Public Policy Framework

How to achieve a truly integrated education in the Republic of Macedonia?

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1. VISION

This includes analysis of the implementation of integrated education in the Republic of Macedonia, factors influencing the process or preventing its implementation, as well as analysis of the current situation in the field of integrated education, factors contributing to its functionality, and the role of local governments in the process of decentralization. In this sense the research is expected to contribute to learning the following:

- The past practices of implementation of integrated education related projects;

- Whether the process of decentralization has helped municipalities to successfully influence the functionality of integrated education;

- The degree to which international organizations contribute to integrated education;

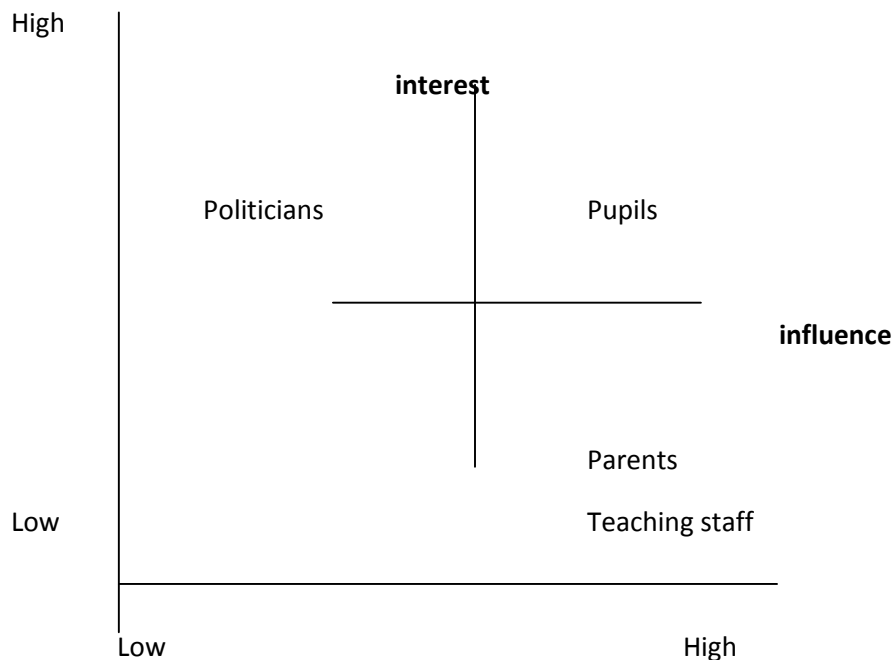- The recommendations for improved functionality of the integrated education.

1. Analysis

The current situation on field is presented in the following points:

1. Segregation in the education system has been supported manifestly or latently for many years, in order to avoid conflict situations among pupils of different ethnic groups. This separation resulted in strengthening of the stereotypes and prejudice towards the Other in both largest ethnic groups.
2. Implementation of the rights of the communities by the political factors in the state failed to create larger integration. On the contrary, ethnic divisions particularly among the young intensified, and knowledge about the Other became anecdotal.
3. Pupils of different ethnic background pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, both in primary and in secondary education, study according to essentially, not just in terms of language, different curricula regarding certain subjects (for e.g. History) that are of key importance for forming their identity and defining their relation with other members of society, either from the same or from a different cultural background
4. There is a Strategy including reforms and activities in five areas of action in order to achieve multi-ethnic integration in the education system, but it is partially implemented.
5. A large number of primary schools officially registered as bilingual or trilingual fail to provide direct contact among pupils attending classes in different teaching languages.
6. Most teachers are not properly trained to work with children and parents of different social and cultural communities.

7. There is a lack of school activities and extracurricular activities to involve the young from different cultures. Minimal efforts have been made so far by state institutions to improve this.

8. There is strong influence from non-formal and informal channels of education (family, local community, religious community, media, and political parties).

9. Political structures fail to confirm in practice declared goals inherent to the educational regulation and education in general.

This document is based on analysis of documents, public policies, and other research studies, by means of desk research and field interviews.

Subject to analysis were legislative acts and secondary education, agreements, research studies and reports made by relevant domestic and international organizations, as well as works and research studies published by domestic and foreign experts, including interviews conducted with representatives of institutions of the central and local governments such as the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau on Development of Education, representatives of the Integrated Education Commission, representatives of the City of Skopje and the municipalities of Tetovo, Kumanovo, and Tearce, and representatives of international organizations.

