

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION



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**NEEDS ASSESSMENT
OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL
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SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on the status and is in line with the UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

Abbreviations

AI	Administrative Instruction
EMIS	Education Management and Information System
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
IEP	Individualised Educational Plan
INCLUDE	Building Capacity for Inclusive Education project
KAS	The Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KCF	Kosovo Curriculum Framework
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
RC	Resource Centre
SEN	Special Educational Need
VET	Vocational Education and Training

***“I would encourage you to support the school in all possible ways
to create better conditions for children with disabilities.
By supporting schools and the children you will support their families as well.”***

A parent of a student with special educational needs

Executive summary

This needs assessment of special educational needs (SEN) in upper secondary education was conducted in 9 public mainstream Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools and gymnasiums in Kosovo in October and November 2020. The purpose of the needs assessment was to analyse the current situation and needs of ordinary higher secondary schools in accommodating and providing quality education for students with SEN and disabilities. The needs assessment aimed at 1) providing information of the current situation of students with SEN and disabilities in VET schools and gymnasiums; 2) finding out what needs to be done in VET schools and gymnasiums to meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities; and 3) providing recommendations for the MES to prepare a plan to build capacities in VET schools and in gymnasiums to include students with SEN and disabilities.

Data was collected by interviewing school principals, Ministry of Education and Science (MES) officers, parents of students with SEN and a worker of an international project on VET. 59 teachers and 2 students responded to the online questionnaire. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the data was collected online and through telephone calls.

The results of this needs assessment show that most of the schools, principals and teachers have positive attitudes and show willingness to provide access for students with SEN and disabilities.

The biggest challenges in schools are related to the conditions in the school including the infrastructure, lack of training on inclusion and how to meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities in mainstream classroom, lack of support services inside and from outside of the school; and lack of adaptations of curriculum and lack of adapted learning / teaching materials and equipment.

Teachers and principals need to be trained on inclusive education including how to meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities in the mainstream classroom and school; and support services need to be created in and for the schools. In addition, conditions of the schools should be improved to make them more accessible for students with different kinds of disabilities (e.g. physical, visual etc).

Most of the schools stated that they have some profiles (e.g. profiles using heavy machines or wood processing) which are not suitable and during practical training could be even dangerous for students with certain disabilities. Thus, it is highly recommended to provide guidance and counselling services at the beginning of studies particularly in VET schools for a student with SEN / disability.

In Kosovo, the planning and developing of upper secondary education for students with SEN and disabilities are facing a challenge due to the lack of accurate and reliable data on the number of students with SEN in mainstream schools. The data obtained by the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) is provided by schools and not based on any professional assessment of students. Furthermore, the EMIS categories for SEN are not clear enough for schools to provide accurate data. Therefore, it is highly recommended to improve data collection by reviewing and clarifying the current EMIS classification of SEN groups, strengthening the collaboration of schools and municipality assessment commissions and providing proper guidelines for schools for the provision of accurate data in the future.

The results of this needs assessment will be used by MES and the INCLUDE project in developing a capacity building programme to increase the number and improve the quality of education of students with SEN in upper secondary education.

Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) with the support of the Joint European Union and Council of Europe project “Building Capacity for Inclusive Education (INCLUDE)” is in the process of improving access and education of students with special educational needs (SEN) in Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools and gymnasiums in Kosovo.

The overall objective of the INCLUDE project is to improve access to quality education of students from disadvantaged groups in pre-primary, primary and secondary education – in line with the Beneficiary’s domestic policies and priorities and Council of Europe standards and practices. One of the specific objectives of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the Kosovo education system to improve participation of and support services for children with special education needs in pre-primary, primary and secondary education; and one of the expected outputs is to enhance participation of children with special education needs (SEN) in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.

During last 20 years, the MES has made lot of efforts to develop an inclusive education system and to improve the access to and provision of education of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities in Kosovo. So far, these efforts have been mainly focused on pre-primary, primary and lower secondary levels of education. As a result, after completing basic education, some students with SEN and disabilities continue their studies in Resource Centres but what happens to the majority of students with SEN and disabilities remains unknown. Some of them probably attend mainstream upper secondary schools, but there are also those who do not continue their studies after compulsory education.

This needs assessment of students with SEN and disabilities in secondary education in Kosovo was requested by the MES and by the INCLUDE project. The purpose is to analyse the current situation and the needs of ordinary upper secondary schools in accommodating and providing quality education for students with SEN and disabilities. The needs assessment was conducted in 9 mainstream public VET schools and gymnasiums. Even with a limited number of upper secondary schools involved in the needs assessment, it gives information about the quality of education that schools are providing to students with SEN and identifies the key challenges that need to be addressed in order to develop an inclusive and quality education, and provide access to students with SEN in upper secondary education.

The results will be used by MES and the INCLUDE project in developing a capacity building programme to increase the number of students with SEN in upper secondary education and to improve the quality of their education.

Theoretical background

This needs assessment is focused on upper (higher) secondary education in Kosovo. Upper secondary level (grades 10–12) of education in Kosovo is divided into high schools (gymnasiums) and vocational education and training (VET) schools. Each of them are divided according to their own profiles; gymnasiums into social, general, natural sciences, mathematics, informatics and languages, and VET schools into the fields of technical, agricultural, economics, medicine, music, trade, theology, arts and 6 centres of competence.

Justification for inclusive education in Kosovo

During last 20 years, the MES has made much effort to develop its inclusive education system and to improve the access to and provision of education for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities in Kosovo. The commitment and willingness of the government of Kosovo to develop inclusive education system, and to improve access and provision of quality education for all students is seen in many aspiring laws, administrative instructions and national strategies (see table 1) developed to form the structure for the new education system.

The Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education 2017–2021 strives to solve the challenges of the education system by undertaking a thematic cross-cutting approach that will address these concrete challenges. Key words of the new strategic plan are: inclusion, quality and accountability. (Alieu, L. 2019.) One of the main principals of the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) 2011 is inclusion which “refers to the right of every child to have equal access to quality education”.

Table 1 | Laws and national strategies stipulating inclusion

<p>Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo Law No.04/L –032</p>	<p>Art. 40: Inclusive education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and other training institutions must respect the principle of inclusive education by accommodating all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions; and promoting integration and contact between children. <p>Art.3: stipulates responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of the Ministry of Education, the municipalities, the education and training institutions and all other bodies to deliver, amongst other, efficient, effective, inclusive and professional services designed to promote all students with equal opportunities in access to education in accordance with their specific abilities and needs and to promote their educational and social development <p>Art. 3.5: Functions and responsibilities of the Ministry, municipalities and educational/training Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect and promote community rights and their members as set forth by the Constitution and applicable law. Foster knowledge of the culture, history, and language of all communities. <p>Art. 39: Special Educational Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a child is not to be taken as having a learning difficulty solely because the language, or form of the language, in which he or she is taught is different from a language, or form of a language, which has at any time been spoken in his or her home, or because he or she belongs to a particular community; in such cases the municipality shall ensure that efficient support in the language of instruction is provided to the child.
<p>Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017–2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a comprehensive plan for the development of the education sector in Kosovo inclusion is the first strategic objective of the KESP and its Action Plan 2017 – 2021 sets inclusion of children with SEN and of marginalised groups into the mainstream education system as a priority the first key priorities are participation and inclusion of children with SEN and of marginalised groups into the mainstream education system the Action Plan defines specific activities to reach specific targets for inclusion as well as for access to education. inclusion achieved through a number of measures such as increased access to education for marginalised groups, teacher training and promotion of diversity, and of interaction among communities.

Kosovo Curriculum Framework (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the primary objective is inclusion of children and young people in a quality education system its aim is the promotion of general social values, human rights protection, inclusion in education and respect of one another's values. one of the main principals is inclusion which "refers to the right of every child to have equal access to quality education".
Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo Law No.03/L-068	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regulates the organisation of the public pre-school, primary and secondary education system in Kosovo stipulates an obligation for the provision of an inclusive education, the right to access to education with respect to principles of non-discrimination and promotion of inclusive policies for the integration of disabled persons into the education system.
Law on Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> guarantees protection of the rights of the child and delegates responsibilities to relevant institutions
National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Special Needs in Kosovo 2013–2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Objective 3: Creation of conditions for inclusive education and for professional support for persons with disabilities

Laws regulating upper secondary education in Kosovo

The Law on Pre-University Education regulates pre-university learning for pupils and individuals belonging to levels 0 through 4 according to the International Standard Classification of Education, adopted by UNESCO. In the article 3 of the Law in the General Principles of Pre-University Education the first principle stipulates that "No person shall be denied the right to education."

Further in the Law on Pre-University Education (article 3, principle 3) states that "it shall be the general duty of the Ministry, the municipalities, the educational and/or training institutions and all other bodies engaged in the provision of pre-university education, --- to plan and deliver an efficient, effective, flexible, inclusive and professional service designed to provide all pupils with equal opportunities in access to education in accordance with their specific abilities and needs and to promote their educational and social development."

This principle is very important in regard to students with SEN as the law mentions the duties of everyone and especially the duties of schools to provide education for students based on abilities and their needs. In Article 40 of the Law, the principle of Inclusive Education is stipulated as follows:

- educational and/or training institutions should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions and should promote integration and contact between children,
- relevant support should be offered based on pupils' individual needs; and
- separate educational settings or special schools are justified only where after expert assessment it is considered impractical to enrol a child in a mainstream municipal school or training institution.

Thus, it is the duty of VET schools and Gymnasiums to provide quality education for students with SEN and disabilities, and to make all necessary accommodations to provide education also for students with SEN.

Law on Education in Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo¹ stipulates the responsibilities of municipalities. Their competencies are related to levels 0-3 of education meaning (pre-primary through upper secondary). Some of the responsibilities given to municipalities through this law include: construction of education facilities, registration and admission of students, employment of teachers and other personnel, appointing school directors, payment of managerial staff, training of educators, supervision and evaluation of education process etc.

This Law gives the responsibility of the municipalities to provide inclusive education for all students including students with SEN.

¹ Kosovo Assembly, Law on Education in Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008

Law No. 04/L-138 for Vocational Education and Training regulates the national vocational education and training system in accordance with the needs of the economic and social development of the Republic of Kosovo, including economic and technological changes, demands of the labour market and the needs of individuals during the transition towards market, human and infrastructure resources. The principals for vocational education and training set in the Law for VET (2013) are: 1) inclusion; 2) access, transfer and progress; 3) theoretical learning and professional practice; 4) current and future needs of the economy; and 5) supporting career development as an integrated part of lifelong learning. Thus, VET institutions should strive for achieving including and creating conditions for education of all children.

