SAVE THE CHILDREN
- INITIATIVE 6
- Trainer: Prof. Dr. Naser Zabeli
- 2006 - 25 teachers of the two schools "Ibrahim Fehmiu" and "Haziz Tolaj"
- January 2007 – Search on the priorities of the school infrastructure reformulation of questionnaires

(Conduct of research April – September 2007 – Findings: 1. Lack of good behavior from teachers; non-organization of English language classes in the cabinet of English language; lack of good behavior from peers).

- 2008 – Lack of a good rapport between students and teachers – discussions with students, teachers and parents.

Examples of priorities from these schools:
Difference, segregation, and more support for some particular students over others.
- Debates
- At the same time, these debates served for additional research!
Reasons of school drop-off
- Preventing bullying – frequent meetings,
- Carrying out of seminars for parents to raise the awareness.

Other measures for the school improvement:
- More frequent meetings with parents,
- The other research in May 2012.

Example: Exercise of physical, psychological, and economical violence by some teachers and students.
- Bullying in school.
- Activities for 2012-2013
Example of priorities: School drop-out by students, with a particular focus on those of the RAE Community.
- On 13 December 2013, the identification of students who had dropped-out school during that school year from the first to ninth grade was carried out.
- On 14 December 2012, a debate between students, parents, and teachers on "Prevention of the School Drop-out of Students" was held.
- Conflicts in school.
- On 15 December 2012, a research was carried out with students, in relation to the causes of conflicts among students. Various opinions were expressed about this topic.
- On 16 December 2012, a debate on the causes of conflicts among students in schools was held.
- Example of priorities: the fair and unfair evaluation.

Table 1: Implementation Model of the Index for Inclusion (first included schools from 2006 until 2013)

Sample of work presentation after trainers' monitoring

FERIZAJ
PRESENTATION OF THE WORK OF COORDINATING GROUP FOR INCLUSION

- Index for Inclusion
- On 29 and 30 September the "Index for Inclusion" seminar was held in "Orchide" Restaurant with "Tefik Çanga" School, in which Professor Naser Zabeli lectured. A total of 20 teachers were present in the seminar.
- Index for Inclusion is a document which should be implemented in school through the continuous work of teachers.
- At the end of this seminar, together with the lecturer, the members of the group have been selected. They later worked on various activities with teachers.

The work of working group for inclusion during the V and VI activities.
- Use of indicators to identify initial concerns.
- Discussion of facts.

Meetings of the working group for inclusion:

-Discussion and integration of indicators and questions with curricula, policies and practices in the school.

Group work during the meetings of working group for inclusion:
- Review of all indicators and questions.
- Identification and overcoming of obstacles in the use of the Index.

- ○ On 12 March 2013, Professor Naser Zabeli paid a visit to our school in order to monitor the work of several months.
- ○ The coordinating group for inclusion presented its work of several months and the achieved results.

Table 2: Example of presentation of work while monitoring by the trainers.

In this state, three schools were selected: "Naim Frasheri", "Thimi Mitko", and "Ramiz Sadiku", with whom it was worked two days in order to adapt the indicators and questionnaires with regard to formulation, but also to content. In December 2010, the Albanian adapted version of the Index for Inclusion was published and distributed to schools, Municipal Education Departments, to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, etc. In 2011, the Index for Inclusion continued with three schools that were included in the state of the adoption of the Manual. After three days of training held with these schools, the coordinating teams in school level were established. In 2012-2013, the Project increased the number of education institutions to 16, 8 of which were Pre-school Institutions, and 8 were Primary and Lower Secondary Schools in 7 Municipalities of Kosovo, which are mentioned in the table below:

Table 3: List of pre-school institutions and primary schools

NO.	NAME OF PRE-SCHOOL AND SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS	MUNICIPALITY
1	"Buzëqeshja" PI	Prishtina
2	"Gëzimi Ynë" PI	Mitrovica
3	"Ardhëmëria Jonë" PI	Ferizaj
4	"Ardhëmëria 1" PI	Gjilan
5	"INTEGJ" PI	Gjilan
6	"Pëllumbat e Paqes" PI	Peja
7	" Ganimete Terbeshi-Orize" PI	Gjakova
8	"Motrat Qiriazi" PI	Prizren
9	"Migjeni" Primary School	Mitrovica
10	"Tefik Canga" Primary School	Ferizaj
11	"Thimi Mitko" Primary School	Gjilan
12	"Ramiz Sadiku" Primary School	Peja
13	"Zekeria Rexha" Primary School	Gjakova
14	"Ibrahim Fehmiu" Primary School	Prizren
15	"Naim Frashëri" Primary School	Prishtina
16	"AntonZako Çajupi" Primary School	Mitrovica

In each preschool institution and primary school, three-day trainings have been organized, during which information about the process of the implementation of the Index through its 5 phases have been given as foreseen in the document, and at the same time the dynamic time plan was developed for each phase.

