

One School for All **Model of organization of school processes enabling the presence of inclusive school setting**

The One School for All Model to arrange school processes in such a way that inclusive school setting is present is actually a work model, a structured approach based on organizational development. It is implemented at school level and managed by a school leadership team especially set up for this purpose, consisting of the school headmaster, his/her deputies and core teaching staff. It has been designed specifically with the Bulgarian context in mind and functions by considering the school as a system at all levels – culture, policies, practice, and by involving all stakeholders.

What could schools expect if they decide to work using the Model?

1. Change of the conceptual frame of inclusive education

„The greatest benefit of all is that we changed as personalities. We no longer discuss the issue whether children with SEN belong in mainstream schools or not. We started considering numerous and different ways of teaching, we started looking for something new, we realised that teaching could occur in a different manner. The change is at the level of personality.¹“

Inclusive education is among the highlights of education policies in the past few years and also during the upcoming Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2018. One of the key findings of the *EU Education and Training Monitor 2017* with regard to Bulgaria is that increasing attention is paid to inclusive education in our country.

The Pre-school and School Education Act which entered into force reads:

§ 1 (22) Inclusive education is the process of understanding, accepting and supporting the individuality of each child or pupil and the variety of needs of all children and pupils through involvement and inclusion of resources aimed at removing the obstacles to teaching and learning and at creating opportunities for development and participation of children and pupils in all aspects of life in the community.

Article 7 (2) Inclusive education shall constitute an integral part of the right to education.

Despite all this, the observations of our Centre based on our daily work and on a study of media environment, which we are about to finalize soon, indicate that inclusive education is still considered in a narrow sense, which comes as legacy of previous processes such as “integrated education” and “inclusive training”. The use of this term still reflects the dominant perception that this is training meant for children and pupils with special educational needs.

¹ All quotations used in the text are statements made by headmasters and teachers in the five partner schools with which the Model was designed in 2014-2016 during the first phase of the One School for All Programme implemented with the support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation.

The Model reaches further than the definition provided by the law in its understanding of inclusive education and defines it as a process of receiving and ensuring support to all children and adults in the educational process. On the one hand, inclusive school setting is possible only if every child feels safe, welcome and supported in school, and has opportunities for personal development and expression. On the other hand, an equally important condition is that every *teacher* feels supported, because it is only the supported teacher who can be confident, motivated and supportive. On yet another hand, in inclusive schools every *parent* feels assured as to their child's safety and development, feels welcome in school and is fully aware of the opportunities to participate in school life attracted by a shared vision of school development.

„I personally felt I was supported. I think it's important to feel this support when I make my first steps as a teacher. Thank you. It seems you fixed the chaos consisting of school occurrences, ideas, priorities, perspectives. Everything fitted together in a complete school picture.“

2. Structured approach at organisational level

„The Model helped us a lot with planning. We developed the annual plan using our priorities as a starting point and the result was much better structured. This approach requires greater effort but the result proves it's worthy.“

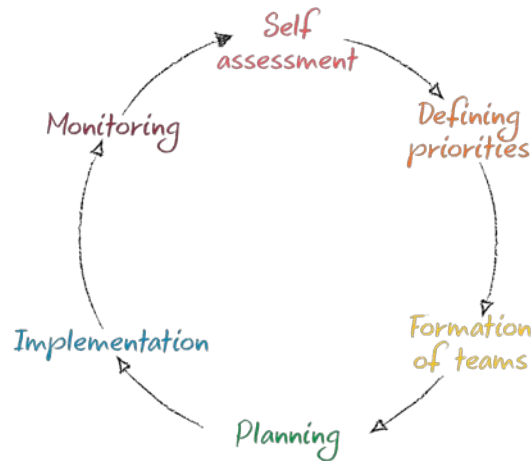
„We all have better idea of the objectives, tasks and expected project results. The specific terminology we're going to use is clearer now, as is the chronology of events...“

„Some of the activities in the plan have been developed purposefully, others are simply part of our other activities running independently from our involvement in the project. We just combined new objectives with our experience so far.“

The introduction and efficient functioning of the school practices included in the Model goes through several key stages:

1. The school setting is analysed using self-assessment of key indicators in each of the four areas of the Model implementation and impact by involving all stakeholders;
2. Priorities are selected and specific and measurable objectives are set, along with indicators of success;
3. Persons in charge are appointed and teams are set up;
4. An action plan is developed in which persons in charge and deadlines are specified;
5. Implementation of the plan and coordination of activities;
6. Progress monitoring.

