

Metadata of the chapter that will be visualized online

Chapter Title	Applying Individual Education Plans in Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities in Serbia: An Empirical Study	
Copyright Year	2026	
Copyright Holder	The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.	
Corresponding Author	Family Name	Kadijevich
	Particle	
	Given Name	Djordje M.
	Suffix	
	Address	Belgrade, Serbia
Author	Family Name	Maslikovic
	Particle	
	Given Name	Dejan
	Suffix	
	Organization	Institute of Social Science
	Address	Belgrade, Serbia
Abstract	To realise the right to education for all including persons with disabilities, so-called “inclusive education” has been advocated and implemented worldwide. In recent years, students with disabilities in Serbia have been supported through the application of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in primary and secondary schools. By referring to the official statistical data for 9 consecutive school years and several publications discussing the application of inclusive education in the country, this contribution examines the extent to which children with disabilities have been supported by IEPs, and the factors that could have contributed to this. It was found that IEPs were applied more often in primary and lower-secondary education than in upper-secondary education. Such a situation could be influenced by access to education, peer acceptance, knowledge and skills complexity, teacher training, teacher training programmes, and governmental policy. The implications for inclusive policy and research are indicated.	
Keywords (separated by “-”)	Serbia - Disabilities - Teacher training - Individual Educational Plans	

Chapter 6

Applying Individual Education Plans in Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities in Serbia: An Empirical Study

Djordje M. Kadijevich  and Dejan Maslikovic 

Abstract To realise the right to education for all including persons with disabilities, so-called “inclusive education” has been advocated and implemented world-wide. In recent years, students with disabilities in Serbia have been supported through the application of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in primary and secondary schools. By referring to the official statistical data for 9 consecutive school years and several publications discussing the application of inclusive education in the country, this contribution examines the extent to which children with disabilities have been supported by IEPs, and the factors that could have contributed to this. It was found that IEPs were applied more often in primary and lower-secondary education than in upper-secondary education. Such a situation could be influenced by access to education, peer acceptance, knowledge and skills complexity, teacher training, teacher training programmes, and governmental policy. The implications for inclusive policy and research are indicated.

Keywords Serbia • Disabilities • Teacher training • Individual Educational Plans

Introduction

Access to education is a fundamental human right (UN, 2015). Inclusive education has resulted from the need to implement schools for all children respecting differences in their abilities and learning needs (e.g., UNESCO, 1994). This type of education ought to be carried out in a way that supports the development of the mental and physical abilities of children with disabilities to their fullest potential, enabling them to “access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary

D. M. Kadijevich (✉)
Belgrade, Serbia

D. Maslikovic
Institute of Social Science, Belgrade, Serbia

© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2026

T. Keane et al. (eds.), *The Impact of Disruptions in Schooling and Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-95-9187-9_6

education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live” (UN, 2006; see Article 24 for other requirements). Although education of this kind also includes meeting the needs of children from minority and other vulnerable groups, children with disabilities constitute the great majority of inclusive students. Because of this, our research has focused on the inclusive education of children with disabilities.

As a response to the right of inclusion (UN, 2006), various state regulations have been issued by the Government of the Republic of Serbia (NPRS, 2006, 2021), especially for inclusion in education (MERS, 2013a, 2013b, 2023). These regulations concerning education require, in brief, the following:

- the right to education,
- equal conditions for all,
- accessibility of programmes and facilities,
- anti-discrimination policy.

This contribution refers to several key issues, namely: “inclusive education”, “G1–8 education”, “G9–12 education”, “individual education plans”, and “inclusive support.” Bearing in mind the educational context in Serbia, these issues can be briefly defined as presented below.

- **Inclusive education** is to be understood as “education for all”, where students with disabilities and special needs and students without them are in the same classes (Kovačević & Maćešić-Petrović, 2012).
- **G1–8 education** serves students from grade 1 through grade 8, whereas **G9–12 education** serves students from grade 9 through grade 12.
- **Individual educational plans** (IEPs) are used to support the inclusive education of children with disabilities. Each of them describes what additional support in education and training for a student with a disability needs to be implemented. Note that unless they have certain disabilities, the inclusive education of children from minorities and other vulnerable groups is not supported by IEPs.
- **Inclusive support** is used to denote that the child’s inclusive education is attained by applying an IEP in his/her formal education.

IEPs have been applied in Serbia from the school year 2009/10 (MERS, 2009). Since their introduction in the United States half a century ago (e.g., Tremblay & Belley, 2017), IEPs have been applied in many countries around the world (Sacks & Halder, 2017). For a recent international perspective on the application of these plans, see, for example, UNESCO (2021).

