

Inclusive Education as Part of a Child-Friendly Schools Framework

Results and Recommendations from a Study in Macedonia



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List of Acronyms

CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
CFS	Child-Friendly School
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ETF	European Training Forum
ICF	International Classification on Functioning
IT	Information Technology
LPE	Law on Primary Education
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

This report is the culmination of a study on inclusive education in Macedonia. The study examined stakeholder perceptions, national policies, and school-based practices. Specific foci of the study were on students with special education needs which according to the definition of the Child-Friendly School concept identifies three major subgroups: children with developmental disabilities, children with low socio-economic background, and children from different ethnic groups. Even though the CFS concept is not fully translated into the legislation in Macedonia in full, it is used to enable comparisons with international trends. A specific focus on gender was not employed in this study, although some results were analyzed from a gender perspective. In general the results of the study indicate that Macedonia has the policy infrastructure to support inclusive education, but for a variety of reasons, is not implementing inclusive education. Socially acceptable exclusion from school for particular populations, inter- (and intra-) ethnic conflict, and a general lack of understanding for students with disabilities appears to exist in regular primary schools. At the same time, a variety of progressive policies, a concern for marginalized students across disciplines, and a willingness of both higher education faculty and parents to engage in inclusive education development demonstrates great promise for inclusive education in Macedonia.

To this end, eight action steps are recommended in order to promote a more inclusive system of education in Macedonia. Each recommendation addresses a challenge at either the national, municipality, or school level, and includes:

1. Improve access for out-of-school children
2. Equitable funding to encourage inclusion
3. Implementation of provisions of discrimination law by providing school-wide training nationally
4. Re-design system for assessing students at risk
5. Improve inclusion of children with special education needs in kindergartens and access to education for children attending day care centres
6. Extend school day for children to ensure participation in extracurricular activities
7. Prepare teacher, principals, and parents for inclusive education
8. Parent involvement

Cost calculations, specific actions, and a timeline are provided for each of the recommendations in the pages that follow. Recommended action steps are designed to target inclusive education at multiple levels and have been supported by a variety of stakeholders before inclusion in this report. The following step for enhancing inclusive education practice in Macedonia is to implement the recommended activities at a pace that is at the same time brisk enough to create change, and realistic enough to provide time for stakeholder participation. Continued training, monitoring, and evaluation of inclusive education efforts will help to ensure a transition into a system that accommodates the needs of all learners.



1 Introduction to the Report

Since 2006 UNICEF has been supporting Macedonia's Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in the development of a Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) approach to quality education, an approach grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In this work, Macedonia has been recognized as a leader of overall CFS education reform in the entire Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) region. Inclusiveness is listed as the first of the six dimensions of Macedonia's CFS approach. As part of UNICEF's ongoing commitment to improve educational quality nationwide, a study was conducted to assess the level of inclusiveness in Macedonian policy and practice. This paper reports on the results of that study, and provides recommendations as part of a broader CFS initiative.

1.1 Conceptual Framework (International Policies)

Inclusive education is an approach to meeting the learning needs of all pupils within an educational system. Its tenets are based on the fundamental principles of the CRC. As outlined in the CRC, education is a right for all children. For example, CRC Article 28 calls for a free basic primary education for all students, a variety of educational options for secondary education, and access to higher education for all children based on capacity and appropriate means. The CRC's focus on all children was exemplified in Article 30 (stating that minority groups shall not be denied the right to education) and Article 23 (outlining the educational rights of children with special educational needs).

Inclusive education aims to create systems that are flexible and supportive enough to meet the needs of students with diverse needs and backgrounds in general education schools and classrooms. Several other international agreements support the implementation of inclusive education at the national level. The 2007 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, for example, states

that educational rights are realized when "persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live (Article 24, Section 2b), and have the right to a free primary education and equal opportunity for secondary education as non-disabled students" (Article 24, Section 2a). The Dakar Education for All agreement in 2000 affirmed universal education as a fundamental right and established a goal to provide every girl and boy, regardless of gender, language, ethnicity, religion, ability/disability, or poverty status with primary school education by 2015.

UNESCO (2002) further operationalizes inclusive education as "a system of education in which all the pupils with special educational needs are enrolled in ordinary classes in their district schools, and are provided with support services and an education based on their forces and needs." The basic premise behind inclusive education is that inclusive policy and practices allow for students of diverse backgrounds and abilities to obtain the benefits of national education systems.

All of the definitions above provide a framework for understanding inclusiveness in schools. In the European context, dimensions of social inclusion are viewed as one of the key aspects of a unified education and training system. According to a 2006 European Commission Report, *Modernizing Education and Training: A Vital Contribution to Prosperity and Cohesion in Europe*, economic and social innovations are both essential in creating a cohesive European society and marketplace. Under "Inclusive Growth-Fighting Poverty 2020" targets, poverty and excluded persons receive special attention. Within the field of education, such demands require that social inclusiveness is as important a factor as graduation rates and other traditional metrics of educational success (Joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "Education and Training 2010 work programme").

1.2 Macedonian Perspectives on Inclusive Education

In Macedonia, inclusive education has been the focus of multiple reports. The most recent document, a 2009 draft study on teacher preparedness for inclusive education by the European Training Forum (ETF), defined inclusive education as *a process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity. Through this process the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces all forms of exclusion and demeaning of pupils be it for their disability, ethnicity, or anything that could render the school life of some children unnecessarily difficult* (Sebba and Sachdev, 1997; Booth and Ainscow, 1998). In this broader sense inclusion is a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion, whereby participation means recognition, acceptance and respect, and inclusion in the learning process and social activities in a way which enables an individual to develop a sense of belonging to a group. Hence, inclusive education must be a general practice, mainstreamed into education, not a specific intervention addressing one disadvantaged group or other.

The ETF document reflects the unique scenarios that impact inclusiveness in Macedonia – namely, challenges in providing quality education across ethnic lines, designing mainstream school systems to be more inclusive of children with disabilities, and finding ways to better support children facing economic hardships. As noted above, however, this document (and inclusive education literature in general) explicitly calls for systemic solutions that will address the needs of specific populations by improving educational practices for all.

1.3 Policies Relevant to Inclusive Education in the Republic of Macedonia

Although Macedonia has no specific laws relevant to inclusive education, the CRC articles and other international documents and conventions address the rights of children with special education needs are translat-

ed in the Law on Primary Education (since 2008) and the Law on Secondary education. Macedonia's *National Strategy for the Development of Education (2005-2015)* has been considered as the most wide-reaching attempt to improve education systems for all students. This programme is designed to improve physical access to education; reduce discrimination within schools (on the basis of sex, skin color, ethnicity, nationality, political association, or religious affiliation); improve educational experiences and outcomes for all children; expand care for children with special educational needs; and expand both pre-school education opportunities and the number of compulsory primary school years (specifically, expand primary school from eight to nine years).

The broad-based *Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (2006-2010)* attempted to mitigate economic disparities in primary schools through providing free textbooks for all children. In the academic year 2008/2009, free textbooks were provided for primary and secondary school students whose families were beneficiaries of social welfare, while in the academic year 2009/2010 primary and secondary school students were provided with free textbooks as proposed by the Law on Primary Education, the Law on Secondary Education and the Law on School Textbooks. In addition the 2006-2010 Government *Program* calls for mandatory primary and secondary education and stipulates financial penalties for families that do not send their children to school. The Program also introduced the concept of Information Technology (IT) in Macedonian schools and called for the placement of computers in all schools. The 2006-2010 document did not address quality or equality issues in schools directly. In 2007, the *Concept for the New Nine-Year Compulsory Education*, addressed issues of inclusiveness such as non-discrimination, multiculturalism, and pupils with special educational needs. The *Concept for the New Nine-Year Compulsory Education* is rooted in Child-Friendly Schools principles and includes statements that explicitly consider the “best interest of the child” (p. 68) in educational processes. These processes include interactions within the school environment and provisions for safe and healthy environments for children (p. 72).

Although inclusiveness involves a process of systemic change, innovations are often thought of in terms of supporting children with diverse ethnicity, disability, and poverty status. These perceptions have led to a variety of educational policies aimed at improving educational practice. In addition to the broad-based educational agendas described in section 1.3 above, there have been several initiatives focusing specifically on ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, and disadvantaged students.

1.3.1 Educational Policy: Ethnic Minorities

One of the most salient policies relevant to ethnic differences in education was the 2001 *Framework Agreement*, which examined participation in governance by ethnic minorities (in this case, also laying out specific guidelines for Albanian participation). The *Agreement's* impact on education was an increased focus on prioritizing higher education funding to provide university education in languages spoken by at least 20% of the population. Stipulations of the Framework are supported in Article 47 of the *Law for Protection of Children* (a social welfare-focused policy), which requires that ethnic minority children have the right to learn in their native tongue in kindergartens. In addition, native tongue instruction is found in the *Law on Primary Education (LPE)*.

According to the concept and curricula for nine-year primary education, education is realized in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian, while the language and the culture of the representatives of other ethnic groups is provided as elective subject: The language and culture of Roma, Bosniaks and Vlachs, starting as of grade three with one lesson a week until grade nine with two lessons a week. It is an obligation of the school directors to inform parents about the possibility for selection of such subjects and to ensure conditions and teachers.

The *Framework Agreement* and Article 9 of the LPE were designed to improve participation of all ethnic and linguistic minorities in primary and secondary education, but several factors have prevented its full implementation. According to UNICEF (2008), Macedonia has a population of 2,045,108 inhabitants. Of these, 64.2% declare themselves to be Macedonians and 25.2% declare themselves as Albanians. Other ethnic minorities include Turks (3.85%), Roma (2.7%), Serbs (1.78%), Bosnians (0.84%), Vlach (0.48%), and others (1.04%). Lack of qualified teachers and educational materials in minority languages has presented challenges in the implementation of native tongue education.

For example, UNICEF (2008) found that there is one Macedonian teacher for each 14.5 Macedonian children. Ratios become increasingly larger, however, for smaller ethnic

groups and groups that have fewer qualified teachers (e.g., the ratio of Albanian teachers to Albanian students is 1 to 19.7). Turkish students have a ratio of 1 teacher to 29.8 students, and Roma children have a ratio of 1 to 524.5. Such discrepancies demonstrate that Macedonian children are more likely to receive instruction in their native tongue than Albanian or Turkish children, and far more likely to receive such instruction than Roma children.

Enrolment, retention and completion of compulsory education for Roma children is a problem of many countries in the region which have Roma ethnic communities. It is widely believed that Roma populations are among the most marginalized in the Macedonian system. To this end, multiple reports projects and policies have been developed to address the needs of Roma learners.

The Ministry of Education and Science has been supporting the campaign for enhancing Roma enrolment in the last few years with the aim to increase the number of enrolled Roma children in primary education through improved cooperation between the institutions at different levels and to increase awareness of Roma population about the importance of education.

In 2004, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) outlined the *National Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia (National Roma Strategy 2004)*. This report noted that one of the main reasons why Roma populations were underserved in public social welfare and education projects is that there was no reliable data on Roma demographics. The Ministry called for better data in order to understand and meet the needs of Roma populations (European Union Monitoring



and Advocacy Program, 2009). In 2005, the Parliament approved a governmental coordinative body to oversee activities and actions related to the beginning of the “Decade of the Roma.”

The European Union Monitoring and Advocacy Program (2009) was critical of Decade activities, stating that they were largely without clear action plans. In addition, continued issues relevant to inconsistent data on Roma populations have plagued opportunities for successful interventions. One program for addressing the educational needs of Roma children, however, appears to have shown promise. The “Inclusion of Roma Children in Public Pre-School” project funded by the Roma Education Fund and supported by UNICEF aims to provide Roma children an early start on formal schooling by providing them with early childhood educational services. At last reporting, 450 children were participating in the program.

The Macedonian Government has put in place an ambitious set of laws to address the problem of school enrollment and retention. The LPE, for example, stipulates that school is mandatory for all children between 6 and 15 years of age. According to the law, schools must report a child who fails to enroll or who has been unjustifiably absent for 30 days. Failing to stick to this law, results in a fine of 800 Euros for parents and guardians, a fine of 3,000 Euros for the primary school, and a fine of 2,000 Euros for the school director.

In 2009, the Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, exempted parents from payment of administrative tax for immunization certificates (one of the key documents for school enrolment in grade one, and a financial burden for Roma families)

On the surface, these measures seem to be working. The net enrollment rate for Macedonia is 92% for both girls and boys (UNESCO, 2008). But these statistics mask continuing problems of inclusion for certain groups, particularly Roma children. The primary net enrollment rate for Roma boys is 65% and for Roma girls 57.8%. This means nearly half of primary age Roma girls are not in school. The government recognizes this problem and implements policies to address it, such as providing textbooks free of charge for all families and free transportation in remote areas (UNICEF, 2008).

A number of programs have aimed at reducing poverty and closing the “social gap” experienced by Roma populations. For example, the World Bank, has been supporting conditional cash transfers for secondary school students whose families are social welfare beneficiaries (including Roma fami-

lies) throughout the CEE region. The only condition for receiving the cash is school enrolment and attendance according to all legislative regulations and by-laws in hope of promoting educational opportunities (World Bank 2010). USAID has helped Roma families claim their right to education through citizenship assistance programs in Roma communities (USAID, 2009).