Then a new cycle of the Model implementation starts by again using the tool of self-assessment and situation analysis, and by updating the objectives and the action plan.



3. Changes occur from the inside out

„It’s not an issue really; my colleagues dislike it (self-assessment – Ed.) but if we insist on it, they do it. It matters a lot to the management because it indicates problems and trends. What we find annoying though is that during the latest self-assessment a problem occurred but no one was willing to get involved in its solution and the respective team. People expected that the problem would be fixed only in a top-down way, no one actually thought that it should be tackled by them at the down levels. This attitude is still pervasive.”

„All teachers took part in the development of a vision of our work based on survey forms completed by pupils and parents. The weaknesses and strengths of our work were taken into account so as to work towards improving our weaknesses.”

The Model describes how inclusive school setting is built up from the inside out. No doubt, building an inclusive school requires regulatory framework and institutional will at national level; however, coordination at the level of systems, policies and practices implemented in schools themselves plays an equally important role. Further to this, individual school participants should have genuine motivation to be part of the process of change, which depends on whether they feel they are really part of the process, whether they are urged to get involved in discussions and exchange of opinions prior to decision making.

„At the beginning of this school year something in us seemed to snap. We shed off the fear of observing each other, we started sharing with others, looking for efficient mechanisms to work with every pupil. We are deeply satisfied with the

fact that thanks to all this we started noticing changes in pupils too, and in their attitude to school and the teaching process. Children we looked upon as goners surprisingly achieved progress!"

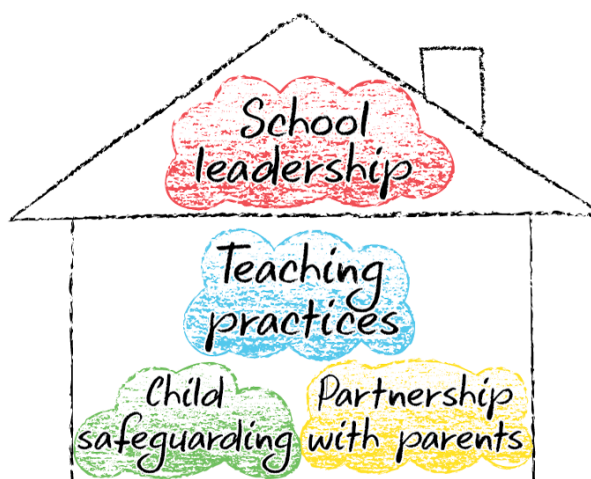
„The change I can feel and see happening has to do mainly with teachers' different attitude. We laid the foundation of a team which indeed shares common vision of the school we want to achieve and of motivating children to show their strenghts.“

4. Targeted teamwork in each of the Model's four areas of impact

„We decided to study the attitudes of the school community and to develop a workplan by involving parents more actively. They were supposed to participate in the development of both the vision and the strategy. A change was also visible among the teaching staff.“

„In the course of the project we obtained clarity as to the issue of child inclusion. We asked ourselves questions that were previously never raised – e.g. the procedure for child protection; an official document specifying the steps one has to take in a specific situation of threat to a child.“

The functioning of the the Model requires coordination of the established school leadership team and consistent involvement of all stakeholders from the school community in four key areas: (1) School management, (2) Teaching practice, (3) Child safety, and (4) Partnership with parents. A team of teachers is assigned to each of the areas, thus enabling every teacher who wants to be part of setting the direction of school development to be an active participant.



Indicators monitored by every school team in the four areas

1. School management
1.1. The school has developed a shared vision with clear focus on building inclusive, accessible and supporting school environment for all children and adults.
1.2. The school earmarks resources and invests time in building up teams in order to involve the necessary specialists and all stakeholders to ensure timely and efficient support of pupils' varying educational needs.
1.3. The school has introduced policy and procedures targeted at prevention, timely identification and support to pupils with learning difficulties.
1.4. The school has efficient qualification programme in place which is designed based on purposeful analysis of teachers' and pupils' needs.
1.5. The school ensures supplementary support and care for the mental health of those teachers who wish to benefit from it, offering them opportunities to get involved in formats led by external specialists (in case a format requires specific expertise) or by resources available inhouse.