Under the Law for VET, the Agency for Vocational and Adult Education and Training and the Council for Vocational and Adult Education and Training were established. The Agency aims at the supervision and development of VET and adult education, and the Council is an advisory body for VET policies and adult education in Kosovo (Alieu, L. 2019).

Administrative Instructions regulating inclusive practices

A numerous of Administrative Instructions related to inclusive education have been developed to support the implementation of the Laws and provide guidance for municipalities and schools including upper secondary schools.

The **Administrative Instruction Nr. 18/2013 on the usage of Individual Education Plan- IEP regulates the usage of the IEP** for students with SEN. Each student with SEN who has received a SEN decision should have the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The AI also regulates issues of persons to draft the IEP, to monitor and to approve it.

The **Administrative Instruction Nr. 22/2013 on the maximal number of students per class and the ratio teacher-student** regulates the maximum number of students per class in Pre-University Education. It also regulates the number of students per class if there are students with SEN in the classroom. The maximum number of students with SEN in a mainstream class in a VET school is three, and where there is a student with SEN in the classroom, there should be two mainstream students less.

The **Administrative Instruction Nr. 06/2016 on conditions and evaluation criteria for candidates with special education needs** regulates the content and criteria and how to organise the state Matura for candidates with SEN. After finishing the upper secondary education, if needed, candidates with different disabilities can be assigned more time and offered assistive devices and personal assistants during the state exam. The implementation of this AI would help and encourage more candidates with disabilities to be enrolled and to finish secondary education.

The **Administrative Instruction Nr. 6/2016 on Conditions and the evaluation criteria of Candidates with special needs** also regulates the evaluation of candidates with different disabilities for the state exam.

The **Administrative Instruction Nr. 8/2016 on Students' Assessment under the curriculum framework for Pre-University education of the Republic of Kosovo** regulates the ways that students are assessed under the Curriculum Framework. Different forms of assessments are foreseen for students and the grading system. This AI includes assessment adaptations that are needed when assessing students with SEN. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) shall be used as an instrument for planning teaching, learning and assessment of students with SEN.

The **Administrative Instruction Nr. 16/2017 for the professional assessment of children with special educational needs** regulates the field of assessment of students with SEN. Municipal assessment teams together with primary and lower secondary mainstream schools could help students with SEN in recommending students in VET schools or gymnasiums based on the path of education they had followed and based on their talents and individual needs.

Challenges in implementing inclusive education in mainstream upper secondary schools

The legal background for inclusion in the education sector in Kosovo is quite advanced and well in place. However, there are still challenges of implementing inclusive education at municipality and school level. So far, the efforts to develop inclusive practices in schools have mainly been focused on basic education where support systems (e.g. resource centres, itinerant teachers, resource rooms, Individualised Educational Plans) have been developed, teachers trained etc. Upper secondary schools have remained more or less without any development and capacity-building towards inclusive education practices.

One of the challenges in planning and developing inclusive education for students with SEN in upper secondary schools is the lack of accurate data on the number of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Data of students with SEN in mainstream upper secondary schools

In 2019/2020, the total number of students in public upper secondary education was 74 427, of which in gymnasiums 34 869 and in VET schools 39 558.

Table 2 Number of students in public upper secondary education in 2019/2020

Vocational schools			Gymnasiums			Total		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
23116	16442	39558	14736	20133	34869	37852	36575	74427

(EMIS 2020)

In 2019/2020, there were 111 upper secondary education students with SEN and disabilities enrolled in resource centres, and 434 students with SEN in regular upper secondary public schools. The statistics from mainstream upper secondary schools do not indicate what is the number of students with SEN distributed between VET schools and gymnasiums. The numbers from mainstream schools were provided by 37 out 123 schools which shows that most of the schools do not provide any numbers of students with SEN. This is one of the reasons why the data of students with SEN in mainstream education is not reliable.

The Table 3 shows the number of students with SEN from mainstream schools and resource centres who finalised compulsory education in 2019 (in total 311) and who started upper secondary education on the same year (in total 172). This shows that 139 students with SEN have disappeared from the statistics.

Table 3

Grade 9 and 10 students with SEN in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020

Grade and type of school	2018/2019	2019/2020
Grade 9 students with SEN in mainstream schools	286	
Grade 9 students with SEN in Resource Centres	25	
Grade 10 students with SEN in mainstream schools		143
Grade 10 students with SEN in Resource Centres		29
In total	311	172

(EMIS 2019, 2020)

What happens to students with SEN after completing compulsory education? It seems that students in resource centres continue their studies in the same school. There are some students who attend resource centres after completing the 9th grade in mainstream school. There are many students with SEN who attend to upper secondary schools even though they are not and very probably have not been included in the statistics during their lower secondary education. There must be also some who do not continue their studies after compulsory education.

The table 4 shows a slight increase in the number of SEN students in mainstream upper secondary schools in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. It also shows the SEN categories of the EMIS data collection.

Table 4

Number of students with SEN in mainstream upper secondary public schools in 2018-2020

Type of SEN	2018/2019	2019/2020
Intellectual impairment	107	99
Hearing impairment	31	31
Eye/vision impairment	111	157
Physical impairment	40	37
Multiple impairments	35	45
Speech, communication and language disorders	24	30
Autism	5	5
Emotional and behavioural problems	14	10
Learning difficulties	10	8
Down syndrome	12	12
In total	389	434

The SEN categories of statistics provided by EMIS are as follows: Intellectual impairment, hearing impairment, eye/vision impairment, physical impairment, multiple impairment, difficulty in speaking, communication and language, autism, emotional and behavioural disorders, learning difficulties/disorders, and Down syndrome. These categories need to be revised. E.g. in the statistics, Down syndrome has its own category even though it causes intellectual impairment. Eye/vision means visual impairment, and there is missing neurological disorders such as attention deficit disorder (ADHD/ADD).

In 2019/2020, one school reported having 56 students with visual impairments and another school 30 students with intellectual impairments. These numbers in mainstream do not sound realistic. It may be that among 56 students with visual impairments, students who wear spectacles have been included. If spectacles help you to see, you are not identified being with visual impairment. Furthermore, having 30 students with intellectual impairments in one mainstream school does also not sound realistic. This leads to the conclusion that school principals do not know

how to correctly classify students with SEN. School principals need to have clear guidelines on how to classify students with SEN if there is no professional assessment of students available.

Challenges in collecting data of students with SEN are combined below:

- The accuracy of the data for students with SEN is complex due to the fact that not all students with SEN in mainstream schools have been assessed by professional assessment teams in municipalities.
- The data collected by EMIS is based on the information provided by the school principals. Thus, the data is based on the perception of school principals and not – as mentioned above – based on the assessment of professionals.
- When collecting data, schools are asked to provide the number of students with SEN in schools. However, it is up to the school how to report and there is no guarantee that they will even report. As mentioned earlier, in 2019/2020, only 37 upper secondary schools out of 123 reported having students with SEN.
- The current SEN categories of EMIS need to be reviewed and schools to be guided properly to provide information.

The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021 includes 7 strategic objectives, and objective 1 is about participation and inclusion: “Increasing participation and providing equal opportunities for the development, training, and education of every individual in pre-university education”. One of the aims of this objective is to create an integrated system for the collection, processing and use of data which will also enable monitoring of students with SEN and dropout children, and the improvement of the quality of teaching through the provision of training programmes for inclusion. Even at the end of 2020, there is a need make more efforts to reach this objective.

Based on the Evaluation report on the implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan of the year 2019², the implementation of foreseen activities on an annual basis could achieve the goal of 50 % of students with SEN that are included in inclusive education. But the exact number of children with SEN and the degree of their inclusion is not known. This is due to the fact that since the publication of the last census in 2011, no data have been provided documenting the number and type of the disabilities of children with SEN. This is a huge challenge in measuring the inclusion of the students with SEN and it creates problems in planning resources (human and material) for the inclusion of SEN students.

This KESP evaluation report in 2019 recommended increasing inclusion of and investment for the education of students with SEN without a specific recommendation on what indicators. As can be seen one of the most pressing indicators is that of data collection of the number and type of disabilities of students with SEN enrolled in mainstream primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools (VET schools and Gymnasiums). Having the system of identification of children with SEN who are already in mainstream schools would give more possibilities for investing and improving the education of students with SEN.

According to the evaluation report of the Kosovo Strategic Plan³ in 2017, students with SEN remain one of the most marginalised categories in pre-university education. There are no facts on inclusion of children with SEN in education system, while their identification and classification continue to be significant issues.

From mainstream upper secondary schools, there is no evidence of the situation of the students with SEN. Do they need and get any support? Do teachers manage inclusive classrooms? Do they have suitable learning materials, assistive devices etc.? This needs assessment aims to shed some light on this situation in upper secondary schools.

² Assessment Report for 2019 on the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021, GIZ

³ Evaluation Report on IMPLEMENTATION OF KOSOVO EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN IN 2017 – Keen Project 2017

The Needs Assessment

Scope of the needs assessment

The main aim of this needs assessment is to gather data about the readiness and needs of ordinary upper secondary schools in Kosovo to accommodate students with SEN and disabilities. This needs assessment is part of the plan of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) with the support of the INCLUDE project to improve the capacity in VET schools and gymnasiums to provide access and quality education, and meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities.

The aim of the needs assessment is:

- to provide information of the current situation of students with SEN and disabilities in VET schools and gymnasiums;
- to find out what are the needs in VET schools to meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities; and
- to provide recommendations for the MES to prepare a plan to build capacities in VET schools and in gymnasiums.

Beneficiaries:

- Students with SEN
- VET schools and gymnasiums
- Principals and teachers
- MES.

Assessment criteria

Qualifications of the assessment criteria: measurable, evidence-based on the literature review on inclusive education, and enabling systematic and effective evaluation of different needs.

The assessment criteria are as follows:

- Awareness
- Acceptance
- Commitment
- Accessibility
- Leadership
- Knowledge and skills
- Resources (human, materials, assistive devices)
- Support services
- Environment (including facilities)
- Differentiations (curriculum, teaching methods, teaching and learning materials, assessment)
- Participation (including parental and community participation)

Methods

Mixed methods and evaluation instruments were used as follows:

1. Quantitative method: online questionnaires for teachers and students with SEN by using the Google Forms;
2. Qualitative method: semi-structured interviews for principals and other respondents; and interviews of parents.

Instruments are described in the next chapter.

Data collection and analysis

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the data was collected by using online questionnaires and online interviews. Only MES officials were interviewed face to face.

Nine upper secondary schools were selected to take part into the needs assessment. Upper secondary level (grades 10–12) of education in Kosovo covers gymnasiums and vocational education and training (VET) schools and each of them have their own profiles. Gymnasiums are divided to social, general, natural sciences, mathematics, informatics and languages; and VET schools into the fields of technology, agriculture, economics, medicine, music, trade, theology, arts and 6 centres of competence.

