Editors Nikoleta Gutvajn Milja Vujačić

**CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES** 

# OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



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#### CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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## OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Editors Nikoleta Gutvajn Milja Vujačić

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#### **FOREWORD**

nsuring conditions for a quality education for all children is a key goal that is supposed to be achieved within the process of reforming the education system. Efforts to ensure both equality and quality in education have become fully made through the idea of inclusive education. The importance of this concept has also been confirmed by the fact that inclusive education in many countries represents a key indicator of the quality, efficiency and humanity of their education systems. Experiences so far in the application of inclusive education have been very valuable, because they point out some important elements of this process and provide guidelines regarding the manner in which those necessary changes should take place. It is important to highlight that it is impossible to develop one unique inclusive model that could be applied in various countries with the same level of success, but that adequate solutions can be only achieved by analyzing specific contextual conditions, taking into consideration the specificities of each social and cultural environment and the existing conditions of education systems and schools. In order for this idea to be actually implemented, it is important that decisions regarding public policies be based on insights obtained through careful research of various problems in the field of inclusive education. Those insights can be very significant both for decision-makers and practitioners in considering the process and results of the implementation of inclusive education as well as in getting ideas for further development of inclusive practices in educational institutions. It is possible to single out two approaches to the research and perception of inclusive education based on the different interests of researchers. The first approach is about searching for practical solutions to certain problems of inclusive education (a partial reform of the education system and schools), while the other approach perceives inclusion as a cultural policy that requires complete reconstruction of society and a new way of thinking.

Research in this field shows that, in spite of great efforts and endeavours to improve this idea, the inclusive education implementation process in most countries develops slowly and with difficulties. There are still many unresolved issues and dilemmas related to this process: (a) In what way is inclusive education related to key challenges in education such as quality, failing classes, lack of resources, rigidity of school programmes? (b) Is inclusive education the right solution for all children with developmental disabilities? (c) Is there is a best solution for the successful application of an inclusive programme and is there a clear plan to be followed? (d) Is the introduction of inclusive education possible in all countries?

The results show that official education policies in this field haven been completely implemented in practice and that existing differences can be explained by the existence of numerous barriers and challenges relating to the practical application of planned changes. Overcoming existing problems has not yet been fully solved, even in countries that have a long tradition of inclusive education and good economic conditions for its implementation, and it is clear that challenges and problems which developing countries encounter, having less experience in this field and unfavourable economic conditions, are bigger and more complicated.

Education policies in the field of inclusive education can be successfully implemented in practice if the key actors in this process (principals, teachers, students, and parents), strongly support planned changes and express a positive attitude towards them. Research shows that the resistance and negative attitudes of teachers and other stakeholders towards the inclusion of children from marginalized groups in regular schools lead to numerous problems in the implementation of inclusive education. It is therefore highlighted that changing attitudes is one of the challenges and key conditions for the success of this process. Changing and overcoming negative attitudes towards inclusive education is progressing very slowly and with difficulty, and that is why many other planned activities in this field encounter difficulties in the process of realization.

The problems in the application of inclusive education to a great extent relate to teachers, as key actors in this process. Research shows that the successful development of inclusive practice is particularly obstructed by teachers' negative self-assessment of their professional competency for the realization of inclusive education, as well as a lack of adequate professional training and expert support in working with students who need additional support. These problems cause teachers who work in inclusive contexts to become overwhelmed and stressed, which additionally affects their work negatively. Modern educational approaches show the importance of the new role of teachers in establishing the required conditions for encouraging the individual development of children and recognizing their individual abilities, affinities, family and cultural heritage. Therefore, adequate professional training of teachers for working in inclusive education, the implementation of innovative approaches in work, and cooperation with parents has been highlighted as one of the most important goals in the process of adapting education to meet the abilities and needs of all children.

Research indicates that, apart from the conditions of education systems, the achievement of inclusive education is hindered by numerous barriers, including social and local community factors, as well as the those relating to children who need additional support and their families. Therefore in considering key challenges and perspectives of inclusive education, barriers and problems should not only be tackled within the education system, but also in connection with other segments of society, such as the family, local community, as well as healthcare and social security.

A collection of papers "Challenges and Perspectives of Inclusive Education" contains thirteen papers by authors who are, by their thematic orientation, focused on elaborating on numerous issues significant for inclusive education. This book aims to examine current problems in inclusive education from the standpoint of their significance for the improvement of public policies and the practice of inclusive education. No theoretical and stylistic harmonization was required from authors of the articles. They were expected to show the results of their own theoretical and empirical research, thus making them accessible to both an academic audience and the wider public, in the hope that the results of such scientific research will be implemented to a greater extent in educational practice.

This collection of papers addresses certain questions of inclusive education, but it does not give a comprehensive account of all aspects of inclusive education. We thought that it was important to publish and present in a single collection papers by authors who are dedicated to examining inclusive education from various perspectives. Papers contain relevant information about the current conditions of inclusive education in Serbia; dominant discourses of inclusive education within legal frameworks of preschool education in Serbia; the connection between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their implicit pedagogies; attitudes of school counsellors towards the education of students with special needs; preschool teachers' competences for working in inclusive education; preschool teachers' opinions about the benefits of professional development in improving competences in the field of inclusive education; possibilities for inclusion of socially marginalized individuals and groups in an institutional environment and the local community in the context of education for human rights; institutional foundations for the inclusion of Roma people in the education system in Serbia and Croatia; frequency of symptoms of emotional and behavioural problems of older primary school students, with an analysis of gender differences, in the presence of symptoms and students' perception and assessment of the influence of difficulties on their own functioning; inclusive support in preventing bullying in the Italian education system; higher education programmes for teacher training in Montenegro and problems inhibiting improvements in inclusive education in music schools, with suggested solutions for their solution; characteristics of career development for various types of teacher in regular and special education systems.