IEPs, implemented in Serbia in accordance with the Law on the Basics of the Education System, have supported the education of students with various disabilities, including specific learning disabilities, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, autism, or other developmental problems. To this end, having recognised the educational needs of each disabled student, they are provided with a specific individualised education tailored to those educational needs. To make IEPs beneficial to students with disabilities, these plans are created, applied, and monitored by

multidisciplinary teams of educators, comprising subject teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, speech therapists, and other experts (MERS, 2009).

Created in accordance with students' abilities, IEPs are official documents in Serbia, which, as already mentioned, describe additional support in education and training for students with disabilities. This support should be implemented in a way that provides optimal teaching and learning conditions for these students. To this end, the conditions would follow the developmental pace of each such student, and enable them to attain the best results within an appropriate workload (MERS, 2017).

IEPS have been modified several times by new regulations; the last time was in 2018 (MERS, 2017). There are two kinds of such plan, namely, IEP 1 and IEP 2.¹

IEP1 is used at the first support level for students with disabilities. It contains primarily an adjustment of the content regularly taught in the classroom, which affects the arrangement of learning conditions, application of methods of presentation, and reliance on educational aids, including literature and accessories. Unchanged are the general goals and expected outcomes specified for students without disabilities (Janjić et al., 2012).

IEP 2 is used at the second, higher support level for students with disabilities. It is usually activated if the use of IEP 1 does not result in the expected results. This plan requires a change in both the learning content and results aimed at. Such a plan describes what a student with a disability should learn, and how much they should know and be able to do in a specific subject by the end of the school year, in relation to the curriculum of that subject developed for children without disabilities. It thus not only affects but changes, sometimes considerably, the arrangement of learning conditions, application of methods of presentation, and degree of reliance on educational aids as regards those usually present in work with students without disabilities (Janjić et al., 2012).

Literature Review

The implementation of inclusive education may be influenced by numerous factors, often expressed in terms of areas, barriers, or challenges. These factors may be related to various levels, such as family, school, community, and system (IP, 2015; Hang'andu et al., 2022; Zanobini et al., 2023). At school-level, two sets of factors are inclusive practice and inclusive culture (Pavlović Babić et al., 2017). Among other factors, very often found are negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities (Sharma et al., 2018; Makuya & Sedibe, 2021); insufficient teacher training, unclear inclusion policy, lack of support services at various levels (Alkhateeb et al., 2016; Al Harballeh et al., 2024; Senoo et al., 2024; Turlubekova et al., 2024);

¹The legislator foresees the third version of IEPs, namely IEP 3. It is used in education of gifted children. If the child demonstrates a talent in a specific subject, to support his/her further development, a special curriculum, more advanced and demanding than the regular one, may be specified by that plan and implemented in practice accordingly (MERS, 2017).

limited/missing work with all role players, including local leaders, stakeholders, and policy makers (Engelbrecht, 2020; Sharma et al., 2018; Rangarajan et al., 2023). A lack of adequate teacher preparation may be the most significant factor (e.g., UNESCO, 2020). Relevant factors may be examined in terms of the dimensions of education quality, such as inclusion, relevance, and participation (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). For example, among important factors are: inclusive teaching practices— inclusion; measurement of learning—relevance; monitoring and management of inclusive education—participation (Rangarajan et al., 2023).

Although the previous paragraph presents numerous factors and a useful framework within which to examine them, they are concerned with inclusive education in general. The implementation of IEPs, which is an important segment of inclusive education, has rarely been studied *per se*. However, one domestic study that focused on this implementation found that inclusive competencies of teachers and their prospective school associates (school psychologists and pedagogues) were the most important driver of IEP implementation: insufficient competencies limit the quality of additional support, the work with parents and other members of IEP teams, and the monitoring of the child's progress (Matić et al., 2022). A foreign study dealing with IEP implementation identified several challenges in terms of teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitude. The most frequent were the methods of evaluation of students' development, and the lack of motivation for implementation (Rashid & Wong, 2023). Regarding the empirical studies on the extent of the implementation of IEPs and possible reasons of that, there is no such study in Serbia. According to the authors' reading, there is probably no such foreign study either.

Research Questions

Despite the fact that IEPs have been applied since the school year 2009/2010, i.e., over 16 school years so far, there is no analysis about the extent to which children with disabilities are supported by IEPs in their formal education in certain periods, or the possible factors that could contribute to the extent found. This is an important gap that needs to be bridged if we are to have better conditions for further IEP implementation. Hence, this study has examined the following research questions:

1. To what extent were children with disabilities supported by IEPs in their formal education?
2. What factors could have contributed to the extent found?

The extent of support referred to in question 1 was determined by empirical research using official statistical data. Regarding question 2, the contributing factors were mainly discussed by referring to domestic publications concerning the state of inclusive education in the country. Although inclusive education comprises both formal and informal forms, this research has only focused on formal inclusive education because reliable statistical data for informal inclusive education were not available.