The selection criteria was as follows:

- selected schools from different regions of Kosovo;
- selected VET schools with different profiles;
- one medical school;
- one gymnasium for social sciences;
- one art school; and
- one music school.

The selected regions were Dečan/Dečane, Gjakovë/Djakovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Peja/Peć, Prishtinë/Priština and Skenderaj.

The data was collected in October 2020 by:

- Semi-structured interviews of 9 principals ;
- Semi-structured interviews of 2 MES officers;
- Semi-structured interview of an international VET education project worker;
- Online questionnaire sent to 125 teachers;
- Online questionnaire sent to 10 students;
- Interviews of two parents of students with SEN.

Semi-structured interviews of principals

The semi-structured interviews were conducted by Gazmend Tahiraj in October 2020. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were held over the phone. The questions for the interviews (see annex 1) were prepared before the interviewing process. First, an email was sent to all school principals individually to inform them about the aim of the study and to request an interview. Secondly, school principals were contacted individually by phone, and set a date and time for the individual interview. Originally, semi-structured interviews were planned to be carried out online on the MS Teams platform but since some of the school principals had problems with internet it was decided to make interviews over the phone.

The semi-structured interview of principals covered the following issues:

- number of students with SEN and disabilities in the schools;
- conditions of the school for provision of access and quality education for students with SEN and disabilities including issues related to e.g. school infrastructure, curriculum, curriculum adaptation, use of assistive devices, learning materials and usage of IEP;
- training of teachers and school principals on inclusive education;
- commitment and willingness of teachers and principals to accept students with SEN and disabilities;
- suitability of VET/Gymnasium profiles for students with SEN and disabilities;
- the biggest challenges and needs in the school to provide better access and quality of education to students with SEN and disabilities.

All interviews were conducted in Albanian. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and translated into English language. The qualitative data gained was analysed by grouping the same kinds of answers into categories.

Semi-structured interviews of MES officials and a Project worker

Two officials from the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and one employee of an International VET education project were interviewed. The questions of the semi-structured questionnaire used for the principals' interviews were modified for the MES officers and the project worker. MES officers were interviewed face to face, and the project worker on the MS Teams platform in October 2020.

Online questionnaire for teachers

The online questionnaire for teachers contained basic questions (gender, educational background, type of school, municipality) and 27 statements reflecting the criteria of the needs' assessment. Teachers were asked to respond to the statements by selecting their own opinion on the scale of 1-5.
1= strongly disagree | 2 = disagree | 3= not agree or disagree | 4= agree | 5= strongly agree

As an example:

1	Our school welcomes students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
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In addition, the teacher questionnaire contained one open question:

“In your opinion, which are the biggest challenges of your school to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities? Please prioritise just three main challenges.”

The link to the online questionnaire for teachers was sent to 124 teachers (15 teachers per each school, except music schools where it was sent to 4 teachers). By the given deadline on the 1st of November, 59 teachers had responded. Head teachers were requested to remind teachers to respond but no more responses were received.

The quantitative data was collected by using the online questionnaire (Google Forms). The data was analysed by presenting percentages of each individual variable of the questionnaire. Responses to the open question were analysed by categorising and grouping the responses according to the similarities of responses, and how they are reflecting to the criteria of the needs' assessment. As an example of how the topics were grouped:

- “27 teachers consider that the infrastructure of the school is not sufficient.” This finding is based on the teachers' responses indicating the following: “Lack of space”, “insufficient infrastructure and / or environment”, “lack of physical access to school”, “not good conditions”, “access to the whole school”, “school building”, “physical access to the premises of the school building”, “toilet”.

Online questionnaire for students

The online questionnaire for students contained basic questions (gender, age, grade, type of school, municipality) and 11 statements reflecting the needs' assessment criteria (e.g. participation, support, learning environment). Students were asked to respond to the statements by selecting their own opinion on the scale

1= strongly disagree | 2 = disagree | 3= not agree or disagree | 4= agree | 5= strongly agree

As an example:

4	My teachers support me when I need support.	1	2	3	4	5
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In addition, the student questionnaire contained two open questions:

- a) Would you please describe by your own words what kind of support you need and get during school days?
- b) Would you please describe what kind of support you would need and what you do not get at school?

The link to the online questionnaire for students was sent to 10 students in the end of October. Only two of them responded by the deadline on the 1st of November 2020. After the deadline, principals were asked to remind students to respond but no more responses were received.

Interviews of parents

Principals assisted in finding two parents of students with disabilities who were willing to be interviewed individually⁴. He recorded, transcribed and translated the responses of the parents.

The main topics of the parents' interviews were related to:

- the conditions in the school where their child is attending;
- support gained and needed in the school; and
- training needs of teachers.

Respondents

Respondents to the semi-structured questionnaire were as follows:

- 8 principals, and from one school instead of the principal (who was sick) the school psychologist and a teacher; (one of the school principals couldn't participate in the interview and appointed the school psychologist and one school teacher to participate in the interview).
- one official from the division of VET and one from the division of SEN/MES
- one worker of an international project contributing to VET education

Respondents to the online questionnaire were as follows:

- 59 teachers
- 2 students with SEN attending the school

Interviews of parents of students with SEN:

- 2 parents

Information of school principals: 3 females and 6 males

Information of teachers

The total number of teachers was 59.

Gender: 61 % female, 39 % male

Educational background is shown in the Figure 1

Type of school is shown in the Figure 2

⁴ Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were held over the phone.

Educational background of teachers

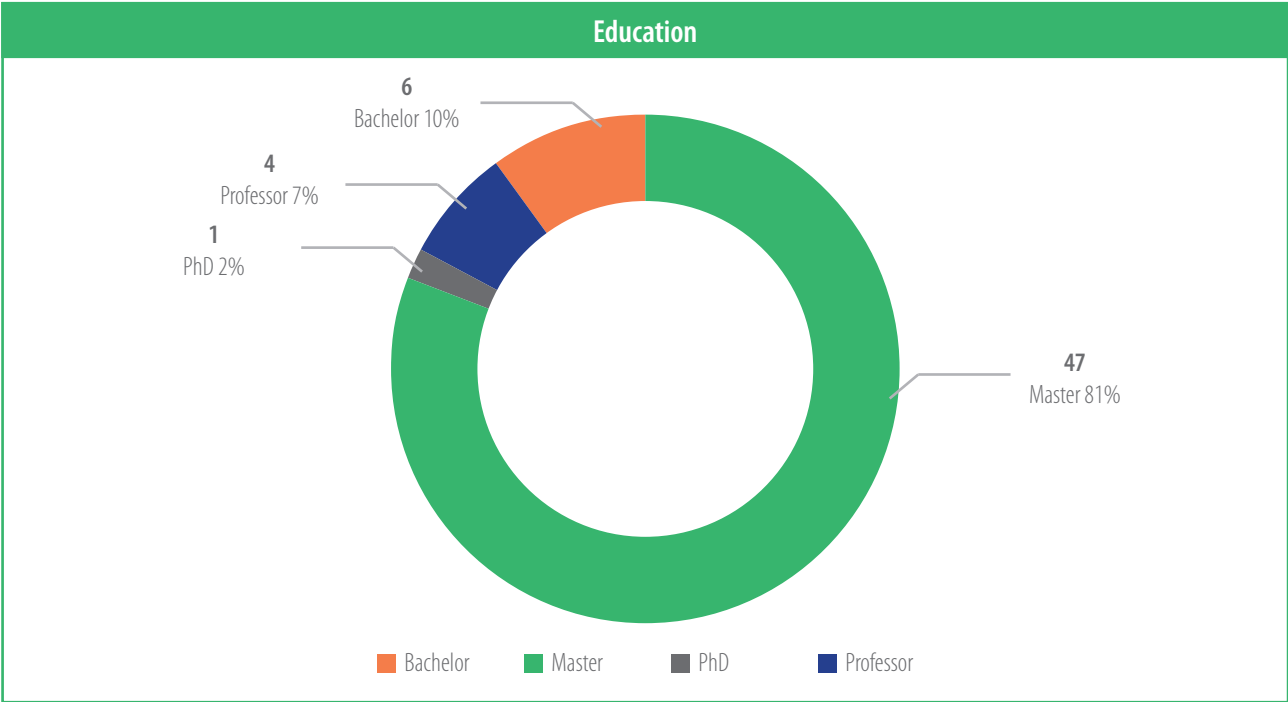


FIGURE 1

Type of school the teacher is representing

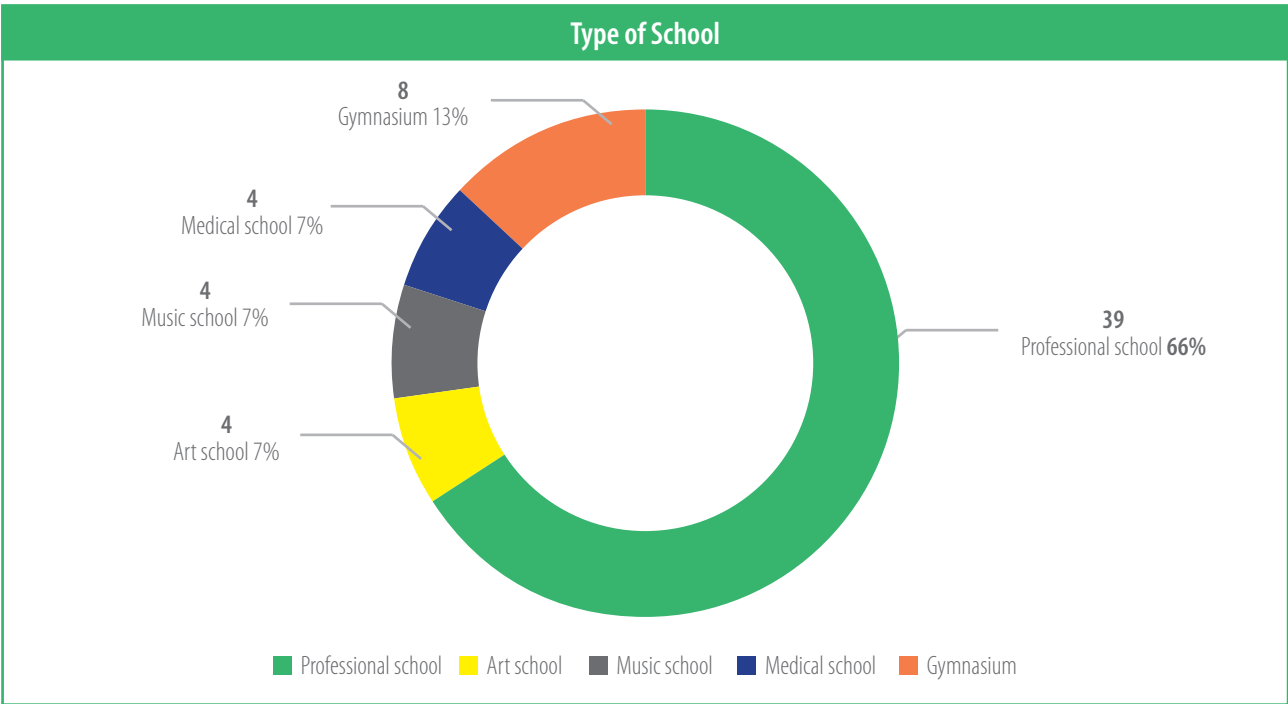


FIGURE 2

Information of students: two female students, age 16 and 17 and at grade 10 and 11

Information of parents: two parents

- A mother of a student with intellectual impairment in grade 12 of a VET school
- A father of a student with an intellectual impairment in grade 11 of a VET school

Results

The results of the interviews and online questionnaires presented in this chapter are combined under topics e.g. enrolment, acceptance, conditions of the school, curriculum, teaching, support, training and participation. These topics reflect the assessment criteria: awareness, acceptance, commitment, accessibility, leadership, knowledge and skills, resources (human, materials, and assistive devices), support services, environment (including facilities), differentiations and participation.