The paper authored by Tinde Kovač-Cerović, Dragica Pavlović-Babić, Tijana Jokić, Olja Jovanović and Vitomir Jovanović *First comprehensive monitoring of inclusive education in Serbia: selected findings*, presents selected findings of the first comprehensive evaluation of inclusive education in Serbia, five years after its systemic introduction. This evaluation is based on indicators defined by the Framework for monitoring inclusive education in Serbia. The research was conducted

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on a representative sample of 28 schools, and it encompassed 1537 students, 794 parents and 742 teachers. The structure of the framework, which implies predefined indicators and criteria, as well as the assessment of that same indicator by various informants, enabled the identification of the areas which are strong points in our education system, as well as areas that require immediate system development. The results of the monitoring constitute a reliable basis for improving the policy and practice of inclusive education in Serbia.

In the paper *Inclusiveness of preschool education within education policies documents of the Republic of Serbia*, Lidija Miškeljin deals with an analysis of relevant legislative documents with the aim of showing that theoretical starting points interwoven with public policies discourse perceive a child differently, as well as inclusion itself thus bearing different implications for the practice of preschool education. A key question from which the author starts her analysis of the legislative framework is: What are the dominant discourses in legislative solutions for preschool education in Serbia and what kind of construction of inclusion do they offer? This paper uses one method of theoretical analysis implementing the technique of content analysis through the following dimensions: accessibility, employees, monitoring and evaluation, and management and financing. Based on the given criteria and categories we can observe that: children's rights remain at the level of political proclamation because they are not operationalized through the participation of children in education guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child; that reducing inclusion to a separate single consideration (such as the scope of children) becomes its own goal and displays particularity in understanding and recognition of inclusion; and that the concept of inclusion itself in documents of public policy is not based on a clear ideology because of existing terminological inconsistencies.

The results of the research aimed at examining teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education were presented and analyzed by Milja Vujačić, Rajka Djević and Nikoleta Gutvajn in their paper *An examination of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.* What distinguishes this research from similar studies in Serbia is its examination of the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their implicit pedagogies. The authors offer an account of key results of related research published both in our country and worldwide and recommend how to create further research on teachers' attitudes, which would lead to a more comprehensive and detailed consideration of this important variable, on which the quality of application of inclusive education depends to a great extent. A basic conclusion of this research is that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are moderately positive. The research has shown that there is a connection between teachers' implicit pedagogies and their attitudes towards inclusion, that is, the closer teachers' implicit pedagogies are to the contemporary education paradigm the more positive their attitudes towards inclusion are.

In the paper *How students with special needs should be educated*, Janez Drobnič shows that special schools can be seen as an opportunity to ensure the right to education for students with special needs, while on the other hand, they imply inequality in education because of students' exclusion from conventional learning environments provided to other students. Considering the fact that school counsellors' task is to help the integration of students with special needs, the

author conducted research on school counsellors' attitudes towards the education of students with special needs, in particular as to where such education should take place. One hundred and one school counsellors from primary, secondary, and special schools in Slovenia were included in the quantitative study. The prevailing opinion of counsellors in schools shows that they prefer the partial model of inclusive education, as they support all students – including those with special needs – being offered education in ordinary schools and classrooms, with the exception of students with learning difficulties. This suggests that we should seek new solutions for modern schools, in particular the education of all teachers for inclusive teaching in a classroom where all students are allowed to be different and individual, rather than being dealt with in two categories: students with special needs and others. This also means that we should revise education curricula and training for all teachers.

In the paper Attitude towards inclusion: an important factor in implementing inclusive education, Vanja Riccarda Kiswarday and Tina Štemberger focused on preschool teachers' inclusive competences. The research, in which 124 preschool teachers were included, aims to establish how they value and assess their competences for inclusion, whereby competences are understood on three levels: attitude, knowledge, and skills. The authors also checked whether preschool teachers with longer work experience and those who had attended in-service training for inclusive settings assessed their inclusive competences higher than others with less experience did. The survey results indicate that preschool teachers see themselves quite competent for work in inclusive settings – they rated themselves high in all three dimensions of inclusive competences. It turned out that there are differences in the assessment of skills and knowledge: teachers with 10 - 20 years of service rated these dimensions higher, but no difference could be noticed between teachers in relation to inservice training for inclusive settings.

In the paper *Preschool teachers' perception of professional training contribution to the development of competences in the field of inclusive education*, Isidora Korać presented a segment of research whose goal was to examine teachers' opinions about the contribution of professional development in developing competencies in the field of inclusive education. The research was based on a questionnaire answered by a sample of 150 preschool teachers employed at preschool institutions in several towns in Serbia. The findings of the research show that the current concept of professional development accentuates the adoption of *ready-made decontextualized* knowledge, development of preschool teachers' competencies as individuals, without connecting individual and organizational changes that inclusion initiates. The author concludes that if we want for the system of professional development to contribute to obtaining preschool teachers' professional competencies for application of the current model of inclusive education, it is necessary to enable their greater participation and reflective practice via programmes for professional development. Inclusion is a change and a challenge for organizations in which various protagonists participate, who are supposed to interconnect from their various positions, roles and responsibilities, aiming for horizontal learning and organized action. Future programmes for professional development

in the field of inclusive education should be directed at the following areas: (a) working with gifted children (b) adapting work organization in preschool institutions in order to meet the needs of children who need additional support, (c) assessment and revision of individual education plans and (d) teamwork and cooperation in preschool institutions.