The implementation process of the Index in the preschool institutions and schools passes through 5 phases, which meet each other. However, the development of schools should not be perceived as a mechanical process. This development is a result of the creation of relations between values, emotions, actions, thoughts, analyses, and careful planning.

In order to carry out the activities foreseen in each phase, the pre-school institutions and schools have established their coordinating teams in compliance with the given directives, and they continued their work through various phases. Each phase lasted approximately 2-3 months, in conformity with the degree of activities foreseen to be carried out for each phase. In order to professionally support these institutions, Save the Children engaged two experts to monitor the activities in each phase. After each phase, a meeting would be held in schools and the degree of the realization of activities, the difficulties, further plans, etc, would be discussed.

Table 4: Monitoring of Pre-school Institutions and Schools

TABLE OF MONITORING FOR INDEX FOR INCLUSION				
Pre-school Institutions/schools		Date		
Phases of development of the Index for Inclusion	Achievements	Challenges/ obstacles	Planned activities for development	Monitor's comments
Phase 1 Commencement of work with the Index • Establishment of coordinating team. • Review of the approach to school development. • Self-awareness of the Index. • Elaboration on the existing knowledge. • Deepening of analysis by using indicators and questions. • Preparation to work with other groups.				
Phase 2 Information about school • Exploring knowledge of employees and directors. • Exploring knowledge of students. • Exploring knowledge of parents and community members. • Setting priorities for development.				
Phase 3 Development of a development plan for inclusion in primary schools • Putting the Manual framework in the school development plan • Putting priorities in the school development plan. • Work of the team in reviewing the development plan. • Decision of the team on the degree of modification of the plan, based on the work with the Manual.				
Phase 4 Fulfillment of priorities (ongoing) • Putting priorities into practice. • Continuing development. • Recording the progress.				
Phase 5 Fulfillment of priorities (in continuity) • Putting priorities into practice. • Continuing development. • Recording the progress.				

This form of support continued until the end of the fourth phase, which foresees the integration of the Index in the school development plans. On this occasion, a joint meeting of all schools was organized, and the achievements, problems faced and plans have been presented.

Table 5: Integration of the Index in the model school development plans –from "Migjeni" Primary School, Mitrovica

Field of quality	Particular aspects of fields of quality for the three-year period	2013	2014	2015
1. Culture, learning, quality of teaching, and learning process	Training and preparing teachers for assessment of achievements/ knowledge of students, according to MEST standards.	Second Term	First Term	
2. Quality of teaching	Training teachers for interactive methodologies of child-centered teaching Identifying problems of students having low success in learning.	Month IV –XII 2013	Month -I - XII	Month I- XII
3. Professionalism of teachers	Seminar/workshop: preparation of teachers for developing the yearly and monthly planning in accordance with curricula documents.	2013	2014	2015
4. Professionalism of teachers	Preparatory workshop – professional development of teachers for developing daily/class plans containing specific objectives.	Month I-VI	Month I - VI	
5. Inclusive culture	Preparing and publishing the school newspaper in teaching languages with the participation of marginalized groups, too.	Month IV-VI	Month – IV-VI	Month –IV-VI

6. Research methodology

The qualitative research methodology has been used to collect data. The opinions were gathered through open-end interviews. Interviews have been conducted with educators, teachers, parents, and students. Also, a focus group was organized with the school management staff. The research was conducted during October 2013-February 2014 period.

Table 6 : Institutions included in the research and the number of respondents

No	Institution / school	Location Municipality	No. of educators, teachers	No. of parents	No. of students
1	" Gëzimi ynë" PI	Mitrovica	10	10	
2	"Pëllumbat e paqes" PI	Peja	10	10	
3	" Ganimete Tërbeshi PI	Gjakova	10	10	
4	" Ardhmëria 1" PI	Gjilan	10	10	
5	"INTEGJ" PI	Gjilan	10	10	
6	"Migjeni" P&LSS	Mitrovica	10	10	10
7	"Tefik Canga" P&LSS	Ferizaj	10	10	10
8	"R. Sadiku" P&LSS	Peja	10	10	10
9	"Thimi Mitko" P&LSS	Gjilan	10	10	10
10	"Motrat Qiriazi" P&LSS	Prizren	10	10	10
	Total		100	100	50