Chapter Structure 146

AU4 Section “Method” gives the details of the method applied in this empirical research. 147
Section “Results” presents the results of this research by using a time series line 148
chart. Section “Discussion” contains a discussion concerning possible factors that 149
could contribute to the reported findings. Section “Closing Remarks” offers a sum- 150
mary of the research presented, including implications for inclusive policy and 151
research. Finally, the appendix describes the steps that were applied to obtain the 152
data considered in this study. 153

Method 154

Design and Variables 155

This study used four variables: 156

- *educational level* (with two values G1–8 and G9–12); 157
- *school year* (with nine values 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 158
2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25); 159
- *total number of students*, and 160
- *inclusive support* (with the two values IEP 1 and IEP 2). 161

For each educational level, it examined the relative frequency (in percentages) of 162
each value of inclusive support by school year. Hence, this study used a frequen- 163
tative design. 164

Analysed Data 165

The data relevant to G1–8 and G9–12 education in Serbia, including inclusive edu- 166
cation, are available at the Open Data Portal of the Ministry of Education of the 167
Republic of Serbia² (<https://opendata.mpn.gov.rs/otvoreni-podaci.html>) For each 168
educational level and each school year, the initial data comprised the total number 169
of students and the number of students supported by IEPs. To obtain this data, the 170
steps described in the Appendix were applied. The data was collected by the second 171
author in August/September 2024 by using the Excel software. 172

²This portal is a unique, official database of all students, programmes and classes regarding all educational institutions in Serbia for primary and secondary education. Data is collected automatically from the database of the Unified Education Information System (JISP). The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia also takes data from this portal.

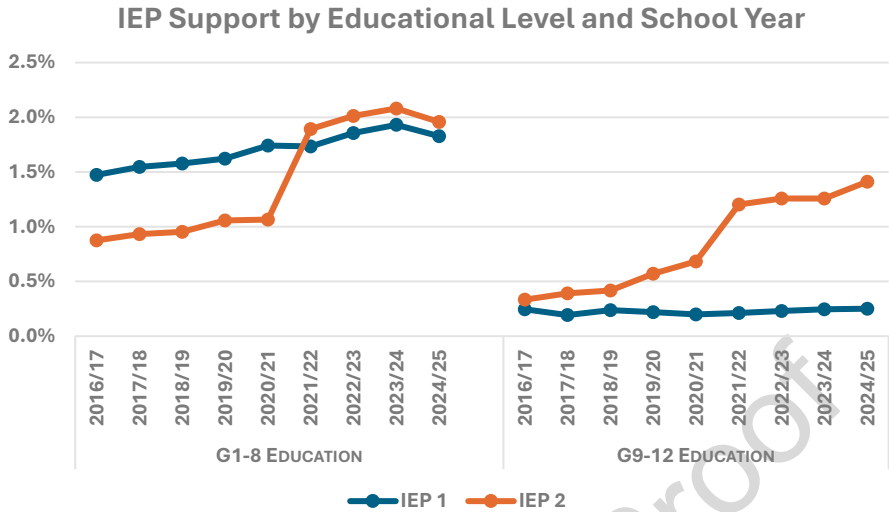


Fig. 6.1 Inclusive support for students with functional difficulties by educational level and school year

Bearing in mind the variables used in this study, the initial data had to be transformed. For each educational level, the relative frequencies of the two values of inclusive support in each school year were found by dividing the total number of students supported by each IEP by the total number of students in that school year. The initial data were transformed by the first author in December 2024 by using the Excel software.

Results

As already mentioned in the Design and Variables section, for each educational level, this study examined the relative frequency (in percentage) of each value of inclusive support by school year. The examined frequencies are displayed by using the time series line chart given in Fig. 6.1. It clearly shows that the two kinds of IEP were, both individually and taken together, applied more often in G1–8 education than in G9–12 education.

Discussion

This section is concerned with the factors that could have contributed to this situation that the two kinds of IEP were, both individually and taken together, applied more often in G1–8 education than in G9–12 education. In a search for possible

contributing factors, the discussion that follows will consider various components of inclusive education. These components are access to education, peer acceptance, parental attitudes toward IEPs, knowledge and skills complexity, teacher training, teacher training programmes, teachers' inclusive competencies, measurement of IEP-supported learning, monitoring IEPs application, and governmental policy.

