

ARISE

Action for Reducing
Inequalities in Education

Policy Road Map
Creating an Inclusive and
Supportive Educational
Environment for All Students

Kosovo

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Educational Environment for All Students

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Background

This Policy Roadmap was developed within the project [Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education \(ARISE\)](#), a regional project implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey and funded by the European Commission.

The project aims to support inclusion of students with low socio-economic status (SES) by building national and regional partnerships of civil society organisations from six aforementioned countries to engage in advocacy and constructive policy dialogue with governments, raise awareness among education stakeholders and pilot interventions targeting low SES students at the school level.

According to UNESCO (2013), inclusive education is “an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination”.

The inclusive school culture is a critical component of such education, encompassing a set of values, norms, and practices that foster a sense of belonging, respect, and acceptance.

Research has shown that schools with a culture of inclusion, positive administrative leadership, and positive partnerships between families and professionals have positive outcomes for all students (Francis, Blue-Banning, Turnbull, & Haines, 2016).

In the context of Kosovo, the country has taken significant steps to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, and ability.

The country's Constitution, Law on Pre-University Education, Law on Education in the Municipalities of Kosovo, and Law on Pre-school Education all emphasize the principles of equality in the education system (Rraci, 2021).

These laws and regulations are aimed at addressing the needs of students from low SES background and promoting inclusive education.

However, despite the laws and regulations in place, Kosovo still faces challenges in addressing the needs of students from low SES backgrounds.

It is estimated that 18% of Kosovo's population lives below the poverty line, with 5.1% of the population living below the extreme poverty line (The World Bank & Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2019). In this line, according to a report by UNICEF nearly 23% of children in Kosovo live in poverty, and 7% live in extreme poverty (UNESCO, Annual Report 2022, 2023).

This can have a significant impact on the education outcomes of children, as research has shown that poverty is often associated with lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates. For example, PISA 2022 results showed that socioeconomically advantaged students outperformed disadvantaged students in reading by around 40 points.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) in Kosovo has developed an Education Strategy for 2022-2026 and its action plan, which recognizes the importance of addressing the needs of students from low SES background (Ministry of Education, 2022).

As part of this effort, MESTI has decentralized competences to municipalities in order to thoroughly address the needs of children from low SES background.

The strategy includes measures such as providing additional resources and support to schools in low-SES areas, increasing access to early childhood education for children from low SES background, and providing targeted support to improve academic achievement for students from low SES background.

This Policy Road Map will provide concrete recommendations to ensure effective coordination of existing mechanisms at the local level, with a focus on addressing the needs of children from low SES background in the Kosovo education system.

In line with UNESCO's vision of inclusive education, the policy guide aims to create a school culture that embraces diversity, fosters a sense of belonging, and eliminates discrimination.

By identifying key areas for intervention, such as building teacher capacity, strengthening school mechanisms, and supporting advocacy efforts by CSOs and GROs, this policy guide aims to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Through collaborative efforts and targeted actions, Kosovo can progress towards achieving its goal of providing quality education to every child in the country.

Recommendations

As part of the ARISE Project, a **Policy Coalition** was constituted, composed of representatives of CSOs, schools, grassroots organisations, researchers/academics from the field of poverty, exclusion research, and policy makers/representatives of government.

This **Policy Road Map** was developed with the contribution of the Coalition members, based on the situation analyzed and based on the findings from the **National Report** developed in the framework of the project.

What follows is a review of recommendations that describe specific goals to guide policy development, and the actions with which to help achieve them. These actions can be implemented at the local level to improve the situation.

General objective

Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the needs of children from low SES background.

Specific Objective 1

Enhancing cooperation among teachers to enable an inclusive environment in schools.

Actions

1.1. Establishing a Teacher Peer Support Network

1.2. Peer Observation and Feedback

Specific Objective 2

Fostering the monitoring and mentoring mechanisms to support implementation of policies at the local level.

Actions

2.1. Implement policies that address needs of students from low SES background at local level

2.2. School-Based Student Support Groups

Specific Objective 3

Improving school culture and climate as prerequisites for meaningful participation.

Actions

3.1. Inclusive Extracurricular Clubs

3.2. Enhance diversity through continuous activities

3.3. Student-Led Inclusion Projects

Specific Objective 4

Creating an environment conducive to the meaningful functioning of school mechanisms.

Actions

4.1. Series of workshops for school mechanisms

4.2. Awareness campaigns

Specific Objective 5

Empowering schools to use planning tools.