In the school year 2009/2010, the Ministry of Education and Science lower the criteria for secondary school enrolment of Roma children to motivate Roma to continue education and enrol in more attractive secondary schools. The Roma Education Fund provided 650 Roma children with scholarship and mentoring in year one of secondary education. This programme was introduced by an NGO and then taken over by the Ministry of Education and Science to be funded at a national level.

In 2009, the MLSP introduced payments to Roma families (who receive social assistance) to improve access to secondary education. Such payments, along with quotas for minority students in higher education, are intended in part to produce a larger cohort of minority teachers and education professionals. This will help to achieve one of the goals of the *Decade of the Roma Action Plan* – to increase the number of Roma teachers in primary and secondary schools.

The lack of clarity that often emerges between Roma students and students with special educational needs is a challenge. Late entry at school, lack of native tongue opportunities, and invalid assessment mechanisms, may lead to a large percentage of Roma children being inappropriately labeled as “student with special educational needs” and therefore receiving inappropriate educational considerations (e.g., enrolling in special schools). Although native tongue language in schools is an unevenly implemented policy, there is no law whatsoever supporting the need to address native language considerations in the assessment of students with possible special educational needs¹. *The Regulation for Estimation/Appraisal of Specific Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Physical or Psychic Development* makes no mention of linguistic or ethnic considerations used in the process of student assessment.

1.3.2 Educational Policies: Students with Disabilities

Issues of culture, poverty, and disability sometimes overlap, despite their disparate coverage in law. According to a UNICEF Innocenti report (2005), minority status and poverty may overlap in Macedonia. Poverty status also increases the likelihood that a family will have a person with a disability, since some disabilities are caused by inad-

equate neonatal nutrition, lack of appropriate healthcare, or other poverty-related factors. Given the stigma that is sometimes associated with disability in Macedonia, it is clear why disability, ethnicity, and poverty factors are often separated in policy and practice. Although data suggest correlations may be present, policy-makers may be hesitant to dwell on data that may encourage negative stereotypes of particular populations.

In the absence of cultural or economic variables, disability is treated as a scientific discussion in Macedonian law. For example, Article 2 of the LPE states, “Each child has a right of primary education. Discrimination is forbidden on race, sex, colour, nationality, or religion.” Article 3 of the same law, however, states that the role of primary education is about “taking care about the development of children and special educational needs.”

Article 42 of the LPE provides schools the right to engage a defectologist to work with students with special educational needs, and Article 61 provides students with disabilities free transportation to school. The distinction of “disability” is provided solely by the Commission on Assessment, as guided by the *Regulation for Estimation/Appraisal of Specific Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Physical or Psychic Development*. Under these regulations, the Commission diagnoses disabilities and provides parents with documentation of disabilities. The Commission also recommends (and in some cases requires) children attend certain types of schools (e.g., students with mild disabilities attend regular schools while students with sensory impairments or more moderate disabilities attend special schools).

The current scenario of inclusiveness demonstrates both a drastic improvement that has happened over the past 20 years and a roadmap for future activities. According to a UNICEF Innocenti report (2005), the number of institutionalized children in Macedonia decreased by half from 1990 to 2002. However, in the same report, UNICEF noted that the continued use of the “defect” model of disability (with professional defectologists) has led to an increase in demand for special schools for students with disabilities.

The 2007 *National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization in the System of Social Protection in the Republic of Macedonia* placed explicit demands on the Ministry of Education to create conditions for the inclusion of children with special educational needs in special and regular schools. In order to accomplish this goal, the *National Strategy for the Development of Education 2005-2010* called for an increased emphasis on teacher training in the area of special needs education. The ETF (2009) recently noted that there are few opportunities for such teacher preparation in Macedonian faculties. According to ETF, there is one subject called Inclusive

Education, but it is only an elective.

As noted in Section 1.3.1, there is often an overlap in Ministries that are responsible for particular populations. Although the education of students with disabilities is documented in education law, the Law on Protection of Children also provides guidance for kindergarten programs for students with disabilities. Article 48 states that services for students with disabilities who are in need of an adapted program (with additional professional development) will be organized within regular schools. This article goes on to say that students with more moderate or physical disabilities will have care organized in a special program.

Although the law encourages inclusion, realities in practice create challenges. For example, a Child-Friendly School survey (ETF, 2009) in Macedonia found that most schools lacked the physical accessibility and toilet facilities to include students with physical disabilities. Deluca (2007) found that children with disabilities are likely being under-identified or overtly excluded in Macedonia (i.e., in 2005, there were only 1,515 pupils with disabilities in schools, far below Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] estimates that approximately 10% of all schoolchildren will have disabilities). In this case, students either have undocumented disabilities, or those with disabilities are not in schools. Finally, decentralization in schools has created scenarios where schools lack local policies on inclusion. This combination of issues may help explain why it is believed that a number of students with special educational needs are not attending school at all.

For those students who do attend school, choices are generally a mainstream school or a special school. Special classrooms within mainstream schools also exist as part of education system. These classrooms were available in 21 schools in 18 municipalities, and fall under the supervision of the local government. These classrooms operate primarily as a specialized environment in a regular school.

1.3.3 Policies for Children who are Economically Disadvantaged

The Macedonian *National Strategy for Poverty Reduction* (2002) examines education as a two-way relationship. According to this document, a focus on education is imperative because lack of access to education may be an effect of poverty and inadequate education may also be a cause of poverty. Although there have been policy attempts aimed at reducing the role of poverty in education, UNICEF’s *Child Poverty in FYR Macedonia Study* (2007) highlighted that inequalities in access to education still exist from the sides of both supply and demand. “Supply” side inequalities existed

¹ Even though research conducted by NGOs indicate that Roma people mostly speak the language of the dominant local community (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish...)

from school systems at the local level that were unable to provide adequate facilities or non-discriminatory environments. “Demand” side inequalities were the result of household decisions to not send children to school because of economic or other reasons.

One of the most salient attempts to reduce barriers to education in Macedonia is the above-mentioned Conditional Cash Transfers for students enrolled in public secondary schools. In this program, all secondary school students whose families are social welfare beneficiaries in Macedonia may receive government funds, as long as they fulfill the condition of enrolment and attendance in school, as part of a broad social safety net. Such funds are provided through governmental loan from the World Bank.

1.4 Conclusions: Desk Review

In an article about inclusive education in Lesotho, Johnstone and Chapman (2009) described the “principal-agent” relationship as one of the most challenging aspects of inclusive education. Specifically, this relationship refers to the degree to which national policy-makers must influence local professionals to carry out policy. At present, Macedonia’s policies are primarily inclusive in nature and encourage inclusive systems that are supportive of a wide variety of children.

Table 1
National Stakeholder Research Participants

Organization	Number of Participants
Bureau of Education	1
Directorate for promotion and development of education on the languages of ethnic communities , Ministry of Education and Science	1
Ministry of Education and Science	1
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	1
UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools Team	14
Open Society Institute of Macedonia	1
Cyril and Methodius University	2
Directorate (MoES)	2
Commission on Assessment	6
Skopje City Centre for Social Work	2

The OECD’s three focal groups (diverse, disabled, and disadvantaged students) appear to be addressed in Macedonia’s policies. With the notable exception of children with moderate to significant disabilities, there are policy proclamations supporting virtually every population’s inclusion in mainstream schools.

The challenge for organizations working in such environments, however, is the extent to which policies are implemented. Decentralized schools create a gap in oversight and ability for centralized policy-makers to ensure policies are implemented. It is often left to the good will of schools or civil society organizations to influence policy. Without strong anti-discrimination legislation which was recently adopted; however implementation is still challenging. In 2010, MoES developed a handbook on preventing a discrimination for the schools.

To understand the critical area of policy implementation, this study examined the current status of inclusive education in Macedonian schools. National-level stakeholders from a variety of civil society organizations, teachers, head teachers, defectologists, and students were included in the study. The following sections explain the organization of the study, report on its findings, and create recommendations based on a CFS framework for inclusive education.

2 Study Methods

The inclusive education assessment was aimed at gaining perspectives from two levels of stakeholders – national and local. Qualitative methods were used in both studies. Descriptive quantitative methods (mean scores) are also reported for the national survey. Details, including sample, instruments, procedures, and analysis methods are reported for both studies in Sections 2.1 and 2.2.

2.1 National-level Survey

The objective of this study was to familiarize researchers with the educational infrastructure of Macedonia (including non-governmental organizations [NGOs], teacher training facilities, and governmental offices) and with CFS documents supporting inclusiveness that have been prepared to date. Through formal interviews, key stakeholders responded to questions about the policy and administrative capacity of Macedonia to support inclusive education. Over the course of one week, individual and group interviews were conducted with governmental and civil society representatives. Each of these stakeholders was asked a series of questions, then asked to respond to a follow-up survey regarding interventions with high likelihood to succeed within the cultural and economic context of Macedonia.

2.1.1 Sample: National-level Survey

In an effort to gather broad-based information about the current and possible future status of inclusive education in Macedonia, nine interviews were conducted with key stakeholder groups. Table 1 (below) provides information on the stakeholder group interviewed as well as the number of participants present at the interview. To protect the anonymity of stakeholders, exact titles will not be disclosed in this report. However, in all instances either the director of the organization or the most knowledgeable person about the organization’s inclusive education involvement was selected (as per the director’s nomination). Only in one instance was a designee for the most knowledgeable person present (due to illness).

2.1.2 National-level Study: Instruments

Two instruments were used in the national-level study of stakeholders. First, a semi-formal interview protocol was used to capture information. At the national level, 31 participants answered a series of semi-structured

interview questions. Semi-structured interviews provided the data collectors with the ability to establish a clear research agenda, but were flexible enough so that participants could elaborate on points that they felt were important (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Questions related to two major themes of the study: (1) What were the major challenges related to inclusive education in Macedonia? and (2) What could be done to create a more inclusive school system?

Each participant answered the same questions, but additional questions were included (if needed) for clarification. Each interview lasted between 20 minutes and one hour, was interpreted between English and Macedonian language, and all notes were captured using a computer word processing program. The full protocol for the stakeholder survey can be found in Appendix A. Sample questions included:

1. What are the biggest challenges facing Macedonian children and youth?
2. Whom do you see as the critical people to create positive change (e.g., parents, students, teachers, government)?
3. What types of inputs (materials, equipment, training) are needed to promote the improvements you seek?
4. What needs to happen in order for (Roma/Albanian/poor/Macedonian/children with disabilities) to be fully included in Macedonian society?

After answering a series of questions, responses were tallied and developed into a follow-up survey for stakeholders. The process of gathering perspectives from stakeholders, then refining recommendations is based on Delphi survey methodology.² The survey used in this study included a list of all possible interventions that were mentioned by all stakeholders interviewed. Stakeholders were then asked to respond quantitatively to each prompt from a scale of (-2) to (+2). A response of (-2) indicated that a prompt was “very likely to negatively impact inclusiveness of schools in Macedonia.” A response of (-1) indicated that a prompt was “likely to negatively impact inclusiveness in schools.” A score of zero (0) indicated a neutral, or no effect on inclusiveness in schools. Finally, scores of (+1) or (+2) indicated that a prompt was likely (or very likely) to have a positive impact on inclusiveness of schools in Macedonia.

² This method was originally developed in healthcare research (Adler and Ziglio, 1996), but has since become an effective means of soliciting and refining feedback from stakeholders in a variety of fields (Thompson, Johnstone, Anderson, and Miller, 2005).

A version of the survey protocol can be found in Appendix B. Example prompts from the survey were:

1. Commit resources to improving programs in minority languages in faculties.
2. Provide Roma children with the same resources (food and transportation) to attend regular schools as they receive in special schools and day care programs.
3. Provide extended day tutoring and enrichment opportunities for students with special educational needs.
4. Provide in-service teacher training on inclusive education.

2.1.3 National-level Study: Analysis

Qualitative data (interview notes) were analyzed using methods frequently used for qualitative inquiry (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Notes from interviews were read and coded with one- or two-word codes describing phenomena, with the explicit focus of finding recommendations that could be used in the follow-up survey. During this approach, point-by-point coding was used (i.e., each point made by a participant was individually coded). Each time a participant made an explicit or implicit recommendation about how to improve inclusiveness in Macedonia, the recommendation was flagged. All flagged recommendations were summarized and entered into a survey. The survey was then translated into Macedonian, and all prompts that had complicated language were

back-translated (i.e., the translator wrote the prompt in Macedonian language, and then translated it back to English to ensure the prompt maintained its intended message). Surveys were sent to all stakeholders via email. Results from the survey were tabulated quantitatively (i.e., the average, or mean, score from each response was tabulated). A short list of interventions deemed most and least promising were created from this survey and will be reported in the results section of this report.

2.2 School-level Study

At the same time as the national-level data were being collected, a series of interviews, focus groups, and observations also were conducted in schools in order to better understand the extent to which inclusive practices were present there. For the school-level study, a variety of participants were asked questions about inclusive education in schools. Data collection points included:

1. interviews with teachers and principals to better understand school-level practices relevant to inclusive education;
2. interviews with students to better understand the challenges students face (specific group and individual interviews were conducted with ethnic minorities, ethnic majority students, and students with disabilities); and
3. interviews with parents (parents of students who are ethnic minorities, ethnic majority in schools, and students with special educational needs were interviewed separately).