In the work *Inclusion of socially marginalized individuals in the light of human rights education*, Olivera Gajić, Milica Andevski, Spomenka Budić and Biljana Lungulov consider possibilities for inclusion of socially marginalized individuals and groups in an institutional framework and a local community in the context of human rights education. The authors consider the context of social inclusion and human rights education in order to collect qualitative indicators concerning the existing knowledge, interest, and recognition of social inclusion and human rights with the purpose of shedding light on this problem by protagonists of the education process, as well as the wider community, which forms the basis of strategic decisions and guidelines of education in a democratic society. Finally, the authors conclude that a well organized support network for workers in this area, who are required to ensure conditions for the fulfilment of human rights on the principles of accessibility, participation and equality.

Studying the Roma minority, which is one of the most economically and socially deprived minorities in Serbia and Croatia, is the focus of the paper *Inclusion of the Roma in Croatia and Serbia: the institutional framework and its implementation*, whose authors are Nikola Baketa and Dragana Gundogan. The goal of this paper is to show the institutional foundations for including the Roma people in the education system, as well as the way in which institutional foundations changed in the process of approximation to the European Union. On the basis of these insights it can be established that, despite the legal framework, there is a high level of exclusion in the education system so that this approach leads to the more difficult advancement of the Roma people within it dropping out, or deciding not to continue education, which in turn perpetuates the problem of education and the social position of the Roma people. The methodological approach of the authors included analysis of legislative documents and reports, as well as that of available statistical data about the education of the Roma minority.

In the paper *The symptoms of emotional and behavioral problems in older primary school students*, Branislava Popović-Ćitić and Lidija Bukvić have shown the results of the research on the frequency of emotional and behavioural symptoms in primary school students, with analysis of gender differences in the presence of symptoms and assessment of students' perception about the influence of difficulties on their own functioning. The data was obtained by means of a Strengths and difficulties questionnaire, a version for self-assessment of adolescents aged 11 to 16 with an addition about the influence of symptoms, on a sample of 630 students from 5 secondary schools in Belgrade. The obtained results were discussed in the context of considering the need for additional support, which, within an inclusive education system, would be provided for students with difficulties in their emotional and social development.

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In the paper Bullying and strategies for confronting the phenomenon in Italian schools, Ignazia Bartholini starts with a review of literature about bullying, published since the 1970s to date. On the bases of the outcomes of some studies previously conducted, she aims to explain how the phenomenon of bullying has accompanied the raising of the period of mandatory school. Through the research of eminent scholars, she argues that the crisis of values and the loss of perspective for the future of teenagers increase the possibility of violent relationships among peers in school, where they spend much of their time. An interpretative model on bullying is therefore highlighted, using the "dramaturgic metaphor" of Goffman and focusing the role of viewer/witness (often the same classmates) in breaking the violent triangle where the perpetrator and victim are similarly victims of the same cruel play. Finally she describes the strategies devised by the Ministry of Education which are currently applied in schools in the Italian peninsula from the perspective of preventive and rehabilitative education, on potential protagonists - victim and bully - on spectators viewers - on all those adolescents who just look at the "violent drama" for fun or for weakness, without interrupting it and preventing a recurrence. In the light of empirical evidences, it is suggested that such programs accompanied by informal practices should be encouraged. The author suggests that after Italy another of the European nations that has invested very much in terms of support for inclusion and prevention for confronting the problem of bullying at school can be considered.

On the basis of recent structural and functional changes in the Montenegrin education system, with a special focus on the concept of inclusion, in her paper *The concept of inclusive education in the master's degree curriculum in Montenegro*, Tatjana Novović analyzes high school programmes for teacher training in Montenegro. Almost twenty years since the inclusive concept was implemented in the Montenegrin education system, with substantial changes in teaching practice and education legislation, the problem of vertical discontinuity in the system is still significant, i.e. there is a lack of coherence and compatibility between primary, secondary and tertiary education. The lack of a continual exchange of practical experiences and obtained knowledge about the benefits and marked challenges among all systemic institutional participants, creating a fluid field of inclusive context in Montenegro, induces discontinuity and actualises "old" questions about the purpose and functionality of previous courses of development of this concept in all education segments.

In her paper *Inclusive education of visually impaired students in music schools in Montenegro*, Vedrana Marković presents problems that complicate the improvement of inclusive education at music schools and offers some solutions. Musically talented children with visual impairment should be identified in time and have their music potential developed, i.e. they should be educated in music schools. It is often the case that blind and partially sighted children with musical talent acquire their musical education outside institutions, by private means, whereby they only dedicate themselves to learning how to play a selected instrument, but not to other courses which are envisaged in the elementary music school (solfeggio, music theory, choral singing, orchestra). This way of learning makes their music education incomplete. In addition to the primary goal – achieving a complete music education - there are numerous positive influences that happen through education in a music school.

The text written by Milica Marušić *The career cycle of teachers according to their motives of professional choice: a comparison of general and special schools*, is focused on the consideration of three groups of teachers, based on the dominant motives of their professional choice: realists, idealists and opportunists, with the aim of comparing characteristics of career development of those groups of teachers in regular and special education system. Results obtained by the use of a questionnaire (N=209) show that teacher *idealists* displayed the lowest level of career frustration, out of a total sample. It was concluded that the career development of *idealists*, *opportunists* and *realists* differ depending on the context in which they work: as regular school teachers, *opportunists* are more prone to withdrawal, while at special schools there is a stronger career frustration.

