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UNICEF Programs of education for Roma children – the art of modelling

JAGODA NOVAK, UNICEF OFFICE CROATIA

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International Framework: UN Committees

Conclusion remarks on the 3rd and 4th Periodical Report of Croatia to the UN Committee for the rights of child (October, 2014.)

Education: „The Committee however remains concerned that many children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations, including Roma children, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children living in remote areas and foreign children, do not have equal access to the education system.”

UN Committee Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the State party:

- Ensure that all children have **equal access to education**, in particular with regard to children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations;
- End segregation of **Roma children and ensure their full integration** into mainstream education;
- Strengthen measures to move towards decentralization and pluralism in the design of educational programs aiming at encouraging **child-centered learning and active participation of children**;

EU perspective, Ombudsmans perspective

EU Monitoring Report on Croatia's Accession Preparations (March, 2013.):

„Additional efforts are needed to ensure that Roma children finish elementary and high education”

Alternative Report Ombudsman for Children to the UN Committee for the Rights of child on the Governments Report (January, 2014.):

„Preeschool/kindergarten program for the children members of the Roma national minority is not co-financing in all education institutions (locations), while it is the key for the prevention of negative practices of segregation in preschool and school education”.

UNICEF evidence-based approach: analysis and research



Roma children – data on education access

- According to MOSES statistics **55% of Roma children are included in kindergartens of preschool short programmes, while RECI* survey records only 21 % of Roma children in RECI sample attending preschools/kindergartens.** According UNESCO, the percentage of children in preschool in general population is 63%
- **Status (middle) dropout rate for Roma children in Cro is around 30%, while in segregated education area it is 43%, while for the majority population is 1%. (estimation of the dropout rate according to MOSES sectoral data base of Roma education, MOSES 2015)**
- **Percentage of 17 year old Roma included in the high school education is 37%, while for majority population is 81% (Regional survey on Roma, UNDP and EC, 2012)**

What does UNICEF do? Good practices

The public policy changes we advocate = Accessible, quality and integrated preschool and elementary school education for all Roma children in Croatia

Includes:

- **Preschool teachers and teachers trainings** (anti-bias trainings; child-centred pedagogy trainings), including continuous mentor's support
- **Fostering cooperation and partnership** between parents and school/kindergarten
- **Developing networks of local stakeholders** in different sectors (education, health, culture, social welfare) including local government decision - makers
- **Developing adequate monitoring and evaluation of the education system** (internal and external) on the national level

Ready Together : program – model for replication in other locations and on the national level

Main implementator of the UNICEF program: **Open Academy Step by Step Croatia**

Outcome: Increase readiness of the Roma/non-Roma children and their parents – as well as teachers - for their inclusion in the elementary education in target schools in the city of Sisak and Slavonski Brod

Output 1: Elementary school includes parents/caretakers of the Roma and non-Roma children into the education of their kids, while they help together to the children to successfully start the elementary education

Output 2: Parents of children of 5-7 are empowered for fostering their children's development and learning, as well as their inclusion into the school activities.

Output 3: Key stakeholders (local and national government, service providers from education, health, social welfare, Roma and non-Roma NGOs) are empowered for developing of the integrated approach to the family-oriented programs for fostering successful inclusion of children from the marginalized groups in the education

Activities aimed at:

- 1. Addressing social norms and practices which are obstacles to the inclusive education and partnership between school and Roma families: **Comprehensive anti-bias training „Živjeti različitosti”****
- 2. Empowering schools for the support to the Roma children and their families in elementary education enrollment: trainings „Children learning Croatian as second language” and **Building Partnership between School and Family”****
- 3. Empowering Roma and non-Roma parents (having children 5-7) for fostering of the early child development, as well as successful school inclusion, through weekly workshops education „Encouraging parenthood” (pre - literacy , pre - math activities which parents could exercise at home with their children etc.)**
- 4. Enabling exchange of knowledge and best practices through REYN network for the support to Roma children (visit to successful Medjimurje schools having Roma)**
- 5. Program Steering Committee including all key stakeholders in the community, supporting program and ensuring its quality and**

Program Target Groups:

- 120 of children ages 5-7
- 240 of parents / family members of children of that age
- 120 of teachers, professional assistants, school management
- 400 of local stakeholders (health, education, social welfare, culture, NGOs) in two communities

Sustainability at the local level

- Activities of the „Ready together” program are becoming integral part of the school curriculum
- Local decision - makers continue to support program activities in other schools/locations (i.e. Trainings, mentors support; networking/regular meetings of local stakeholders in different sectors)
- local authorities are co-financing complementary activities in fields of: housing, urban infrastructure, culture, health - focused at members of Roma community (development of the childrens playground in the city of Slavonski Brod near Roma settlement, free-time activities for Roma children in the city of Sisak etc.)

Sustainability at the national level:

The final idea is to replicate the model at the national level, in co-financing patterns between national level, local level governments and UNICEF. The idea is that Government (national and local) would support the full access to all services for Roma children and parents to integrated education, while UNICEF would ensure quality part of the education

Thank You!

Contact: Jagoda Novak, Program Associate, PhD

jnovak@unicef.hr; UNICEF Office for Croatia

