

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE FIRST REPUBLICAN SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON “INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD”
HELD ON 04–05 MARCH 2025

The First Republican Scientific Conference on “Inclusive Education: Achievements and Challenges Ahead”, held on 04–05 March 2025, was organized in partnership with Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, Baku Slavic University, and Khazar University.

Inclusion refers to the full engagement of children with diverse intellectual and physical abilities-including both gifted children and children with disabilities-in all aspects of schooling and instruction, while simultaneously ensuring that the educational environment remains accessible and beneficial for all other learners. Education, as a major factor influencing social processes, serves the formation of the qualities and values that shape personality development. Democratic education guarantees the equal right to education for all members of society, including both individuals without disabilities and persons with disabilities. This, in turn, contributes to the preservation of social equality within society. Such an opportunity can only be effectively ensured through inclusive education.

Inclusive education is understood as the provision of quality education for all children in age-appropriate classes within general education schools located close to their place of residence, regardless of special educational needs or other barriers, while ensuring the necessary support for their academic achievement. Inclusive education supports children with special educational needs in reaching their full potential, strengthens their self-confidence, and places them on an equal footing with their typically developing peers.

The contemporary period necessitates raising public awareness among persons with special educational needs and their legal guardians regarding educational needs, while also informing them about their educational rights as reflected in the education legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and international conventions. The purpose of this conference was to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge for prospective teachers and currently practicing classroom teachers who seek advice and strategies for involving children with diverse intellectual and physical abilities in a wide range of mainstream classroom activities.

The conference featured discussions on the concept of inclusive education, its historical stages of development, principles and characteristics, curriculum design in inclusive educational environments, and state policy directions in the field of inclusive education. The current situation regarding the education of persons with disabilities in Azerbaijan was also analyzed.

At the opening ceremony of the conference, keynote speeches were delivered by the Rector of Nakhchivan State University, Elbrus Isayev; the Minister of Education of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Elkhana Najafov; the Acting Minister and Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Farid Baghirzadeh; the Vice-Rector of Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, Professor Asaf Zamanov; the Head of the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology at Baku Slavic University, Professor Pirali Aliyev; and the Acting Dean and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education at Khazar University, Aygun Verdiyeva.

In addition, the opening ceremony included the presentation of the “Faith in the Future” project, prepared by Latifa Guliyeva, a graduate of Nakhchivan State University and teacher at Nakhchivan City Children’s Music School No. 4, with the participation of children with disabilities.

Alongside Nakhchivan State University, the conference hosted participants from more than twenty academic and educational institutions, including the Heydar Aliyev Military Institute, the Education Institute of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Lankaran State University, Ganja State University, Baku Slavic University, Azerbaijan Sports Academy, Sumgayit State University, Azerbaijan University, Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, Azerbaijan State Pedagogical College, the Aghjabadi branch of Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University,

Azerbaijan State Agrarian University, Mingachevir State University, Khazar University, Nakhchivan Teachers' Institute, Leyla School Training Center, as well as a range of regional schools and research institutes. A total of 141 presentations submitted by more than 150 participants were delivered in both face-to-face and online formats.

Conference Conclusions

The conference reached the following conclusions:

- ✓ comprehensive and systematic research should be conducted on the history and developmental stages of inclusive education;
- ✓ the education of students with disabilities should be specifically addressed in curriculum design;
- ✓ methods for adapting curricula for students with disabilities should be identified;
- ✓ necessary modifications to the educational environment for students with disabilities should be determined;
- ✓ students with disabilities should be adequately provided with educational resources;
- ✓ inclusive classrooms should be established in higher education institutions;
- ✓ appropriate conditions and relevant nutritional provisions should be created in university cafeterias to ensure proper nutrition for students with disabilities;
- ✓ international best practices in inclusive education should be studied and applied through inviting foreign experts and supporting the international mobility of local specialists.

Conference Recommendations

The conference further proposed the following recommendations:

- ✓ the establishment of mentorship services in the field of inclusive education and the professional preparation of mentors;
- ✓ the development of application and communication guidelines for students with disabilities;
- ✓ the provision of additional financial support to educational institutions to ensure high-quality education for students with disabilities.

Scientific Editor of the First Republican Scientific Conference on “Inclusive Education: Achievements and Challenges Ahead”
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