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Equal Opportunities in diversity and supporting students who are at risk



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**"Let us assume that each person has an equal chance, not to become equal to others, but to be different in order to realize that unique potential that he or she has, in body, mind and spirit."
(John Fischer)**



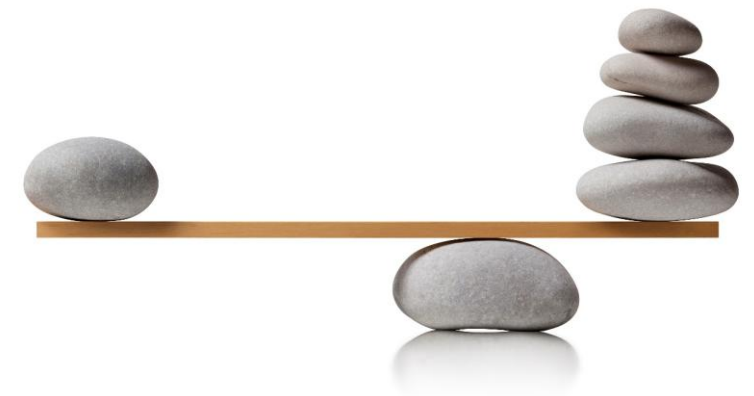


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Equal opportunities refers to the absence of barriers to economic, political and social participation and equal treatment for all citizens regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, chronic non-communicable disease, HIV infection, membership of a disadvantaged group and any other criteria.



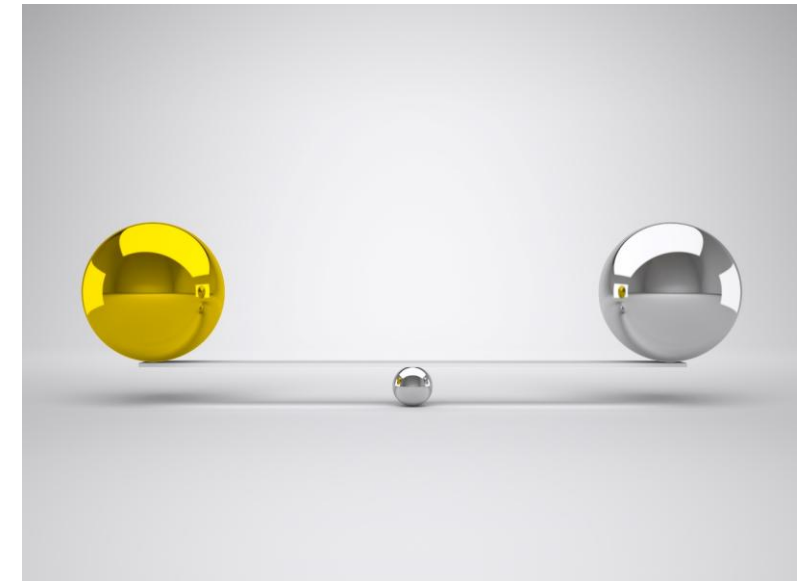


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Equal opportunities means treating people fairly and without prejudice, but also creating conditions that encourage, value diversity and promote dignity in the workplace and in society. Moreover, equality means correcting past imbalances and ensuring that relations with partners and customers are conducted in a constructive way, supporting inclusion and avoiding unjustified discrimination.





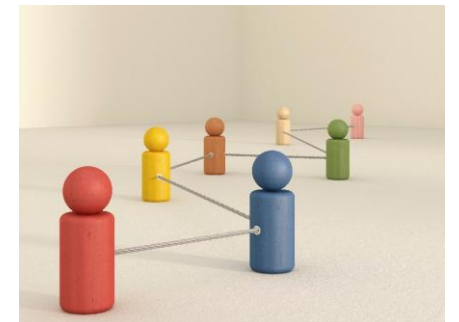
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"Social exclusion is a dynamic process, reflected in descending levels: some disadvantage leads to exclusion, which in turn leads to further disadvantage [...] and ends in multiple and persistent disadvantage. Individuals, households or other spatial units may be excluded from access to resources such as jobs, healthcare, education and political or social life."

(Eurostat Working Group on Poverty and Social Exclusion Statistics)





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Poverty or exclusion from access to adequate resources - defined as poverty in terms of both income and deprivation of any kind;

Exclusion from the labour market - identified using a series of employment indicators (at the same time, the researchers admit that these indicators are only valid when they correlate with exclusion from social relations);

Exclusion from services - where services refer to public transport, play facilities and children's clubs and basic services in the home (gas, electricity, running water, telephone);