Table 7: Participators in focus group

No.	Name and Surname	Institution	Municipality	Profession/ Possition
1	Fexhrije Halimi	"Buzëqeshja" PI		Assistant Educator
2	Gjejlon Begolli	" P. E paqes" PI	Peja	Director
3	Melihate Meha	"A.Z.Cajupi" P&LSS	Mitrovica	Director
4	Refik Azemi	MED Official	Mitrovica	Chairperson
5	Selim Zogaj	"I. Fehmiu" P&LSS	Prizren	Teacher
6	Resmije Rashiti	"T.Canga" P&LSS	Ferizaj	Assistant Educator
7	Ermira Pruthi	Save the Children	Prishtina	Project Official
	Dhurata Nixha	Save the Children	Prishtina	

7. Good practices from the implementation of the Index in preschool institutions and schools

In order to reflect as good as possible the results and difficulties of implementation of the Index, some surveys were carried out with teachers, students, and parents. The questionnaires were composed of some questions about which the teachers, students, and parents were asked to reflect. Also, a focus group in which the following participated: representatives from the Municipality, school and pre-school institution directors, teachers, educators, and representatives of Save the Children, who reflected about the process of implementation of the Index, including the advantages and disadvantages, as well as difficulties found during the process.

Information of teachers, parents, and students about the Index for Inclusion

How informed are the teachers, parents and student?

From the analysis of interviews, it results that by the implementation of the Index for Inclusion, they have been informed about it and they have witnessed the positive impact from its implementation.

The majority of teachers, parents, and students said that they have information about its implementation. This was argued with their attitudes which are as follows:

Teachers:
- Now, the activities are carried out in our schools which have never been carried out before.
- The coordinating group works.
- Trainings on topics which resulted to be of priority during the research have been delivered.
- Research has been conducted (which did not happen before).

Parents:
- They have asked for our ideas.
- The Individual Education Plan has started to be implemented.

Students:
- We know that an important group functions.
- Our teachers participate frequently in the meetings.

Teachers said that they are generally informed about the Implementation of the Index for Inclusion, but also a significant number of parents (16) and students (12) said the same.

This indicates that the Index for Inclusion has been understood, and teachers are familiarized with its content, philosophy, and methodology. On the other hand, the fact that a significant number of parents and students are not informed, raises the issue of further work with children and parents.

Institutional changes and changes in teachers due to the implementation of the Index for Inclusion

Table 8: Institutional changes

Viewpoint of teachers	Viewpoint of parents	Viewpoint of students
Problems identified; Plans developed; Priorities set; A project won; Awareness of teachers is higher; Differentiated teaching is taking place; The absence level of students has been reduced; Greater help is provided for children/students with learning difficulties; Inclusion of students with special needs in regular classrooms is taking place; There has been a greater inclusion of the RAE community members. Inclusion of priorities derived from the research in school level in the School Development Plan.	Teachers are more open towards children and they feel safer and more accepted. For the first time (2013) a child with autism was accepted in our school; The school has a better setting; It is discussed more about the rights of child; Students with special needs have been included in regular classrooms.	The teachers' behavior is better; There is less absence in the classrooms; Labeling has decreased; There is a warmer welcoming for children with special needs; The physical infrastructure has been upgraded; There is a larger attendance of students from the RAE community.

Compared to the positive statements about the changes in the institution, a significant number of parents (26) and students (10) said that they do not notice any change. Therefore, also in this point, there must be a focus on the activities whereby tangible changes would be searched.

Changes in teachers

Teachers said that the implementation of the Index for Inclusion influenced them in their attitudes and job. They said the following:

Teachers:
- We generally feel more supported;
- Greater inter-collegial cooperation in school;
- Greater motivation to work with children/students with learning difficulties;
- There is a more friendly environment in school ("I am happier with my job");
- We have more information, and work plans for active inclusion of students.

Students:
- Teachers are more open;
- They treat us better;
- They help us more.

Activities in institutions/school and the inclusion of parents

Educators and teachers said that because of the implementation of the Index for Inclusion, the number of activities in institution/school has increased. This can be seen from the increased number of meetings and topics discussed.

Activities/topics:

- Inclusive policies and practices;
- Opportunities to efficiently implement the Index of Inclusion;
- Opportunity of inclusion of children/students with special needs in regular classrooms;
- Work with children with autism;
- Work with children with Down Syndrome;
- Inclusive games;
- Forms of child socialization;
- Development of Individual Education Plan;
- Measures for reduction of absence of students.