2.2.1 School-level Study: Sample

Sampling for the school-level portion of the study was developed in collaboration with the UNICEF Education Unit in Macedonia. Because communication with schools was sometimes difficult, a sample of school types was selected prior to the field visit. These types represented a variety of configurations of students, each having a possible impact on inclusive education. Schools were selected on the basis of their student population. Specifically, schools were selected if they had students with special educational needs (or not), had a substantial population of Roma students (or none), were Albanian majority, were Macedonian ethnicity only schools, or were special schools. The rationale for the selection of schools was to examine purposefully the dynamics of inclusive education from diverse perspectives. Also included in the sampling was the level of financial resources available to the school (e.g., the level of wealth of the school and its community). Table 2 represents the sampling matrix for the study.

Specific schools were picked on the criteria of schools known to UNICEF that fit the characteristics described in the sampling mechanism, with purposeful geographic distribution of schools. All contacts with school leaders were made through the UNICEF Macedonia country office. All 15 schools selected anticipated our arrival and contacted parents in advance about the interviews. School administrators selected parents and students, which introduced a non-random element to the study. Further details on this element will be discussed in the “Limitations” section.

2.2.2 School-level Study: Instruments

Data collection teams used several instruments to gather data from stakeholders in schools. Among the data collection instruments used were:

- Focus group protocol for students (could be used for individual students)
- Focus group protocol for parents (could be used for individual parents)
- Focus group protocol for teachers (could be used for individual teachers)
- Individual interview protocol for principals (could be used with defectologist or psychologist, if present).

Each instrument (found in Appendices C, D, E, and F) underwent the same vetting process. First, instruments were developed by research consultants based on CFS literature and research. Next, protocols were translated from English to Macedonian, with input from the UNICEF Education team. Third, instruments were reviewed and examined by the local research team, which included CFS experts, teachers, and parents. The finalized instruments were used by 15 local researchers.

2.2.3 School-level Study: Procedures

Procedures for data collection required the employment and cooperation of 15 local researchers. Three teams of three researchers (including at least one experienced researcher and one person familiar with Macedonian schools) participated in a one-day training for research instruments. During this training, researchers examined and made changes to instruments based on experience in schools. Over the course of five days, teams conducted interviews in schools.

Teams typically arrived in schools early in the morning. From there, the team would meet briefly with the principal or other designee. They would briefly establish a plan for data collection, then interview groups in various places. Teams dispersed once they arrived in schools in order to interview different stakeholder groups. Over the course of the week, research teams conducted 21 student interviews, 13 principal or professional team member interviews, 22 parent interviews, and 19 teacher interviews. In total, 75 interviews were gathered in Macedonian schools.

Interviews were conducted either in Macedonian or Albanian language. Each research team was provided with a digital voice recorder to capture participant responses. At the end of each day, research teams debriefed either in the vehicle on the way back from a school (for schools distant from Skopje) or at a local coffee shop (within Skopje). Within two weeks, all research teams provided consultants with notes from each interview. Notes ranged in quality from brief descriptions to detailed accounts of interviews, complete with participant direct quotes.

2.2.4 School-level Study: Analysis

Qualitative data (interview notes) were read and coded with one- or two-word codes describing phenomena. During this study, point-by-point coding was used (i.e., each point made in interview notes was individually coded). Next, codes were collapsed into larger “themes” that describe the phenomena described by participants (see Results section).

For this study, two consultants with backgrounds in qualitative research conducted the analysis. Analysis was undertaken by first reading all the interview notes. The process began with using either Microsoft Word or Excel software to individually code the entries of the interview notes and to identify themes. The consultants then met, discussed the coding, vetted themes with each other, and reached conclusions on the data.

Table 2
Sampling for School Study

Descriptor	Number of Schools
Urban primary school that includes students with disabilities (one school with high levels of resources, one with low levels of resources)	2
Rural primary school that includes students with disabilities and has no ethnic minorities	1
Rural primary school that does not include students with disabilities and has no ethnic minorities	2
Urban primary schools with at least 50 Roma students (one school with high levels of resources, one with low levels of resources)	2
Rural primary school with at least 50 Roma students	1
Majority Albanian schools	2
Special primary school for students with intellectual impairment	1
Special primary school for students with hearing impairment	1
Special primary school for students with visual impairment	1
Urban school with high degree of ethnic mixing	1
All-Roma school	1
Total	15

3 Results

The results section of this report will be organized into two sections. First, results will be reported in narrative form, citing examples from text. Second, results will be reported in a CFS framework, with special attention to (1) enrollment and completion (which addresses acceptance of students); (2) achievement (which addresses pedagogy); (3) system-wide inclusivity; and (4) teacher preparation and training for inclusive education, all in the context of the CFS approach to improving educational quality in Macedonia.

3.1 Narrative Results: National Study

Ten stakeholder groups were interviewed with the aim of collecting feedback on what interventions might be successful in promoting inclusive education in Macedonia. Nine respondents from six organizations (all civil society and education – no government officials responded) provided feedback on 38 prompts asking them to rate what interventions might be effective. On a scale from -2 to 2, respondents were generally positive toward most intervention ideas (the average response to all interventions was 1.41).

The Standard Deviation of data was .56, meaning that most raters thought most ideas were relatively implementable.

Two points of interest, however, were interventions that had very high mean scores (almost one Standard Deviation above the norm) and interventions that had negative ratings. Table 3 provides a scale of the most and least desired interventions reported by a very small sampling of civil society and education sectors.

Stakeholders did not feel a system that “tracked” children into either (1) lower quality schools or (2) groups within schools for low or high achievers would be effective. From the perspective of stakeholders, “tracking” students by level is a system that will not improve inclusive education efforts in Macedonia.

On the other hand, five main approaches were deemed to be promising within the context of Macedonia. Each is explained below along with original quotes from stakeholders.

Table 3
Mean Response Scores to Inclusive Education Interventions

Intervention	Mean Score	Interpretation
Create an “inclusive education” track in the faculty that has core courses on inclusive education that are taken by both special and regular education candidates	1.89	Implementable
Promote extra-curricular activities that involve children from multiple cultures	1.89	Implementable
Provide extended day tutoring and enrichment opportunities for students with special needs	1.89	Implementable
In-service teacher training on inclusive education	1.89	Implementable
Create a system of appeals, so that if parents wish to challenge the recommendations of the Commission on Categorization, they may have a hearing with an impartial officer	1.89	Implementable
Shift focus from general high schools into vocational high schools	-.25	Not Implementable
Create levels in schools where children who are very bright learn with those who are very bright, children who are average learners are with other children who are average learners, and children who learn slowly are with other children who learn slowly	-.5	Not Implementable

Approach 1.

Inclusive education programs in faculties

A professor from a prominent university in Macedonia noted that Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation (no longer called defectology) programs are integrated. In Macedonia we are preparing teachers to work with students with special educational needs. The teacher training faculties offer selective courses that students can take to be trained on how to work with students with special educational needs. However, we don't have defectologists in schools.

Stakeholders across subject areas noted that there is a high demand for defectologists in regular schools – for both students diagnosed with disabilities and those with generalized learning problems. One recommendation was to create a faculty for inclusive education (pre-service) that would serve as a place for preparation of special needs teachers (new terminology being used by some in Macedonia) and regular teachers. Such programs would likely have two different tracks (one for specialist and one for content teachers). However, overlapping courses and field experience opportunities may be employed for collaborative problem solving based on real scenarios in schools.

Approach 2.

Promote learning activities that involve students from multiple cultures

A member of Macedonia’s civil society movement working in an NGO recommended the idea of extra-curricular activities. In interviews with stakeholders, questions about language divisions in Macedonia often led to bewilderment about how to create inclusive schools when children are separated by language of instruction. Extra-curricular activities were seen as a means to promoting ethnic harmony. Suggestions such as sports, arts activities, and service learning (where students work together to solve societal problems) were suggested as approaches to bringing students together. Another interviewee described how students could work together within schools.

Schools should sustain these inter-ethnic activities... A model school exists in Dialogue Center School. Tetova area was the biggest conflict (around language of instruction). The school started to mix children where there is no language for division – computer classes, “neutral topics” are a good way for people to mix.

Approach 3.

Provide extended day tutoring and enrichment opportunities for children with special educational needs

One of the challenges cited by stakeholders was the inability for teachers to meaningfully support students with special needs in the regular classroom. One stakeholder said, *“Teachers don't know what to do – how to work with children...When you have 30 children in the classroom, what can you do?”*

Because of this, one stakeholder recommended extending the school day for children with special educational needs. The period of extended time could provide supplemental instruction to help students keep up with the demands of regular school, and provide them with an opportunity to work in a small group environment that is not generally possible in the day-to-day environment of mainstream schools.

Approach 4.

Provide in-service training on inclusive education for teachers

Three members of the UNICEF CFS team recommended the idea of supporting teachers through in-service training. The teacher trainers lamented that teachers have great difficulty individualizing instruction. Such difficulty presents challenges for students with a wide variety of learning needs, not just students with disabilities.

In our schools there is not individualized approaches, the teachers work with the same methods, so in that case if the child doesn't see themselves in that way of teaching, there is a gap and the child is on the outside of the process; that is the main reason for children having difficulty.

First of all, teachers need sensitivity, now we don't have that. The teacher worked with all children the same way.

Approach 5.

Create a system of appeals so that if parents wish to challenge the recommendations of the Commission on Categorization, they have a hearing with an impartial officer

The Commission on Assessment provided important information on the care in which they make recommendations for schools.

A multidisciplinary team makes an assessment according to the various assessments. Besides the IQ, the psychologist makes the criterion. If the child is with moderate intellectual disabilities, they go to special school or special education class. If mild, they go to regular school. If speaking of hearing impairment, 80 decibels he can follow regular school. If the decibel level is more than 80, the child enrolls a special school for children with hearing impairment.

The process described above clearly has scientific merit, in that it is based on objective data about a child's intellectual or sensory functioning. Some stakeholders, however, believed that there were instances where children might be successful in regular schools.

Regular school is more stimulating for children in the mainstreaming. If you separate them it will be less stimulating. Some parents don't feel comfortable with disabled children. I want my child to have an opportunity and to learn something, and to face the reality that there are children who are different.

To this end, stakeholders expressed strong agreement with the idea of establishing an appeals board that could, on the request of the parent, review Commission on Assessment recommendations. An example of when a parent might appeal a decision is if a child has special educational needs, but parents prefer a regular school for stimulation or social reasons.

Stakeholder perspectives on teacher training, school activities, and assessment policy provided valuable insights into how inclusive education activities might be framed in UNICEF activities. These perspectives will be revisited in Section 3.3 of this report.

3.2 Narrative Results: School-level Study

The breadth and depth of data derived from school-level data produced three main themes. Themes touched on educational, policy, and social interactions in schools. The three issues that arose from school-level data were (1) lack of access to schools and/or primary school completion of some students in Macedonian schools; (2) disruptive or aggressive behavior (and related victim anxiety) in schools; and (3) teachers' lack of child-friendly practices.

3.2.1 Continuing Enrollment and Attendance Problems Affecting Roma Inclusion

Interviews with school directors, teachers,

and parents indicate that laws intended to promote attendance measures may not be effective. Data from the interviews suggest the policies may be having unintended negative consequences, such as providing incentives for Roma parents not to register their newborn children with the government as required by law, bureaucratizing relations between Roma parents and school officials, and rendering problematic the role of expert staff such as school pedagogues and psychologists, onto whose shoulders problems are shifted.

Bureaucratizing relations between parents and school officials

The problem of low rates of Roma enrollment and attendance was brought up by both school directors and teachers, and by parents at schools with large Roma populations. About two-thirds of school directors identified Roma non-compliance with compulsory attendance as a problem. Directors tended to characterize their response to this non-compliance by pointing out all they can do is obey the law. Directors seemed at once powerless and confused about how to improve enrollment into school.

School directors also addressed the issue of effectiveness cautiously. Many school directors stated clearly that they understood the law and were complying with its regulations, but nonetheless saw the law as largely ineffective. Most school directors blamed Roma parents for the problem, although one school director at a largely Roma school in Skopje said the government needed to take a greater interest in the problem.

A school director in Kichevo said his school management committee tells Roma parents the law mandates their children go to school. But many parents don't send their children due to poor economic conditions. *"The greatest challenge is increasing the number of Roma who enroll and finish school,"* he said.

At a school in Skopje with a mixed Albanian and Roma student population, the school director claimed all Roma children in the school's catchment area had been enrolled. However, many children did not remain in school. *"There is a problem with dropouts because of poor parents or parents who are separated and send their children to beg. After 30 days, the school takes 'concrete measures,' but these measures do not function properly,"* he explained.

Likewise, a school director at a school with primarily ethnic Macedonian students in Pechevo said he had complied with the law, but some Roma parents remained non-compliant. *"In the past we had problems with attendance, but all the necessary steps to solve this problem were taken with the Center for Social Work and the parents – although in some cases the parents are unwilling to cooperate,"* he said.

In Bardovci, a suburb outside of Skopje, a school director pointed out that complying with the law can place school directors in awkward positions, since they have to act as punishing authority figures while serving as community liaisons. *"The parents just ignore the law. What do they care? People don't have money. I reported two of my students. And one of the students I reported invited me to her wedding!"*

Only one school director indicated he had tried a creative approach to the problem of Roma attendance. Roma girls get married too early and discontinue their education, explained this director, who works in Skopje. So the school decided to reward students with food if they attended five days in a row.