At the end of this foreword we would like to stress that our task was facilitated to a great extent by the readiness of all the authors to fulfill the requirements of the editor both in terms of the scope and structure of the papers. We hope that our gratitude will be a sufficient reward for the efforts they invested. We would like to thank the consulting editors, our distinguished colleagues Professor Nikolay M. Borytko, Professor Susana Padeliadu and Professor Marija Kavkler, whose suggestions significantly influenced the improved quality of the book. We owe a debt of gratitude to Milan Stančić, PhD, who patiently and dedicatedly helped us during all stages of preparation of this collection of papers. We are equally grateful to Rajka Djević, PhD, for her help and constructive suggestions, which significantly contributed to the quality of this collection of papers. We are also grateful to Mladen Radulović, MA, Branko Cvetić and Vlada Polić for their patience, professionalism and friendly understanding during the preparation of this manuscript.

Nikoleta Gutvajn and Milja Vujačić

### INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN MUSIC SCHOOLS IN MONTENEGRO

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For more than ten years, inclusive education has been one of the most important aspirations when it comes to contemporary education in Montenegro. Several pilotprojects were completed first from 1998 in preschool education, and later from 2002 in primary schools. The inclusion process in Montenegro is very complex and demanding. During its implementation one should keep in mind the aggravating specificities of the environment, such as constraint and rigidity when it comes to children with functional and developmental disabilities. We will mention the survey on the Montenegrin citizens' opinion related to children with disabilities, done by the Institute of Social Sciences, Center for Political Studies and Public Opinion Research in Belgrade, in the period 11 – 15 March 2001. The largest number of respondents (over 50%) replied that they feel sympathy and unease when meeting a blind child. Moreover, the largest number of respondents (even 82%) said that children with special educational needs should be educated in special institutions, whereas only 5% thought that they should be included in regular schools. The survey showed that acceptance of children with disabilities mainly exists in a declarative sense. Even though the respondents were aware that children with disabilities are not included enough in society, it is almost impossible to find those who would contribute to their higher inclusion in the proposals for the betterment of these children's position, yet a predominant stance is that there is a need for special education and upbringing.

The Law on Education and Upbringing of Children with Special Educational Needs came into force in Montenegro in 2004 and represents an important precondition for implementation of inclusion projects.

As a matter of fact, inclusion means adjustment of individualization and integration. Special educators and typhlo-rehabilitators in many countries have vast experience in the field of inclusive education. They point out that visually impaired children have to invest much effort to master the unreduced teaching plan and program which is measured for the needs of children of the general population. In consultations among educators and rehabilitators of visually disabled persons from many European countries<sup>2</sup>, the basic principles of inclusive education are agreed upon:

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<sup>2</sup> Report III ICEVI Workshop on Training of Teachers of the Visualy Impaired in Europe, Bratislava, 2007.

- Restructuring the principle and practice of educational work for the purpose of individualization and differentiation;
- Restructuring the cultural and social codes with the aim of accepting differences as an invitation to understanding, cooperation and support;
- Supporting different learning styles and paces on the way to a positive outcome;
- Ensuring quality of education for all students through adequate curricula, strategies and teaching;
- Raising social awareness on educational inclusion as just one of the aspects of general social inclusion (Eškirović & Vučinić, 2008: 426).

In cases when organization of the teaching work does not encompass adjustment to the individual needs of tactile kinesthetic learning and psychological support in removing difficulties while adapting and forming self-image, visually impaired children often resort to a defense mechanism in social communication. They will try to remove differences between the way they see themselves and the way they think others see them. It is necessary to prevent the emergence of emotional immaturity, anxiety, attention instability, impulsiveness, developmental hyperkinetic syndrome, and stereotypical movements, through certain educational measures (Morse, 1985).

It is known that under conditions of well-prepared education and rehabilitation, visually impaired children can achieve great success in education. However, there is a lack of awareness of how much marginalized the children with visual impairment are when it comes to fulfillment of their natural needs to have an open, easily accessible and available educational and wider social network for the variety of their requirements concerning education and other life conditions (Eškirović & Vučinić, 2008).

Development of contemporary pedagogy and didactics has been characterized by a differentiation and individualization tendency. The new teaching concept is particularly being upgraded in the areas related to education specificities of the children with disabilities. The center of attention is precisely the child with specified abilities and barriers in the sensory, mental, mobility and social spectrum. The inclusion model does not mean equalizing all people, but rather respecting diversity of each individual who then gets the possibility to make decisions on taking responsibility for their own life. Class individualization should be used for the purpose of inclusion. Teaching goals, curricula and methods are adapted to students. The educator who works with visually impaired students, music pedagogue included, should know that it is "important to ensure the highest degree possible of the student's independent work, not only in the individual class, but also in working frontally, in groups and pairs" (lbid: 421).

#### INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MUSIC SCHOOLS

The inclusive education model in elementary music schools implies a change of the environment in the first place – it is required to adapt the program and work methods to the abilities of the children with visual impairment, to adapt the teaching aids and remove architectural barriers. All of this demands great preparation and support.

Booth (1996) notices that there are not many examples of schools that include all of children from the vicinity. We can fully agree with this statement, since, by working on this subject, we found out that a very small number of visually impaired children in Montenegro go to a local school. Only one student with visual impairment was included in a regular elementary school on the territory of the Municipality of Podgorica, during the academic year 2009/10; three students in 2010/11; one student in 2012/13; three visually impaired students in 2014/15, and one student in 2015/163. At the level of the state of Montenegro, according to the Union of the Blind of Montenegro data, only three students with visual impairment were included in the process of inclusive education in elementary schools and only one student in secondary school4. Their education and professional rehabilitation has been linked, in the most cases, to the Resource Center for Children and Youth in Podgorica, which has been the only specialized institution in Montenegro where children with visual impairment are educated. There are 16 blind students being educated in the Center in the academic year 2015/16. Out of this number, 10 students only have visual disability and they attend either elementary or secondary school, whereas 6 students also have other disabilities and they are assigned to classes for children with combined disabilities<sup>5</sup>. It is clear that such an education model also implies an early separation from the parents and that they are "isolated from the wider social environment with the aim of permanent and systematic education and preparation for life, without a continuous and direct contact with sighted children and this also means the lack of possibility for mutual influence" (Jablan & Hanak, 2005, 15). Being pulled out of their local communities in a certain way already makes these children absent from elementary music schools as well or present in a very small number. In the academic year 2015/16, there are three visually impaired students being educated at the elementary music school of the "Vasa Pavić" Art School for Music and Ballet in Podgorica<sup>6</sup>, whereas other music schools in Montenegro currently do not have students with visual impairment.