When looking at the results of the teacher questionnaire it must be noted that most of the statements are related to inclusive education and students with SEN and disabilities. However, 20% (12) of the respondents work in the gymnasium or in medical school which do not have any students with SEN / disabilities. This may explain the large percentage of teachers who have selected choice 3 (not agree or disagree) of the questionnaire. Teachers' responses are shown both by percentage and number of teachers.

Enrolment of students with SEN and disabilities

Seven out of nine schools have in total 38 students with SEN and disabilities attending the upper secondary school as shown in the Table 5.

Table 5 | Number of students with and type of SEN / disabilities as described by principals in VET schools and gymnasiums

Type of SEN/disability	VET school	Art school	Music school	Medical school	Gymnasium	In total
Visual impairment and blindness	3		1			4
Physical impairments	4					4
Language disorders	2	1				3
Intellectual impairments	8	2				10
Hearing impairments	4					4
Multiple impairments	1					1
Emotional disorders	1					1
Learning disabilities	11					11
Total	35	3	1			38

Acceptance

Two principals reported not having any students with SEN or disabilities in their schools. They were not able to give any specific explanation for the absence of students with SEN. However, one of the school principals stated:

'We usually have an open announcement for admission of students and we never had students with SEN who wanted to be enrolled in our school. I cannot say why they are not in our school as we have never imposed any restriction for them'

This statement gives the impression that students with SEN are eligible to apply to the school, but they do not. At the same time, it seems that the school is not doing anything to encourage and welcome students with SEN to attend to the school.

Another principal believes that strong competition for the enrolment in their school may result that students with SEN are even afraid to apply for the school.

‘We have strong admission criteria of having good results and good marks in the primary school in order to be in our school. The average mark of 5 or 4 is needed to be enrolled in our school’

This is a difficult precondition for most SEN children to reach, and naturally causes refusal for applications of students with SEN.

Some of the principals’ statements reflect their own attitudes (unfortunately negative) towards students with SEN.

‘Fortunately, currently we don’t have any children with SEN in our school’

This kind of a comment can be interpreted as displaying a negative attitude towards SEN students (even if is not meant to) and if the comment comes from the principal it may have implications on the admission and attitudes of other staff members towards students with SEN in their school.

However, overall, teachers seem to have a very positive opinion of the welcoming students with SEN and of head teachers’ willingness to provide access to students with SEN and disabilities as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

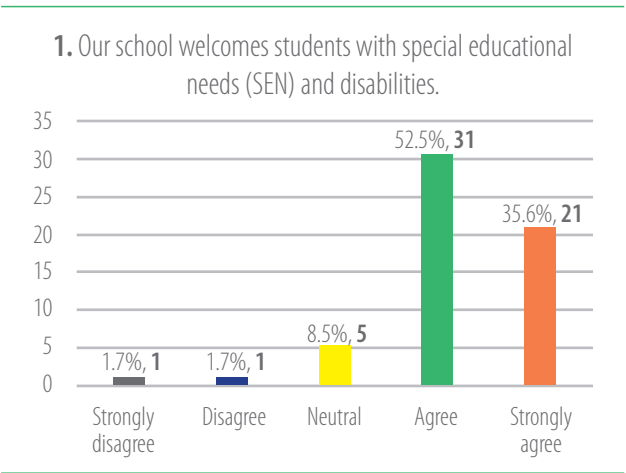


FIGURE 3

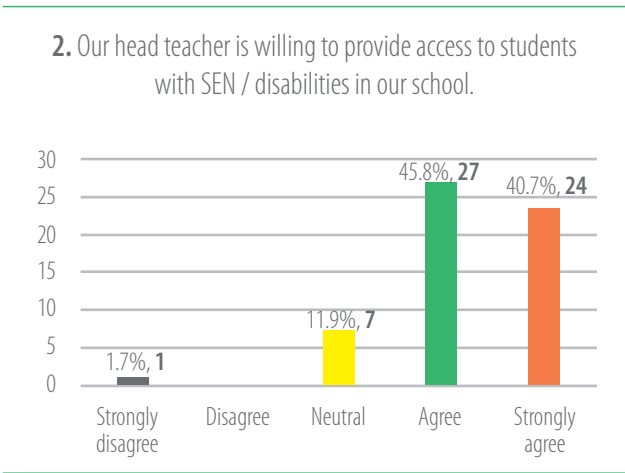


FIGURE 4

91,7% (52) of the teachers seem to have very positive opinion about how their school welcomes students with SEN and disability (Figure 3); 86,6 % (51) teachers have the opinion that their head teacher is willing to provide access to students with SEN / disabilities in the school (Figure 4). This shows commitment of the leadership to provide access to students with SEN and disabilities in many of the schools.

Principals were asked about the readiness and willingness of their teachers to have students with disabilities in their classes. All school principals reported that their teachers have positive attitudes, and they are willing to work with students with SEN. “They try with all means to do their best in working with students with SEN.” This shows commitment of teachers to including students with SEN even though as principals state that teachers lack skills and training on how to work with different students with different disabilities.

3. Our teachers are willing and committed to teach students with SEN / disabilities.

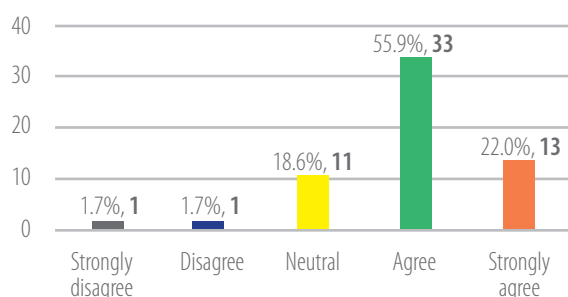


FIGURE 5

5. Special school is the best setting for students with SEN / disabilities.

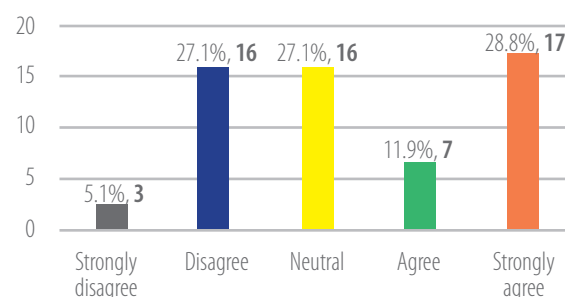


FIGURE 6

Also most of the teachers (77,9 %) think that teachers in their school are willing and committed to teach students with SEN / disabilities (Figure 5), and 83 % (49) of the teachers tell that accepting diversity is an important value in their school.

After having these very positive opinions of welcoming, acceptance, willingness and commitment to have and teach students with SEN in the school, it is surprising to find out that only 32,2 % (19) of the teachers disagree or strongly disagree with the statement "Special school is the best setting for students with SEN / disabilities". (Figure 6)

Parents consider that the attitudes of principals and teachers are positive:

"The school principal and teachers accepted very well my daughter... Teachers and the school principal have positive attitudes."

"Teachers have a very positive attitude towards... my son with disabilities."

Some of the teachers are worried about the acceptance and attitudes of other students.

"Other students are not so willing to accept students with SEN in the classroom."

"It often happens that students with disabilities are misunderstood by other students and make them feel less wanted"

But a parent is positive:

"Also students in general accepted her (daughter with disability) well in the school... Of course there are moments when some students use the opportunity to ridicule her, but my daughter knows how to escape from those situations. She is very well trained on this."

Two teachers highlight the importance of raising awareness among students "to accept and respect each other in the classroom regardless of their abilities, which means preventing stigma.

Conditions of schools

Principals were asked to describe the conditions of the schools to provide access to students with SEN and disabilities. The conditions include infrastructure of the school, curriculum, curriculum adaptation, assistive devices, learning materials and usage of IEP.

When talking about the school infrastructure, all school principals spoke about the accessibility in their schools for students with physical disabilities. They centred on physical access to their school premises for students with physical disabilities and not for other accommodations needed for other types of disabilities. Maybe this is because they are not aware of what accommodations and adaptations are needed for different types of disabilities. As one of the principals stated:

‘We don’t have any experience with SEN children. We even didn’t have ever any request for admission of SEN children in our school. Maybe because of this I don’t know what is needed in the infrastructure for SEN children’.

Six out of nine schools have ramps for wheelchair users. The other three schools reported that they do not have access for students with physical disabilities. Even schools which reported having ramps, said that this creates access only to the ground floor, and not to the whole school premises. According to MES officers, VET schools generally have at some point good infrastructure, and most of VET schools have ramps.

Schools which reported having students using wheelchairs were forced to arrange the classroom on the ground floor for them. One school reported that on the ground floor they have only workshops and laboratories and classes are on the first floor and thus, students using wheelchair have no access to the classrooms. In most of these schools, toilets do not seem to be accessible for children with physical and other disabilities.

6. The infrastructure and environment of our school is a barrier for students with SEN / disabilities to have access to our school.

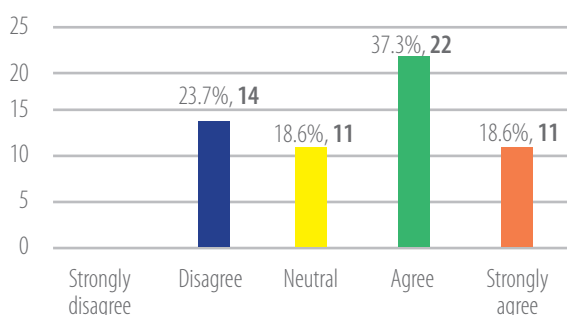


FIGURE 7

8. We lack sufficient equipment, supplies and assistive devices to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities.

