

Final Report

Service Provider Forum, Slovenia

4th and 5th of November 2010



Active European Citizenship



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Introduction

In the autumn of 2008, a first provider forum took place in Slovenia. This seminar was organised by EASPD, in cooperation with local partners, and was held in Ljubljana on the 6th -7th November 2008.

On the 8th October 2009, a follow-up was organised in the Institute of Rehabilitation in Ljubljana. This year, the forum focused mainly on the issue of deinstitutionalisation. This Forum was also very successful and even better attended than last year. With the support of the local partners, the following report was made.

Aims and Objectives

Through the organisation of provider forums, EASPD aims to help local service providing organisations to set up or further develop umbrella structures for providers, and to provide information about the values and principles of the EU. Through these forums, service providing organisations can improve communication with each other in order to fine-tune service provision and exchange models of good practice amongst themselves and other European Union countries.

The main topic of the forum was: **Inclusive education – One school for all – a reality or a utopia?** The topic is relevant and placed in a time when Slovenia is adopting the amendments of education legislation. The legislation is changing towards an inclusive education system, which should in the future allow education of all children in "one" school. This raises many questions and we were looking for the answers during the Provider forum. Is it really possible to include all children, even those with the severest handicap in the same class and what happens to those children who require complex medical care? What will happen to the financing of the reformed system, and who will decide in which program the child will be included and what will the role of parents be? What about the teachers who are now working in special education programs? Where will the teachers employed in regular schools get the additional skills needed?

We wanted to know what is written in the European documents and guidelines for this area and what are the experiences of some other European countries. We also wanted to be informed about suggestions to the amendments of the laws in Slovenia and the doctrinal changes in the education of persons with disabilities. At the end of the forum, we looked at several examples of good practice on integrating children with special needs in mainstream schools.

Local Partnership

The forum was organised by EASPD in cooperation with SOUS, Zveza Sonček and CUDV Draga in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

1. SOUS – Skupnost organizacij za usposabljanje (Association of organizations for training persons with disabilities)

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Ms. Valerija Buzan

the main organizer, partner of EASPD in Slovenia

2. Zveza Sonček – Cerebral Palsy Association of Slovenia

Rozanska street 2, 1000 Ljubljana

Phone: +386 1/534 06 67

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Mr. Joze Primožic

coorganizer, preparing and coordination of event, conference hall

3. CUDV Draga – Training, Occupation and Care Centre Draga

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Fax: +386 1/420 26 26

Ms. Valerija Buzan

coorganizer, catering assistance

Date and Place

The provider forum took place on the 4th and 5th November 2010 in the Centre Sonček Šiška (Trg Komandanta Staneta 5, 1000 Ljubljana).

Programme

Thursday, 4th of November 2010

8:30 to 9:00	Admission of participants
9:00 to 9:20	Organizer's welcome (Ms. Valerija Bužan)
	Greeting from the EASPD representative (Mr. Phil Madden)
9:20 to 10:05	International legal frameworks with regards to inclusive education and the outcomes of the Dublin conference

(Mr. Phil Madden, Great Britain)

- 9:05 to 10:35 Principles and challenges of education
(Mr. Janez Krek, Faculty of Education, Slovenia)
- 10:35 to 11:00 Discussion
- 11:00 to 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 to 12:00 The changes of education of people with special needs
(Mr. Stane Košir, Faculty of Education, Slovenia)
- 12:30 to 13:00 Discussion
- 13:00 to 14:00 LUNCH
- 14:30 to 15:15 Together to school - models of good practice in the field of inclusive education
(Mr. Kristoff Dhont, Belgium)
- 15:15 to 16:00 The changes of legislation in the area of social care regarding people with disabilities
(Mr. Cveto Uršič, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia)
- 16:00 to 16:15 Discussion
- 16:15 End of first day

Friday 5th of November 2010

- 9:00 to 9:15 Feedback from the previous day
- 9:15 to 9:45 Changes and innovations in the area of school legislation
(Ms. Alenka Kovšca, Ministry of Education and Sport, Slovenia)
- 9:45 to 10:30 Transition of Malta's school system towards an inclusive school system
(Mr. Vincent Borg, Malta)
- 10:30 to 11:00 Discussion

11:00 to 10:30	Presentations of some examples of good practices in Slovenia Elementary school Trnovo, Ljubljana
11:30 to 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 to 13:30	Presentations of some examples of good practices in Slovenia Elementary school Oskarja Kovačiča, Ljubljana Elementary school Mala Nedelja Elementary school Leskovec, Krško Zveza Sonček CUDV Draga Ig
13:30 to 14:00	Final conclusion

Participants List and Profile

A list of participants is available in the annex. The audience consisted mainly of directors and the management of Slovenian service provider organisations and teachers and specialised professionals in special and regular schools and institutions.