In addition, the educators and teachers said that at first it was difficult for them to implement the Index for Inclusion because there was a hesitation of staff to be engaged in, a cooperation which was not good due to the continuity of a long tradition, which was evident as the time passed, and now a much better situation exists compared to the previous one.

On the other hand, the parents said that they have been involved in activities, when asked about things related to their children/students.

Parents

Sometimes, we have been asked to give, and we have given, ideas and suggestions for the progress of the learning process.
We have talked about greater opportunities of cooperation;
We have given ideas about the functioning of the discipline in school.

However, a considerable number of them (32) say that they have not been consulted and that they have joined the institution/school activities only on different holidays. This indicates that the old practice of inviting parents to school only on holidays or certain days still exists. Due to this reason, there is a need for more work toward the inclusion of parents in the activities of the institution. Therefore, a plan of work describing the institution activities in detail in relation to the active participation of parents, should be foreseen.

Table 9: Recommendations from educators/ teachers, parents and students

Educators/ teachers	Parents	Students
• Enhancement of infrastructure conditions; • Integration of professional associates (pedagogues, psychologists, etc.) in school; • Integration of teaching assistants; • Assessment of students by an established Commission; • Decrease of number of students in classrooms; • Inclusion of other schools, as well; • Even more cooperation with Save the Children; • Delivery of other trainings; • A greater supervision by the Municipality and MEST; • Financial support.	• Continuation with the Index for Inclusion; • Implementation of laws and regulations; • Integration of the pedagogue and assistants; • Additional trainings for teachers; • Stimulation of teachers;	• School is a place where we pass many hours, therefore it should be more inclusive; • The number of students in classrooms should be reduced; • More students with special needs should be included; • A greater space for carrying out recreational activities; • Code of conduct and rules should be implemented better.

"Implementation of the Index has made us real researchers"
"Now we can develop projects, too."
Member of coordinating group" Tefik Canga", Ferizaj

Index for Inclusion has created opportunities to overcome the prejudices and problems we suffer by inclusion and provision of quality education for children with special needs

Teacher SHF&MU "Ibrahim Fehmiu" P&LSS, Prizren

Viewpoint on Index for Inclusion in municipal level and by the directors of pre-school institutions and primary schools

In the municipal level, this is seen as a new approach which has its own challenges starting with the concept of inclusive education until its realization in practice. Furthermore, the way of the conception and the orientation of the project through the two components such as the backup team at the municipal level, composed of representatives from three departments, such as: Education Department, Health Department, and Social Welfare Department, then, the employment of teaching assistants, and the preparation of schools through trainings provided by "Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Preschool and Primary School Education in Kosovo" Project, implemented by the office of Save the Children in Kosovo, which was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy.

School Director of "Anton Zako Çajupi" P&LSS, Mitrovica
Inclusion has been correctly understood in schools.
Teacher in "Ibrahim Fehmiu" P&LSS, Prizren
The benefit from children, parents, and community because of the use of the Index was that it has broken the prejudices.

The inclusion of the Municipality in this process made it possible that the work with the Index to be considered with more seriousness by schools and kindergartens, because now, the schools have not been alone in this process.

"This is the first time that the school asks us and requests our ideas"
"Teachers are more opened towards us and students"

A parent

Whereas, from the schools and school directors, the Index is seen as a very important instrument and guide to explore the problems and various issues which schools face with. Furthermore, they believe that this has influenced also in building the capacities of schools to be able to identify by themselves the problems and challenges, but also to try to address and resolve various identified problems using the capacities and inner human and financial resources.

Prioritization of issues to be addressed by the school, but also their inclusion in the development programs of schools has been an essential element, which is foreseen by the Index itself, so that this shall become a school tradition during the years to come. Some schools have gone

further carrying out activities, which aimed at addressing the issues that were identified by the research conducted at school, such as: lectures with parents, activities with students in order to address violence, bullying, drop-out of school, prevention of other negative phenomena in schools, etc. Even teachers see the importance and priorities of using the Index in schools, as they emphasize that at first there were many difficulties due to the lack of information by the staff and parents as regards the importance of the Index and benefits the school could have. They emphasize that in order for this to be achieved, it was needed to take slow steps, but over time and after the inclusion of the other part of school staff, the work with the Index has been viewed as important in the school performance. The cooperation in community was increased and this happened thanks to the research conducted with parents, who, through questions, had the opportunity to reflect about the school in entirety. Furthermore, the organization itself, which funded the project for the Index for Inclusion in Kosovo, Save the Children, considers the project to be important, since it considers that it helps schools in providing them with the opportunity to create a suitable and inclusive environment for all children, through the help obtained by the Index. They have particularly considered that the Index created opportunities in overcoming prejudices and issues related to inclusion and provision of quality education for children with special needs and due to this, they have used a more holistic approach and the trainings were organized so that they could treat the concept of Inclusion for the creation of more inclusive environments for all the children.