Actions

5.1. Capacity-Building Workshops for School Staff on Inclusive Education and Low SES Support

5.2. Inclusive School Development Program (SDP) Review and Revision

Table 1. Objectives and Actions

Policy Goal		Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background		
Specific Objective 1:		Enhancing cooperation among teachers to enable an inclusive environment in schools		
Action		1.1. Establishing a Teacher Peer Support Network		
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
Support from the school administration; MED	Local schools and their teachers; Education-related NGOs or community organizations.	<p>Organize a meeting with interested teachers to explain the purpose and benefits of the peer support network;</p> <p>Encourage teachers from various schools to join voluntarily and create a network of teachers interested in inclusive education;</p> <p>Facilitate regular meetings, either in person or virtually, for teachers to share experiences, challenges, and effective strategies for supporting low SES students;</p> <p>Conduct workshops or informal training sessions where teachers can develop their skills and knowledge in inclusive teaching practices through peer-led sessions;</p> <p>Create an online platform or group for ongoing communication and resource sharing among the teacher network.</p>	Teachers gain valuable insights and practical strategies to foster an inclusive learning environment.	<p>Ensure clear communication about the voluntary nature of participation to respect teachers' workload;</p> <p>Encourage open and non-judgmental discussions to maintain a positive and supportive atmosphere within the network.</p>

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 1:	Enhancing cooperation among teachers to enable an inclusive environment in schools			
Action	1.2. Peer Observation and Feedback			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
<p>Observation templates and tools;</p> <p>Collaborative feedback protocols;</p> <p>Professional development budget.</p>	<p>School administrators;</p> <p>Teacher networks.</p>	<p>Establish a system for peer observation and feedback among teachers</p>	<p>Improved teaching practices through peer learning and constructive feedback;</p> <p>Increased collaboration and professional growth among teachers.</p>	<p>Ensure a culture of trust and confidentiality;</p> <p>Provide clear guidelines for observation and feedback;</p> <p>Foster a supportive and non-judgmental environment for feedback exchanges.</p>

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 2:	Fostering the monitoring and mentoring mechanisms to support implementation of policies at the local level			
Action	2.1. Implement the policies that address needs of students from low SES background at local level			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
Meeting space; Task force guidelines.	MED; Community-based organizations; Education stakeholders.	Identify key stakeholders from local government, community-based organizations, and education stakeholders to participate in the Municipality PRTAN; Ensure effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders; Schedule regular meetings to discuss policy implementation progress and identify areas for improvement.	Improved coordination and collaboration among local government, community-based organizations, and education stakeholders; Enhanced monitoring and evaluation of policies at the local level; Increased effectiveness of policies in addressing the needs of low-SES children.	Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the PRTAN in promoting policy implementation at the local level; Provide ongoing support and mentoring to stakeholders to ensure effective policy implementation.

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 2:	Fostering the monitoring and mentoring mechanisms to support implementation of policies at the local level			
Action	2.2. School-Based Student Support Groups			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
<p>Space within schools for group meetings;</p> <p>Support from school administrators and teachers;</p> <p>Printed educational materials (brochures, handouts).</p>	<p>School staff (teachers, counsellors, administrators);</p> <p>Local community organizations.</p>	<p>Formation of Support Groups;</p> <p>Peer Mentoring;</p> <p>Regular Group Meetings;</p> <p>Workshops and Skill-Building Sessions;</p> <p>Parent Involvement;</p> <p>Monitoring and Tracking Progress.</p>	<p>Low SES students feel a sense of belonging and support within the school environment;</p> <p>Enhanced communication between students, teachers, and parents leads to a more cohesive support system.</p>	<p>Ensure confidentiality and create a safe space for students to share their experiences and challenges without fear of judgment;</p> <p>Encourage open communication with parents to ensure their support aligns with the goals of the support groups.</p>

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 3:	Improving school culture and climate as prerequisites for meaningful participation			
Action	3.1. Inclusive Extracurricular Clubs			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
Available school spaces and facilities.	MED; Schools; Local community organizations.	Conduct meetings to gather student interests and ideas for inclusive clubs; Identify teachers or staff willing to supervise each club; Set up clubs based on student interests (e.g., art, music, sports, literature); Organize regular club meetings and activities.	Increased student engagement and participation in extracurricular activities; A more inclusive and welcoming school community; Enhanced collaboration and friendships among diverse groups.	Ensure teacher or staff support and supervision to maintain a safe environment; Encourage open communication and feedback to address any potential issues; Address any instances of exclusivity or discrimination promptly.

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 3:	Improving school culture and climate as prerequisites for meaningful participation			
Action	3.2. Enhance diversity through continuous activities			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
Available school spaces and facilities.	Teachers, students, parents, community members.	<p>Form a committee to plan and organize the activities;</p> <p>Invite students, teachers, parents, and community members to showcase their cultures through presentations, performances, and exhibitions;</p> <p>Conduct workshops and interactive activities on diversity, inclusion, and cultural appreciation;</p> <p>Hold open discussions on promoting understanding and empathy.</p>	<p>Increased cultural awareness and appreciation among students and staff;</p> <p>Enhanced understanding and acceptance of diverse backgrounds;</p> <p>Strengthened community bonds.</p>	<p>Ensure representation from different cultural and ethnic groups in the planning committee;</p> <p>Address any concerns or potential cultural insensitivity during the event;</p> <p>Encourage respectful dialogue and mutual understanding during discussions.</p>