Access to Education

By forming an estimation from the data given in MERS (2022), it can be said that not more than 95% of children aged 7–15 are included in the compulsory G1–8 education, whereas not more than 90% of the entire student population will continue with optional G9–12 education (these figures could have differed 2–3% from year to year). Another estimation says that about 5% of children aged 7–17 years have one or more functional difficulties (UNCF, 2023, p. 16). Concerning the last 4 school years, IEPs were applied for almost 4% of students in G1–8 education, compared to just about 1.5% of students in G9–12 education. Bearing in mind the aforementioned estimations, it is clear that students with disabilities have had better access to compulsory, G1–8 education than to optional, G9–12 education. It is therefore very important to encourage children with functional difficulties in their pursuit of G9–12 education, having applied the appropriate inclusive practices that could support them in doing so. Note that many unemployed persons are those with disabilities who only completed their G1–9 education (e.g., MERS, 2022).

Peer Acceptance

Students in primary education may well have more positive attitudes, in general, towards peers with disabilities than students in secondary education (e.g., Pan et al., 2023). Also, adolescents become more aware of peer relationships and the images peers hold of each other, and are thus more vulnerable to peer rejection or exclusion (e.g., Cunha et al., 2012). A study undertaken by Protector of Citizens in primary and secondary education in Serbia (Protector of Citizens, 2024) evidenced that when choosing friends, about 63% of students look more for common similarities than opening themselves to diversity. However, about 50% of students were willing to support peers with disabilities. Nevertheless, about 20% of students expressed negative attitudes toward their stay in regular schools and with regards to closer social relations. By combining the reported foreign and domestic findings, it may be supposed that the higher application of IEPs in G1–8 education could be caused by peer acceptance of students with disabilities; this influence was rather indirect through access to education.

Knowledge and Skills Complexity

The relatively constant and small frequency of the application of IEP 1 in G9–12 education throughout the whole examined period could be attributed to a higher complexity of knowledge and skills students need to acquire in their upper-secondary education, which calls for a change in both the learning content and results aimed at, demanding thus the application of IEP 2 more often. On the other hand, a lower complexity of knowledge and skills students need to acquire in their primary and lower-secondary education could enable a frequent application of IEP 1 in G1–8 education, which thus occurred more often than that in G9–12 education. The underlined difference in complexity is recognised by UNESCO classification of education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012), for example.

Teacher Training

Teacher training programmes that support inclusive education have been applied since 2009 (Nedeljkovic, 2019), with more than 40,000 participants in the first 10 years of their application. Despite that, several years after the systematic regulation of inclusive education, most teachers did not know enough about the relevant legal provisions, about half of them had not attended a course on inclusive education, and about half of them did not plan to improve their inclusive competencies (Friedman et al., 2015). Many teachers also experienced difficulties in distinguishing between IEP1 and IEP2 as regards, for example, defining clear and measurable outcomes and the concrete activities necessary to attain them (Jeremić et al., 2012). This is a critical task that needs to be completed appropriately (e.g., Koßmann, 2022), to avoid having IEPs as just another administrative requirement for teachers (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2016a). Hence, in the 4-year period 2018–2021, another massive teacher training in inclusive education was implemented with nearly 10,000 teachers, but primarily those in G1–8 education (MERS, 2022, p. 104). This is probably the main reason why IEPs were, contrary to G9–12 education, widely applied in K1–8 education. Note that a considerable increase in the application of IEP 2 from 2020/21 to 2021/22 in both G1–8 and G9–12 education might be influenced by the massive teacher training applied in the second round.

Teacher Training Programmes

Let us briefly consider the catalogue of teacher training programmes available at <https://zuov-katalog.rs>, which is accredited by the Institute for the Improvement of Education and Training. These programmes are grouped into thematic areas. One of them concerns the application of an inclusive and democratic approach in

upbringing and education (in Serbian “Примена инклузивног и демократског приступа у васпитању и образовању”). An examination of the programmes listed in this area (undertaken in December 2024) revealed only 12 different programmes with inclusion or some related word in their titles. While many of them include work with both G1–8 and G9–12 teachers and deal with IEPs among the various topics to be covered, only one programme focuses on IEPs. What is more, there is no programme specifically designed for G9–12 teachers in gymnasiums (high schools) and vocational schools. Clearly, compared to G1–8 teachers (especially G1–4 ones), G9–12 teachers have been less supported by training programmes in improving their inclusive teaching practices.