In the city of Bitola, a school director with a majority Roma student population said drop-out was a problem beginning in first grade. She did not comment further, but two of the parents at her school expressed frustration at the lack of compliance with the law. *"The official in charge of the educational activities sends court invitations to the parents, because their children don't attend classes, but they don't show in court,"* one parent said. *"If just one parent were fined, the others would learn their lesson."* Another parent added, *"Perhaps the social welfare should be canceled, then the parents would surely send their children to school!"*

Professional Team

The issue of enrollment and attendance was often connected to the roles and responsibilities of expert staff. Both school directors and teachers brought up the need for expert staff as a means to address this issue. Many schools lack expert staff, which, according to the LPE, should include at least one defecologist, psychologist, counselor, and pedagogue per school. Shifting the problem of enrollment and attendance to one for which expert staff is responsible raises a number of questions. One question is whether expert

staff, even if they were put in place, would be capable of handling this issue. Another question is whether expert staff should be expected to handle a challenge that involves a complicated mix of laws, community norms, and school culture.

The two school pedagogues interviewed for this report expressed frustration and concern about how they were perceived, feeling that unrealistic demands were being made on their ability to track student attendance and complete other reports. A school pedagogue in a rural school with primarily ethnic Macedonian students said she spent a lot of time addressing community rivalries that affect student relationships and attendance. She complained that pedagogues are considered to be "policemen or scarecrows." They are underestimated by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, and the Bureau of Educational Development, she said.

A school pedagogue in Skopje opined about the impossibility of keeping up with attendance forms and the erratic lives of some of her students. She suggested that more attention be paid to students with special needs, whether or not they were officially labeled as special needs students. To do that, more expert staff should be hired and teachers should receive more training, she said. *"We have differences regarding tradition, family structure, and values of everyday life. We have cases where Roma parents come in and curse in front of their children. For example, the parents divorce, the mother leaves with another man, she returns, and this causes the child to react."*

Nonetheless, both school directors and teachers frequently mentioned the need for expert staff as a way to solve issues. A school director in Skopje at a primarily ethnic Macedonian school said, *"We need broader expert service. We cannot rely always on NGOs."*

Teachers more often talked in terms of Roma enrollment and attendance as a socioeconomic issue instead of as a legal issue, perhaps reflecting the fact that unlike directors, they do not directly face financial penalties. But they also saw expert staff as a way to address absent students.

Self-segregating Schools

In some cases, exclusion appears to be occurring on a school level as parents withdraw

their children from schools that become increasingly dominated by Roma and/or children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Ironically, this trend may be a consequence of the national push to be more inclusive and enroll more Roma children. One consequence of this limited success appears to be a “flight” of ethnic Macedonian children to predominately ethnic Macedonian schools.

This trend may also have accelerated due to a new law which allows parents to send their children to any school they wish, versus enrolling them only in their neighborhood school. Of the 11 regular schools included in this report, three appeared to be undergoing a process of re-segregation on the basis of ethnicity and socioeconomic standing. It may be that a “tipping point” or “critical mass” needs to exist before this process begins.

In Kichevo, Macedonian students are leaving schools early and transferring to other schools to avoid mixed (Roma and Macedonian) classes, teachers and parents said.

At a school in Bitola, teachers and parents said they feared their school would be a Roma only school by next year. Currently there are about 300 ethnic Macedonian students and 503 Roma. While the school director and defectologists did not mention this issue as a concern, some parents expressed alarm. *“At the beginning of this school year, a natural segregation occurred in the school,”* said one parent. *“The parents who are not Roma get their children into other schools. We can expect that in a short time, most of the children in this school will be Roma children.”*

Another parent said that when Roma parents also try to enroll their children in another school, they are rejected. They say, *“Your child is a Roma child.”* A teacher also lamented this rapid process of ethnic separation, but blamed Roma children. The Roma unconsciously take pride in claiming this school as their own, she said. *“In this way they ghettoize.”*

At another school in Skopje, a parent characterized the changing nature of the school as regrettable, although it was not clear if this was due to an overall decrease in student numbers or a decrease in numbers among a particular ethnic group. The parent said, *“They have all run away. They’re all gone.”*

One school appeared to be reversing this trend. A school director in Skopje said he

can report an increased percentage of Roma students in the school. It is not clear, however, if the increase is sizable and an indication of large-scale ethnic inclusiveness.

Socioeconomic problems

Macedonia has adopted plans to reduce child poverty and social exclusion. The *Ministry of Labour and Social Policy 2007 to 2009 Strategic Plan*, for example, has many components. It is not clear how successful this plan has been, or its impact upon children and their inclusion in school environments. According to recent data, an estimated 32.4% of children in Macedonia were living under the poverty line in 2005, and more than 50% of children were living under the relative poverty line (UNICEF, 2007).

Data from this study indicate that most school directors, teachers, and parents see child poverty as a problem that affects attendance. Educators appear for the most part to see poverty as a problem of lack of material supplies, as opposed to a complex problem that can affect student behavior, self-esteem, physical preparedness, and social inclusion. In many schools, educators did not see poverty as a problem affecting many students, although national data suggest that a significant number of students are living in poverty. Students, likewise, did not believe their peers were socially excluded because of their socioeconomic standing. Parents were the most likely to see poverty as related to behavioral problems.

The following comments reflect views about students with low socioeconomic backgrounds:

What is needed is snacks and sponsorship to go on field trips for social cases. A Roma parent at this school said children there have excellent relations no matter what their economic backgrounds, but *“children are also different now.”* He explained that children are diseased by viruses, and are forced to drink water from the toilet because of lack of clean water. (School Director)

“What needs to be done is to improve the domestic environment of the students, but this is not the responsibility of the school.” (School Director, ethnically mixed school)

“Maybe aggressiveness comes from having no opportunities at home as others and that frustrates the child.” He suggested there should be an extra class with a psychologist. (Parent, Roma school)

“Roma parents do not have enough money for clothes, food and school materials.” (School Director, Roma school)

A school director in Skopje at a primarily ethnic Macedonian school said she formed a “business group” of 10 wealthy parents to help poor students. Now there are five, due to the worsening economic situation. The group unobtrusively pays debts and expenses. She also formed a youth organization, but some parents do not want to cooperate. A parent at this school offered a different perspective on how poor students are treated. *“Is it proper for a teacher to use the teacher’s book to bang with it on the desk and tell the children, ‘I spend my whole salary on you?’”* he asked.

A school director in Pehcevo at a primarily ethnic Macedonian school said it is necessary to work with parents, but the school faces resistance. Giving help doesn’t solve the problem – there were cases where students sold their textbooks within several days, he said. A parent expressed a different perspective, saying the school asks for money from parents too much. *“It creates anger in us.”*

A school director in Skopje said they have low numbers of poor children, but they give them basic teaching aids, or free or reduced snacks.

The school director of an Albanian school in Lipkovo (a rural area) said he sent a request to municipality major for assistance.

The school director of a Roma school said, *“The government needs to start being concerned about the Roma population. Many students here are from low socioeconomic backgrounds.”*

Disputed existence of ethnic conflict

Children for the most part do not suffer social exclusion in school due to ethnic conflict, according to adults. Furthermore, a large number of educators and parents insisted that no ethnically-based divisions exist in their schools. In more than half (10) of the 18 interviews or focus groups held with teachers, teachers denied any ethnically-based conflict or did not comment on it. In some cases, such as at an ethnically-mixed Albanian and Roma school in Skopje, one teacher said inter-ethnic conflict existed and another teacher denied it.

Students, by contrast, said ethnic conflict often occurred between groups. But the conflict also occurred within ethnic groups, and all conflict was complicated by age, gender, and other factors. The following are some of the comments made:

“Children live in mixed environment and have no problems; Macedonian children come to see Roma language classes.” (Principal of Roma school)

“The school’s multi-ethnic character is positive, what is needed is snacks for the Roma children, despite the fact Macedonian students leave prematurely.” (Principal in Kichevo, an ethnically mixed city in the western part of the country)

“There are absolutely no ethnic tensions!” (Principal in Bitola, primarily Roma school)

The school pays attention to multiculturalism, no problems because the number of students from different ethnic backgrounds is very small, students are merged. The school holds plays that focus on diversity. *“We do not know if this is the right thing to do, but we do it!”* (Principal in Skopje, primarily Macedonian school)

There are no apparent problems. *“There are some provocations, but in the end, they are just children.”* Roma parents are more interested in cooperation than Macedonian. *“We must not teach the students or parents to be lazy...They manifest ungratefulness for the welfare food while the rest manifest revolt.”* (Principal in Pehcevo, primarily Macedonian – 24 Roma out of 338 Macedonians)

A school Pedagogue in a primarily Macedonian rural school reported no tension between ethnic groups currently (there reportedly was in the past), but divisions exist between the six nearby villages.

Teachers in Skopje at a school for visually impaired reported no discrimination because children share same problem, but parents often insist on sending children to regular school because they see combined disabilities as an embarrassment.

The principal of an Albanian school stated that the Ministry of Education needs to solve the problem of students from high school upsetting children and teachers, and also requests for expert staff and transportation

On the other hand, students made the following comments about ethnic tensions:

“Macedonians experience teasing from Albanians” (reported by Macedonian students in a mixed ethnicity school).

Roma students in a Roma majority school stated that Macedonian students *“call us gypsies, say we do not have money, say we smell bad and have head lice.”*

In a mixed ethnic school in Skopje, the least accepted students are the Albanians, followed by the Roma and then are the other students from the different ethnic minorities. Students report that children are rejected by Macedonians once their ethnicity is known to others. Some of the Macedonian students with darker complexion were also insulted by the other Macedonian students and were called “Cigani!”

Students in a rural school commented on the following complex ethnic dynamics:

A mixed-ethnic student group said the relation between the Roma and Albanians is good. *The Macedonians-Roma relation is full of tensions. Students generally sit with the same ethnic group students in a bench because “the Macedonians want that.”* Roma students reported wanting to associate with Macedonians, but the Macedonians reportedly *“run away, they are disgusted with them, abuse them, beat them. The fights happen 2-3 times a week, and are started by older Macedonians with young Romas, who then call older Roma and at the end it all becomes a fight among everyone.”*

In the same school, the Macedonians-Albanians relation is said to be mixed. In the case of cross-ethnic fights, students will call their brothers “and then there is a big fight.” Also, they say that the Macedonians consider everyone as “Gypsies” at the school, regardless of their ethnic background. They give an example of Macedonians saying to Albanians and Romas: *“Come to kiss the cross”* (and they are Muslims). Albanians and Romas fight with each other very rarely, and Albanians and Macedonians fight every day to prove who is stronger. When a Macedonian teases a Roma, the Albanians defend the Roma. Likewise, a Roma will defend an Albanian if fighting with a Macedonian. This same group of children reported that most of the teachers differentiate the children from different ethnic background: *“They give better grades to Macedonians even if they know*

less... The teachers give bad grades to the Roma, for talking at the class.”

Although professionals in schools denied ethnic tensions, it was clear that underlying teasing and other aggressive behavior between students was present. As noted above, this behavior was often ignored by teachers. In one instance, teachers were accused of being complicit with ethnic stereotypes and marking students accordingly. In the case of ethnic tensions, it was clear that students and professionals viewed the existence of tensions quite differently.

3.2.2 Aggressive Behavior Impacting Safe School Environments

Students frequently mentioned other aggressive students as a major problem at school, saying in some cases these children were ostracized. Aggression was experienced in a wide variety of ways, as fighting and physical violence, destruction of school property, and verbal disrespect and aggression against other students and teachers. By contrast, about half of teachers and parents saw student behavior as an issue. They also saw it as a less problematic issue than students. Parents and expert staff were the least likely to mention student behavior as a problem.

Children reported students were victimized and bullied as a result of ethnicity, socioeconomic standing, and physical and mental disabilities, although these vulnerable groups were not always targeted and children in the same school, and in different schools, had different opinions about which students tended to suffer. Children also pointed out “counter-intuitive” conclusions – that children from their own ethnic groups could be the violent and bullying ones, that rich students (i.e., a student who had new clothes) could be ostracized, and that children with disabilities could be “provocative” and aggressive, leading to their exclusion from school.

Adults, for the most part, denied students were victimized or bullied as a result of ethnicity, socioeconomic standing, or because of disabilities. Two exceptions were some parents of children with disabilities, although these parents also tended to blame their own children for the aggressive behavior that they demonstrated and received. Others believed that children who did not have good hygiene were more likely to be victims of bullying or teasing.

Students

A total of 20 focus group discussion and interviews were held with students – four involved students with disabilities and 16 with general population students. In nearly all focus groups and interviews, students brought up disruptive behavior by students as a major difficulty they faced at school and as one of the things they would most want to change about their school.

Students often talked about avoiding or ostracizing these “disruptive students” and expressed their belief that they should be sent to another school. Some students also wished for more adult intervention and teacher control of “naughty” students. It is not clear if bullying or bullied students are ostracized and to what extent bullying overlaps with disruptive behavior.

In most cases, the identification of these disruptive students is not clear. Some statements suggest these may be older primary school students, boys, children with learning disabilities, children with “domestic” problems at home, children who are unsocial, children from outside the school who enter the school grounds, and children who get socially pulled into disputes because of ethnic or family/village connections. Disruptive behaviors range from talking in class and not respecting the teacher to physically assaulting other students, throwing rocks, and scaring other children. Overall, there was no definitive explanation for these behaviors, but the trauma caused by such behavior appears to be real.

When asked specifically about the adults in their lives, some students reported mocking from teachers (especially low achieving students), more serious verbal assertions (one teacher called students “garbage” and “bitch”), and physical abuse from teachers (students reported that teachers would close doors on them, force them into their seats, and pull their hair). Students never mentioned cases of parental abuse.