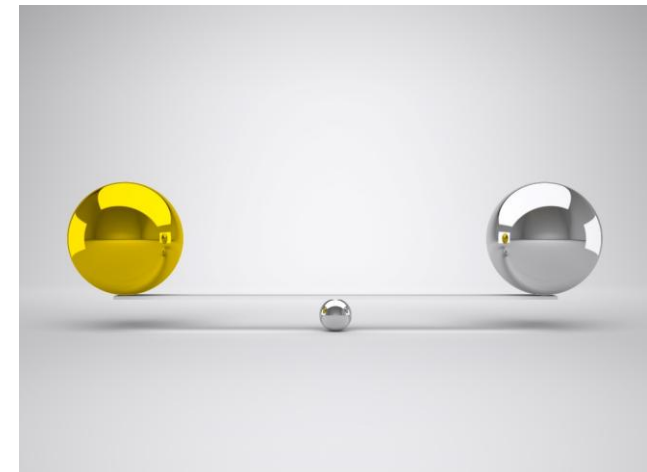
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Exclusion from social relations, which covers the following five dimensions:

- non-participation in communal activities, seen as essential by the majority of the population;
- size and quality of social circles; support available on a regular basis and in times of crisis;
- non-involvement in political or civic activities;
- isolation, as a result of fear of crime, disability or other factors.





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Identifying the sources of exclusion is an issue that is constantly on the minds of specialists.

Even if it cannot be said that it is a completed process, we consider that three significant types of sources of exclusion are outlined, namely:

1. structural exclusion, produced by the configuration of the social system,
2. territorial, community belonging of the individual or group and
3. self-exclusion.



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Forms of social exclusion

Economic exclusion

Exclusion from education

Exclusion from health services

Exclusion from social welfare services

Exclusion from occupational services

Exclusion from housing

Exclusion from participation in political life

Exclusion on grounds of criminal offences

Exclusion due to alcohol and drug use and dependence

Exclusion due to malfunctioning of justice, police

Exclusion from area-specific opportunities, with reference to transport, communications

Exclusion due to abandonment by family or lack of family

Gender-related exclusion

Roma-specific exclusion

Specific exclusion of abandoned, severely neglected or abused children.



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"Inclusive education seeks to meet the learning needs of all children, young people and adults, with a particular focus on those vulnerable in terms of marginalisation and social exclusion." (Definition of Inclusive Education (UNESCO, Salamanca Conference, 1994)

"Inclusive education implies a permanent process of school improvement, aimed at harnessing existing resources, especially human resources, to support the participation of all pupils in a community in the learning process." (MEN&UNICEF, 1999 and GD no.1251/2005)



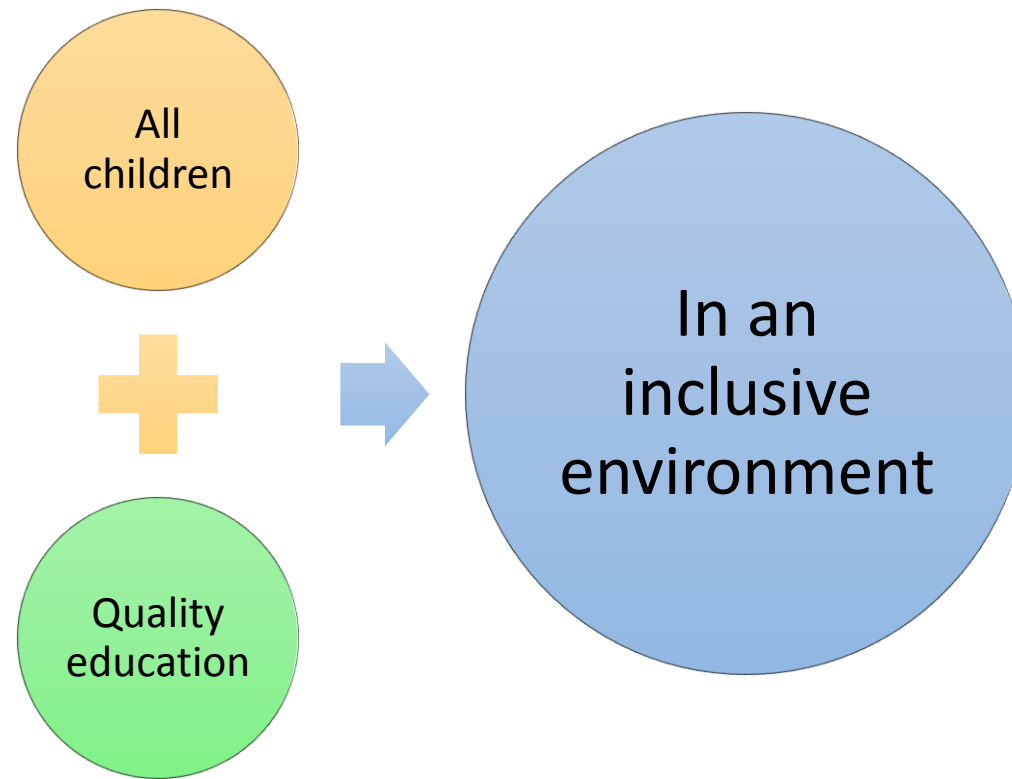


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In Salamanca (Spain) in 1994, the vision of inclusive education was adopted and recommendations were made that have remained a reference for UNESCO and the entire international community throughout the subsequent period: "...schools must include in the educational process all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions".