Governmental Policy 270

As with any educational reform, inclusive education has had to be gradually introduced into the educational system in Serbia. Hence, lower levels of education needed to be covered first. As a result, compared with G9–12 education, there has been a more active teacher inclusion in training programmes and thus a higher degree of IEPs application in G1–8 education. Note that the gradual nature of the inclusive education reform may, for example, be evidenced by the fact that the first comprehensive monitoring of inclusive education in the country, arranged in the school year 2014/15 (e.g., Kovač-Cerović et al., 2016b), focused mainly on G1–8 education. This was the only such monitoring applied so far. A later but less detailed monitoring, which is presented in MERS (2022), had the same tendency, especially when the quality of inclusive education was assessed.³

Other Components 282

Bearing in mind the content of section “Literature Review”, there are other components that could influence the findings of this empirical study, such as parental attitudes toward IEPs and teachers’ inclusive competencies. The study by Kovač-Cerović et al. (2016a) found positive parental attitudes toward IEPs, since most parents expressed satisfaction with the work of IEP teams and the progress of their children. This study also found that most teachers assessed their inclusive competencies as

³Although a comprehensive policy of inclusive education in Serbia has been developed, only limited progress has been made in its implementation (MERS, 2022). Owing to limited funds and commitment, the Ministry of Education, primarily responsible for this education, has reduced its control and provided insufficient resources to meet all the necessary international standards and to deal with various critical drivers of inclusive education. The sharing of responsibilities with other ministries has complicated the matters (e.g., regarding social status issues with the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs).

solid ones. However, as the situation regarding these components in G1–9 education has not been compared to that in G9–12 education so far, the grounds supporting their influence are missing.

There are other components of possible influence, such as measurement of IEP-supported learning (MERS, 2022, p. 158; cf. Nikolić et al., 2019) and monitoring IEP application (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2016b). However, the related evidence is slim, and only available for G1–8 education. Hence, the grounds supporting their influence are also missing. It is important to underline that even for the compulsory G1–8 education, systematic measurement as well as continuous monitoring and management of IEPs application have been missing.⁴ Note that the measurement of IEP-supported learning is driven by IEP content, which may often be only partially developed and rarely updated (Kovač-Cerović et al., 2016a); two shortcomings primarily caused by the insufficient inclusive competencies of teachers and other IEP team members (e.g., Matić et al., 2022).

AUS

Looking Back

The previous discussion evidences that the finding that IEPs have been applied considerably more often in the compulsory G1–8 education than in the optional G9–12 education might have been driven by access to education, peer acceptance, knowledge and skills complexity, teacher training, teacher training programmes, and governmental policy. Because of this difference in the application of IEPs, the situational requirements concerning IEP application in Serbia may be summarised in the following way: with G1–8 education, capacity building has been largely accomplished, and so more should be invested in quality building; with KG–12 education, since capacity building is already well underway, work is now required on quality building in parallel. The discussion suggests that quality of IEP application may primarily concern IEP content, teachers' inclusive practices, measurement of IEP learning, and monitoring and management of IEP application—factors which pertain to the three dimensions of education quality underlined in section “Literature Review”.

⁴Proper financing has been crucial for the implementation of inclusive education in Serbia (e.g., UNICEF, 2019). While the State government is responsible for providing financial support to education as a whole (MERS, 2009), all financial support for the implementation of inclusive education depends on local governments and their self-generated incomes, since the legal framework applies a decentralisation model of financing.

Closing Remarks

317

This contribution has examined basic statistical data regarding the application of IEPs in Serbian schools in recent years and searched for factors that could contribute to the extension of this application. It was found that IEPs have been applied considerably more often in the compulsory G1–8 education than in the optional G9–12 education. A detailed discussion revealed six contributing factors. These were governmental policy, access to education, peer acceptance, knowledge and skills complexity, teacher training, and teacher training programmes; apart from knowledge and skills complexity and teacher training programmes, these factors have often been considered in the literature. The two factors concerning teachers shape their inclusive competencies, which is the most important driver of IEP implementation, according to many studies. Hence, teachers’ inclusive practices and their efficacy in applying them (e.g., MacArthur, 2022; Woodcock et al., 2022) need to be primarily addressed in further improvements of the educational documents and practices regarding inclusive education in general and IEP application in particular. To this end, the educational policies of several European countries (e.g., Denmark, Finland, and Estonia) may be of use in guiding the long-term reform in education in Serbia (Krstić Srežović et al., 2024). Although inclusive education was introduced into Serbia more than 15 year ago, it has not been sufficiently evaluated, and there is no continuous quality monitoring involving all role players. Since this contribution documents the lack of relevant domestic research studies, it opens up and hopes to further actualise research into the topic of IEP implementation in the country. This research would examine not only the scope of IEP application and the critical factors that influence it, but also compare the situations at different educational levels for each of them. Such comparisons are largely missing at present.

Appendix: Obtaining Initial Data

342

To obtain this data, the following steps were applied:

1. press the button regarding the educational level to examine (“Основно образовање” for G1–8 education; “Средње образовање” for G9–12 education);
2. press the button “Подаци о одељењима и разредима” concerning the data on classes and study years;
3. select the school year by using the list box “Школска година” and then press the button “Претрага” to search for the data requested;
4. when the data requested are shown below, press the button “EXCEL” to download the data in the spreadsheet format of the Microsoft Excel software;
5. insert the SUM commands in the spreadsheet to calculate the total number of students as well as the number of students supported by each of the IEPs applied; to find these sums, use the columns N, O and P, respectively.