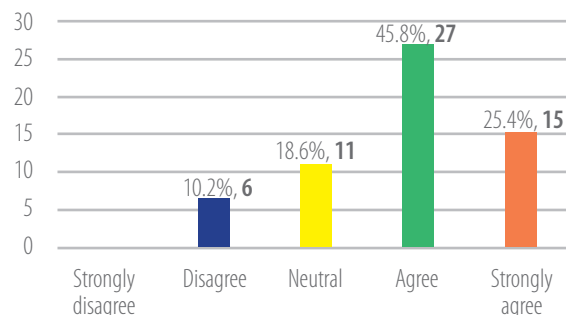


FIGURE 8

More than half of the teachers 55,9 % (33) consider that the infrastructure of the school is not suitable for students with SEN and disabilities (Figure 7). In addition, in the open question of the questionnaire 27 teachers addressed the infrastructure as one of the main challenges for inclusion of students with disabilities.

Parents are quite positive about the infrastructure and conditions of the school:

“It is an old school and the infrastructure is not good. The conditions in the school are the same for all children.” and “The school infrastructure is not bad.”

“The lab where my daughter is doing the practice is good.” and “Labs in the school have equipment. The equipment in the school is a bit old, but it is possible also for my son to practice some practical skills.”

The lack of sufficient equipment, supplies and assistive devices to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities is considered a challenge for 71 % (42) of teachers (Figure 8).

According to 72 % (42) of teachers, schools do not have adapted teaching and learning materials for students with SEN / disabilities. 42, 5% (25) of the teachers consider that ICT technology helps their students with SEN / disabilities to learn.

The large number of students in the classroom does not seem to be a big problem to accommodate students with SEN since more than half 52, 6% of the teachers (31) disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

Curriculum

All nine schools reported that they have the same curriculum for all children and they are not adapting it in any way for students with SEN. The art and music schools informed that due to the specifics of the school, they have more individualised type of work with all of their students, and this naturally serves students with SEN well.

As shown in the Figure 9 below, nearly half of the teachers consider demands of the curriculum difficult for students with SEN / disabilities to be accommodated in our school.

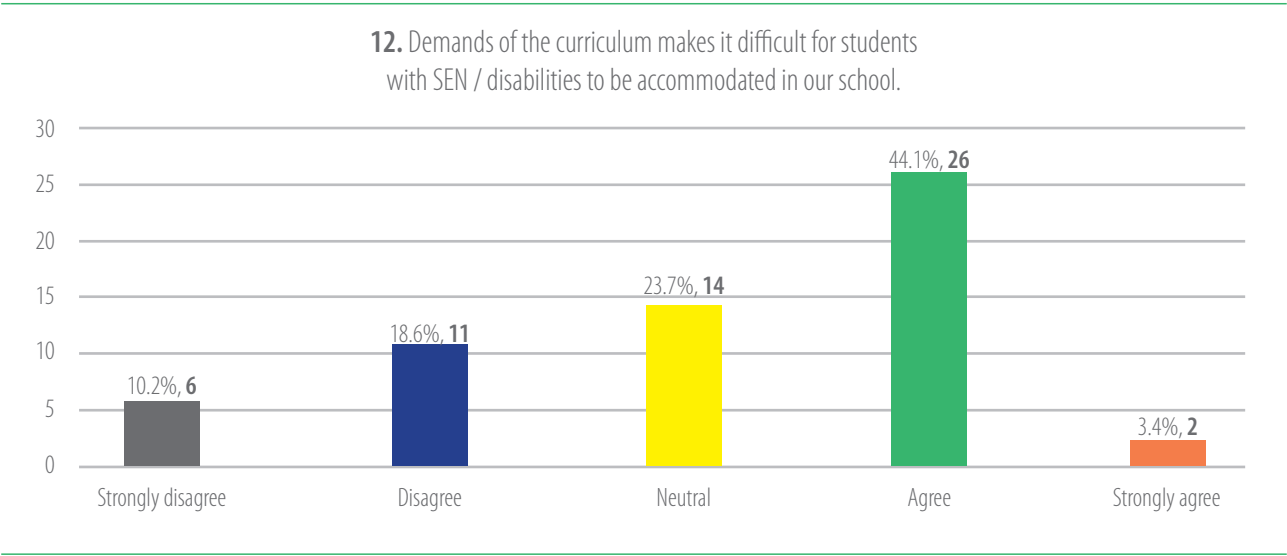


FIGURE 9

Even though the use of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is foreseen for all students with disabilities who have a decision on their education with special education needs by the Municipal Assessment Commission, IEPs are not in use in any of the 9 schools.

Teaching

14. In our school, we develop ways of teaching that respond to the diverse needs of students.

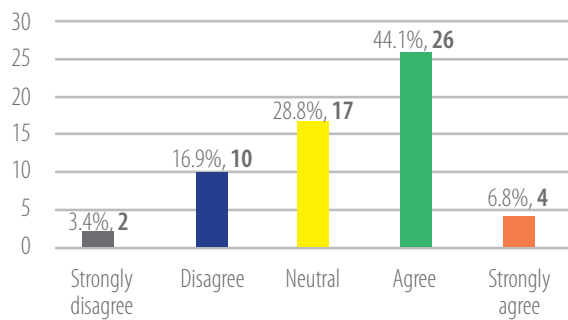


FIGURE 10

15. It is too difficult to modify the instruction, teaching style and teaching and learning materials to meet the needs of students with SEN / disabilities.

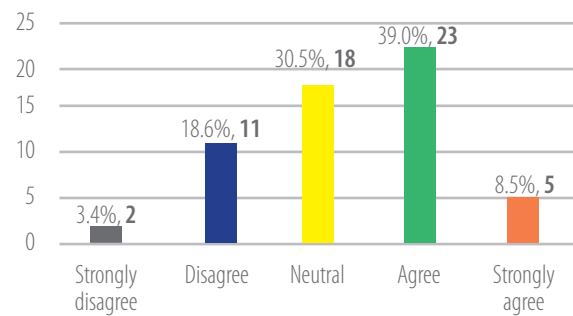


FIGURE 11

More than half of the teachers (30) report that teachers in their school develop ways of teaching that respond to the diverse needs of students (Figure 10). On the other hand, almost half of the teachers (28) consider that “It is too difficult to modify the instruction, teaching style and teaching and learning materials to meet the needs of students with SEN / disabilities.” (Figure 11)

86,4 % (51) of the teachers report using various teaching methods to meet individual needs of all students in the classroom. According to most of the principals, teachers use some alternative assessment techniques to make it possible for SEN students to express themselves better.

9. We have adapted teaching and learning materials for students with SEN / disabilities available in our school.

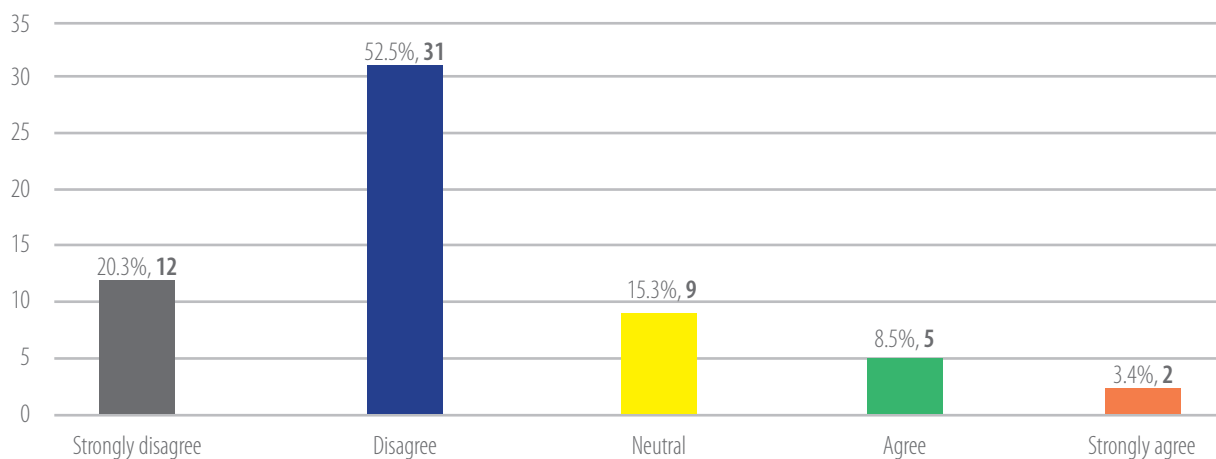


FIGURE 12

Only 7 (11,9%) of the teachers agree with the statement of having adapted teaching and learning materials in the school (Figure 12).

According to parents, there are no alternative learning materials available:

“My daughter did not receive any alternative learning materials. She is receiving the same materials as other students.”

“The school doesn’t provide any alternative materials for my son. He has the same materials as all other children.”

Support

According to 77,9 % (46) of the teachers, there are no support services for teachers and their students with SEN and disabilities available (Figure 13).

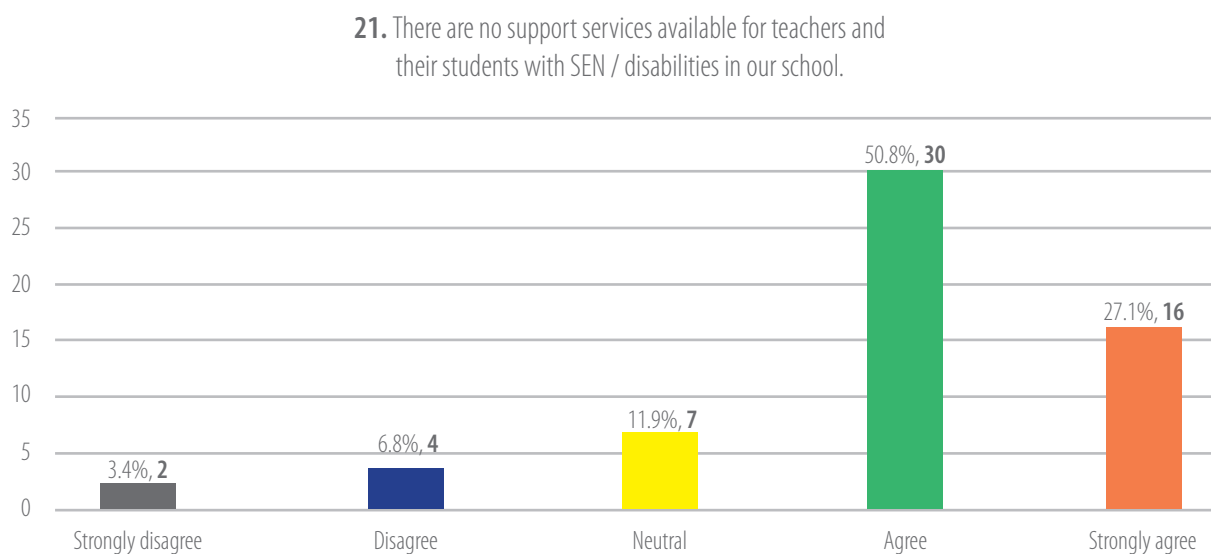


FIGURE 13

Only 6 teachers (10, 2%) are familiar with the work of itinerant teachers in resource centres.