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Inclusive education involves an ongoing process of school improvement, aimed at harnessing existing resources, especially human resources, to support the participation of all pupils in a community in the learning process.

"Inclusive education and the pedagogy of diversity", defines inclusive education as the institutionalised way of schooling children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in mainstream/ mainstream school structures, as an alternative to special schools, and presents several dimensions:

- Legislative and administrative
- Pedagogical
- Social



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Strategies for schools and teachers

a) General principles:

- ✓ Establishing a school philosophy
- ✓ Respect the principle of natural proportion (e.g. local schools)
- ✓ Form an inclusion working group.
- ✓ Maintain flexibility and realise that it is not an easy process to implement.





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b) Necessary conditions for the progress of schools involved in inclusive education:

- ✓ Effective leadership style from all staff, not just the principal.
- ✓ Involvement of staff, students and the whole community in school policy-making and decision-making.
- ✓ Commitment to collaborative planning
- ✓ Coordination strategies
- ✓ Attention to the potential benefits of the review process
- ✓ Staff development policy.



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Inclusion indicators

A. Creating a culture of inclusion

I. Community building

1. Every student should be encouraged to feel welcome.
2. Students help each other.
3. Teachers to work together.
4. Teachers and pupils to respect each other.
5. To form a partnership between teaching staff and parents.
6. Teachers and principals to cooperate on good terms.
7. All local communities to be involved in school work.



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Setting inclusion values

1. To have high expectations of all students.
2. Teachers, principals, students and parents to share the philosophy of inclusion.
3. Pupils are valued equally.
4. Pupils and teaching staff treat each other as human beings, but also as occupants of a 'role'.
5. Teachers seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school.
6. The school should strive to reduce all forms of discrimination as far as possible.



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Producing inclusive policies

I. Developing a school for all

1. Teaching staff appointments and promotions to be impartial.
2. All teaching staff be helped to become familiar with the school.
3. The school should seek to enrol all pupils who exist in the community.
4. The school to allow all buildings to be physically accessible to all people.
5. All new students be helped to become familiar with the school.
6. The school to form teaching groups so that all pupils are valued.



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Organising support for diversity

1. All forms of support to be coordinated.
2. Skills development activities for teachers are designed to meet the needs of diverse learners.
3. Policies for 'special educational needs' should be policies of inclusion, not integration.
4. The Code of Practice on Special Needs Education should be used to reduce barriers to learning and participation for all pupils.
5. Support for pupils learning Romanian as a second language to be coordinated with support for education.
6. Religious and behavioural support policies are integrated with curriculum development and learning support policies.
7. Reduce pressures for disciplinary exclusion.
8. Reduce barriers to participation.
9. Reduce threats.



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Developing inclusive practices

I. Orchestrating learning

1. Teaching should be planned with all learners in mind.
2. Lessons should encourage the participation of all students.
3. Lessons develop the ability to understand differences.
4. Pupils are actively involved in their own learning process.
5. Pupils learn through collaboration.
6. Assessment contributes to achievement by all students.
7. Classroom discipline should be based on respect for the student.
8. Teachers to plan, teach and revise in part-nerially.
9. To encourage learning and participation by all students.
10. Homework to contribute to the learning of all students.
11. All students to take part in activities outside of class.



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Mobilising resources

1. Differences between students to be used as a RESOURCE to aid teaching and learning.
2. The whole experience of the teaching staff to be used.
3. Teachers develop resources to facilitate learning and participation.
4. Community resources are distributed equitably to facilitate inclusion.



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There are several contemporary challenges of wide resonance to the way schools are organised and operate:

- Child-centredness, on the uniqueness of the child
- Responding to diverse educational situations (a responsive pedagogy, taking into account and valuing the diversity of the human being in its various aspects)
- Comprehensiveness - understanding, acceptance of differences between peers (pedagogy of otherness)
- Democracy and human solidarity - a fairer, more natural school
- An open, caring school
- A flexible school that adapts, learns (itself) and changes.



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The concept of **sustainable development** was established through the international agreement reached at the Rio de Janeiro Conference (1992) and the adoption of Agenda 21 as the global strategic option for the next century.

Sustainable development is the ability to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The overall objective of development is to identify the optimal solutions for combining and "living together" the four systems: economic, human, technological and environmental, within which the concept of economic development is applied to the economic, political and social environment.



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The three pillars through which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is structured were defined in the Brundtland Commission Report (1987):

SOCIAL EQUITY - whereby developing nations must be able to meet their basic needs in terms of employment, food, energy, water and sanitation;

ECONOMIC GROWTH - for developing nations to approach the quality of life in developed countries;

THE ENVIRONMENT - with the need to conserve and improve the available resource base by gradually changing the way technologies are developed and used.



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Ensuring quality education and promoting
lifelong learning opportunities for all



Thank you for your attention!

- Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!
- Dziękujemy za uwagę!
- Děkujeme vám za pozornost!
- მადლობთ ყურადღებისთვის!
- Mulțumesc pentru atenție!

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