



Hungary

Dr. István Hiller
Minister for Education and Culture



Mr. Hiller, born in 1964 and of Hungarian nationality, is Minister of Education and Culture of Hungary and Vice-President of Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP). Previously, from 2003 to 2005, István Hiller was Minister of Cultural Heritage and from 2002 to 2003 Political Undersecretary of State at Ministry of Education. He is a founder member of the MSZP and took part in the wording of the Hungarian Social Democratic Charter. The year 2000 Congress of MSZP elected him member of the party's National Presidency and from 2004 to 2006 he was President of the Hungarian Socialist Party. As head of the Education Cabinet of MSZP he directed work over the chapter on education in the party's 2002 election programme. Mr. Hiller studied history and Latin language and literature at the Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE) in Budapest. He graduated in 1988. He took his doctorate summa cum laude in 1990 and in 1996 his PhD degree. István Hiller started his career as a scholarship holder then later as an assistant lecturer at the Department of Hungarian History of the Middle and Modern Ages at the Eötvös Lóránd University (ELTE) in Budapest. In 1995 and in 1997 he worked and carried out research at the Institute of History of the University of Vienna. In 1999 ELTE students voted him "The University Lecturer of the Year". In 2004, he received German, Italian and French Order of Knighthoods. His writings are regularly published in various journals and study collections both in Hungary and abroad. He regularly takes part in Hungarian and international history conferences. István Hiller is married with two children. His wife, Julianna Hiller-Farkas is a senior college lecturer, who took her PhD degree in 2005.

Inclusive education – challenges in the 21st century

The policy of education in Hungary implemented via the principle of integration aims at including every child in institutional education, regardless of the fact that a child's development may be hindered due to a physical injury, mental problem or some other reason. As this policy seems to coincide with the intensifying intent of the parents of children affected to implement this policy, the value of good practices that have, over the years, been developing in institutions involved in the implementation of inclusive education, is constantly increasing. An education package, created to improve the conditions in which equal opportunity for students with special needs is an achievable objective, is an instrument to provide support to institutions involved in the integration initiative in Hungary with the help of various tenders and programmes initiated by government institutions. The development scheme designed within the framework of these government programmes paves the way for a support system in the field of pedagogy, which can be a useful instrument in providing institutions with a guideline in situations related to specific practices in the field of pedagogy and also in everyday teaching. No efficient integration is possible without the packages created as a result of existing development schemes. Therefore, the effort invested in these development initiatives is of crucial importance in my country.

The education packages are as follows:

- Development of a programme package aimed to provide guidance in teacher training;
- Development and implementation of teacher further training packages and packages designed for the training of educational specialists;

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- Development and implementation of training programmes aimed to intensify social sensitivity;
- Development of the know-how of integrated education, setting up of a methodology data bank and a data supply service package;
- Development of new methods to prevent early student drop-outs;
- Transfer of knowledge accumulated in special institutions to mainstream institutions.

Intensive education, a new vision about the services provided by the school system is getting increasing attention and more and more popular. The notion 'inclusive' originally covered a kind of co-educational methodology and alternatives used in the education of disadvantaged students, the official term used in Hungary being 'students with special needs'. Today the term 'inclusion' is often used in phrases like the 'inclusion of students with special needs', 'inclusion of disadvantaged students' or 'inclusion of the Roma'.

The foundation of inclusive education lies in education based on differentiation. The traditional view that relies on the capability of pupils to adapt to the highest possible degree to existing requirements, and where its effectiveness primarily depends on the capability of adapting, regrettably falls short of being implementable in the new scheme of integration. What is needed is the ability and resolve of teachers and educators to look for and explore all the individual characteristics of a student, no matter whether she or he is healthy or one with special needs. The aim here is to give any child, during the years spent at school, the opportunity to improve their talent that stems from the core characteristics of the individual's psyche. This is why we think UNESCO's International Conference on Education is so important to us, the conference being a forum where we can exchange our views with other countries on the specific issues of education and where we can also learn about new methods.