Opinions of the focus group, advantages of using the Index for Inclusion in Preschool Institutions and Schools

- The use of the Index has had many positive results, because it has been multi-dimensional and impacted on schools so that they become more open and friendly for the staff, students, and community, and it has also raised the level of cooperation.
- The employment of educators and teaching assistants has enabled the building of capacities of schools and kindergartens to support the children and students in school and kindergarten.
- Schools are not informed about the concept of inclusion.
- Increase of the number of activities with students within schools.
- The cooperation with parents and community is enhanced.
- Trainings for PIA have been organized and the teachers will use them.
- The number of students with learning difficulties who have been involved in school and Individual Plan is increased.
- Increase of cooperation between the school staff.
- Various meetings with colleagues have been organized, in which various themes such as: violence in school, drop-off of school, etc. have been treated, and the school has advocated for different issues.
- The teachers are motivated to work with children with special needs, who are now found in regular classrooms.
- The students have been trained to undertake various initiatives within school for various issues.
- The awareness of parents is increased.
- Trainings of trainers have taken place within schools.
- Students are freely expressing themselves about their problems.

Projects of pre-school institutions and schools

Implementation of the Index for Inclusion has positively influenced the work in developing the projects by the teachers. The research and development of projects by the Institutions is considered as a weak spot, therefore the implementation of the Index has enabled the teachers to gain the skills for developing projects. In addition, the institutions where the Index for Inclusion has been implemented have applied and won other projects as well, and the teachers said that the activities organized within the context of the Index have enabled the development of skills for project drafting.

After a short training and practical monitoring and consultation, some Institutions have drafted projects and won grants which were given by Save the Children Organization and they have organized various activities in Institutions about issues related directly or indirectly with the Inclusion.

Tabela 10. The list of pre-school institutions and schools which have won grants by Save the Children:

No.	Pre-school Institutions/ Schools	Projects
1	"Buzëqeshja" PI, Prishtina	Overcoming obstacles and building confidence.
2	"Pëllumbat e Paqes", PI Peja	Inclusion in function of the increase of quality in teaching and learning.
3	"Ardhmëria Jonë" PI, Ferizaj	Increasing the quality of school and the relation of the Index for Inclusion in enhancement of performance of school.
4	"Intexh" PI, Gjilan	Cooperation with communities and the socialization of children in function of inclusion.
5	"Gëzimi Ynë", PI Mitrovica	Increasing the performance of educational work.
6	"Ganimete Terbeshi Orize" PI Gjakova	For an inclusive kindergarten.
7	"Ardhmëria" PI, Gjilan	Educator-child-parent mutual cooperation
8	"Zekeria Rexha" Primary School, Gjakova	Reduction of differences, lacks, cooperation with parents and the creation of inclusive classrooms.
9	"Haziz Tola" Primary School, Prizren	Inclusion of interactive methods for cooperation and modification in the school context.
10	"Motrat Qiriazi" Primary School, Prizren	Inter-collegial cooperation and with parents in function of inclusion.
11	"Ibrahim Fehmiu" Primary School, Prizren	Prevention of violence, advancement of cooperation and the reduction of the school drop-out.
12	"Naim Frasheri" Primary School, Prishtina	Increase of quality of teaching and learning.
13	" Ramiz Sadiku" Primary School, Peje	Inclusion in function of increase of the quality in teaching and learning.
14	"Migjeni" Primary School, Mitrovica	Establishing the inclusion culture through the identification and treatment of obstacles (barriers) in school.
15	"Andon Zako Çajupi" Primary School, Mitrovica	Let's learn by playing.
16	"Thimi Mitko" Primary School, Gjilan	Building the capacities of teachers in providing adequate services for children with learning difficulties.
17	"Tefik Çanga" Primary School, Ferizaj	Inclusion in function of the increase of quality in teaching and learning.