The last step may be simplified by using a pivot chart and an accompanying pivot table.

References

- Al Harballeh, S., Opoku, M. P., & Al Murshidi, G. (2024). 'Where Art Thou' in the implementation of inclusive education? Parental assessment of practices. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 24(2), 169–193. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-024-09379-2>
- Alkhateeb, J. M., Hadidi, M. S., & Alkhateeb, J. A. (2016). Inclusion of children with developmental disabilities in Arab countries: A review of the research literature from 1990 to 2014. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 49–50, 60–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2015.11.005>
- Cunha, M., Matos, M., Faria, D., & Zagalo, S. (2012). Shame memories and psychopathology in adolescence: The mediator effect of shame. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 12(2), 203–218.
- Engelbrecht, P. (2020). Inclusive education: Developments and challenges in South Africa. *Prospects*, 49, 219–232. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09499-6>
- Friedman, E., Pavlović Babić, D., & Simić, N. (2015). *Inclusive education in Serbia: Policies, practice and recommendations*. The Western Balkans Investment Framework. Retrieved from https://wbif.eu/storage/app/media/Library/10.Projects/Inclusive%20Education%20in%20Serbia_Final_June%202015.pdf
- Hang'andu, P., Mensah, E. K., Nikolova, E., & Hayward, E. (2022). Educating children with disabilities. In *The Palgrave handbook of global social problems* (pp. 1–26). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68127-2_238-1
- Institute of Psychology. (2015). *Report on the state of inclusive education in the Republic of Serbia, Project report (in Serbian)*. Fond za otvoreno društvo, Tim za socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva i UNICEF. Retrieved from https://nauka.f.bg.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-04-15_6259741cf2a72_izvetajostanjuinkluzivnogobrazovanjaurepublicisrbiji2015.pdf
- Janjić, B., Milojević, N., & Lazarević, S. (2012). *Handbook for employees in kindergartens and schools: Application and improvement of inclusive education in Serbia (in Serbian)*. Udruženje studenata sa hendikepom. Retrieved from <https://www.mdri-s.org/public/documents/upload/partnerske-publikacije/Primena%20i%20unapre%20C4%91enje%20inkluzivnog%20obrazovanja%20u%20Srbiji.pdf>
- Jeremić, J., Lažetić, P., Petrović, D., & Radó, P. (2012). *Inclusive education practice monitoring—Project report (in Serbian)*. Open Society Foundation.
- Koßmann, R. (2022). Individual educational plans: Just a tool to immunise teaching from parental criticism? *Cogent Education*, 9(1), Article 2085628. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2085628>
- Kovač-Cerović, T., Jovanović, O., & Pavlović-Babić, D. (2016a). Individual education plan as an agent of inclusiveness of the educational system in Serbia: Different perspectives, achievements and new dilemmas. *Psihologija*, 49(4), 431–445. <https://doi.org/10.2298/PSI1604431K>
- Kovač-Cerović, T., Pavlović-Babić, D., Jokić, T., Jovanović, O., & Jovanović, V. (2016b). First comprehensive monitoring of inclusive education in Serbia: Selected findings. In N. Gutvajin & M. Vujačić (Eds.), *Challenges and perspectives of inclusive education* (pp. 15–29). Institute for Educational Research & Faculty of Teacher Education, Volgoград State Socio-Pedagogical University. Retrieved from <https://ipir.ipisr.org.rs/handle/123456789/634>
- Kovačević, J., & Maćešić-Petrović, D. (2012). Inclusive education—Empirical experience from Serbia. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 32(3), 463–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2011.11.008>