Teachers

Eighteen focus group discussions were held with teachers – four interviews involved teachers at special schools and 14 with teachers at regular schools. Disruptive behavior by students was mentioned in eight, or slightly less than half of teacher focus groups

and interviews. Only one of the teachers at special schools mentioned a wish for “better behaved” students.

Thus, teachers did not cite aggressive behavior as a problem as frequently as students. Additionally, teachers used language that downplayed the extent or severity of the issue. Only one teacher brought up violence, and this was indirectly referred to as a “security” issue at the school. Almost all teachers, except for one, said there was no ethnically-based conflict or bullying at their schools.

Teachers tended to refer to student behavior in individual terms. None explicitly brought up disruptive behavior in the context of having an impact upon other students. Teachers used terms such as students who “do not pay attention,” “lack of domestic education,” “need to learn more respect,” aggravate others, need greater “discipline,” need to be more “well-mannered,” and older students who play truant. In most cases, it was not clear what type of student these teachers had in mind. In two cases, teachers referred to disruptive students as students with disabilities. In all cases, issues of aggressive behavior were seen as less problematic by teachers than students. This minimization could either point to a lack of awareness on teachers’ part about instances of teasing and aggression – or could mean that teachers do not perceive these actions as serious.

Principals and Expert Staff

A total of 13 focus group discussions and interviews were held with principals and expert staff – 10 interviews with principals, two with school pedagogues, and a focus group discussion with school defectologists. Disruptive behavior by students was mentioned in seven, or half, of focus groups and interviews.

Principals and expert staff appeared to see disruptive or badly behaved students as much less of a problem than students or teachers, and did not mention this as an issue related to student inclusion or exclusion. Disruptions related to students were described as due to adult conflict in villages, students from other schools who “knock on windows and upset children”, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, students with disabilities who are “very active” (hyperactive), and students who behave provocatively.

Parents

A total of 24 focus group discussions and interviews were held with parents – 10 with parents who have children with special educational needs and 14 with parents of children without special educational needs. Disruptive behavior by students was mentioned in 15, or more than half of parent focus groups and interviews.

Unlike students and teachers, parents did not describe disruptive behavior as affecting their child's learning or inclusion in school. The exceptions were a Turkish mother who said she was ready to go to the police over violent behavior at her son's school; the parent of a rich girl who was teased; and the parent of a Roma child who had come home crying. Additionally, in five focus groups and interviews with parents of students with disabilities, parents cited teasing, molestation, insults, aggressive behavior, and bad habits of other students as reasons their children avoided or dropped out of school or out of a particular school – although it was not clear all their children had dropped out of school. Also, in three cases, parents said their special needs child had also participated in negative behavior.

Parents of children with no disabilities tended to describe disruptive behavior as not serious. "It's normal for children to have moments of misbehavior," one parent said. Another said, children "fight and make up all the time." Parents differed and tended to be vague about the identity of disruptive children, in some cases saying they were individuals regardless of ethnic group, sometimes they were described as Roma, or sometimes as a "risky" group.

3.2.3 Lack of Child-Friendly, Inclusive Instructional Practices

Of the 20 group and individual interviews conducted by researchers, concerns for teacher pedagogy were brought up in 11 interviews. Student concerns ranged from concerns about physical and emotional abuse by teachers (reported in seven interviews) to teachers evaluating students in a perceived unfair manner or favoring high-achieving students over low-achieving students (five instances). In general, students reported taking their studies very seriously and were disappointed when teachers "have poor teaching methods and confuse the students." The students also perceived that teachers at times favored other students, complaining of

"unjust evaluation" or "a teacher who does not want to put a better grade to a student and always finds a reason to not do it." To the students, issues around evaluation appeared to be as stressful as issues around discipline and punishment. Other concerns students had were: Teachers who were unpredictable with their approach to discipline.

"A teacher who asks a lot, but speaks quietly."

"A student raises the hand in the class, but the teacher will ask the one who doesn't raise the hand."

"A teacher who, when the boys stand up from the chair, roughly catches them and pushes them on the chair or through the door."

"Sometimes the teachers give higher marks to some children because they are afraid of their parents."

A teacher who gives "sudden tests" and the student gets an "F" if s/he fails to answer the questions.

"One teacher from the previous year who talked on the phone during class and let the children do their own work and never gave any explanations." The students and their parents reported the case to their class teacher but the teacher only said that the teacher in question will not teach at the next school year.

"One teacher became angry and called the students 'garbage' and 'bitch.'"

In summary, teachers' unpredictability in terms of student evaluation and classroom management appeared to be a major source of anxiety for students, creating high-anxiety learning environments.

Teacher Perspectives

Teacher perspectives on their own teaching vary. Teachers in general had a very hard time evaluating their own work – positively or negatively. Of the 18 interviews with teachers, two common themes emerged. The first concern for teachers was a lack of teacher materials. In nine of the 18 interviews, material shortages were mentioned as a major deterrent to better teaching. Most teachers stated that they needed "presentation kits" and "textbooks," but others mentioned that a lack of basic supplies in the schools had an impact on morale – such as soap in the bathrooms and poor furniture. A few teach-

ers discussed the use of videos, movies, and other materials to help students understand concepts, but the vast majority of teachers were concerned about a lack of textbooks and presentation kits.

In seven of the 14 teacher interviews in regular schools, teachers also expressed concern for how to accommodate learners with special needs (in this case, defined by teachers as environmentally deprived Roma students and students with disabilities). Exasperated with their inability to individualize curriculum, teachers frequently stated that a "special curriculum" was needed for learners with special needs and that learners would be better served in special schools. Teachers in special schools unanimously agreed that students with disabilities were best served in special schools.

Statements by some of the teachers in regular schools corroborated special school teachers' beliefs that students with disabilities did not belong in regular schools.

There is a significant number of Roma children that do not progress adequately, but do not have certificates from the Institute for Mental Health and are not categorized. Therefore, I do not know how to treat those children, but still attempt to include all children in the activities.

There are some children that should not attend classes in this school.

We have no curriculum that fits the children with disabilities. I do not know the daily dosage of the child, how far I should go with the material, is the child supposed to learn three letters today or maybe one is enough.

On the other hand, one teacher felt he was successful in including children with disabilities by finding ways to keep the children busy.

We want to include these children [i.e., she refers to the children with disabilities, children with different ethnic background and children with low socioeconomic background] in the classes with tasks that fit their level. To have a regular class, we need to make special tasks for these children so that they are included in the class. The tasks given to the students with disabilities are at a level lower than the ones of the other students and this is all done

to keep them busy during the class. If we neglect them, they will not participate in the classes at all.

Overall, meeting the needs of students with learning challenges (whether they had disabilities or not) appeared to be a challenge for teachers. Several teachers in special schools noted that after Grade 4, these challenges increase exponentially as academic requirements increase.

Principals and Parents

As non-observers of teaching and learning activities, parents and principals made fewer detailed comments about classroom pedagogical approaches. Both parents and principals agreed, however, that materials were lacking. Such materials could have an impact on the ability of teachers to promote learning for diverse learners.

3.3 Summary of Narrative Results

In summary, two sets of results emerged from this study. Although these results were derived from different data sets, there are overlapping themes in the two results sets described in Sections 3.1 and 3.2. The first common themes revolve around teaching and learning processes for inclusive education. In schools, students reported a lack of child-friendly methods, while teachers did not feel they had the preparation or materials to work with diverse students. National stakeholders believed one of the most pressing issues in inclusive education is the need for pre-service and in-service training around inclusive education.

Second, there is an attendance issue in schools, especially for marginalized children. A variety of factors, from segregated schools to ineffective attendance policies, have kept children from entering and completing school. According to stakeholders, an inflexible system of student categorization may be a contributing factor to students not being included in regular schools.

Finally, student aggressive behavior was seen as a detriment to safe schools by other students. According to stakeholders, supplemental social and educational activities may help students to improve achievement and understand personal, ethnic, and social differences more clearly.

4 Assessment Results as Part of a Child-Friendly Schools Approach

Child-Friendly Schools are a multi-dimensional approach to improving schools and their communities. Macedonia defines Child-Friendly Schools as having six dimensions:

(1) inclusiveness; (2) effectiveness; (3) health, safety, and protection in school environments; (4) gender responsiveness; (5) involvement or participation of students, parents, and community in the life and work of the school and community; and (6) respect for children's rights and multiculturalism.

Within each dimension, there are five components:

(1) Policy, (2) School Capacities, (3) School Board, (4) Teachers' Capacity, and (5) Community Participation.

Table 4 outlines results from the study in each of the five components of Child-Friendly Schools.

Table 4
Findings from the Inclusive Education Study Classified by CFS Component

1. Component: Policy		
1. Does national policy support inclusive education?	Policy review, interviews with national stakeholders, interviews with local stakeholders, interview with day care director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policy supports inclusion of all ethnic groups. Policy on Regionalization intended to support inclusive schools. Currently no mechanism for educational services in day care centers (responsibility of Department of Social Welfare). National policy has challenges with implementation
2. Is there anti-discrimination policy in schools?	Interviews with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student bullying data indicates that there is no clear policy on discrimination among students. Student reports of teacher activities indicate that discrimination of particular students may exist in schools. Teachers express willingness to learn more about teaching various types of students.
3. Are there policies for supporting out of school children?	Policy review, interview with day care center director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No transition policies for moving children in institutions or day care centers to schools. No special attention is given to a notable transition from fourth grade and beyond. National compulsory education policy intended to keep children in school through high school.
2. Component: School capacities		
4. Are there adequate support personnel in schools for working with students with special educational needs?	Interviews with national stakeholders, interviews with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools often have pedagogists and psychologists as part of full time staff. There are very few defectologists who are employed in regular schools. Data collectors only met one in the 11 regular schools visited. All teachers in special schools are defectologists.

5. The school has enough qualified staff to provide schooling on the languages that are spoken in its region.	Policy review and local stakeholder interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnic minority and teachers are under-represented in schools. Directorate is dedicated to improving faculty opportunities to promote teaching in native tongue in schools.
6. Do schools have the capacity to encourage access to schools?	Policy review and interviews with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only power schools have to enforce attendance laws is to report truant students. Stakeholders called this practice largely ineffective. Skopje City Social Welfare Department is undertaking improvement in physical access of schools by building ramps and providing transportation. Sanitary conditions in all schools appear to be in faulty conditions (for all students). Schools are lacking multi-sensory materials needed to teach diverse students, but all schools have computers.
7. Do schools have the personnel to support after-school enrichment, tutoring, and extra-curricular activities?	Interviews with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most schools run on shift systems and if schools run no shift system they close early. Additional personnel and space considerations may be necessary for these types of activities. Parents of students with disabilities were especially supportive of additional activities for their children.
8. Are there inclusion teams in schools, comprised of multi-disciplinary representatives designed to support all students?	Interviews with local stakeholders, interviews with MoES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No such teams exist on a formal level. None of the schools data collection teams visited had such teams. Schools have professional teams which could be re-configured as inclusion teams.
3. Component: School management		
9. Is the school aware of children that should be in school but are not?	Interviews with Commission on Assessment, local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools do not always know if children are of school age but not attending school. School managers reported not having mechanisms for bringing out-of-school children to school. Once enrolled, school managers generally have a sense of where out-of-school children are when not in school.
10. Does the school have the capacity to hire specialist personnel to support inclusive education?	Interviews with MoES and local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoES is reluctant to put one defectologist in every school. Local school managers claim they do not have the funding nor the capacity to hire defectologists (this is a MoES decision). Faculty program has produced many defectologists (special needs teachers) who could be immediately employed if funding were available.

5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, this section outlines key recommendations. These recommendations will be organized by according to activity area, based on feedback provided from Macedonian stakeholders. Approximate costs are included for each recommendation.

5.1 Improve Access for Out-of-School Children

In our research, there was much speculation about out-of-school children. According to research participants, there are known children in communities who are of school age, but do not attend school. However, there is a dearth of reliable data on these children. Participants believed the majority of children who do not attend school to be either engaged in family activities (Roma children) or disabled. In order to improve access, a two-pronged approach must be taken. First, families need to better understand the value of education to promote better attendance. At the same time, schools need to become more accepting of diverse students who may have difficulty transitioning back into schools after lengthy absences (or no schooling at all). The first step, however, is to determine where children are and why they are not attending school.

5.1.1 Improving Access for Out-of-School Children: “Child Find” Processes

Currently there is a lack of consistent procedure in Macedonia regarding identifying and intervening with out-of-school children.

A concerted effort to find and return children to school would require a system of documentation, support, and (when necessary) penalties supported by both the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Child Find procedures can begin with personnel at the school level (psychologist or principal) collecting data in a standard form related to rumors of out-of-school children or known cases within the community. The educator would share such information with municipality-level social workers. Social workers would visit homes, try to understand issues related to attendance, and develop a plan for future attendance in collaboration with school and family. The role of the social worker is to broker support for families by working with schools and families. If collaboratively developed plans fail or are refused by parents, social workers may consider reporting families to proper authorities and sanctions against families outlined in education law may be imposed.

5.1.2 Inputs Needed for Recommendation

Table 5 provides an overview of necessary inputs in order to realize this recommendation.