One of the schools receives support from the resource centre for the blind with adapted materials. In another school, teachers have adapted learning materials by themselves (e.g. books in large print) for a student with a visual impairment.

According to parents there is no support for students with disabilities in the school:

“She needs a support teacher, but there are no support teachers in the school.”

“She is not receiving any additional lesson hours”.

School principals stated that they need the assistance of specialised staff to support their students and teachers in teaching students with SEN. One of the school principals stated that they have two personal assistants supporting two students with disabilities in their school paid by their parents.

Both MES officers and parents state that there is a need for support teachers and assistants in the school. Comments of parents:

“The personal assistant - we are paying ourselves - is supporting my son individually.”

“It would be good that municipality would provide some support teachers for children with SEN and not parents to pay from their personal money. We made official request in the municipality since three years ago and they said that they cannot provide because of the lack of finances. This is not acceptable.”

59,4 % (35) of the teachers suppose that other students are supporting students with SEN / disabilities.

The two students who responded to the questionnaire seemingly do not get support in the school. One of them strongly agrees he/she needs extra support or adapted learning materials during lessons but disagrees with the statement of getting extra support. One of the students

receives support from parents when needed. Neither of them has any opinion on the statements that teachers or classmates provide support when needed.

Training

16. My pre-service teacher training provided me skills to manage inclusive classroom included with students with SEN.

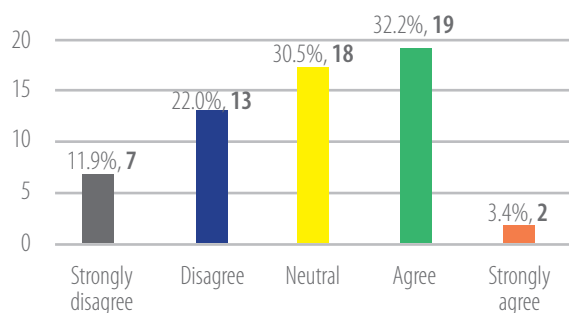


FIGURE 14

17. I have received in-service training on inclusive education.

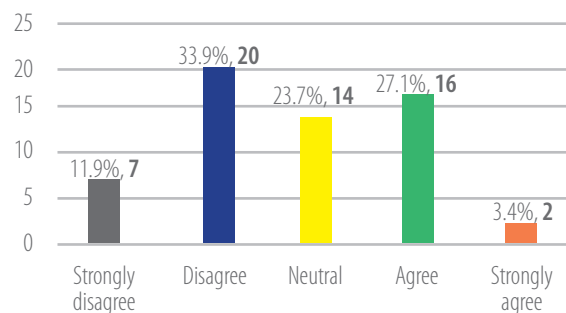


FIGURE 15

21 teachers (35,6%) consider that their pre-service teacher training provided skills to manage inclusive classroom. (Figure 14). In-service training on inclusive education was received by 18 (30,5%) teachers (Figure 15).

Only 25,4 % of the teachers consider that teachers in their school have enough knowledge and skills to manage inclusive classroom and support students with SEN. (Figure 16). 84,8% of teachers would be willing to teach students with SEN if they received training on how to modify teaching to meet the needs of students with SEN/ disabilities. (Figure 17)

18. Teachers in our school have enough knowledge and skills to manage inclusive classroom and support students with SEN.

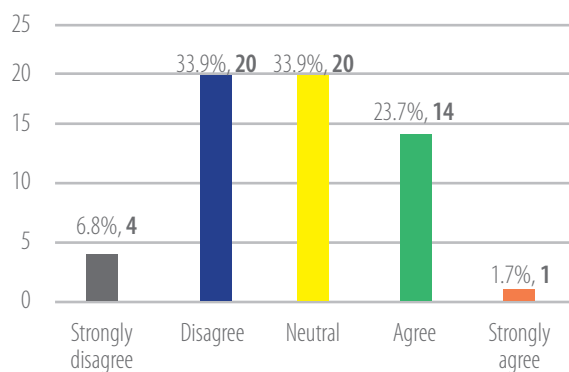


FIGURE 16

19. If I received training on how to modify my teaching to meet the needs of students with SEN/ disabilities, I would be ready to teach also them.

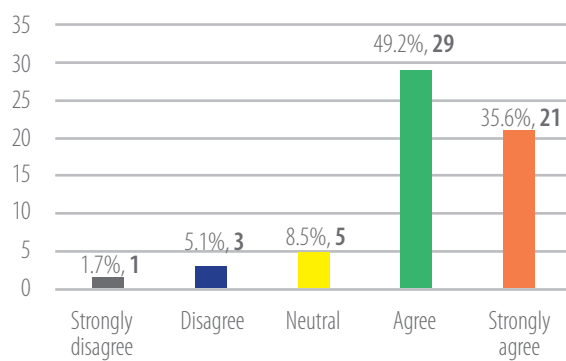


FIGURE 17

All nine school principals reported that their staff is not trained on inclusion. Only one of the school principals reported having received some training on inclusion.

All school principals reported that they would like to have their teachers trained on inclusive education and also principals themselves would be interested in receiving some training. They consider that due to and during the COVID-19 pandemic, it would be problematic to organize any training in their school.

Most of the school principals are not aware of the training programmes that exist on inclusive education and they could not state any specific training they need for their staff. But, after the discussion with them in more details, they were able to request some specific training such as: How to use IEP, how to teach children with disabilities, how to plan lesson hours and in general didactics. Some school principals reported that their teachers are lacking didactic and pedagogical skills in general as they come from the professional sectors e.g. energy and machinery.

Both parents consider that teachers need training on “modern pedagogy” and on how to meet the needs of students with disabilities:

“Teachers lack skills of how to teach students with disabilities, but by having positive attitudes toward them they overpass that. Teachers need to be trained not only how to teach students with disabilities, but in general modern pedagogy.”

“Whatever support to provide for teachers by the project will be good. A short course to explain to teachers that these children are not sick...”

A clear message was given by MES officers and project worker: teachers and principals of VET schools and gymnasiums have not received any training on inclusion and on how to support students with SEN, and thus, there is a need to organise training on inclusive education for all of them.

Participation

24. Students with SEN / disabilities are participating in all activities in the classrooms.

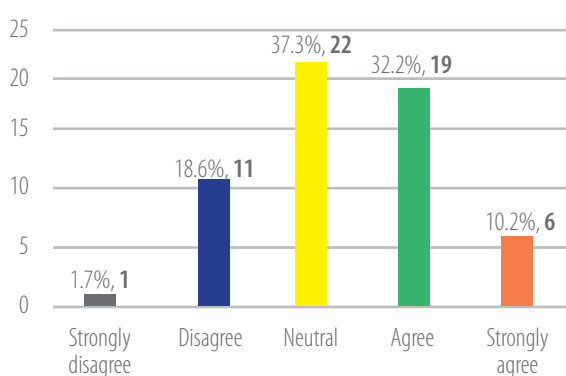


FIGURE 18

25 teachers (42,4%) are of the opinion that students with SEN are participating in all activities in the classroom (Figure 18). Note that 20 % (12) of the teachers do not have any students with SEN in their classroom.

One of the students participates most of the activities at school but the other one not. One of them has made friends at school but the other one does not have any opinion about it.

As Figure 19 shows, nearly all of the teachers consider that accepting diversity is an important value in their community.

Figure 20 shows that teachers are strongly confident that parents with disabilities are willing to have their children educated in their school.

26. Accepting diversity is an important value in our community.

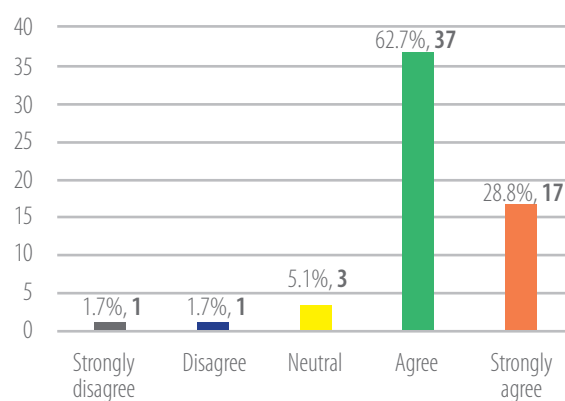


FIGURE 19

25. Parents of children with disabilities are willing to have their children educated in our school.

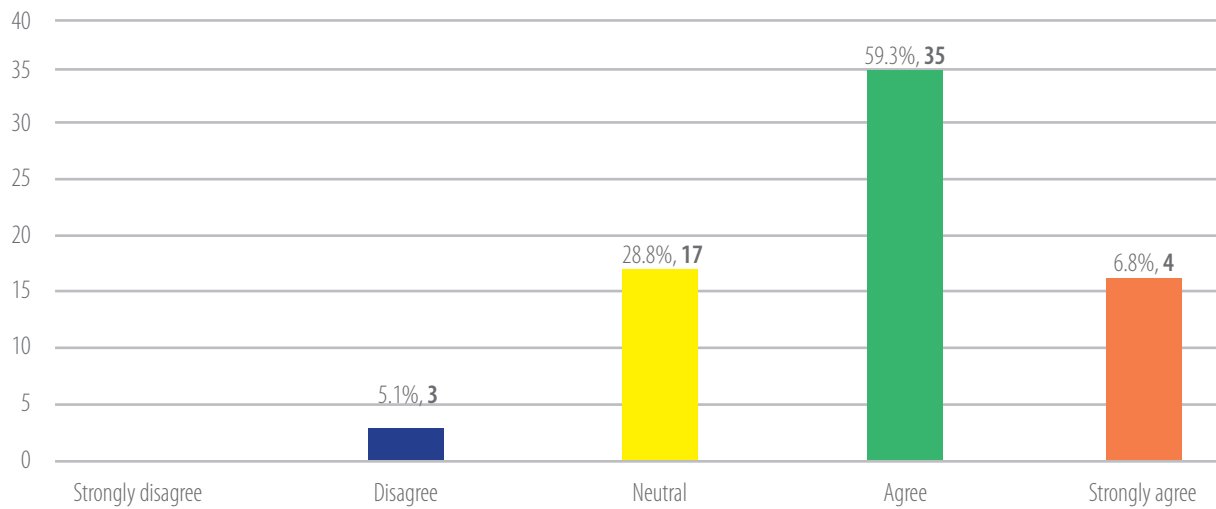


FIGURE 20

Suitability of the school profiles for students with SEN

The suitability of VET/Gymnasium profiles for students with SEN and disabilities is a concern of most of the school principals. They stated that some of the profiles (e.g. heavy machinery) are not suitable for students with SEN.