> WE have had difficulties that the school staff be informed ad familiarized with the Index because the school works in 2 shifts and it has been difficult to organize meetings with the whole staff. *Members of the cooperating group "Thimi Mitko" Gjilan*

8. Challenges /difficulties of the implementation of the Index in educational institutions in Kosovo

Implementation of the Index for Inclusion in Kosovo has been accompanied with various difficulties in various phases of implementation. The difficulties have been related to the implementation phases, because each phase has its own specifics through which the institution passes, and it should carry out activities which often require willingness and determination by the educational institution staff and community in order that the desired changes take place.

The Index for Inclusion is composed of 5 development phases, and each phase has its own specifics which should be duly followed, because each state is an important precondition to go to the next phase and in some cases, when, for example, in the first phase it has not been worked properly to inform the staff and familiarize it with the work with the Index, then this makes the second, third, etc. phase more difficult. This is highly dependent on the commitment of human resources within school, for example, the director of school, as a key person who supports and monitors the work of coordinating group, in all the phases of the work with the Index.

Based on the experience with schools and pre-school institutions, some challenges have been common for all the institutions, but there have been also challenges, which were different from institution to institution. Informing the institution staff about the importance of the implementation of the Index has been a common challenge, since 20-25 people from each institution have participated in trainings. In some schools, the number of the staff has been much higher, and since the coordinating group has had to carry out the informing or training of the other part of the staff, this caused difficulties in some cases.

The work of the coordinating group within school in some schools has also been a challenge. In some schools, the coordinating group has not been very active and they did not have sufficient support from the school director, hence, neither from the other part of school staff.

The mentioned difficulties have been noted also in the use of the manual, especially in the first and second phase of the implementation of the Index. This might have been because the coordinating group was not sufficiently familiarized with the document and its use, especially in using the indicators of the Index for identifying the needs within the school. This made that the questionnaires developed and used by schools, had no clear focus on the purpose of research, hence the results gained by the research did not offer novelties or information which would make the institution act towards the addressing of the identified problems. Difficulties have also been observed in the addressing of identified priorities by the schools. These difficulties were identified as a result of research within the schools and discussions with the staff either in relation to involvement in the school development plan or in carrying out activities to address

them. The reasons are different. In some schools, it was difficult for the staff to become committed, because the school operated in two shifts. Another reason is that the staff was engaged out of regular working hours and this was done mainly on voluntary basis, but not as an issue of a policy or practice of school, and the lack of financial resources caused the activities to be partially carried out, and there are even cases when no concrete initiatives have been taken. In general, it can be concluded that the first year of work with the Index, is rather a year during which the schools and the school staff should become familiar and get used to it, and because there is a lack of inclusive culture and team work in schools, it makes the work with the Index more difficult. Therefore, considering the identified difficulties and the above mentioned reasons, this may be regarded as normal as per the first year of these institutions' work with the Index.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

The Index for Inclusion is a useful and important Manual for kindergartens and schools, especially in promoting the inclusion in education. This is also shown by various studies that have been made in other countries, but even in this research, which shows that the use of this Manual shall build school and kindergartens' capacities to identify and treat various problems and issues which these institutions may face during their daily work. This is particularly important for a better use of school resources and increase of the cooperation with the community, in order for the school to be an inclusive institution for all the children of the community. Based on these good practices, which have been found by the use of the Index for Inclusion in Kosovo, we recommend the following:

- The Index for Inclusion should be part of MEST policies in order to promote and implement inclusive policies in all the education institutions in Kosovo;
- The support of the Municipal Education Departments in promoting the importance of the use of the Index for Inclusion in education institutions should continue;
- Municipal Education Departments should continue their support for the continuation of the use of the Index for Inclusion in the institutions which have worked with it, so that this becomes part of the culture of these institutions;
- The positive models created in kindergartens and schools where the Index for Inclusion has been implemented, should be expanded also in other kindergartens and schools, in order to expand the network of kindergartens and schools which offer inclusive settings;
- Kindergarten and schools which have used the Index, should continue the research in fields that have been less explored, or in fields where they want to increase their performance, including all actors in and outside of school;
- School institutions should intensify and continue their work especially with parents and students, so that they become participators and decision makers in the institutions where their children are involved;
- The creation of a network of kindergartens and schools which have worked with the Index for Inclusion, in order to exchange the experience and promote it in other schools;
- The Index for Inclusion should continue to be promoted also through programs in the high education level, as a special subject or within any certain subject, such as in the subject of inclusive education or other relevant subjects;
- The Index should be treated also in various programs of trainings, which are organized by the Municipalities, partners or various NGOs.

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