These data were obtained on the personal author's request from the Secretariat for Culture and Sports of the Municipality of Podgorica in February 2016.

Data were obtained on the personal author's request from the Union of the Blind of Montenegro in February 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Data were obtained on the personal author's request from the Resource Center for Children and Youth "Podgorica" in Podgorica in February 2016.

Data were obtained on personal author's request from the management of the Art School for Music and Ballet "Vasa Pavić" in Podgorica, in February 2016.

Our opinion is that inclusion in music school as a specific educational institution, is not an unreachable model but rather a goal to be pursued. In this respect, inclusion in music school should imply the possibility of planning the teaching processfor both the entire class and individual students and, especially, careful planning for a certain group of students, precisely for students with visual impairment.

Musically talented children with visual impairment should be identified on time and have their music potentials developed, i.e. they should be educated in music school. It is often the case that blind and partially sighted children with musical talent acquire the music education outside of institutions, by private means, when they only dedicate themselves to learning how to play a selected instrument, but not to other courses which are envisaged in the elementary music school (solfeggio, music theory, choir singing, orchestra singing). This way of learning makes their music education incomplete. In addition to the primary goal – achieving a complete music education, there are numerous positive influences that will happen through education in a music school. The advantages of a regular education in music schools, such as learning together and joint work of all students, matched with advantages of joint education in elementary schools as pointed out by Popović "in a school with sighted children, a blind child will be exposed to both positive and negative experience which will contribute to development of a realistic selfconcept that is very important for a successful adaptation of blind children" (Popović, 1991: 204). Children with disabilities are less alienated in a regular school, they feel less different, the possibility of labeling is smaller; the regular school environment affects the children with disabilities in a more positive and stimulating way, especially in the field of speech, communication, playing; being included in regular school, and children make mutual friendships (Stančić, 1982).

Experts working on the problems of educating children with disabilities show the greatest optimism concerning development and educational achievements of children with visual impairment. In order for any child, visually impaired child included, to start getting a music education, s/he needs to have music abilities, but also general abilities such as inventiveness, imagination, special type of attention (Mirković Radoš, 1996). Research of cognitive abilities speaks in favor of a successful music education of visually impaired persons with musical talent, which "showed that there is a relatively large percentage of those with above-average intelligence and talent, a somewhat smaller percentage of the average and a constant percentage of those with borderline intelligence and intellectual disability" (Zovko, 1996: 53). The exception can be a child that has a disability in addition to visual impairment, for example intellectual disability, but in this case the child does not have the potential for inclusion in the music school.

#### REQUIRED CONDITIONS

A series of prerequisites that need to be met for a musically talented child with visual impairment to be truly included in the work and life of a music school will be elaborated below. The starting point in this process will be the prerequisites that Maksimović and Golubović (2008) discuss about with regard to accommodating children with visual impairment in regular schools.

Organizational prerequisites firstly refer to reducing the number of children in the class to a number which is optimal for organization of individual work with disabled students. The teaching program for a solfeggio course currently valid in Montenegro recommends the number of 15 students in a group/class, i.e. for olfeggio and theory of music courses<sup>7</sup>. It is realistic to assume that an optimal number of students in a music school applying the inclusive model, could go from 8 to 12 students in a class, 2 to 3 of which are students with visual impairment.

Having in mind that one of the basic inclusion principles implies the school adapting to students with special educational needs, it is particularly important for us to become aware that music school buildings and classroom spaces need to be adapted as well, with the aim of better and easier access for the visually impaired students. This particularly refers to labeling the classrooms with the Braille alphabet, which would make it easier for the independent spatial orientation of visually impaired students. Even though there are two music schools in Montenegro, in Podgorica and Kotor, neither of them offers anything that would facilitate easier movement and spatial orientation for these students.

As the most significant condition of acquiring complete music literacy, which is also a precondition for a successful professional music career, we emphasize that students with visual impairment should be able to use basic and auxiliary aids for writing and reading special and adapted alphabet. We know from our personal experience that use of a Braille typewriter is avoided in solfieggio classes and one of the most common reasons is the noise that it makes, which disturbs the other students. However, our opinion is that there needs to be work done towards sensitization of sighted students, who should accept the Braille typewriter noise as a normal thing and realize that this is the only way their friend with visual impairment can independently write notation (or any other) text.

In addition to the primary educational role that music education has in the life of the visually impaired student, the contribution that music education makes in the process of their socialization is very important. That is why it is significant to have a pleasant

<sup>7</sup> There is not a teaching program in Montenegro (for the elementary music school) for the visually impaired students. Unlike Montenegro, the currently valid teaching program of solfeggio for visually impaired students (elementary music school) in the Republic of Serbia foresees 6 visually impaired students in a class.

and tolerant atmosphere in the classroom. A child with visual impairment also fulfils the need for affirmation in the music school, along with a series of social needs. It is the duty of a music educator working in music schools to ensure, through dedication and action, that "the conditions are met for the visually impaired students to feel pleasant, to have the sense of belonging in the classroom and the school regardless of the fact that their specificity is inevitably putting them in a special position" (Maksimović & Golubović, 2008: 443).