High

interest

Politicians   Pupils

influence

Parents

Low   Teaching staff

Low   High

PESTLE analysis
Political influence – political structures often lack continuity in their actions and statements. There are double standards in their actions. In some situations they state they are interested in integration of communities in education, and in other situations, for the benefit of current political goals, they give strong nationalistic statements that greatly affect society and undermine the whole process.

Economic influence – MIE is a complex process requiring significant financial resources. The state is not interested to support this process financially.

Social influence – integrated education may contribute to living together, inclusion, learning about differences, development, and strengthening of the social capital.

Technological influence – new technologies may encourage children from different ethnic groups to get to know each other, but also to get apart even more, taking into account the access to many different materials that promote xenophobia and inter-ethnic hate.

Legal influence – Legislation is in the spirit of MIE, but on field this is not fully practiced.

Environmental influence – Activities in the environment and for the environment to be carried out by different ethnic communities are covered in MIE.

2. Looking forward

Scenarios and risks

Desired scenario:

- Introduce and implement an evaluation system for past reform processes in primary and secondary education in the field of integrated education;

- Precisely define mechanisms for promotion of the principles of respect and tolerance, and ensure they are reflected in the legislation related to education at all levels;

- Introduce obligatory contents referring to enhancing the knowledge about the Others, and promotion of intercultural aspects in the curricula (for e.g. in subjects such as History, mother tongue, Our Fatherland, Folk Dances, Exploring the Birth Place for primary education);

- Establish training mechanisms for the teaching staff within the framework of formal education, as well as evaluation mechanisms for the application of the acquired knowledge in the educational process;

- Establish mechanisms for promotion of learning the language of the Other (competitions and scholarships) in primary and secondary education;

- Continue the promotion of cooperation between teaching staff and schools that offer classes in different languages (extracurricular activities, joint excursions and celebration events);

- Avoid physical barriers in multilingual schools among pupils of different cultural background (going to school in different buildings, different shifts, etc.)

- Establish classes where teaching would be in two or three languages;

- Integrated education policies should be managed by municipalities due to their extensive experience on the situation and the challenges at local level;

- The Ministry of Education and Science should establish separate items for integrated education when allocating funds through block grants;

- The Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau on Development of Education should undertake measures to remove texts and textbooks creating stereotypes and prejudice;

- Establish mechanisms in high education to promote cooperation between universities that teach in different languages (joint research projects, conferences, etc.).

Risks:

influence		Financial risk	Political risks
		Administrative risk	
		Communication risk	
Probability			

Financial risk – level: high. If resources to finance this project are lacking, there is large probability for it to fail.

Political risk – level: high. Without serious and honest political will, the process of MIE withstands no chances for realization. The political will and dialogue can intensively influence development or impairment of the political process.

Administrative risk – level: medium. Continuous improvement and training of teaching staff is necessary for more successful implementation of inter-ethnic integration in education.

Communication risk – level: low. Pupils from one ethnic group want to communicate with pupils of another ethnic group but they need encouragement.

Influence

The option of achieving the desired outcome described as a desired scenario, including its effectiveness, consistency, cost and implementation, is also related to risks in an environment of external influence.

For making impact on key decision makers, it is necessary to use advocacy and lobbying tools starting from presenting the politicians with findings and recommendations related to the success

of the MIE, encouraging the non-governmental sector to continue work on inter-ethnic integrated education related projects, and changing the system of financing the local government uses, in order to introduce a separate category or a coefficient for inter-ethnic education within the process of creating education grants for the local governments. This would encourage the municipalities and the schools to work more intensively for this goal. Also local governments should be urged to reallocate funds available for the non-governmental sector more intensively in this direction.

Making a change: How to ensure that proposed public policies really work?

Ways we can influence affected parties in this process include exchange of information, creation of mechanisms for control by several parties, starting from the Ministry of Education and Science, all the way to producing analysis, lobbying and monitoring of the process of implementation of integrated education related policies.

Evaluation and lessons learnt: What is success? How can we use lessons learnt?

There are many successful models we can take as an example. The goal of the European spirit and values is having different ethnic groups in common action. In the Republic of Macedonia, even though belated, reforms have been initiated to strengthen cohesion among members of different cultural groups.

There are certain improvements regarding the situation of integrated education (recognizing its importance and initiating reforms to achieve it). Problems that exist are more of systemic and political nature.

In view of this, education policies should be developed in accordance with and as part of general integration policies.

The proposed changes offer possibilities for twofold action in this process. Proposed ideas offer possible systematic solutions of problems, and solutions for improving the field work by means of direct involvement of pupils, parents, teaching staff and schools.