

Summary of results on survey on position of youth with disabilities in secondary education in Serbia and Montenegro

Network of Youth and Students with Disabilities of Serbia and Montenegro (consisted of four partner organizations from Belgrade, Nis, Kragujevac and Podgorica) has promotion of the inclusive education in SMN as one of its main aims. This project has a focus on secondary education and targets high school students with disabilities, as possible future students and leaders of movement of persons with disabilities.

The overall goal of the project is to promote equal rights for youth with disabilities and create conditions for inclusive secondary education system in Serbia and Montenegro. The survey has a goal to examine educational opportunities and obstacles for youth with disabilities in secondary schools.

As one of the project activities was survey on position of and opportunities for students with disabilities within secondary education institutions (both regular and special). Survey was held through questionnaire that contained questions on accessibility of schools and boarding schools, possible discrimination that was experienced in schools and boarding schools, interaction between school personnel, other students and students with disabilities, as well about motivation for future education. These variables were observed from the aspects of education in regular of special schools, type of disability, education and employment of parents or guardians (as indicator of social status) and regarding the region in which survey was conducted.

Five survey teams contacted 502 secondary schools (8 special schools among them) in Serbia and Montenegro and interviewed 484 student with different type of disabilities, 288 student from regular schools and 191 from special education schools. Gender was successfully balanced, just a bit in favor of female students (51% of final number). All schools were introduced with goals of project and with letter that was send to them as invitation for cooperation, letters of support from Ministry of Education and Sports of Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Education of Montenegro, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy of Serbia and Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Montenegro were send. Those supports were of great help during project implementation, especially during communication with different state institutions. Also, this occasion was used to inform educational institutions in all regions about existence of problems of persons with disabilities in educational system, social model of approach to disability issues and initiatives and experiences in inclusive education.

Beside data that were gathered during survey, experiences of interviewers that went in regular and special schools, gave some confirmations of presumptions that initiated survey at the beginning.

- Considerable number of students from special schools consider they school as regular although they are officially schools for special education
- Reports from interviewers of accessibility of schools and boarding schools say that there no schools that are completely accessible
- Students and school personnel that were contacted don't know basic principles of accessibility and inclusive education
- It was noticed great closure in great number of regulars schools, both young with disabilities, school personnel and family, on questions regarding disability
- Quarter of interviewed students from schools for special education thinks that professors don't have adapted approach to student with disabilities, same number experienced discrimination in this schools from they professors and other school personnel, most of them think that book are not adapted and more than one third of them thinks that professors don't have adapted approach during examination
- A limitation of special education system is especially shown in school for special education of student with hearing impairment. General impression is that pupils of these schools are much less educated than pupils in all other schools, they don't have developed communicational skills and their dictionary is very poor, also they are not encouraged to read. Pupils are not able to learn from standard school literature, they don't have books at all, they learn only what professors write at the board, so the classes are very simple and poor, on the level of primary school and in one of those schools, sign language is taken off the curriculum.