

# Growing up in cities

## Local solutions for children

5-7 November 2025, Ljubljana

Social Innovation Lab



## Learning Lab BLUE – Inclusive Classrooms: Supporting Children with Special Needs through Teacher Training and Community Practice

5 November 2025, 15:30 – 17:30 CET

### Background

Designing and implementing gender-inclusive urban policies remains a key priority for cities striving to create more equitable and resilient communities. This interactive workshop will explore how cities can strengthen support for children with special needs by combining inclusive education, teacher training, and community-based practices. Drawing on experiences from the work of the Educational Centre Pika, the session will present both the principles of inclusion and practical approaches to implementing them in everyday teaching. Participants will gain insights into how inclusive schools can promote not only academic success, but also children's mental health, social integration, and well-being.

Through case-based group work, participants will reflect on dilemmas such as whether a child with developmental delay is best supported in a mainstream or specialised school setting. The workshop will encourage participants to exchange their own local experiences, challenge common myths about inclusion, and identify practical steps for building safe and supportive learning environments. Participants will be equipped to recognise the links between mental health, learning environments, and inclusion, understand how new pedagogical knowledge contributes to quality education for children with special needs, and learn strategies for translating theory into practice in schools and communities.

### Speakers

- **Matej Rovšek**, Centre Janeza Levca, Educational Centre Pika, Ljubljana
- **Sara Marn**, Centre Janeza Levca, Educational Centre Pika, Ljubljana

### Objectives

- Identifying different vulnerable groups at risk of mental health challenges (e.g. children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders, other special needs, etc.).
- Understanding key concepts such as segregated forms of schooling, safe and supportive learning environments, and integration vs. inclusion.

- Gaining knowledge of the basic principles of inclusion – dispelling myths, clarifying what inclusion is and is not, and highlighting the social benefits of inclusion.
- Understanding how new pedagogical approaches are linked to quality education for students with special needs and learning how to transfer new knowledge into direct work with children – establishing and guiding the implementation process.

## Programme

15:30 – 15:40	<p><i>Welcome &amp; Introduction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming remarks</li> <li>• Ice-breaker</li> </ul>
15:40 – 16:15	<p><i>Introductory Presentation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive education and mental health: Key ideas on how good teaching practices and supportive school environments can help improve inclusion and support children’s and young people’s mental health.</li> <li>• Practical example: Presentation of IC Pika as a unique model that connects education and care, showing how inclusion works in practice and what challenges and successes come with it.</li> </ul>
16:15 – 17:00	<p><i>Interactive Exercise: From Theory to Practice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussion: Participants work in small groups to reflect on an inclusion-related scenario.</li> <li>• Sharing perspectives: Groups explore different options and present their key insights to the others.</li> </ul>
17:00 – 17:30	<p><i>Joint reflections</i></p>

## Contacts

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