One of the most important requirements of inclusive education is adapting teaching methods to the student with special educational needs. In order for music educators to be able to successfully teach the students with visual impairment, it is necessary that they have certain competencies (Marković, 2015). Music school teachers must be ready to adapt teaching methods to blind or partially sighted students. This is necessary when it comes to becoming literate in Braille music code. We state, as an example, that while working with students of the general population in the standard process of music literacy, introduction to the note duration starts with the whole note and goes to a shorter duration: half, quarter and eight note. However, when talking about introduction to Braille music symbols, it is necessary to go in the opposite direction: from the eight to the whole note. This is determined by the principle used as a basis for writing down the pitch and duration in the Braille music code (Krolick, 1996). Furthermore, students with visual impairment use typhlo-didactic adapted textbooks, i.e. enlarged notation or textbooks printed in Braille alphabet. Optical aids should also be used for partially sighted students (glasses, magnifiers, projectors), then a recorder, special marker pens and similar helping tools. Classes should be individualized but also conceived in a way which does not disturb the teaching process with other students.

In our opinion, the individual education programs for blind and partially sighted students have to become the practice in primary music schools as well. Those included in the development of individual education programs are a solfeggio teacher, instrument teacher, typhlologist, pedagogue, psychologist, student and parent. At the end of every school year, an expert team (solfeggio teacher, instrument teacher, typhlologist and psychologist) is required to submit a written report to the school administration on the student's achievements as well as suggestions for further work.

Organization of inclusive education in music school also means joint activities for all students, such as choir singing and orchestra playing. "The basic principle of inclusive education i.e. achieving maximum integration and minimum isolation" (Maksimović & Golubović, 2008: 444) can be fulfilled through participation in joint music activities. In that way, blind and partially sighted children have the opportunity through everyday interaction with their peers, to learn by identifying and imitating the model of standard behavior and acquire attitudes and value system typical for their peers without disabilities. Occasional

separation, which is necessary for the provision of individual professional help, must not lead to reduced participation of visually impaired children in the activities of children without disabilities.

Involvement of visually impaired children in the teaching process in music schools would ensure the conditions where their humanization and democratization is substantially improved. In such a teaching process, the real capabilities of students should not by any means be underestimated, which is especially important when related to blind and partially sighted students. The teacher should set important and necessary requirements. As Makarenko pointed out as early as 1957: "My basic principle has always been: require as much as possible from a person, but show as much respect as possible for their personality" (Eškirović & Vučinić, 2008: 425).

It is especially important to emphasize the necessity of developing partnership relations with parents of blind and partially sighted children. They should participate in the planning and monitoring of their child's development. Sometimes parents have an unrealistic picture of their child's capabilities and, subsequently, unrealistic expectations regarding the child's success. Parents are often unable to realize their child's capabilities and recognize the child's musical abilities. In that sense, a music pedagogue, i.e. the music school as an institution, should play a substantial role, providing support and encouraging not only visually impaired students but also their parents.

Teaching process with blind and partially sighted students in music schools should be organized in line with contemporary typhlo-didactic principles and in accordance with children's capabilities, or even setting slightly more demanding requirements. While teaching, the music pedagogue needs to cooperate with typhlologist or special educator of visually impaired persons as a way of getting the necessary help and support, at least in the initial time of teaching, when students acquire musical literacy. It should be emphasized that upbringing and education work should not be subordinated to the needs of visually impaired students. The pace of work and progression in the class should not be slowed down in order to adjust to visually impaired students, because that does not lead to inclusion.

In line with the above, we believe that responsibilities of both the music school as an institution and the music pedagogue as an individual are to contribute with their professional engagement to a continuous improvement of the teaching process and, thereby, to genuinely inclusive teaching in music schools. Identification of musically gifted blind children, provision of support for their professional music education and constant efforts made towards personal professional development and acquisition of new knowledge and skills should be an imperative. An effort should be made within narrow music-pedagogical circles, followed by a wider community, so that, in times to come, the

blind and partially sighted children would not be only sporadic and isolated examples in music schools in Montenegro.

#### SOCIALIZATION OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

Visually impaired children belong to the section of the child population that often manifests certain difficulties in the socialization process. Those difficulties are most frequently recognized and manifested as shyness, reserve, low self-esteem, insecurity etc. and the reasons for this can be very different. By active monitoring of the process of inclusive music education of visually impaired students throughout the period of a few school years, we were able to perceive their gradual development in both musical and social senses<sup>8</sup>. Observing their growth from primary music school students to secondary music school graduates, we noticed that music education has very much influenced the formation of their personality, the process of their socialization, their self-confidence, creativity, imagination and the development of their work habits. We noticed that music engagement may contribute to a substantial decrease in the intensity of the abovementioned feelings, and sometimes even to their complete elimination. Research that was carried out in September 2013 (Marković, 2014) which encompassed two secondary school students with visual impairment attending regular classes at the "Vasa Pavić Art School for Music and Ballet" in Podgorica (Montenegro), showed that inclusive music education has a positive impact on socialization of visually impaired students and that the inclusive education model also has a positive influence on sighted students attending the same class or school as the visually impaired students. Answering the questions, students concluded that because they attended the music school, the number of their sighted friends was higher than it would be if sthey had attended one of the courses in the Resource Centre. Since the majority of visually impaired students are educated in the Resource Centre, which is a type of boarding school, most of the visually impaired students rarely leave the school yard i.e. boarding school and therefore don't have the opportunity to meet many of their sighted peers. Both students pointed out that most of their peers were willing to assist and that their friends treated them as their equal, i.e. they did not feel discriminated against in any way. The assistance is especially visible in cases