2. Teaching practice
2.1. Teachers can recognise any learning difficulties timely and can identify every child's strengths and weaknesses by using different tools and approaches to this end.
2.2. Teachers apply traditional, multisensory and interactive teaching methods based on information about every pupil collected in advance so that they can meet the different learning preferences and needs of every pupil. Whenever possible, teachers match the way in which they check and grade pupils' success with their strengths, so that pupils are able to show the best of their capacities.
2.3. Teachers analyse purposefully any additional competences they may need in order to work with their pupils, and they plan ways to acquire and develop them. Teachers actively look for opportunities to get further training and take part in various formats (professional meetings/communities in schools, workshops, conferences, intravision, supervision, etc.) which meet their needs and they monitor the benefits they get.
2.4. Teachers arrange classrooms in ways matching the diverse learning needs and preferences of all pupils (including pupils with learning difficulties) and the specific teaching methods they have selected in order to meet those needs and preferences.

3. Child safety
3.1. Clearly regulated and defined (step by step) reporting procedure is available to the staff to refer to whenever concerns and incidents related to child safety have to be

notified; the procedure is also in compliance with the national legislation.

3.2. The school has a procedure in place to select teaching and non-teaching staff, which takes into consideration the principles of child safety.

3.3. There is a code of conduct clearly indicating which conduct of adults to children and children to children is acceptable and which is not.

3.4. The school has adopted and implements policy of pupils' protection and safety.

3.5. The school ensures that all pupils are granted the same right to protection.

3.6. All decisions and policies related to safety and protection at school are consulted with the pupils and their parents.

4. Partnership with parents

4.1. Teachers hold focused (clearly targeted) individual talks with parents, which may have different goals, whenever necessary and with such frequency as to facilitate the achievement of the set goals.

4.2. The school offers environment that sets equal opportunities for parent involvement, irrespective of parents' ethnic group, religion, social status or another distinctive feature.

4.3. The school offers environment that gives parents opportunities to get involved in different initiatives, events, clubs and other formats.

Where is the Model implemented and what are the results of its implementation?

The quotations used in the text are statements made by headmasters and teachers in the five partner schools with which the Model was designed in 2014-2016 during the first phase of the One School for All Programme implemented with the support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation. These schools are: *Zahary Stoyanov* 104th Primary School in Sofia; *Stoil Popov* 171st Primary School in Novi Iskar; *Hristo Botev* 202nd Primary School in Dolni Pasarel; *Vassil Levski* Primary School in Pravets; *St. Cyril and Methodius* Primary School in Botevgrad.

Some conclusions of our joint work with the partner schools

1. Instead of ready-made solutions, schools need support to understand how to help themselves – in terms of awareness of their needs, taking responsibilities, discovering their resources. Schools are ready to initiate changes once they define their needs on their own.
2. An efficient teacher training programme is the one targeted at forming and developing analytical and self-reflexive skills.

3. The opportunities to improve teachers' capacity, combined with opportunities to hold discussions and analyse existing and potential school practice with regard to embracing diversity result in improved teachers' attitudes to classroom diversity.
4. There are types of career development different from traditional training, which could help educators teach and support children more efficiently – e.g. sharing classroom experience and observations with other teachers. Experience sharing is most beneficial if a topic and specific goals are set. If sharing occurs between teachers from different schools, then other school contexts may become familiar and more points of view may find common ground.
5. Any teacher is supportive only if s/he feels supported. By support and mental care in the Model's context is meant any practice and conditions which have to do more with teachers' emotional status and mental wellbeing than with teachers' career development, the latter being only a part of teacher personality. Opportunities to cope with professional burnout, other than one-time team building event, opportunities to offer space for conversations where teachers can see themselves as humans, and not just professionals, care for mental health, etc. are just few of the forms that the leadership team should offer to the teaching staff in terms of care for teachers' wellbeing.
6. A crucial factor that determines and builds on teachers' efforts to introduce inclusive education is the school managing body. Inclusive education is above all a philosophy of new relations. "The headmaster guides school management toward a culture of valuing and embracing diversity, s/he sets the model of relations"²; the managing body does what is necessary to make inclusion, as a priority, part of the school vision, it creates opportunities and conditions for teachers to share challenges and look for solutions as a team, and it recognizes that teachers need to be protected against professional burnout.
7. In order to be able to assert inclusive education as school practice and philosophy before parents, pupils and teachers, the managing body needs to build on a document that has been discussed, endorsed and communicated, and that asserts inclusion as part of the school commitment to provide quality education.