- Krstić Srejšović, A., Stamenković, M., & Vuksanović, N. (2024). Monitoring sustainable development goals: Stepwise benchmarking approach. *Journal of Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis*, 31(3–4), e1838. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mcda.1838>
- MacArthur, J. (2022). Inclusion. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of teacher education* (pp. 804–810). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8679-5_328
- Makuya, D., & Sedibe, M. (2021). Exploring the challenges that are faced by teachers in the implementation of inclusive education at grade 9 level in Gauteng north district schools in South Africa. *Interchange*, 52, 561–576. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-021-09429-1>
- Matić, I., Škrbić, R., Ivezić, S., & Vrućinić, J. (2022). Individual educational plan—Challenges of implementation (in Serbian). *Pedagoška stvarnost*, 67(2), 186–201. <https://doi.org/10.19090/ps.2021.2.186-201>
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia. (2009). *Rulebook on detailed instructions for determining the right to an individual education plan, its application and evaluation (in Serbian)*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 76/2010.
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia. (2013a). *Law on basic education (in Serbian)*. MERS. Retrieved from https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_osnovnom_obrazovanju_i_vaspitanju.html
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia. (2013b). *Law on secondary education (in Serbian)*. MERS. Retrieved from https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_srednjem_obrazovanju_i_vaspitanju.html
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia. (2017). *Rulebook on detailed instructions for determining the right to an individual education plan, its application and evaluation (in Serbian)*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 74/2018.
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia. (2022). *The national report on inclusive education in Serbia: From 2019 to 2021 (in Serbian)*. MPRS. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/serbia/en/reports/national-report-inclusive-education>
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia. (2023). *The medium-term plan of the Ministry of Education for the period for 2024–2026 for the implementation of the Education development strategy in the Republic of Serbia until 2030 (in Serbian)*. MERS. Retrieved from <https://prosveta.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Srednjorocni-plan-MP-2024-2026.pdf>
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia. (2021). *Education development strategy in the Republic of Serbia until 2030 (in Serbian)*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 63/2021. Retrieved from https://prosveta.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1-SROVRS-2030_MASTER_0402_V1.pdf
- National Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. (2006). *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (in Serbian)*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 98/2006.
- National Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. (2021). *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (in Serbian)*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 115/2021.
- Nedeljković, V. (2019). Quality inclusive education in Serbia. In *Regional forum on sustainable development for the UNECE countries, Geneva, 21–22 March 2019: Case studies compilation* (pp. 8–11). United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Retrieved from https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/RCM_Website/SDG_4-1_Serbia.pdf
- Nikolić, G., Cvijetić, M., Branković, N., Đorđić, D., & Johnstone, C. (2019). Not there yet: Lessons learned on the journey to inclusion in the Republic of Serbia. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 67(4), 452–465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2019.1589429>
- Pan, C. C., Bittner, M., & Chou, C. C. (2023). Developing an inclusive culture through Unified Champion Schools programs: A pilot study on school awareness and attitudes toward students with intellectual disabilities among general students in Taiwan. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 71(2), 273–286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2023.2231215>
- Pavlović Babić, D., Simić, N., & Friedman, E. (2017). School-level facilitators of inclusive education: The case of Serbia. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 33(4), 449–465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2017.1342419>

- Protector of Citizens. (2024). *Special report of the Protector of Citizens on inclusive education*. The Author. Retrieved from <https://ombudsman.rs/attachments/article/7992/Ombudsman%20Special%20Report%20on%20Inclusive%20Education.pdf>
- Rangarajan, R., Sharma, U., & Grové, C. (2023). Inclusion and equity in India's new National Education Policy (NEP): An analysis using the Context Led Model of Education Quality. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 29, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2295907>
- Rashid, S. M. M., & Wong, M. T. (2023). Challenges of implementing the individualized education plan (IEP) for special needs children with learning disabilities: Systematic literature review (SLR). *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 22(1), 15–34. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.1.2>
- Sacks, L. H., & Halder, S. (2017). Challenges in implementation of individualized educational plan (IEPs): Perspectives from India and the United States of America. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing*, 8(9), 958–965.
- Senoo, E. J., Oti-Boadi, M., Senoo-Dogbey, E. V., et al. (2024). Barriers to inclusive education of children with autism: Ghanaian teachers' perspective. *Discover Education*, 3, 146. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00242-3>
- Sharma, U., Armstrong, A. C., Merumeru, L., Simi, J., & Yared, H. (2018). Addressing barriers to implementing inclusive education in the Pacific. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(1), 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1514751>
- Tikly, L., & Barrett, A. M. (2011). Social justice, capabilities and the quality of education in low income countries. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31(1), 3–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.06.001>
- Tremblay, P., & Belley, S. (2017). Individualized education plans in Canada: A comparative analysis. *International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE)*, 8(1), 3017–3024. <https://doi.org/10.20533/ijcdse.2042.6364.2017.0409>
- Turlubekova, M., Petrovna, P. T., & Bugubayeva, R. (2024). Analysis of factors influencing inclusive education as a key lever for reaching children with special educational needs in the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(6), 3731–3743. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i6.6270>
- UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action*. UNESCO. Retrieved from https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Salamanca_Statement_1994.pdf
- UNESCO. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all*. UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.54676/JJNK6989>
- UNESCO. (2021). *Global education monitoring report 2021—Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia—Inclusion and education: All means all*. UNESCO. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375490.locale=en>
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2012). *International standard classification of education ISCED 2011*. The Author. Retrieved from <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>
- UNICEF. (2019). *Situation analysis of children and adolescents in Serbia*. UNICEF Serbia.
- United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*. Retrieved from <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd>
- United Nations. (2015). *Universal declaration of human rights*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2023). *Children with disabilities in Europe and Central Asia: A statistical overview of their well-being*. UNICEF. Retrieved from https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ECARO-Disability-report-11_20_2-1.pdf
- Woodcock, S., Sharma, U., Subban, P., & Hitches, E. (2022). Teacher self-efficacy and inclusive education practices: Rethinking teachers' engagement with inclusive practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117, Article 103802. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103802>