The principals identified the following profiles as being suitable for students with SEN and disabilities:

- Gymnasium of social sciences
- Arboriculture profile
- Viticulture profile
- Chef/Cuisine
- Farming
- Art school – All profiles: Textile design, Interior Design, Graphic design, ceramics design
- Food technology
- Agriculture
- Playing Piano
- Economy
- Information technology
- Transportation

The need to improve the access and quality of education for students with SEN and disabilities identified by principals are shown in chapter 5 Conclusions and recommendations

Summary of MES officials' and a project worker's interviews

The total number of students with SEN and disabilities in mainstream schools is unknown also for the MES officers. This is because of the challenges in data collection described earlier in the chapter "Data of students in upper secondary schools" (p.10).

According to MES officers, there are VET schools which have to some point good infrastructure, and most VET schools have ramps that allow access to students in wheelchairs.

In order to provide access and improve the quality of education of students with SEN and disabilities in higher secondary schools, teachers and principals need to be trained on inclusive education including how to meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities in the mainstream classroom and school; and support services need to be created in and for the schools. In addition, conditions of the schools should be improved in order to be accessible for students with different kinds of disabilities (e.g. physical, visual).

The project worker talked about the conditions of two Centres of Competence that their project supported. These Centres of Competence were built by respecting the highest standards of construction and by creating good conditions for students with SEN. Unfortunately, as he stated there are no SEN students in either of the Centres.

MES officers highlighted the importance of guaranteeing the security of students with SEN and disabilities during practical work and workshops. Also they emphasised the importance of modifying the standards for the needs of students with SEN. In addition, according to them at the end of the schooling, a certificate should be provided to students with SEN showing what kind of skills the student has acquired. This would help him/her to show to the employer the skills he/ she possess.

A clear message was given by MES officers and project worker: There is a need to organise training on inclusive education for teachers and principals of VET schools and Gymnasiums since they have not received any training on inclusion and on how to support students with SEN.

According to both MES officers, there is a need to employ support staff such as support teachers and assistants in VET schools. Assistants need knowledge and skills in order to provide SEN support, and therefore, as emphasised by one MES officer, assistants need to be trained on how to support students with SEN in upper secondary education before being appointed in VET schools.

One of the MES officers stated that it is possible for municipalities to employ support teachers and other support staff especially now when the number of students in VET schools is decreasing.

The importance of receiving data of students with SEN needed in order to employ extra staff was raised by the project worker. After having proper data on the number of students with SEN in the VET schools decisions for the number of (support) staff to be employed could be made. He also suggested that regulations could be made for one support teacher supporting more than one school.

About the suitability of the profiles in VET schools and Gymnasiums for students with SEN, the MES officers suggest preparing a list of profiles that are most suitable for SEN students and that can create job opportunities for them. However, this is not supposed to limit any chances for profiles for students with SEN.

According to the project worker, some of the profiles are already accessible for students with SEN without any adaptations. He is also of the opinion that it is needed to equip different labs in different municipalities to create access for students with different types of impairments.

Needs to improve the access and provide quality education for students with SEN and disabilities particularly in VET schools listed by the MES officers and the project worker are shown in the following chapter.

The project of the interviewed project worker develops the standards for level 5 education for the profile of assistants of children with special needs. So far 130 assistants have graduated in this programme, and in the current training group there are 60 students. The programme is of a high quality and after graduation assistants can be employed in VET schools as support staff for SEN students.

Conclusions and recommendations

The results of this needs assessment show that most of the schools, principals and teachers have positive attitudes and a willingness to provide access to school for students with SEN and disabilities.

Challenges

The challenges of collecting accurate and reliable data on the number of students with SEN and disabilities in mainstream schools causes difficulties for planning and developing inclusive education and its services for schools and students with SEN and disabilities.

The biggest challenges in schools are related to the conditions of the school including the infrastructure, a lack of training on inclusion and how to meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities in mainstream classrooms, a lack of support services inside and outside of the school; and a lack of adaptations of curriculum and learning / teaching materials and equipment.

Needs of schools

The needs of the schools to improve access and quality of education for students with SEN and disabilities in higher secondary education are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Needs of the school to improve access and quality of education for students with SEN

Respondent	Needs identified
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvement of school infrastructure• Organising teacher training on inclusion• Providing different laboratories for schools• Equipment for practical work needed• Support staff (support teachers, assistants for children with SEN, psychologist) needed• Curriculum adaptations needed• Free transportation for students with disabilities
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• infrastructure and conditions of the school• lack of training of teachers• lack of materials, books and equipment• lack of support staff
MES officers and the Project worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• change the mentality and the approach of the staff of VET schools toward students with SEN• create physical access for students with SEN• analysis on what profiles students with different impairments prefer• focus on creating opportunities in VET schools for students with different disabilities• employment of support staff in VET schools• building capacities of teachers of upper secondary school in modern pedagogy in general and also on how to work with students with SEN• build support mechanisms in VET schools that will support students with SEN from the admission process and throughout of their education• build capacities of instructors who will support SEN students in their practical work

Parents of students with SEN and disabilities

- support, support teacher
- extra lesson hours
- additional practical lessons in the lab
- alternative learning materials
- teachers need to be trained
- transportation to and from the school
- more practice, less theory
- personal school assistants

Back in 2013, Gashi A. & Serhati J. had already reported that VET schools in Kosovo are less likely to select students with disabilities and students with learning difficulties. They further stated that mainstream VET schools have not been prepared for providing education for students with disabilities and learning difficulties because of the following reasons:

- teachers are not trained to meet special educational needs in the classroom;
- the infrastructure sets limitations for access for persons with disabilities; and
- There are not suitable programmes for students with SEN and places for professional practice for them.

This seems to be the reality today as well. All respondents of this needs assessment identified the lack of training on inclusive education and limitations of conditions at school including infrastructure as challenges to the provision of access and quality education for students with SEN and disabilities.

Support systems have not been developed in upper secondary schools to support students with SEN and disabilities. Only one of the nine schools reported that the Resource Centre provides them support.

Schools do not have any support teachers or school assistants. It was reported that some parents have hired a personal assistant to support their child with disability at school. This should be the obligation of the municipality to make sure that school assistants are available when needed.

Most of the schools stated that they have some profiles (e.g. profiles handling heavy machines or wood processing) which are not be suitable for students with some disabilities. In these cases, the practical part of the training might be dangerous for them. Thus, it is highly recommended to provide guidance and counselling services at the beginning of the studies particularly in VET schools for a student with SEN / disability.

Recommendations

- a)** Improve data collection of the number of students with SEN in VET and other upper secondary schools
 - Review the EMIS classification on SEN
 - Strengthen the collaboration between schools and municipality assessment teams to identify students with SEN
 - Develop and submit a guideline for schools to provide accurate data on students with SEN.
- b)** Identify the most appropriate training programmes that should be offered to the school principals and teachers in upper secondary schools
 - Principals of inclusive education
 - How to manage an inclusive school and classroom
 - How to meet the needs of students with SEN and disabilities in an inclusive setting
 - Multi-professional work
- c)** Improve conditions in upper secondary schools to serve and provide access for students with disabilities (e.g. availability of suitable sanitary facilities including toilets)
- d)** Provide adapted learning materials and assistive devices
- e)** Make needs analyses of and employment plans for the support staff needed in the upper secondary schools (support teachers, assistants for students with SEN and school psychologists)
- f)** Develop and carry out systematic training of school assistants
- g)** Create collaboration between upper secondary schools and resource centres
- h)** Analyse the profiles that are most suitable for different types of disabilities and do the needed modifications to increase the number of SEN children, especially on VET profiles
- i)** Provide career counselling and guidance for students who attend to upper secondary school in order to find the suitable profile of studies.
- j)** Prepare a plan to raise awareness on inclusion among upper secondary school staff.
- k)** Preparatory vocational training for students who are not ready for the VET immediately after the compulsory education
 - This training could contain training to prepare a student with SEN for vocational training. It also could strengthen the abilities of a student to complete a vocational qualification, education and guidance for work and independent living

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Annex 1: Questions of Semi-structured Interview used with school principals

Dear Respondent,

The project Building Capacity for Inclusive Education (INCLUDE) financed by the European commission is preparing needs analysis of the situation of children with special needs in the secondary education in Kosovo. This Interview is a part of the assessment which is conducted in 9 secondary schools.

The aim of interview is to gather information about the readiness and needs of secondary schools to accommodate students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Based on the findings, the MES with the support of INCLUDE project will develop a plan to capacity in secondary schools to provide quality education for all students.

All information collected is confidential. The responses will be managed only by the assessment team members Gazmend Tahiraj and Marja Matero. No personal information will be given to outsiders. After the analysis, the original materials and personal information are destroyed. The data files, which do not contain any personal information, will be used only for this needs assessment.

We thank you for your help and cooperation!

Questions:

1. *Do you have students with special needs (disabilities) in your school?*

- If yes, How many?
- what type of disabilities they have?
- If not, Why?

2. *Does your school have the conditions to accept students with special needs and attend education in your school?*

- Do you have appropriate infrastructure in your school?
- What do you need to improve the infrastructure?
- Curriculum/Adaptation?
- Assistive devices?
- Teaching materials are they?
- Usage of Individual Education Plan?

3. *Based on your knowledge how willing are you teachers and your staff to accept students with special needs?*

- If Not, Could you explain why?

4. *Are your teachers trained in inclusion to support students with special needs?*

- If yes, what type of training they attended.
- If not, are they willing to be trained in Inclusion?
- What type of training you think they need in order to accept students with special needs?

5. *Are the profiles you are offering in your school suitable for students with disabilities?*

- Which profile in your school is the most suitable for students with special needs?

6. *What you think is needed to change in your school in order to accept students with special needs? Please prioritize 3 things you think are the most important to change in your school in order to provide education for students with special needs?*

Annex 2: Questions of Semi-structured Interview used with school principals

Dear Respondent,

The project Building Capacity for Inclusive Education (INCLUDE) financed by the European commission is preparing needs analysis of the situation of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the secondary education in Kosovo.

