

From language needs to inclusive education

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ABSTRACT

The increasing diversity of children from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds in Slovenian kindergartens and schools presents both opportunities and challenges for the educational system. Language barriers and cultural differences can hinder successful integration, making it crucial to adopt a structured and inclusive approach to education. The effectiveness of this integration is heavily influenced by the implementation of pedagogical processes and the attitudes of educators.

Inclusive education requires a multifaceted strategy, including professional collaboration, structured protocols, and a supportive learning environment. Integration should be a two-way process involving children, parents, educators, and the local community. Continuous monitoring, professional support for educators, and networking at regional and national levels are essential components.

This study examines how language needs are identified and addressed in Slovenian schools and kindergartens the role of educators in fostering inclusion. It also explores the challenges educators face when working with children, students, parents, and colleagues. The research involved 96 kindergarten practitioners, 157 primary school teachers, and 19 secondary school educators trained in inclusive practices.

Findings show that language needs are assessed using interviews, observations, language tests, and collaboration with parents. The Individual Activity Plan is key for addressing language barriers, adapting educational programs, and encouraging participation. Educators emphasized the importance of a vertically integrated approach to support immigrant children, fostering acceptance, belonging, and multilingual communication across all education levels.

Keywords: inclusive education, learning environment, language needs, professional support, immigrants