5.2 Equitable Funding to Encourage Inclusion

The Ministry of Education and Science funds all primary schools through block grants provided to municipalities. Funding formulas de-

11. Does the school manager facilitate professional development opportunities in inclusive education?	Interview with Child-Friendly Schools team and local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some cases, yes – principals facilitate inclusive education training. There is not a common national understanding of what inclusive education training would comprise. Principals organize other forms of professional development that could be adjusted to include inclusive education competencies.
12. Does the school manager provide instructional leadership on issues of inclusion?	Interviews with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals welcomed diverse students, but did not always have strategies for how to help such students. Principals did not always know of cases of abuse by teachers upon students. Some principals worked closely with NGOs to improve the level of inclusivity in their schools.
13. Do school managers work with local special schools and day care centers to examine ways to support children in the regular school?	Interviews with local stakeholders and day care center director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special schools and day care centers may initiate contact with local schools around moving students from one setting to the other. Principals in local schools have to date not contacted special schools.
4. Component: Teachers' capacities		
14. Do the teachers exhibit child-friendly pedagogies and inclusive strategies?	Interviews with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers from the schools claimed that they are not familiar with how to individualize instruction for diverse learners, but were willing to learn. Students believed that teachers were often uneven in their assessment and treatment of children. There appeared to be no common expectations for teacher conduct in classrooms. The Education Inspectorate of MoES is developing teacher evaluation instruments which could be used to document inclusive practice.
15. Are pre-service teachers being exposed to inclusive curriculum?	Interview with professors at faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive education is offered as a course in the faculty. No program exists that simultaneously trains special and regular teachers.
5. Component: Participation in the community		
16. Does the community help the school to approach all children who are not included in the education?	Interview with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members mentioned some efforts (like door knocking), but primarily did not participate in school recruitment efforts. Some parents talked about supporting “trips” for students.
17. Does the community work with the school to create after-school and extra-curricular activities for students?	Interviews with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents supported the idea of after-school or extended day programming. Parents had not volunteered to support such programming at the time of interviews.

Table 5
Inputs Needed to Realize Child Find Recommendation

Input	Rationale	Cost
Materials	Common referral materials for schools documents ³	150 Euro per
Training	Identification training for principals and social workers	2080 Euro (approx. 4 days)
Policy Change	Promotion of local intervention prior to inflicting penalties on families	0

³ Approximate cost for translation and printing of 20 pages of documents. Re-print costs would be marginal

pend on number of pupils, population density of municipalities, and number of special educational needs children in the municipality. Although these equitable funding formulas provide supplemental funding for students with greater needs, there are no stipulations that require that supplemental special needs funding is spent on special needs children. This means that funds designed to create equitable learning conditions for students with special educational needs could be used for any legal expenditure of block grant funds (including, but not limited to, cleaning supplies, heating bills, and magazines).

5.2.1 Clarifying Use of Funds: National and Municipality Level Recommendations

In order to ensure that students identified as “special educational needs” are receiving the enhancements they need to succeed in school, it is imperative that supplemental funding for special needs students be spent on such students. Such a change would require a national level change in by-laws that requires documentation of how funds were spent by municipalities. In the spirit of decentralization, MoES might develop several choices from which municipalities may use supplemental funds, including hiring additional staff, purchasing additional learning materials, and supplemental transportation for students with special educational needs. All choices, however, would need to be approved at the national level and would need to include an accurate accounting of the number of students with special educational needs in a municipality. Accounting of students with special educational needs may need further systems in place to ensure that students with special educational needs are not over- or under-represented in funding formulas.

5.2.2 Inputs Needed for Equitable Funding of Inclusive Education

Table 6 outlines the inputs needed to realize equitable funding for inclusive schooling.

Table 6
Inputs Needed for Equitable Funding of Inclusive Education

Input	Rationale	Cost
New by-laws	Need requirement to ensure funds are appropriately spent	0
Accounting	Development of system and training	8000 Euro
Oversight	MoES oversight of spending by municipalities	1600 Euro (40 days annually) ⁴

⁴ 40 Euro per day oversight staffing costs

5.3 Reduce Discrimination in Schools

Data from schools indicate that discrimination between and among students creates environments that are unsafe for students, reduces learning opportunities for particular students, and reduces opportunities for schools to grow as communities. Reduction of discrimination begins at the national level, but can be implemented at the school level.

5.3.1 Pass Anti-Discrimination Law

The passed anti-discrimination Law provides a legal backing to inclusive education efforts and policy language for schools to use when developing local anti-discrimination policies. Once national policy is passed, work with local schools to replicate policy at the local level.

5.3.2 School-wide Behavioral Expectations

Because aggressive behavior is so prevalent in Macedonian schools, the most realistic way to address the problem is through school-wide efforts. Training for students, parents, teachers, and administrators will help to bring school communities together around areas of common concern. Among all the stakeholders, students considered this the most pressing issue. Possible solutions are school-wide behavioral support and expectation programs. The video found at www.pbis.org is a good example of such a program. Another is strategic anti-bullying training for all school community members, including students, parents, and teachers (see www.pacer.org/publications/bullying.asp).

Training in these areas has two objectives. The first objective is to provide parents, teachers, and students the practical skills they need to address school violence. The second objective (and perhaps most important) is aimed at attitudinal changes related

Table 7
Inputs Needed to Reduce Discrimination in Schools

Input	Rationale	Cost
Anti-Discrimination Law	Law will protect marginal populations	0
School-wide Training	Common expectations and responses to discriminatory and aggressive behaviour	2000 Euro (approx. 5 days)
Materials for Schools	Materials to help reinforce concepts	150 Euro per manual

to school violence, children’s taunting, and underlying perceptions of student characteristics that may lead to conflict.

5.4 Redesign System for Assessing Students at Risk

The assessment processes for school-aged students who are suspected of having special educational needs or are environmentally disadvantaged in Macedonia are highly centralized and dependent almost entirely on Commission on Assessment diagnoses. This system creates a dependency on one organization that cannot possibly assess all children with suspected special educational needs or disadvantages, and disempowers schools to attempt early intervention with students.

5.4.1 Revise Commission on Assessment Practice

The Commission on Assessment Policy currently is guided by scientific guidelines (e.g., a child with “x” disability will attend “y” type of school). In inclusive environments, the assumption is first that a child will attend mainstream school. When compounding factors are present (e.g., psychological evaluation data, parent opinion, school capacity), alternatives need to be considered. These alternatives should always be appealable, whether by parents or by the Commission itself.

One mechanism to improve the utility of Commission on Assessment evaluations is to use International Classification on Functioning (ICF) categories (which consider the child’s environment and relationships in the assessment of their functioning). However, even with ICF classifications, final reports about students should include useful recommendations and careful consideration of multiple viewpoints, as well as documented intervention attempts (see below).

5.4.2 Develop Inclusion Teams at Schools

Although students with disabilities represent a small population of students, defectologist estimates from Macedonia indicate that up to 30% of children in school may have some form of learning challenge. Inclusion teams bring together members of a school’s professional team with experienced teachers and parents of children at risk, who work with all teachers in the school on problem-solving and on finding ways to meet the needs of unique learners. Inclusion teams may be used to support classroom management, to help design new approaches for struggling learners, or to design programs for highly gifted students. UNICEF can develop training modules related to these teams for its partner schools.

5.4.3 Deploy Defectologists (Special Needs Teachers) to Lead Inclusion Teams

The defectologists (future special educational needs teachers) are situated to lead inclusion teams because of their training and understanding of the needs of struggling learners. Future special educational needs teachers will likely find children with specific disabilities in schools. Because the categorization system is unpredictable (parents may not agree with or take their children for assessment), however, there may be children with hidden disabilities in regular schools. At the same time, there are a variety of children with learning challenges in schools that are not related to disability (e.g., their learning style does not match well with the teacher’s pedagogy, lack of support from home). As a policy issue, current defectologists could be re-assigned to be used as support teachers for *all* children with learning challenges in schools. Their role would be to both participate in reteaching (remediation) of students with special disabilities and to prevent further academic slippage of students with other special educational needs.

Preparation for this new role could be part of a broader new inclusive education training program (see below).

On an emergency level, pedagogues or psychologists might be selected to lead inclusion teams in schools. However, the deployment of special educational needs teachers to work with students with special educational needs will help teams to function more effectively. At a minimum, one special educational needs teacher can be deployed to each municipality (84) or to each primary school (approximately 350). Funding for such special educational needs teachers may come from better use of allocated funds for special educational needs students (see above) or from new allocations (see calculations in Table 7).

5.4.4 Provide Informal Assessment Tools for School Inclusion Teams

Early monitoring and detection of student progress is vitally important in order to intervene and prevent students with learning challenges from slipping behind their peers. Currently, the only form of student assessment in Macedonia is highly formalized, generally conducted in Skopje by medical personnel or psychologists. A series of screening instruments needs to be developed in order to track student progress. If students show slow progress on such screening instruments, inclusion teams can intervene by changing teaching approaches, by providing extra help when needed (see examples below), or by working closely with parents to address home-based issues. Characteristics of effective screening instruments include:

- In the language of instruction of school (or students' native tongue as appropriate);
- Aligned to national curriculum;
- Developmental in nature; and
- Piloted or normed on local populations with clearly defined points for which intervention takes place.

The development of such instruments can likely take place in collaboration with faculty members familiar with curriculum and assessment. Such instruments can also be developed for kindergartens to ensure early intervention as necessary.

5.4.5 Inputs Needed to Redesign Practices for Assessing Students at Risk

The resources needed for this recommendation are perhaps the most intensive in terms of costs. However, the aim of all interventions is to be cost effective. Effective investments sometimes have greater economic cost, but carry more potential benefits. It was clear from field research that students with special educational needs and students with high risk characteristics (e.g., ethnic minorities or economically disadvantaged) have no formal processes for support and intervention in schools. These systemic interventions aim to address these needs. Table 8 outlines estimated expenditures.

5.5 Ministry Assumes Collaborative Responsibility for Kindergartens and Day Care Centers

In Macedonia there are currently two institutions providing social services to children.

Table 8
Inputs Needed to Change Assessment Practices in Schools

Input	Rationale	Cost
Training for Commission on Assessment	Introduce ICF system and new methods for assessment reports	1650 Euro (approx. 3 days)
Formation of Inclusion Teams	Need for in-school intervention teams	2270 Euro (approx. 5 days)
Deployment of spec. ed. needs teachers to work with students with spec. ed. needs in schools	Need for leadership in intervention schools	3000 Euro ⁵ per annum per teacher (approx. 80-300 teachers)
Development of Assessment Materials	Need for school-based evidence for intervention	8000 Euro per annum

⁵ Based on average annual salary of teachers in Macedonia

Table 9
Inputs Needed to Improve Education in Kindergartens and Day Cares

Input	Rationale	Cost
MoES training and curriculum development	Needed inclusion of education in social institutions	1600 Euro (20 days MoES staff time for curriculum development 150 Euro materials)
Linking schools and kindergartens/day care centers/special schools	Promote schooling opportunities for children	950 Euro (approx. 2 days)

Kindergartens are designed to provide care for young children (ages 4-6). Day care centers provide safe places for out-of-school youth (e.g., street children, children with psychological problems, children with disabilities). In both types of institutions, there may be little in terms of formal education and curriculum. Ministerial responsibility likely was assigned during the former socialist era in Macedonia, when day care centers provided care for persons thought unable to work. Likewise, kindergartens were designed to care for children while parents worked. In both cases, services are being provided to school-aged children or pre-school aged children. To this end, the Ministry of Education and Science should begin conversations with Ministry of Labor and Social Policy about how to introduce educational components in these institutions to ensure that educational components and curriculum are implemented.

5.5.1 Local Level Linkages Between Educational and Social Institutions

School managers can begin to link to nearby day care centers and special schools to design "transition teams." Transition teams will include members of school inclusion teams and members from the daycare centers and special schools. Transition teams seek opportunities for children who are in special schools or day care centers to transition into regular schools. The purpose of transition teams is to identify children who are being under-served in day care or special schools and to support their entry into regular schools. Transition team members would include head teachers from both schools, special educational needs teachers (defectologists), parents, and regular teachers who would be accepting the child with special educational needs into her/his class.

5.5.2 Inputs Needed to Make Social Institutions (Daycare centers) ensure that children get education

Training and staff time are needed to link educational institutions to social welfare institutions. Costs in Table 9, however, do not reflect the political will that is needed for MoES to become involved in the education of very young and marginalized children.

5.6 Extend School Day

Schools can develop a 40-50 minute block at the end of each day for "enrichment" activities. These activities could consist of a combination of individualized tutorials for students who need extra help, extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, art, or computers) designed to bring students with different ethnicities together, and service learning (community engagement) activities. This final period should be viewed as a class that extends the teaching of other classes, including academic subjects and life skills, based on space availability at schools.⁶

The World Bank (2008) has reported that Macedonian teachers are among the highest paid in Europe in comparison to average per capita income. At the same time, the Macedonian school day (four hours long) is one of the shortest in Europe. Relatively high pay compared with short work hours represents an inefficiency that may have impacts on student learning. The additional school period may rectify this scenario.

5.6.1 Inputs Needed to Extend School Day

Because teachers are contracted for an eight-hour work day (but only work four of these hours at school), no financial inputs are needed to implement this recommendation. However, teacher acceptance of this new timetable may be an issue. Therefore, political will may be the most important input related to this recommendation. Table 10 demonstrates the minimal consulting effort needed to provide teachers with information about how to best make use of an enrichment period. In addition, a small Ministry of Education and Science task force may need to assess how enrichment periods are implemented in schools that have a shift system.

