

Conference report

## **Background**

Multicultural education and the education of minority pupils, especially Roma, has been targeted as a priority for all foundations.

With the draft Policy paper ready it was especially important to create the possibility for foundations to discuss the arising questions. There was also an urgent need to give foundations the possibility to share their experiences and methods relating to multicultural education in general and especially the special needs in the education of Roma students. With organising the conference, IEP wanted to provide an open debate about these questions.

## **The Purpose of the Conference**

The purpose of the conference was to:

1. To introduce the policy paper, "Multicultural Education and the Education of Minority Pupils" developed by IEP, and to begin to discuss and answer the question - What are the implications for foundations;
2. To support the process of strategy development in order to create an effective strategy and programme portfolio relating to the policy;
3. To share information about effective foundation programmes, including good methods and techniques particularly related to the successful schooling of Roma children.

## **Conference Participants**

There were 40 participants from 16 countries.

The foundations that participated in the conference were from the countries where multicultural education, or the education of minorities is a priority area. Most countries in Central and Eastern Europe have problems in this field, thus many of the countries in the region participated.

## **Conference Program**

The work at the conference was divided into three major parts in the following way:

The first day was devoted to policy. An introductory presentation outlined why and how the draft policy paper was prepared with the help of the foundations themselves. Susan Róna addressed questions regarding more general issues on Roma education in her presentation "School Success for Roma Children". There were presentations and discussions concerning the implementation of the policy paper. The first part concentrated on a broader view while the second part of the day was rather discussions.

The second day was mainly spent with the planning and methodology aspects. Charles Temple and Byrd Stasz as respected experts in the field conducted a workshop through the day. Their presentations and group sessions focussed on the aspects of multicultural education, the problems and importance of children's books in a multicultural education framework and oral history.

The third day was almost entirely the time for sharing practice and discussing problematic points in connection with minority education. Stephen Heyneman's keynote speech addressed several important questions in the field of minority education today. Focus was given to group discussions and sharing practical methods. One especially helpful and useful session was the regional group discussions where foundations had the possibility to discuss common problems and ways of solutions in the field of multicultural education.

## **Conference Outcomes**

It was IEP's hope that Foundations would return home and digest all that they had experienced, that they could integrate multicultural education and the education of minority pupils into their overall education strategies, and to have fresh ideas about creating new programme areas or revising existing ones to meet the multicultural education needs in their countries.

The outcomes of the conference are summarised in details in the "Proceedings of the Multicultural Education Conference" on IEP's web page: <http://www.osi.hu/iep>.

Hard copies are also available for reference.

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