<sup>8</sup> In the period 2009 – 2014, the author of the work carried out solffedgio classes with blind and partially sighted children who are musically talented at the Resources Center for Children and Youth "Podgorica" in Podgorica, with an aim of discovering musically talented children and directing them to the music school education. Moreover, a good cooperation with teachers at the Art School for Music and Ballet "Vasa Pavić" in Podgorica where the music education is also acquired by the students with visual impairment, was achieved. The results of years-long experience and observations in the teaching practice, were translated converted into a doctoral thesis titled *Development Model of the Initial Solfeggio Class in Working with Blind and Partially Sighted Children*.

of dictation of certain contents, reading contents written on the blackboard, reproduction of what teacher said when the student might not have heard well etc. Visually impaired students are also assisted when moving at school, having in mind that the school building has two floors in addition to the ground one and nothing to facilitate the movement and orientation of visually impaired persons. Furthermore, students said they felt great satisfaction when playing music together with their sighted peers. Choir singing is a form of making music where collective responsibility is particularly strengthened and students learn that each member of the group is equally important and unique. Both students think they would surely not attend art music concerts and different shows so much, nor would they have the opportunity to attend different cultural events if they weren't secondary music school students. As an example, they pointed out that being music school students enabled them to participate in the performance of popular songs and in music videos that promoted inclusive education. Also, one of the interviewed students, being musically talented, was awarded a scholarship that enabled him to attend the second grade of secondary school in the USA. Thanks to frequent performances of the school choir, competitions and similar events, they are able to travel more than their peers with visual impairment from the Resource Centre. However, survey results show that learning together with classmates does not take place so often, because, as our interviewees say, they have different ways of learning. Joint learning is more present in times prior to knowledge assessments, when they interrogate each other, play melodies they are supposed to reproduce vocally or write them down etc. Our respondents notice that very often their friends had asked them for help by and they are always pleased to be able to assist their classmates in some way. It is interesting to hear both students saying that they spend a lot of time with their classmates out of school as well, that they often go to birthday parties and other celebrations, or go to concerts and shows together etc. Students with visual impairment emphasize that acquiring music education in a music school was a normal thing for them. They wouldn't want to be separated in some sort of a special group or similar. By attending music school they felt included as full members of society. They met a lot of peers and adults every day that they wouldn't have the opportunity to meet if they had not engaged in music (Marković, 2014). By analyzing the research results, one can conclude that acquiring a music education would significantly contribute to better socialization of the aforementioned student population. Getting education together with sighted peers should be an imperative, not only in terms of general education of visually impaired students, but also in the field of specific types of education such as music education, because this helps students accomplish their larger inclusion in the society and daily social events. Apart from social acceptance and acquisition of necessary social skills, music engagement opens great possibilities when it comes to the choice of life profession and the fullest possible utilization of personal potential.

It is also important to point out the positive impact of the inclusive education model on sighted students. Joint activities at solfeggio, choir singing, chamber music and orchestra classes contribute to the development of mutual connection and dependence and create a positive climate where, in a certain way, they can all help each other. The acquaintance with blind and partially sighted children and their joint music education have a positive impact on the general child population. Growing up disconnected from persons with disabilities nearby usually causes prejudices and misconceptions that disability happens to someone else, that disabled persons are not part of their reality, and that every liaison with them is impossible. Children growing up without inclusion lack the opportunity to develop their humanity. If they do not have the opportunity to meet their peer or an adult with disabilities in childhood, they may face serious problems in embracing disabled persons in the working or family environment when they grow up.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

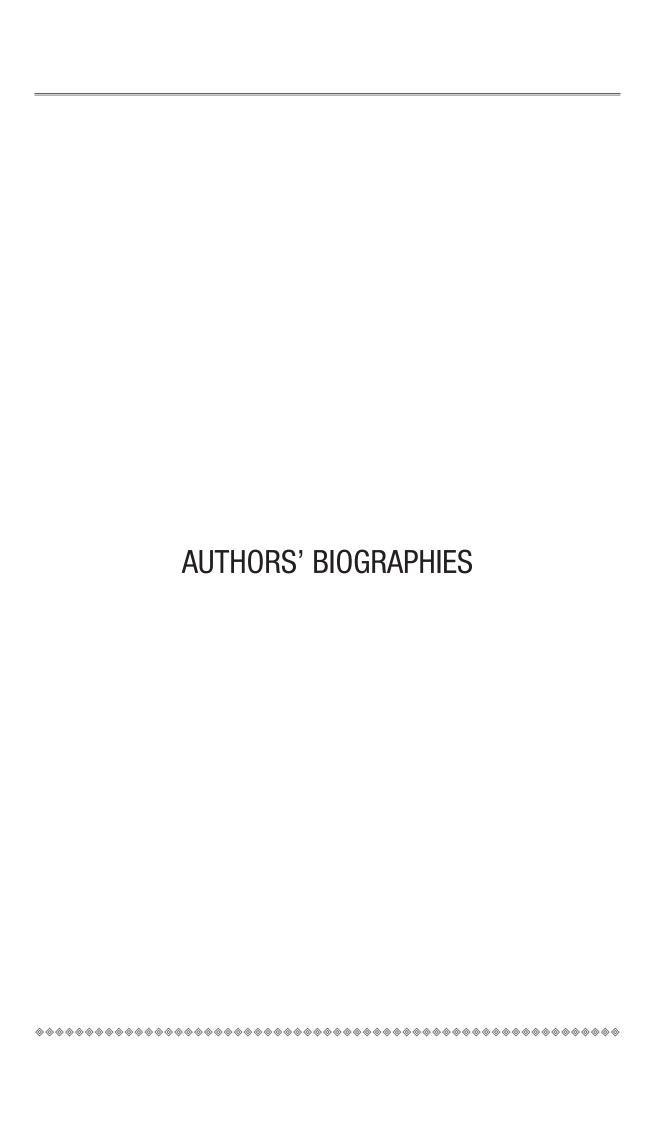
Based on the above, we point out that the most desirable form of music education of visually impaired students is the inclusive education model at music school. Practice shows that, especially in the past, the blind and partially sighted students rarely acquired music education and it was mostly outside of music educational institutions, with special engagement, dedication and personal enthusiasm. Research done in 2013 (Marković, 2014) supports the stance that blind students with a musical talent can be educated with their peers in regular music schools, based on the inclusive education model, in classes attended by both visually impaired students and sighted students. Only in such conditions can blind and partially sighted students with musical talent acquire necessary social skills, in addition to musical ones. In the conditions of joint music education they will develop self-confidence and the sense of equal value, and become full members of the group. Within the courses that are taught in a group class, such as solfeggio, choir singing and orchestra singing, all students develop the sense of individual and collective responsibility, which has positive effects not only on the development of the personality of the visually impaired students, but also of all group members. In order for such inclusion to take hold in music schools in Montenegro, it is necessary to ensure the adaptation and adjustment of school buildings, technical equipment of classrooms, procurement of required textbook literature in Braille alphabet, and teaching aids adapted to students' needs.

