

## How can Disabled People's Organisations better promote and improve inclusive education of students with disabilities?

**Relevant articles of the CRPD:** 8, 19, 24

**Country:** Moldova, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro

**Region:** South East Europe

**Good practices available in:** English (full report available in Albanian and Serbian)

The Promotion of Inclusive Education Initiative in South East Europe: a Comprehensive Approach to Raise Awareness and Change Representations of People with Disabilities

### Description of the practice and the process involved

Attitudes based on segregation and the medical model by professionals, families, policy makers and people with disabilities themselves are one of the largest barriers to change. **Changing perceptions of disability** is a long process that involves not only **awareness-raising campaigns** but **comprehensive research and information** on disability made available to all as well as **new methodology for training public service professionals** based on the holistic approach.

There are examples in the region where the approach to changing minds is being achieved in a **holistic** manner beginning with research and information followed by awareness-raising and training on the new disability paradigm. The following example shows a best practice using a multi-pronged and comprehensive approach.

The Associations of Students with Disabilities in Moldova, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro **joined together** to take a regional approach to promote **inclusive education**. The initiative began in December 2003. Using both **information and research** along with **media campaigns** is an excellent way to approach changing the dominant perceptions of disability.

In addition, the regional approach to promoting new ideas has an added value as it facilitates **sharing experiences and resources** in the process of shifting the paradigm.

The project has several phases:

### Phase one: gathering information and research

- The project began with a **wide-scale survey on students with disabilities** attending university based on **interviews** with students themselves in all three countries,
- An **analysis of legislation related to education** was made in all three countries using a team of **lawyers with disabilities**.

### Phase two: media campaigns

- A **media campaign** was organised to promote the results of the survey to the public as well as to policy-makers,
- The associations created a **list of amendments and propositions** for changing legislation based on the legal analysis and presented to various ministries.

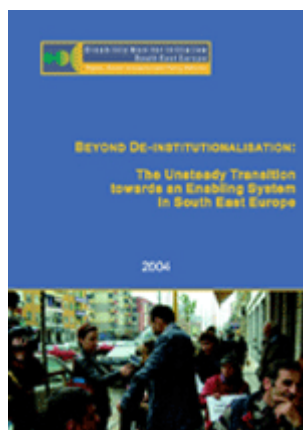
### Phase three: lobbying

- **Lobbying activities** were carried out within the ministries in all three countries based on the findings and research that was gathered,
- **Lobbying university administrations** was carried out using the findings in the surveys to communicate their demands.

## **The effects / impact of the practice**

While it is too early to tell what impact this initiative has had, the approach used to change minds and raise awareness around the inclusive paradigm is **multifaceted** using **information on the situation** for students with disabilities as well as **legal analysis** on education to convey the message.

## **Background and context**



**Full project report:** [Beyond De-Institutionalisation: The Unsteady Transition towards an Enabling System in South East Europe \(DMI SEE, 2004\)](#)

**Criteria for the good practices:** see page 21 of the full report.

**Recommendations from the good practices:** see page 91 of the full report.

**Links to further resources:**

[Full text on article 8 – Awareness-raising](#)

[Full text on article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community](#)

[Full text on article 24 – Education](#)