

Conclusions, Lessons and Challenges Case name: **Joint Programme for Roma and Marginalised Groups Inclusion – Component: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological development of Serbia, Group for Social Inclusion**

1. Subject/issue	Campaign to increase coverage of children from vulnerable social groups by preparatory pre-school programme and primary school
2. Sector, Country	Education, Republic of Serbia
3. Background, antecedent	<p>Data available to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) about coverage of children by compulsory education show increase in general population, but still insufficient coverage of children from vulnerable social groups by preparatory pre-school programme and primary education.</p> <p>According to the data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS), coverage of children in Serbia by preparatory pre-school programme was 94.49% during 2013/2014. According to the MoESTD data, 66,442 children (97.01%) were included in preparatory pre-school programme in public and private pre-schools and primary schools with preparatory pre-school programme. The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in Serbia, carried out by the SORS and UNICEF during 2014, show that coverage of the Roma children from informal settlements of the age a year before the primary school was 62.9%. SORS data for year 2014-2015 about a number of children in pre-schools who attend programme in native language show that 1031 children with the Romany language as the first language attend pre-school education, i.e. 141 children with the Romany language as the second language.</p>
4. Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To increase coverage of children from vulnerable social groups, including the Roma children, by preparatory pre-school programme and primary school - To improve intersectoral cooperation in identifying children that are not covered by pre-school programme and primary school, as well as in providing support to regular attendance and improvement in learning and development
5. Current Status	<p>The campaign is in its final phase.</p> <p>Activities carried out by now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official call from the MoESTD to regional school administrations, pre-schools and primary

schools with the preparatory pre-school programme to join the campaign to increase coverage of children by the preparatory pre-school programme and primary school.

- Group for Social Inclusion of the MoESTD (GSI MoESTD), jointly with UNICEF, SDC, Red Cross, Centre for Interactive Pedagogy (CIP Centre), Open Society Foundation, REF, Association of Pedagogical Assistants (APA), regional school administrations, professional associations and other partners did the following:
 - o prepared printing promotion and informative material for parents, with information on enrolment procedures, importance of attending preparatory pre-school programme and primary school and their compulsoriness. Leaflets and posters were printed in Serbian and Romany languages (40,000 leaflets and 4000 posters);
 - o leaflets were distributed through regional school administrations, in cooperation with the Red Cross and members of the APA, to the beneficiaries – parents of children from vulnerable social groups.
- Pre-schools and primary schools, in accordance with specifics of the local communities, together with relevant partners developed and carried out activities that contributed to increasing the coverage of children from poor families, children from Roma families and children with disabilities by preparatory pre-school programme and primary school during the year 2015-2016.
- GSI MoESTD, in cooperation with UNICEF, CIP Centre and Serbian Association of Psychologists and Pedagogues in Schools and Pre-schools, organised and held 4 seminars “Pre-school Education Accustomed to All Children”, attended by pre-school teachers and associates and representatives of local self-governments. Aims of the seminar were:
 - o to improve competences of headmasters, pedagogues and psychologists, special education teachers to implement inclusive / quality pre-school education in Serbia;
 - o to support activities of increasing coverage of children by preparatory pre-school programme and primary education, as well as campaign evaluation;
 - o to strengthen cooperation between different actors at the pre-school and local self-government level, with a goal to increase coverage of children from vulnerable social groups by quality pre-school education;
 - o to improve educational support to children and professional support to parents and pre-school staff through realisation of quality transitional activities (key transitional periods: family – pre-school; nursery – kindergarten – preparatory pre-school programme; development groups – regular groups; pre-school – pre-school; pre-school – primary school).
- Through the questionnaire on activities of increasing coverage of children by preparatory pre-school programme, MoESTD gathered data from pre-schools and primary schools with

	<p>preparatory pre-school programme about the effectiveness of the campaign.</p>
<p>6. Key-Stakeholders and their Roles / Responsibilities</p>	<p>MoESTD, in cooperation with UNICEF and other aforementioned partners, initiated the campaign, organised and participated in realisation of seminars “Pre-school Education Accustomed to All Children”, gathered data about the effectiveness of the campaign and organised data processing and reporting.</p> <p>UNICEF Office for Serbia – partner in planning and realisation of activities of MoESTD, as well as providing expertise and financial support.</p> <p>CIP Centre – associates in strengthening competences of school staff related to increasing coverage and improved support to children through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presenting good practice experience in development and realisation of quality diversified programmes of pre-school education, - presenting good practice experience in realisation of programmes of support to children from vulnerable social groups, aimed at improvement of wellbeing, progress in development and learning. <p>Pre-school and primary school staff: headmasters, pedagogues and psychologists, teachers, pedagogical assistants – direct realisation of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mapping partners at the local level in pre-school activities of increasing coverage of children by preparatory pre-school programme (local self-government, regional school administration, centre for social work, health centre, Red Cross, civil society organisations, Inclusive Education Support Network, health mediators, pedagogical assistants, coordinators for Roma issues in local self-governments, local media, etc.), - organisation of meetings with relevant partners and agreement on activities needed to be carried out by each institution and organisation, aiming at informing and sensibilisation of parents, recording and enrolment of children (ex. visit to Roma families and interaction / debates in Roma settlements, meetings with parents in schools and municipalities, parallel activities with children and parents, etc.), - operational development of activities of the pre-school / school related to increasing enrolment of children from vulnerable social groups to the preparatory pre-school programme for 2015/2016, - carrying out planned activities in cooperation with partners, regular monitoring of effects and reporting on realised activities and results to the respective regional school administration and to the GSI MoESTD.