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 3:	Improving school culture and climate as prerequisites for meaningful participation			
Action	3.3. Student-Led Inclusion Projects			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
Available school resources (e.g., materials, classrooms).	Teachers, students, community organizations.	<p>Encourage students to propose and present their ideas for inclusion projects;</p> <p>Assist students in forming project teams and planning their initiatives;</p> <p>Provide guidance and support during project implementation;</p> <p>Celebrate and showcase the outcomes of the projects within the school community.</p>	<p>Increased student engagement and ownership in promoting inclusion;</p> <p>Implementation of various creative inclusion projects;</p> <p>Positive impact on school culture and environment.</p>	<p>Ensure that all student-led projects align with the values of inclusion and do not promote discrimination;</p> <p>Provide necessary guidance and support to students to ensure successful project completion;</p> <p>Recognize and appreciate all students' efforts, regardless of project outcomes.</p>

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 4:	Creating an environment conducive to the meaningful functioning of school mechanisms			
Action	4.1. Series of workshops for school mechanisms			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
<p>Collected data;</p> <p>Needs assessment;</p> <p>Workshop materials / guidelines;</p> <p>Trainers / Human resources,</p>	<p>NGOs;</p> <p>MED;</p> <p>MESTI.</p>	<p>Workshop on needs assessment;</p> <p>Conducting training for School Board;</p> <p>Workshop on roles and responsibilities of Parent Councils;</p> <p>Workshop on roles and responsibilities of Student Councils;</p> <p>Supporting parents from vulnerable groups to actively and meaningfully participate in the school mechanisms.</p>	<p>School mechanisms are willing to act independently;</p> <p>Parent Council is functionalized;</p> <p>Student Council is active.</p>	<p>Inform all parties on the importance of being involved and active in school life;</p> <p>Present the Democratic School Governance principles from CoE guidelines;</p> <p>Ownership of the intervention.</p>

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 4:	Creating an environment conducive to the meaningful functioning of school mechanisms			
Action	4.2. Awareness campaigns			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
Leaflets; Identified topics and means for campaigns.	NGOs; MED; School community.	Prepare and disseminate leaflets; Information session for parents on parenting methodologies; Information session for students on antidiscrimination, inequalities, bullying.	School community is informed for roles and responsibilities in school life; Parents are aware for Positive Discipline principles; Students are informed and skilled to address cases of violence, discrimination and other negative behavior.	Inform all parties on the importance of being involved and active in school life; Organize formal and nonformal meetings with parents and school partners; Share responsibilities.

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 5:	Empowering schools to use planning tools			
Action	5.1. Capacity-Building Workshops for School Staff on Inclusive Education and Low SES Support			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
<p>Trained facilitators; Workshop materials and handouts;</p> <p>Audiovisual equipment (projectors, screens, etc.);</p> <p>Venue for workshops; Evaluation and feedback forms.</p>	<p>MED;</p> <p>Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on education and inclusivity;</p> <p>Local community representatives.</p>	<p>Identify and invite schools to participate in the workshops;</p> <p>Develop workshop content focusing on inclusive education and strategies to address the needs of children from low SES background in the School Development Plan (SDP);</p> <p>Conduct capacity-building workshops for school staff, including teachers, principals, and support staff;</p> <p>Provide practical guidance on integrating low SES support into the SDP.</p>	<p>Increased awareness and knowledge of inclusive education principles among school staff;</p> <p>Improved understanding of how to address the needs of low SES children within the SDP;</p> <p>Enhanced capacity of schools to implement strategies that promote inclusivity;</p> <p>Schools demonstrate a commitment to actively address low SES needs in their planning.</p>	<p>Assess the needs of schools beforehand to tailor workshop content effectively;</p> <p>Have backup facilitators available in case of unexpected unavailability;</p> <p>Collect feedback during and after workshops to identify areas for improvement.</p>

Policy Goal	Ensuring coordination of the existing mechanisms at the local level to address the need of children from low SES background			
Specific Objective 5:	Empowering schools to use planning tools			
Action	5.2. Inclusive School Development Program Review and Revision			
Resources	Partners	Methods/Activities	Results	Risk mitigation
<p>SDP review team (comprising education experts, school representatives, and community members);</p> <p>Data on the current SDP and its effectiveness;</p> <p>Meeting space and materials for review and revision;</p> <p>Communication and dissemination resources.</p>	<p>MED; School administrators, teachers, and staff;</p> <p>Local community organizations and representatives.</p>	<p>Assemble an SDP review team with diverse expertise and perspectives;</p> <p>Collect and analyze data on the current SDP, including its strengths and weaknesses concerning low SES needs;</p> <p>Conduct research on successful strategies and approaches to address low SES needs in education;</p> <p>Organize meetings with school representatives to discuss the findings and gather input for revision;</p> <p>Collaboratively develop an inclusive SDP revision that addresses the specific needs of low SES children.</p>	<p>A revised SDP that includes specific strategies to address the needs of low SES children;</p> <p>Clear goals and action plans for improving educational outcomes for low SES students;</p> <p>Enhanced collaboration and engagement among stakeholders in the SDP revision process;</p> <p>Increased awareness of the importance of addressing low SES needs in the local education community.</p>	<p>Involve representatives from low SES communities to ensure their perspectives are considered;</p> <p>Regularly communicate progress and updates to all stakeholders to maintain transparency;</p> <p>Ensure the use of evidence-based practices to increase the likelihood of success.</p>

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