² Marinova, A. 2016, *Supporting personal development in the latest educational policies of inclusive education: the practice of support*, available at priobshti.se: <http://priobshti.se/article/reformata-v-priobshtavashtoto-obrazovanie/podkrepat-a-za-lichnostno-razvitie-v-novite-0>

8. Whenever the management communicates openly with teachers and shares responsibilities with them, teachers become more confident and take on initiatives. Whenever the relations between teachers and management are only formal, teamwork is not valued and teachers believe that nothing depends on them, then responsibility is shed off and teachers lack initiative to trigger any type of change.

Some outcomes of the implementation of the Model pointing out to change of teacher attitudes and practice in the partner schools

How would you grade your attitude to inclusive education? 1 - I don't support it; 5 – I definitely support it - % (real respondents only)		2014	2015	2016
	1	1,0	0	0
	2	2,9	1,1	0
	3	29,1	5,4	7,7
	4	24,3	20,4	20,5
	5	34,0	60,2	66,7

For whom is inclusive education meant? - % (every correct answer)	2014	2015	2016
Children with SEN	67,0	63,4	56,0
Children with learning difficulties	63,1	71,0	59,0
Children of different ethnic origin	25,2	26,9	25,6
Children with mother tongue other than Bulgarian	16,5	18,3	19,2
All children	48,5	39,8	69,2
Teachers	49,5	58,1	69,2
Parents	29,1	49,5	60,3
Other	1,0	2,2	6,4

Who is mostly responsible for inclusive education in schools? - % (real respondents only)	2014	2015	2016
Teachers and headmaster	30,1	33,3	53,8
Resource teachers and specialists	21,4	7,5	9,0
Ministry of Education	38,8	40,9	20,5
Parents	1,9	1,1	1,3
Other	1,9	3,2	6,4

Do all children with learning difficulties need to get resource support? -% (real respondents only)		2014	2015	2016
Yes		70,9	34,4	25,6
No		24,3	40,9	55,1
I don't know		0	11,8	14,1

Do you succeed in defining the strengths of children with learning difficulties? - % (real respondents only)		2014	2015	2016
Always		13,6	22,6	16,7
In most of the cases		45,6	50,5	65,4
Sometimes		19,4	15,1	10,3

How would you grade your confidence with regard to learning difficulties during talks with parents? - % (real respondents only)		2014	2015	2016
Not confident		8,7	4,3	1,3
2		25,2	7,5	5,1
3		45,6	23,7	26,9
4		7,8	41,9	50,0
Fully confident		6,8	16,1	11,5

Do you use differentiated approach in case of children with learning difficulties? -% (real respondents only)		2014	2016
Yes		63,1	80,8
No		3,9	5,1
Not sure		7,8	5,1

Where is the Model implemented now and what can you expect from us?

In the period of 2017-2019 the Model is being tested in ten partner schools selected by means of a competition which comprised 3 stages: *Nesho Bonchev* Secondary School in Panagyurishte; *Vassil Levski* 156th Primary School in Kremikovtsi district, Sofia; *Lyuben Karavelov* Secondary School in Dobrich; *St. Cyril and Methodius* Primary School in Vetren; *Bacho Kiro* Secondary School in Pavlikeni; *Hristo Botev* Primary School in Brestnitsa; *Bratya Miladinovi* 97th Secondary School in Sofia; *Hadzhi Gencho* National School in Teteven; *Pencho Slaveykov* Primary School in Dimitrovgrad; *Anton Strashimirov* Primary School in Bohot. Work in three of the first-phase schools continues as well: *Zahary Stoyanov* 104th Primary School in Sofia; *Hristo Botev* 202nd Primary School in Dolni Pasarel; and *St. Cyril and Methodius* Primary School in Botevgrad.

In November this year, the school teams in different thematic fields received series of training on the priorities they selected in the fields of: school management, teaching practice, child safety and partnership with parents. Now they have to achieve the goals set in their school action plans.

You can expect that the Model will be further enriched and improved so that it matches school needs even better and is accessible by more schools. News will be available at <http://priobshti.se>.

Furthermore, the Centre offers MOE certified training dedicated to the Model, to self-assessment of school settings and to any of the four school development areas. Further information about this training is available on the MoE website, qualification section. The Centre site, www.cie.bg, will be posting the dates of planned training and there you can register for participation.