	<p>Local self-governments: partners in planning and realisation of activities of increasing coverage of children by preparatory pre-school education programme and providing additional support to the children who need it.</p> <p>Association of Pedagogical Assistants: partners in planning and realisation of activities of increasing coverage of children by preparatory pre-school education programme and providing additional support to the children who need it.</p> <p>Red Cross Serbia: partners in planning and realisation of activities of increasing coverage of children by preparatory pre-school education programme and providing additional support to the children who need it.</p>
<p>7. Capacity building and Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings with representatives of pre-schools (headmasters, pedagogues and psychologists, pre-school teachers) and local self-governments “Pre-school Education Accustomed to All Children” - A round table is foreseen, in which the Report on the Campaign Results will be presented to pre-schools and primary schools, with recommendations for organisation of further activities aimed at increasing coverage of children from vulnerable social groups and providing and improving additional support.
<p>8. Institutionalization (if any)</p>	<p>Systematic solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System (LFES) and bylaws provide right to education to all children and foresee additional support in exercising this right, which is in function of a child’s improvement in development and learning. The activities are being carried out to modify and amend the LFES, initiating improvement of regulation related to the support to children / students from vulnerable social groups. - The Strategy of Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia by 2020 foresees a number of activities that should improve coverage and support to children / students from vulnerable social groups in the education system. - Establishing a joint body for support of work and coordination of supervision of work of inter-sectoral commissions was initiated. - Support to Roma children in the education system is integral part of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in Serbia for the period 2016-2025. This was operationally developed in the Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia. <p>As part of the campaign:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-schools and primary schools with preparatory pre-school programme were obliged by the minister to prioritise in their Annual Working Plans and operationally develop activities related to increasing enrolment of children from vulnerable social groups to preparatory pre-school programme. - Development of the instruction and guideline to vertical and horizontal transition of children / students from vulnerable social groups in pre-university education was initiated. Related to this, meetings were held with professional associations of nurses, pre-school teachers, pedagogues and psychologists and it was agreed to collect good practice examples in planning and realisation of activities that should contribute to more successful transition of a child through different levels of education. - Data collected through the questionnaire from all pre-schools and primary schools in Serbia is being processed in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund (REF). Based on that, a report on realised activities on increasing coverage of children by preparatory pre-school programme will be developed.
<p>9. Interfaces / Need for coordination with other key issues</p>	<p>Inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation is required for improvement of coverage by preparatory pre-school programme and primary school and for support to improvement of learning and development of children from vulnerable social groups / Roma:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation between MoESTD and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, - Cooperation and coordination of activities between different sectors within MoESTD, - Cooperation between pre-schools and primary schools with local self-governments, Red Cross, Roma associations, CSOs active in the field of support to children in education, etc. <p>Establishment of a joint body for support of work and coordination of supervision of work of inter-sectoral commissions is a key element in improvement of intersectoral cooperation.</p>
<p>10. Recommendations</p>	<p>In order to have efficient activities of increasing coverage of Roma children it is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuously inform parents of children from vulnerable social groups (children from unhygienic Roma settlements, children with disabilities, children from socially less stimulated environment, etc.), publish information visible in pre-schools, primary schools, health centres, centres for social work or Roma settlements, - create and carry out activities to draw attention and motivate parents in community, Roma settlements, outside of pre-schools and primary schools, which will be visible and which can discreetly and easily remind and motivate parents to enrol their children and support their regular attendance of preparatory pre-school programme and primary school. These can be

	<p>door-to-door activities, workshops for children and parents, debates, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if here is a possibility, it would be important to involve local media and prominent individuals in the community in an attempt to remind parents that preparatory pre-school programme and primary school are compulsory, - parallel with enrolment, measures for drop-out prevention should be developed. It is important to analyse needs, resources and means at the community level to provide material and non-material support to children from the most vulnerable families (food, clothes, transport, usual material – textbooks, etc.).
<p>11. Why is this a good practice? Reflection and learning</p>	<p>Listed activities are a good practice because there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intersectoral cooperation - Horizontal learning and experience exchange
<p>12. Contact and website/link</p>	<p>inkluzija@mpn.gov.rs</p> <p>http://www.mpn.gov.rs/</p> <p>http://www.mpn.gov.rs/grupa-za-inkuziju/</p>