⁶ An extended school day for schools that work on a shift system may work on a rotating basis. For example, if two classrooms are set aside during second shift, students in first shift might attend after-school programming one to three days per week on a rotating basis.

Table 10
Inputs Needed to Extend School Day

Input	Rationale	Cost
Training on enrichment period	Need to extend school day for individualized support	1470 Euro per day (approx. 3 days)

5.7 Prepare Teachers, Principals, and Parents for Inclusive Education

Evidence from schools and perceptions of a variety of stakeholders indicate that teachers, school leaders, and parents do not necessarily understand the concept of inclusive education and may need supplemental training in inclusive education. There are three venues which could be used for such training: non-formal adult education, pre-service teacher education, and in-service teacher education.

5.7.1 Develop a Non-formal “Inclusive Education Leadership” Program

Inclusive education requires, above all, a dedication to inclusive principles. Through a leadership institute (e.g., during school summer holidays), a small cohort of teachers, principals, parents, and older students could convene for a short period of time. Classes in the mini-course would consist of strategies for implanting inclusive education at a systems level – including policy, school-based inclusion, and community inclusion. The “Inclusion Leadership Program” should have annual participants who are intended to be catalysts for increased inclusive activity around the country. Networks of “Inclusion Leaders” will soon develop and can be supported by annual meetings or conferences.

5.7.2 Develop an Inclusive Education Track at Faculties

The most promising approach to bringing inclusive practices to schools is to enlist the support of fresh university graduates. Faculties of education should develop a program that combines courses in both special and

regular education. An inclusive education program could consist of two tracks – one for special and one for regular educators. However, if 50% or more of the coursework is common, special and regular educators can begin (through class and internship experiences) to find ways to work with one another to solve problems related to the challenges of inclusion.

5.7.3 Inclusive Education In-Service Teacher Training

Inclusive education practices are designed to provide all students with access to the regular curriculum. Teachers modify curriculum and provide accommodations to students as necessary. In-service training for inclusive education could be developed as a supplement to existing content-oriented teacher training modules. Rather than separate inclusive education training, inclusive pedagogical practices could be built into an existing content training program. For example, a three-hour mathematics training could be re-designed so that two hours are dedicated to mathematics concepts and one hour is dedicated to approaches for individualizing mathematics curriculum, reflecting on the role of culture in the classroom, or addressing ethnic bias that may be present in content area teaching.

5.7.4 Inputs Needed for Inclusive Education Training

Cost inputs below include direct cost of consultants for training, as well as costs associated with sending professors abroad for supplemental training. As faculties begin to develop new programs in inclusive education, they will need models for how to organize

Table 11
Inputs Needed to Deliver Inclusive Education Training

Input	Rationale	Cost
Inclusive education leadership seminar	A program that will develop a cohort of leaders from multiple disciplines and perspectives to support inclusive education	3150 Euro (training costs) + 50 Euro per participant housing
Inclusive education track at faculty	Begin to develop inclusive education in pre-service teacher training	4000 Euro (cost of travel and stipend for 10-day study tour per professor)
Inclusive education in-service training	“Mainstream” inclusiveness into all in-service training	2500 Euro (approx. 5 days)

new programs, they will need to speak with peers in other institutions, and they will need to see programs in action. All other training can take place within Macedonia, keeping costs minimal. Costs of the inclusive education leadership program are based on the assumption that a cooperating university is willing to host the program during its school holidays, therefore making on-campus (or near-campus) housing and meeting facilities available. Table 11 provides basic inputs.

5.8 Parent Involvement

Parents are essential in the inclusive education process for two reasons. First, parents of marginalized children can advocate for, rather than shelter their children from, an inclusive education system. Such advocacy, however, is coupled with an understanding of school community norms and expectations. At the same time, participation of parents of non-marginalized children in school activities may help to reduce the discrimination expressed by some parents in interviews. Two recommendations below outline opportunities for parents to participate in the inclusive education process.

5.8.1 Parents as Partners in Inclusive Education Teams, School-wide Behavior Training, and Extra-Curricular Periods

Parental participation and leadership are essential in the processes described in sections 5.3.2, 5.4.2, 5.6, and 5.7.1 of this report. Educational literature on low-achieving students suggests parent support and involvement are important elements of successful educational outcomes for children. Therefore, strategies to support the LPE in a way that does not cause tension between school officials and parents should be considered. Specifically, parents will need to be viewed as important partners in school activities such as community building (around student and teacher behavior) and intervening with struggling students.

In addition, adding an extra class period per day as an enrichment time could have beneficial effects on multicultural education and student achievement. Engaging community members in such activities (such as volunteer tutors, service learning sites and recipients, and chaperones) is a way to meaningfully spread the intended effects of extra-curricular periods into the community. Finally, parents would be ideal participants in an inclusive education leadership non-formal education program.

5.8.2 Develop Parent Resource Center

In order for parents to effectively advocate for their children, understand national laws, and connect with other parents, a parent resource center may be necessary. This center would provide a central hub for parents to access information on a variety of educational topics. In the past, such a center was funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy for parents of children with disabilities, but an inclusive education parent resource center would be for parents of all children. The center, however, would focus specifically on helping children of diverse ethnicities, with disabilities, and who are economically deprived to access an appropriate education for their children. An example of a powerful parent resource center can be found at www.pacer.org.

5.8.3 Inputs Needed for Parent Participation

Parent participation costs very little, but can bring tremendous rewards. Parents should be welcomed at schools and should be provided basic incentives for participating in special training sessions at schools. At the same time, a parent resource center could be staffed by a few dedicated members who are able to coordinate outreach to parents around the country. Table 12 demonstrates estimated costs of parent participation.

Table 12
Inputs Needed to Improve Parent Participation

Input	Rationale	Cost
Parent involvement in inclusive education teams	Parents are experts on their children’s learning styles and preferences	0
Parent involvement in extra-curricular activities	Parent volunteers expand the possibilities of extra-curricular periods and act as tutors	0
Parent involvement in behavioral training	Parents, as community members in schools, should understand non-discrimination and common behavioral expectations	0 Euro per parent
Parent Resource	Provide parents with information and social	120,000 space rent gathering opportunities per annum (200 sq m), 4200 Euro per staff salary for four staff per annum, ⁷ 2500 office costs ⁸

⁷ Based on Ministry of Social Welfare Civil Servant salary of 350 Euro per month.

⁸ Based on estimate of 500 Euro cost of computer (four computers for staff) and 500 Euro miscellaneous costs (office supplies, printer, paper, etc.).

6 Fiscal Analysis of Recommendations

The recommendation of a policy option is based on the use of a variety of information about the likelihood that a proposed course of action will result in desired outcomes. One consideration is the cost of a potential course of action. Effectiveness is another important consideration. To determine which alternatives are most likely to be cost effective, it is important to carefully analyze each alternative. The amount of resources and the effectiveness, as well as school and community support for each alternative, must be evaluated. According to Dunn (2004)

It is seldom possible to choose between two alternatives on the basis of either costs or effectiveness. It is almost always necessary to specify the level of effectiveness and costs that is regarded as adequate. This largely is a matter of reasoned judgment that cannot be resolved by arbitrarily adopting a single criterion or adequacy (p. 327).

Table 13 summarizes the cost information presented in Tables 5-12 and the effectiveness data presented in Table 2. The costs listed may not be a comprehensive list of all costs, and it would be useful to consider whether the same decision would be made if the actual costs were substantially higher than the projected costs (by 10%, 20%, 50%, or even 100% over the life of the program).

Some of the recommendations can be implemented quickly and may be a one-time event

or activity. Other options may be ongoing programs and costs will be spread across many years. In some cases it may take time for a recommendation to be fully implemented. For example, it may take awhile for the teachers or others to develop the skills needed to fully implement an intervention.

6.1 Additional Considerations

The costs included in the tables are costs identified by stakeholders and may not include all costs. Additionally, there are other related factors that should be considered. Additional considerations might include those listed below (not all of the considerations are relevant for some of the options):

- Is the option feasible?
- Will the option primarily have a short-term or long-term impact?
- Do the principals/psychologists, social workers, teachers, and parents have time available to take on additional tasks? Or will they need to reduce time spent on low priority activities?
- Will additional personnel need to be hired to assist in carrying out the option?
- Are there other costs associated with the option that have not been identified?
- Will there be a need for follow-up training or development?
- Is the option likely to result in the desired outcomes in the short run? Is the option likely to result in long-term sustainable change?

Table 13
Cost and Effectiveness Summary

Recommendation	Cost and Unit ⁹	Ranked Effective by Stakeholders ¹⁰	Comments
5.1 Improve access for out-of-school children			
5.1.1 "Child Find" Process	150 Euro per document 1020 Euro per day per	Not ranked	A policy change is required (0 Euro).
5.2 Oversight of equitable funding to encourage inclusion			
	1600 Euro per school per year		New by-laws must be developed (0 Euro).
5.3 Reduce discrimination in schools by passing law and then providing school-wide training			
5.3.1 Pass antidiscrimination law	0 Euro	Not ranked	
5.3.2 School-wide training behavioral expectations	2000 Euro per school per year (5 days per school) 150 Euro per manual (1 manual per school)	Not ranked	

⁹ See Tables 5-12 for additional detail. Costs were identified by stakeholders. There may be additional costs that were not identified.

¹⁰ A "YES" indicates that the mean score was at least 1.8 on a scale of -2 to 2. See Section 3.1 and Table 3 for details. The rankings are based on stakeholder input. Some of the recommendations are adaptations and variations of the interventions listed in Table 3.

Recommendation	Cost and Unit ⁹	Ranked Effective by Stakeholders	Comments
5.4 Redesign system for assessing students at risk			
5.4.1 Revise Commission on Assessment Practice	2850 Euro (3 days)	Not ranked	
5.4.2 Develop inclusion teams at schools	2750 Euro per venue (5 days)	Not ranked	
5.4.3 Deploy special needs teachers to lead inclusion teams	3000 Euro per annum per teacher	Not ranked	Will require approximately 80-300 teachers. At minimum, one special educational needs teacher can be deployed to each municipality (84) or for each primary school (approximately 350)
5.4.4 Provide informal assessment tools for school intervention teams (develop assessment materials)	8000 Euro per year (25% salary for two faculty members) 2150 Euro (5 days)	Not ranked	
5.5 Improve education in kindergartens and day cares			
5.5.1 Local level linkages between educational and social institutions	1750 Euro MoES training and curriculum development (staff time and materials; assumed 20 days of MoES staff time)	Not ranked	Costs for options 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 cannot be disaggregated. Costs do not reflect the political will that is needed for MoES to become involved in the education of very young and marginalized children.
5.5.2 Inputs need to make social institutions educational	950 Euro per school (2 days)		
5.6 Extend school day	670 Euro per school (3 days)	YES	Because teachers are contracted for an eight-hour work day (but only work four of these hours at school), no financial inputs are needed to implement this recommendation. However, teacher acceptance of this new timetable may be an issue. Therefore, political will may be the most important input related to this recommendation. In addition, a small Ministry of Education task force may need to assess how enrichment periods are implemented in schools that have a shift system and consultants to provide training on enrichment period may be needed.
5.7 Prepare teachers, principals, and parents for inclusive education			
5.7.1 Inclusive education leadership seminar	2000 Euro per institute (assumed 5 days) 50 Euro per participant housing 150 Euro per participant materials 1000 Euro per local facilitator	YES	Leadership summer institute
5.7.2 Inclusive education track at faculty	4000 Euro per professor (travel and stipend)	YES	
5.7.3 Inclusive education in-service training	2000 Euro	YES	
5.8 Parent involvement			
5.8.1 Parent involvement in inclusive education teams, school-wide behavior training, and extra-curricular periods	0 Euro per parent	YES	
5.8.2 Develop parent resource center	136,800 Euro per site per year (space rental, assumed 4 staff members)	Not ranked	

7 Timeline for Implementation

Implementation for inclusive education projects will take place over the next six years in Macedonia. Below is a recommended timeline for implementation, based on feasibility. Each recommendation will have its own timeline. A total project timeline will then be provided to allow for planning across activities.

7.1 Child Find Activities

Activity 1 is designed to find and enroll out-of-school children in school. Currently, there are no data on the number of out-of-school children in Macedonia. Stakeholder perceptions indicate that there may be as many as 20,000-30,000. These children are commonly believed to be children of very poor families, children from cultures with early marriage traditions, and children with disabilities.

The recommended activity of teachers and schools becoming reporters of stories they hear is predicated on perceived or real action by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Therefore, it is recommended that a meeting be held in August 2010 between UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, and the MLSP. The priority of this meeting will be to establish a system of reporting whereby teachers and principals can report out-of-school children to the MLSP. It is currently unclear what the follow-up step of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will be. It is assumed, however, that a plan for bringing out-of-school children will be developed between municipality-level Social Welfare personnel and local school personnel. These collaborative plans may include providing incentives to send children to school, organizing for appropriate clothes or school materials, or other activities that may support the child's inclusion in school. During this time, the Ministries will also develop a monitoring plan for keeping track of school-based data and follow up. Such a plan will be used for monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Once an agreed upon plan is in place, a series of one-day trainings can take place (four

in total with clusters of schools with a consultant). The consultant will develop a common form for teachers to use, communicate the policy or process adopted by Ministries and UNICEF, and demonstrate how to gather information at the school level. This training would likely take place in November 2010; however, consultants may also be used to facilitate inter-Ministry meetings if necessary. The full implementation of this component would begin in January 2011, with schools beginning to collect and share data with the Ministry of Social Welfare shortly after the holiday break.