Main conclusions

SOUS - the Association of Organizations for Training Persons with Disabilities, Slovenia, organized the third provider forum on the 4th and 5th of November 2010. Like previous years the meeting was held under the auspices of EASPD (the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities) for the benefit of organizations promoting equal opportunities for persons with disabilities within a system of efficient and high quality services.

The theme of the forum was 'Inclusive education – One school for all – a reality or a utopia?' – a very relevant subject in Slovenia at the moment.

The title of the Forum proved to be an ongoing issue, as a provocation and also as a pessimistic assessment of the current situation and conditions in the field of inclusive

education for children with special needs in Slovenia. Optimistic hope leads to a forecast of changes of the school legislation and the new White book that is if the promises of the Ministry of Education will be fulfilled to allow all children education in one school - with various programs. So that we will no longer question whether, inclusion is for all children, but rather seek common ways and means for its realization, to take any challenges as an incentive to find the best solution.

Lectures and discussion at the forum reminded of the European legal framework for inclusive education and of the results of the Dublin conference (Phil Madden, vice president of the EASPD association), introduced examples of the reformed Maltese educational system in the direction of inclusion (Vincent Borg, Ministry of Education and Work in Malta) and looked at concrete paths to "common schools" (Kristoff Dhont, mobile teacher in Flanders, Belgium). Foreign cases, we set up alongside the situation of Slovenian reality in this area and conceptualizing changes to education legislation (Alenka Kovšca, Ministry of Education and Sports) and doctrinal changes, produced by a working group to reform the White Book, led by dr. Janez Krek, dr. Stane Košir strives to renovate areas of care for people with special needs. We also got to know the legislation on disability and social security (Mr. Cveto Uršič, MDDSZ). We concluded with concrete examples of inclusive education of children in some Slovenian mainstream schools, presentation of results and impact of the project Korak k Sončku towards the integration and presentation of an international project FOCAL (preparation of a guide for the development of creativity in adults with special needs through art).

Phil Madden gave a very clear message to the forum and Slovenia. All children have the right to inclusive education. Slovenia has signed and ratified this commitment which is legally binding with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Therefore, we as a country must find a way and means to achieve this in real life and provide the necessary resources for it. In this way we can best express our attitude towards children with special needs.

We need to move forward, we must not allow re-segregation, which may occur due to too many obstacles. It is essential to the understanding of the concept of inclusive education, which is therefore also a political and moral, not only a professional and system issue. Inclusion means an inclusion for all, an inclusive, friendly school for everyone, not just children with special needs.

The approach in Slovenia needs:

- A clear policy
- A clear legal framework
- Sufficient financial resources (which could mean temporary double financing of the rest of the special education and also the inclusive education)
- Clear strategic objectives at all levels of education
- Practice that will be pursued step by step and implement these goals.

The starting point for inclusive education - an inclusive school should be individualized.

The examples of good practice in individual schools and Project Korak k Sončku presented at the 3rd Forum confirmed that the waves of inclusion must be strong enough and persistent to bring success and confirm that one school for all is possible.

CONCLUSIONS

Participants of the 3rd Provider Forum EASPD have created the following suggestions and conclusions:

- Slovenia has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of people with disabilities and is obligated to respect it, therefore "one school for all" is a legal and moral obligation of the State.
- The necessity of a legal definition of early treatment for children with special needs must be interdisciplinary (it must include not only medical but also the special educational assistance, a provided inter-ministerial cooperation and a clear division of responsibilities).
- A new education legislation (amendments to the Law on Children with Special Needs) must actually exceed the existing legal deficiencies which did not allow the realization of one school for all in practice (perfect the role of directing commissions, clear content of individual programs, quality assessment and evaluation of knowledge, provide transfer between programs ...)
- Pedagogical university must provide professional development of the existing teaching staff and new professionals (of all educators - teachers), not only special educators and rehabilitation pedagogs.
- Experts are required to visit the children (mobile services) and not vice versa. This is especially important for preschool children who are not enrolled in kindergartens.
- Schools at all levels must begin to implement a variety of educational training programs
- to ensure a sufficiently large and diverse network of schools, with the support of expert centers that will confidently implement these programs.

- The strategy of inclusive education must also include preparations for employment and independent living, which calls for a revision of existing programs.
- Special education programs should be upgraded and must be implemented both at school and in planned technical centers for vocational education or training.
- The new school legislation should be aligned with changes in legislation regarding social security (the new law on social inclusion).

Impact

As an umbrella structure exists already in Slovenia (SOUS), the overall aims of this provider forum were to provide information about the EU, to provide network opportunities, to facilitate the exchange of good practices and to advance the inclusive education. The impact and the results of this seminar will be seen in the long-term in a wider social context. The more immediate impact was the positive feedback from the participants of the forum.

Visibility and Valorisation

The forum was very well received. Important members of the Ministry of Education and sports and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs participated, and all relevant representatives of institutions providing school and social services attended too.

Budget

Costs

Annexes

- Programme of the event
- List of participants