Zanobini, M., Viterbori, P., & Usai, M. C. (2023). Psychology of special needs and inclusion. In J. Zumbach, D. A. Bernstein, S. Narciss, & G. Marsico (Eds.), *International handbook of psychology learning and teaching* (pp. 1077–1096). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28745-0_52

Djorde M. Kadijevich , with a Ph.D. in informatics in education (University of Novi Sad, Serbia) and a Ph.D. in mathematics education (University of Joensuu, Finland), conducts research in mathematics, informatics, and statistics education. He is a member of several groups of experts, including the Editorial Board of Journal of Computer Assisted Learning and Committee for Education of the Serbia Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Dejan Maslikovic received his doctorate from the University of Belgrade from the study of the capacity of digital technology for the development of an inclusive society. His areas of research interest are inclusion, cultural heritage, sociology, education, and, more recently, social aspects of the application of artificial intelligence.

Uncorrected Proof

Author Queries

Chapter No.: 6 0006237389

Queries	Details Required	Author's Response
AU1	Please check that the affiliation details are presented correctly.	
AU2	Please check that the hierarchy of section headings are appropriate.	
AU3	The citation “Janjić et al., 2021” has been changed to “Janjić et al. 2012” here and in subsequent occurrences to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary.	
AU4	Please check that the section cross references are made appropriate here and in subsequent occurrences.	
AU5	The citation “Nikolić et al., 2020” has been changed to “Nikolić et al. 2019” to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary.	
AU6	Reference “Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (2021)” was not cited anywhere in the text. Please provide in text citation or delete the reference from the reference list.	

Alternative Texts for Your Images, Please Check and Correct them if Required

Page no	Fig/Photo	Thumbnail	Alt-text Description																																																		
	Fig1	IEP Support by Educational Level and School Year <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>School Year</th><th>G1-8 IEP 1 (%)</th><th>G1-8 IEP 2 (%)</th><th>G9-12 IEP 1 (%)</th><th>G9-12 IEP 2 (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2016/17</td><td>1.5</td><td>0.8</td><td>0.3</td><td>0.3</td></tr><tr><td>2017/18</td><td>1.6</td><td>0.9</td><td>0.3</td><td>0.4</td></tr><tr><td>2018/19</td><td>1.6</td><td>0.9</td><td>0.3</td><td>0.4</td></tr><tr><td>2019/20</td><td>1.7</td><td>1.0</td><td>0.3</td><td>0.5</td></tr><tr><td>2020/21</td><td>1.7</td><td>1.0</td><td>0.3</td><td>0.6</td></tr><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>1.8</td><td>1.8</td><td>0.3</td><td>1.1</td></tr><tr><td>2022/23</td><td>1.9</td><td>2.0</td><td>0.3</td><td>1.2</td></tr><tr><td>2023/24</td><td>1.8</td><td>2.0</td><td>0.3</td><td>1.2</td></tr><tr><td>2024/25</td><td>1.9</td><td>1.9</td><td>0.3</td><td>1.4</td></tr></tbody></table>	School Year	G1-8 IEP 1 (%)	G1-8 IEP 2 (%)	G9-12 IEP 1 (%)	G9-12 IEP 2 (%)	2016/17	1.5	0.8	0.3	0.3	2017/18	1.6	0.9	0.3	0.4	2018/19	1.6	0.9	0.3	0.4	2019/20	1.7	1.0	0.3	0.5	2020/21	1.7	1.0	0.3	0.6	2021/22	1.8	1.8	0.3	1.1	2022/23	1.9	2.0	0.3	1.2	2023/24	1.8	2.0	0.3	1.2	2024/25	1.9	1.9	0.3	1.4	The inclusive supports for students with functional difficulties is shown in the figure based on educational level and school year
School Year	G1-8 IEP 1 (%)	G1-8 IEP 2 (%)	G9-12 IEP 1 (%)	G9-12 IEP 2 (%)																																																	
2016/17	1.5	0.8	0.3	0.3																																																	
2017/18	1.6	0.9	0.3	0.4																																																	
2018/19	1.6	0.9	0.3	0.4																																																	
2019/20	1.7	1.0	0.3	0.5																																																	
2020/21	1.7	1.0	0.3	0.6																																																	
2021/22	1.8	1.8	0.3	1.1																																																	
2022/23	1.9	2.0	0.3	1.2																																																	
2023/24	1.8	2.0	0.3	1.2																																																	
2024/25	1.9	1.9	0.3	1.4																																																	