The aim of the needs analysis is to gather data about the readiness and needs of secondary schools in Kosovo to accommodate students with SEN. Based on the findings, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) with the support of the INCLUDE project will develop a plan to build capacity in secondary schools to enable them to provide access and quality education for all students with SEN.

This interview is a part of the needs analysis which is conducted in 9 secondary schools including your school. You are kindly requested to response to the questionnaire.

All information collected is confidential. The responses will be managed only by the assessment team members Mr. Gazmend Tahiraj and Ms. Marja Matero. No personal information will be given to outsiders. After the analysis, the original materials and personal information will be destroyed. The data files, which do not contain any personal information, will be used only for this needs assessment.

We thank you for your help and cooperation!

1. Do you know how many students with disabilities are in VET schools?

- In Gymnasiums?
- How do you collect the data?
- What kind of disabilities they have?

2. How do you describe the conditions of VET schools/ Gymnasiums to provide access to students with SEN?

- Do they have appropriate infrastructure in Schools?
- What is needed to improve the infrastructure in the school?
- Curriculum/Adaptation?
- Assistive devices?
- Teaching materials?
- Usage of Individual Education Plan?

3. Do you know if teachers/School principals of VET schools / Gymnasiums received any training on inclusion on how to support students with SEN?

- If yes, what type of training they have received?
- If not, is there a plan to organize training on inclusive education?
- What type of training do you think they need in order to accept and teach students with SEN?

4. What about the support staff that are working and need to be employed in VET schools/Gymnasiums to support SEN Students?

- Support teachers
- Psychologists
- Assistants for children with special educational needs

5. How would you describe the suitability of the VET Profiles/Gymnasiums in schools for students with SEN?

- Which profile do you think are the most suitable for students with SEN?

6. What do you think is needed to change in upper secondary schools, especially VET schools to provide access and quality education for students with SEN?

7. What is the project you are working doing for the improvement of quality of education for students with SEN in secondary education?

- Any training?
- Any profile adaptation?

Annex 3: Questionnaire for teachers

Instructions:

The project Building Capacity for Inclusive Education (INCLUDE) financed by the European commission is preparing needs analysis of the situation of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the secondary education in Kosovo.

The aim of the needs analysis is to gather data about the readiness and needs of secondary schools in Kosovo to accommodate students with SEN. Based on the findings, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) with the support of the INCLUDE project will develop a plan to build capacity in secondary schools to enable them to provide access and quality education also for all students with SEN.

This questionnaire is a part of the needs analysis which is conducted in 9 secondary schools including your school. You are kindly requested to response to the questionnaire.

All information collected is confidential. The responses will be managed only by the assessment team members Mr. Gazmend Tahiraj and Ms. Marja Matero. No personal information will be given to outsiders. After the analysis, the original materials and personal information will be destroyed. The data files, which do not contain any personal information, will be used only for this needs assessment.

Read the instructions carefully and respond according to your own experiences.

We thank you for your help and cooperation!

Pristina, October 4th, 2020

Gazmend Tahiraj
Marja Matero

Background information

Select your options.

Gender	Female <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/>
Age	years
Education	Bachelor <input type="radio"/> Master <input type="radio"/> PhD <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> , what
What is your teaching subject	
Experience as a teacher	years

Information about the school

Municipality	
City	
School	
Type and specialization of your school	<p>VET <input type="radio"/> , specialization _____</p> <p>Gymnasium <input type="radio"/> , specialization _____</p>

QUESTIONNAIRE

SELECT YOUR OPINION

1= strongly disagree | 2 = disagree | 3= not agree or disagree | 4= agree | 5= strongly agree

1	Our school welcomes students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Our head teacher is willing to provide access to students with SEN / disabilities in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Our teachers are willing and committed to teach students with SEN / disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Accepting diversity is an important value in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Special school is the best setting for students with SEN / disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The infrastructure and environment of our school is a barrier for students with SEN / disabilities to have access to our school.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Due to the large number of students in classrooms, it is not possible to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
8	We lack sufficient equipment, supplies and assistive devices to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
9	We have adapted teaching and learning materials for students with SEN / disabilities available in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
10	ICT technology helps our students with SEN / disabilities to learn in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
11	It is easy to organize the classroom to accommodate the students with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Demands of the curriculum makes it difficult for students with SEN / disabilities to be accommodated in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
13	There are no places for practical training for students with SEN / disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
14	In our school, we develop ways of teaching that respond to the diverse needs of students.	1	2	3	4	5
15	It is too difficult to modify the instruction, teaching style and teaching and learning materials to meet the needs of students with SEN / disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5

16	My pre-service teacher training provided me skills to manage inclusive classroom included with students with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I have received in-service training on inclusive education.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Teachers in our school have enough knowledge and skills to manage inclusive classroom and support students with SEN.	1	2	3	4	5
19	If I received training on how to modify my teaching to meet the needs of students with SEN/ disabilities, I would be ready to teach also them.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I use various teaching methods to meet individual needs of all students in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
21	There are no support services available for teachers and their students with SEN / disabilities in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I am familiar with the work of itinerant teachers in resource centres.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Other students are supporting students with SEN / disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Students with SEN / disabilities are participating in all activities in the classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Parents of children with disabilities are willing to have their children educated in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Accepting diversity is an important value in our community.	1	2	3	4	5

In your opinion, which are the biggest challenges of your school to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities? Please prioritize just three main challenges.

1)	
2)	
3)	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Annex 4: Responses of teachers to the online questionnaire

1= strongly disagree | 2 = disagree | 3= not agree or disagree | 4= agree | 5= strongly agree

		1	2	3	4	5	No of teachers
1	Our school welcomes students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.	1,7% (1)	1,7% (1)	8,5% (5)	52,5% (31)	35,6% (21)	59
2	Our head teacher is willing to provide access to students with SEN / disabilities in our school.	1,7% (1)	-	11,9% (7)	45,8% (27)	40,7% (24)	59
3	Our teachers are willing and committed to teach students with SEN / disabilities.	1,7% (1)	1,7% (1)	18,6% (11)	55,9% (33)	22% (13)	59
4	Accepting diversity is an important value in our school.	1,7% (1)	-	15,3% (9)	57,6% (34)	25,4% (15)	59
5	Special school is the best setting for students with SEN / disabilities.	5.1% (3)	27,1% (16)	27,1% (16)	11,9% (7)	28,8% (17)	59
6	The infrastructure and environment of our school is a barrier for students with SEN / disabilities to have access to our school.	-	23,7% (14)	18,6% (11)	37,3% (22)	18,6% (11)	58
7	Due to the large number of students in classrooms, it is not possible to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities.	8,5% (5)	44,1% (26)	10,2% (6)	23,7% (14)	13,6% (8)	59
8	We lack sufficient equipment, supplies and assistive devices to accommodate students with SEN / disabilities.	-	10,2% (6)	18,6% (11)	45,8% (27)	25,4% (15)	59
9	We have adapted teaching and learning materials for students with SEN / disabilities available in our school.	20,3% (12)	52,5% (31)	15,3% (9)	8,5% (5)	3,4% (2)	59
10	ICT technology helps our students with SEN / disabilities to learn in our school.	10,2% (6)	11,9% (7)	35,6% (21)	35,6% (21)	6,8% (4)	59
11	It is easy to organize the classroom to accommodate the students with SEN.	3,4% (2)	28,8% (17)	42,4% (25)	23,4% (15)	-	59
12	Demands of the curriculum makes it difficult for students with SEN / disabilities to be accommodated in our school.	10,2% (6)	18,6% (11)	23,7% (14)	44,1% (26)	3,4% (2)	59
13	There are no places for practical training for students with SEN / disabilities.	8,5% (5)	28,8% (17)	6,8% (4)	40,7% (24)	15,3% (9)	59
14	In our school, we develop ways of teaching that respond to the diverse needs of students.	3,4% (2)	16,9% (10)	28,8% (17)	44,1% (26)	6,8% (4)	59
15	It is too difficult to modify the instruction, teaching style and teaching and learning materials to meet the needs of students with SEN / disabilities.	3,4% (2)	18,6% (11)	30,5% (18)	39% (23)	8,5% (5)	59

16	My pre-service teacher training provided me skills to manage inclusive classroom included with students with SEN.	11,9% (7)	22% (13)	30,5% (18)	32,2% (19)	3,4% (2)	59
17	I have received in-service training on inclusive education.	11,9% (7)	33,9% (20)	23,7% (14)	27,1% (16)	3,4% (2)	59
18	Teachers in our school have enough knowledge and skills to manage inclusive classroom and support students with SEN.	6,8% (4)	33,9% (20)	33,9% (20)	23,7% (14)	1,7% (1)	59
19	If I received training on how to modify my teaching to meet the needs of students with SEN/ disabilities, I would be ready to teach also them.	1,7% (1)	5,1% (3)	8,5% (5)	49,2% (29)	35,6% (21)	59
20	I use various teaching methods to meet individual needs of all students in the classroom.	-	3,4% (2)	10,2% (6)	62,7% (37)	23,7% (14)	59
21	There are no support services available for teachers and their students with SEN / disabilities in our school.	3,4% (2)	6,8% (4)	11,9% (7)	50,8% (30)	27,1% (16)	59
22	I am familiar with the work of itinerant teachers in re-source centres.	13,6% (8)	23,7% (14)	52,5% (31)	6,8% (4)	3,4% (2)	59
23	Other students are supporting students with SEN / disabilities.	1,7% (1)	1,7% (1)	37,3% (22)	45,8% (27)	13,6% (8)	59
24	Students with SEN / disabilities are participating in all activities in the classrooms.	1,7% (1)	18,6% (11)	37,3% (22)	32,2% (19)	10,2% (6)	59
25	Parents of children with disabilities are willing to have their children educated in our school.	-	5,1% (3)	28,8% (17)	59,3% (35)	6,8% (4)	59
26	Accepting diversity is an important value in our community.	1,7% (1)	1,7% (1)	5,1% (3)	62,7% (37)	28,8% (17)	59

Annex 5: Responses of students to the online questionnaire

1= strongly disagree | 2 = disagree | 3= not agree or disagree | 4= agree | 5= strongly agree

1	My parents support me to do my homework when needed.	1	2	3	4	5
2	During lessons I sometimes need extra support or adapted learning materials.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I get extra support or adapted learning materials when I need.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My teachers support me when I need support.	1	2	3	4	5
5	My classmates support me when I need support.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have made friends in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I have not been bullied at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I participate to all activities at school.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The school building, classrooms, toilets and the school yard is accessible for me.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I have assistive devices for my needs in our school.	1	2	3	4	5
11	ICT technology helps me in my studies.	1	2	3	4	5

One response

Two responses

More information

www.coe.int/education

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