Unlike children of typical development, visually impaired children are, due to the nature and limitations of the disability, highly limited or simply unable to engage in the arts. On the other hand, music is an art form that poses no limits for the blind and partially sighted to engage in. This is the reason why everyone working with visually impaired children in their upbringing and educational engagement, especially music pedagogues, should provide support for greater inclusion of musically gifted children into the process of acquiring professional music education. It is up to music pedagogues but also the wider social community to help make the road full of obstacles easier to walk through. Inclusion in music schools is not unattainable; it is an ideal the wider community should strive for. We hope that these suggested solutions will be recognized as positive in accomplishing the goal: achieving the inclusive music education of visually impaired students and improving practical teaching in the music schools that include these students.

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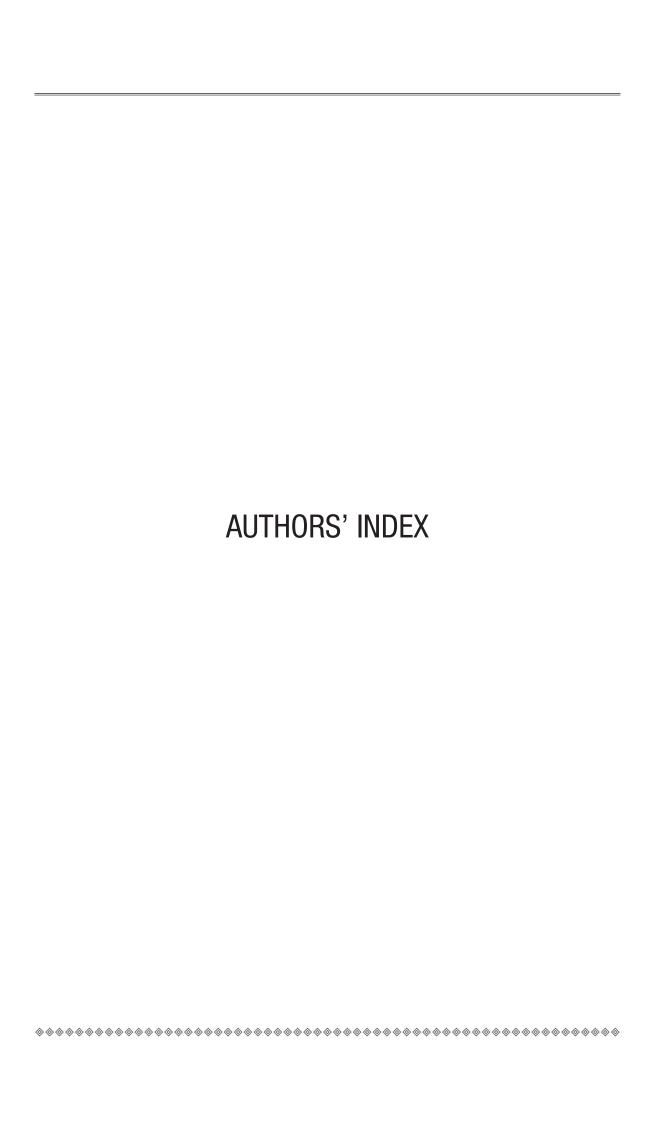
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Milja Vujačić

Nowadays inclusive education is seen as a priority field in development of the system of education for children with disabilities. The authors use relevant research materials and apply modern methodology. Each article shows long-term research interest of its author, reflecting their scientific interests and priorities. The edited book can be recommended not only to researches and educators, but also to students, undergraduates, graduate students, who only begin their path in science and in need of expanding research horizons.

Professor Nikolay M. Borytko (from review)

This book as a whole provides information on several countries in the wider Balkan area, for which there is limited relevant information available and communicates both commonalities and diversity. The mission of inclusive education is propelled throughout the entire book and many of the challenges discussed, are of interest of wider readership. It is certainly a useful book for anyone who is interested in inclusive education.

Professor Susana Padeliadu (from review)

The chapters follow the framework of the scientific papers with clear objectives, adequately described methodology of the studies, consist of clear descriptions of results with discussion and conclusions and also include information how results may affect the practice. Reader of the book will also find the review of relevant literature in the field of inclusive education.

Professor Marija Kavkler (from review)