7.2 Ensuring Equitable Funding for Students with Special Needs

Work toward ensuring the equitable distribution of funds intended for students with special educational needs can begin quickly, but should be supported by the following activities:

- 1- UNICEF meets with Ministry of Education and Science financial staff to alert them of issues related to students with special educational needs (students with special educational needs have special funds allocated to them, but such funds are mingled with ordinary funds).
- 2- UNICEF works with Ministry of Education and Science to ensure by-laws are changed so that funds go directly for programming for students with special educational needs.
- 3- Ministry of Education and Science develops system of monitoring and oversight to ensure funds are used for their intended population.

Although not mentioned in the cost analysis, a local or expatriate consultant could develop a draft set of approved activities for special educational needs funding. This activity would only take a few days and could be submitted electronically to UNICEF.

7.3 Reduce Discrimination in Schools

In the above sections, two activities were recommended in order to reduce discrimination in schools. The law is adopted and anti-discrimination for schools is introduced.

7.4 Redesign System of Assessment for Students at Risk

Redesigning an assessment system for students with special educational needs will require strong technical support from local faculties and external consultants versed in curriculum-based measurement. In order to develop a system of informal measures that can be used to screen learning challenges, a system of piloting, field testing, and norming must take place. This will take several years and will likely take a significant portion of faculty members' time. It is recommended that this activity begin with preliminary consultant meetings in April 2011. It will likely take up to two to three years to have initial instruments in place.

7.5 Improve Education in Day Cares and Kindergartens

A two-stage process is recommended for improving the educational level of kindergartens and day cares. First, however, the Ministry of Education and Science must negotiate and take partial (if not full) responsibility for day cares and kindergartens. Once responsibility is assumed, both kindergartens and day care centers will need to have educational curricula. UNICEF's Early Childhood Standards can be implemented in kindergartens, but a coherent curriculum needs to be developed for day cares based on the national curriculum. Because the negotiation process for Ministry involvement in day cares and kindergartens may be slow, curriculum development should not begin in near future.

7.6 Extended School Day

The process of extending the school day will likely meet with resistance from teachers. To this end, the first six months of the program can be spent simply discussing the possibility with stakeholders.

7.7 Inclusive Education Training

Inclusive education training is recommended to take place at three levels. First, faculties can begin to examine how courses might fit together for an inclusive education track in the faculties. Because existing coursework and professors are already in place, it should take no more than two years to plan and implement the program, which would begin during the 2012 academic year.

Once the inclusive education track is delineated and coursework defined, the program can be adjusted to include an Inclusive Education Leadership Institute, which could be implemented in the summer of 2012. Finally, inclusive education in-service training can begin immediately by inserting inclusive education pedagogies and philosophies into existing in-service training programs.

7.8 Parent Involvement

In the area of parent involvement, two activities are suggested. First, parents can begin to participate in anti-discrimination and community-building training. Furthermore, a parent center should be established to help increase parent involvement in inclusive education.

8 Conclusions

Inclusive education policy and practice hold great promise for increasing social equity, improving educational equity, and promoting child-friendliness in schools. This report, based on fieldwork in Macedonia, provides recommendations at the national, municipality, and school level. The eight-point plan will provide a variety of approaches designed to support student access and success in schools. Some of the recommendations may be difficult to achieve because of the need for political will of stakeholders (e.g., extending the Macedonian school day). Others will require funding to ensure that appropriate supports for students are in place (e.g., deployment of special educational needs teachers in regular schools). Within the six-year framework of the UNICEF inclusive education project, however, all may be nec-

essary. Supporting all students inclusively in Macedonia means improving access for out-of-school children, improving instruction, and improving support mechanisms for students for whom even improved instruction may not be enough. Macedonia stands poised for success on inclusive education measures. Its policies support inclusive practice, but have yet to be realized in practice. Organizational support from the UNICEF office, through implementing the eight recommendations above, may help improve education for all Macedonian students – including those currently on the margins of formal schooling. By doing so, Macedonian schools can become more inclusive, promoting opportunities for *all* Macedonian students to benefit from its national education system.



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Policies Reviewed

- 2001 Framework Agreement
Concept for the New Nine-Year Compulsory Education
- Decade of the Roma Action Plan
- Law on Primary Education
- Law for Protection of Children
- National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (2002)
- National Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia (National Roma Strategy 2004).
- Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (2006-2010)
- Regulation for Estimation/Appraisal of Specific Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Physical or Psychic Development
- Strategy for the Development of Education (2005-2015)

Appendix A: Informal Protocol for Organizations, Policy-Makers

1. Tell me about your organization.
2. What are the biggest challenges facing Macedonian children and youth?
3. What are the biggest challenges facing Macedonian schools?
4. What educational or societal impact do you hope to see as a result of your work?
5. How should this change be financed?
6. Who do you see as the critical people to create positive change (e.g., parents, students, teachers, government)?
7. What types of inputs (materials, equipment, training) are needed to promote the improvements you seek?
8. What needs to happen in order for (Roma/Albanian/poor/Macedonian/students with disabilities) to be successful in schools?
9. What needs to happen in order for (Roma/Albanian/poor/Macedonian/children with disabilities) to be fully included in Macedonian society?

Appendix B: Delphi Survey, Macedonian Stakeholders

Please Circle or Electronically Highlight your Organizational Affiliation
 Government NGO School Faculty

Directions: For each prompt below, respond numerically according to the choices below.

Add comments if you wish to clarify your response.
 2 = Very likely to improve inclusiveness of schools in Macedonia
 1 = May improve inclusiveness of schools in Macedonia
 0 = Will have no effect on inclusiveness of schools in Macedonia
 (-1) = May have a negative impact on inclusiveness of schools in Macedonia
 (-2) = Very likely to negatively impact inclusiveness of schools in Macedonia

Interventions	Numerical Response	Comments
Example: Eliminate free meals in school for poor children	(-2)	
Interventions for Faculties		
1. Commit resources to improving programs in minority languages in faculties		
2. Develop programs to encourage ethnic minorities to become teachers		
3. Create an “inclusive education” track in the faculty that has core courses on inclusive education that are taken by both special and regular education candidates		
4. Include courses on informal academic screening in special education faculty programs		

Interventions	Numerical Response	Comments
Interventions for Social Sector		
5. Provide Roma children with the same resources (food and transportation) to attend regular schools as they receive in special schools and day care programs		
6. Promote extra-curricular activities that involve children from multiple cultures		
7. Develop more vocational programs in general high schools		
8. Improve physical access to schools by building ramps and elevators for students in wheelchairs		
9. Create professional teams in day care centers and nearby primary schools who seek to help students in day care centers transition to regular schools		
10. Institute a “child find” program where education officers are required to visit families whose children do not go to school to encourage them to send children		
11. Provide incentives for families to send their out-of-school children (e.g., lunch, uniform money, free transportation)		
12. Penalize families who do not send their children to school with fines or other sanctions		
School-based Interventions		
13. Shift focus from general high schools into vocational high schools		
14. Organize schools so that students can learn some subjects in their home language and others in Macedonian		
15. Create a system of guidance and counseling for primary students who will enter high school		
16. Create programs in schools that highlight contributions from all cultures		
17. Create levels in schools where children who are very bright learn with those who are very bright, children who are average learners are with other children who are average learners, and children who learn slowly are with other children who learn slowly		
18. Expect professional teams in schools to conduct annual screenings in schools to determine if there are children who need additional help. Design a support program for these students.		
19. Create a system where the professional team in schools documents attempts to help individual students before referring to the Commission on Assessment (Commission on Categorization)		

Interventions	Numerical Response	Comments
20. Provide extended day tutoring and enrichment opportunities for students with special educational needs		
Policy and Infrastructure Interventions		
21. Implement a policy that all students must learn both Macedonian and Albanian language subjects in schools		
22. Implement a policy that all students must learn in Macedonian language in schools		
23. Establish a system whereby teacher promotion and sanctions are partially dependent on child-friendly teaching strategies		
24. Implement a “state center for assessment” that will oversee all external examinations		
25. Training for “state center for assessment” personnel to learn about the needs of students with disabilities and language minorities on tests.		
26. Establish standards for curriculum in day care centers to ensure educational processes are taking place		
27. Eliminate the practice of waiting until child is 7 to begin school		
28. Develop a “service formula” for deciding how to place special education teachers in special schools (e.g., one special education teacher for every five students with special educational needs)		
29. Implement a reduction formula for students with special needs in regular classes (e.g., reduce the size of the class by five students for every one student with special educational needs)		
30. Place one special education teacher in every school to work directly (and only) with students with disabilities		
31. Place one special education teacher in every kindergarten		
32. Place a special educational needs teacher (formerly known as defectologist) in every school. Their role would be to work with the pedagogue and teachers to help students with disabilities, other children who are having trouble, and design programs for gifted students		
Teacher Training Interventions		
33. Conduct assistive technology training for teachers		
34. Create a companion manual (and training) to go along with new national curriculum that addresses how to individualize for students with special educational needs		

Interventions	Numerical Response	Comments
35. Teacher training on independent thinking skills		
36. In-service teacher training on inclusive education		
Categorization and Assessment		
37. Create a system of appeals, so that if parents wish to challenge the recommendations of the Commission on Categorization, they may have a hearing with an impartial officer		
38. Institute a database of all children with documented disabilities in the country. Examine data to ensure that ethnic minorities are not over-represented in the population of children with disabilities		

Appendix C: Teachers’ Protocol

1. Tell me about some of the strengths that you bring to the classroom as a teacher.
2. What are some of the challenges that you face with regard to very poor students, students with disabilities, and students from minority ethnic groups?
3. What are the conditions under which you accept or do not accept children in your school (e.g., students with disabilities, Roma)?
4. If you could change anything about how you teach, what would it be?
5. If you could change anything about the makeup of your class, how would you do it?
6. What do you see as the particular challenges for your school in working with students with disabilities?
7. What do you see as the particular challenges for your school in working with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds?
8. What do you see as the particular challenges for your school in working with students from different ethnic backgrounds?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix D: Macedonia / Parents

OVERVIEW OF SENSE-MAKING METHODOLOGY AND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Sense-making methodology, with an emphasis on dynamic processes, is different that the ‘transmission model’ of disseminating information/research, which assumes that senders and receivers share the same perspective and share the same ideas about what is of value or importance. Instead, sense-making conceptualizes humans as facing a gap-filled reality, and as continually trying to fix the real and create meaning. Everyone is an expert about their own situation. It provides a link between micro and macro levels of human communicative behavior (social organization and individual actions).

Sense-making methodology has practical implications. Instead of information being “transmitted,” information is exchanged and communication systems are designed for dialogue, which involves reciprocity and ownership. Everyone designs their own information to some extent (e.g., theoretical merger of agency and structure). Sense-making looks for patterns in how sense-making occurs, not just at the content of responses. The focus is on process (verbs).

Applications: Identify information needs not met, which kinds of situations improve/hinder practice, what users want, what predicts information use, gaps across stakeholder perceptions (e.g., school – university).

Protocol: Micro-moment time-line interview

Teachers

1. To Tap Situations: Think of a recent time when you faced or perceived White-Black educational disparity at your school. What happened? How did it connect to your past teaching experience?
2. To Tap Gaps: What questions/confusions did you face? What did you struggle with? What did you try to figure out? What was missing?
3. To Tap Bridges: What conclusions did you come to? How did you feel about it? How did it help you in your work? What was still incomplete?
4. To Tap Outcomes: For each conclusion, how did it help? How did it allow you to change your teaching or thinking about your work? How did it connect with your life and teaching experience?

Possible analysis:

- Types of bridging strategies – stakeholder views of solutions
- Types of gaps – how do people use information, what kinds of information do they need, what do they use the information for, what predicts their information use
- Types of outcomes – evaluated in terms of student progress, helping plan, helping get support, helping gain control, helping make career progress
- Cross-disciplinary perspectives: situation-gap-bridge
- The nature of uncertainty by academic discipline
- The nature of the disagreement by academic discipline

Parents

1. Think of a time when you became aware of difficulties your child or other children face at your child’s school. This could be an event, a situation, or a story you heard. Describe the circumstances. Where were you? What did you see or hear?
2. What questions came to your mind at the time? What did you try to figure out about the circumstances?
3. What conclusions did you come to? What would you still like to know?
4. How has knowing about the difficulties of your child or other children at school affected your relationship to the school? Has it changed your thinking about the school?

Appendix E: Principals’ Protocol

1. What is the ethnic/linguistic makeup of your school (by percentage)?
2. What are the conditions under which you accept or do not accept children in your school (e.g., students with disabilities, Roma)?
3. What is the average teacher:student ratio in your school?

4. What are the functions of the professional team in your school?
5. Would you classify your students as above average / average / or below average?
6. What data sources (e.g., internal exams, external exams, attendance records) do you consider most important in evaluating your school?

Appendix F: Student Protocol

1. Tell me about your strengths as a student.
2. What are some of the difficulties you face in school?
3. What are some of the difficulties that other students face in your school?
4. If you could change anything about how your school better helps students, what would it be?
5. Talk about the different types of students in your school and your relationship with them.
6. Describe the characteristics of a student who is likely to be successful in your school?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?



