

Closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma

#### Policy suggestions based on experiences of the 'A Good Start' for early childhood education with focus on marginalized Roma communities

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# Why invest in quality early childhood education and care?

- Ending the intergenerational transmission of poverty
- A return on investment/ preventive action
- Brain Development / well being of children
- Preparation of school (preventing early school leaving) + enhances chances to succeed in life
- Children's rights and social responsibility

# ,A Good Start' facts

Two main objectives of the project:

- to scale-up access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Roma children and
- to raise early childhood development outcomes for Roma children so as to enhance their school readiness;
  Budget: aprox. 2.5 million EUR by EU and other donors;
- Target: 4000 direct beneficiaries in 4 countries, 16 locations,;

Timeframe: 24 months;

Partners: 12 implementing local partners, 3 international partners- ISSA, FSG and SGI;

Evaluation and capacity building by the WB and UNDP Roma involvement at all levels

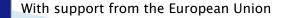


#### Let me kindly invite you to watch together a movie about the project directed by Milutin Jovanovic (3.45 min)



#### DATA FROM THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY ON ENROLLMENT OF ALL CHILDREN AGED 3-7 IN AGS, 2010

	number of children aged 3-7 years	A at home and not enrolled	B mother/ child program me	C Crèche	D kinder- garten	E community center	F primary school	G special primary school	H other insti- tution
Slovakia	293	45.4%	8.2%		21.8%		21.8%	1.4%	1.4%
Romania	97	3.1%			56.7%	29.9%	9.3%	1.0%	
Macedonia	282	72.0%			13.1%	0.4%	13.1%	0.4%	
Hungary	381	5.8%	0.5%		88.5%		5.2%		



# Challenges in the 4 countries - addressed by AGS

- > lack of proper legislative framework
- > capacity problem, lack of kindergarten facilities
- > scarcity of ECEC services for age group 0–3
- > quality of ECEC services is often under the required minimum standards
- » segregation in kindergartens and school education system
- > channelling Roma children to special education, or to zero classes
- > insufficient preparation with the language of instruction
- Poverty and material depravation, poor housing conditions
- > health status of children

# Preschool as a bridge to mainstream education Slovakia

AGS Zborov, Abranovce – capacity problems, language issue, inter-cultural relations

- community mediators empowered parents to enrol children\*
- material support\*
- tutoring for children attending zero classes\*
- provided financial support to establish preschool services
- employed teacher, Romani teacher assist. and kitchen assist.
- informal preschool class for Roma children run by the church

AGS Martin, Banska Bystrica – capacity problems, transportation

- \* above
- > monthly kindergarten fee covered
- > financing tutoring for children in zero classes
- > open house events in kindergartens and primary schools
- > transportation and accompaniment

# **Community Resource Centres focused on ECEC in Romania**

AGS Telechiu, Craiova – isolation, extreme poverty, lack of infrastructure

- community center established in the community temporary solution
- alternative, community-based and comprehensive intervention: social worker, health mediator, education mediator and pedagogue
- informal adult education (focus on mothers)
- nursery/ crèche for 0-3 established in the centre (in the process of accreditation)
- liason between municipality and the Roma community

# Supporting preschool enrolment in Macedonia

AGS Skopje, Shuto Orizari – issues with official documentation, capacity problems, extreme poverty

- > assisted registration of children to obtain birth certificates, and vaccinations
- > financing tuition fee
- material support for families
- vening meetings for mothers
- Facilitate access to social services

AGS Eastern-Macedonian localities - transportation issues, poverty

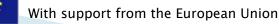
- commitment of municipalities, joint investment in infrastructure
- ransportation provided, staff employed partly by AGS, partly by the municipalities
- > financing tuition fee

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# Interconnected interventions in Hungary

AGS 6 localities low quality of services in geographically isolated communities,

- Home visits by the community mediators
- Meséd (Your Story) literacy for empowernment developing parenting skills and knowledge to improve ECED outcomes for young children training and engagement of local Roma as mentors and facilitators
- > Home Pre-School Community Liasion program
- Focus on the mainstream society theoretical and practical part of teacher's training modified
  - curricula adjusted
  - obligatory practice module modified



#### Instruments for evidence-based project implementation

- Community Assessment
- The application of the Household Survey
- Database of beneficiary children
- Continuum for Assessing Caregivers in Center and Communitybased Programs
- Applying regular monitoring tools

### **Outputs at the end of December 2011**

- More than 9000 home visits to families in the project
- 776 Roma children enrolled with support from AGS: 483 in kindergarten, 203 in primary school and 90 in other forms of ECD (mother-child programs)
- 172 Roma mothers and 451 children participated Your Story program
- 186 teachers and 36 paraprofessionals trained
- More than 300 students (future teachers) participated activities
- More than 800 children received material support
- In Macedonia, 351 parents and children obtained official documents/ birth certificates; more than 1000 children were assisted with vaccination
- About 100 community motivation events held
- Good-practice guides and policy papers in preparation

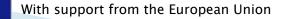
#### Lessons learned, policy suggestions for governments

- Two years of subsidized or free kindergartens for all
- Inclusive and integrated approach to ECEC
- Variety of basic quality services (home-based and community-based services for children 0-3/ kindergarten for children 3-6)
- Focus on home based parenting
- Community empowerment with focus on mothers
- Quality human resources (teachers, health workers, Roma mediators)
- Greater focus is needed in urban settings



#### Recommendations for EU memberstates on their National Programming Documents connected to 2014-2020 EU funds

- a) Linking SF to mainstream educational strategies
- b) ECEC horizontal priority
- Long term strategies/provisions moving away from pilot project
- d) Targeting of deprived micro-region and urban centers
- Incentives for local actors to comply with conditionality (partnership - cooperative culture)
- f) Technical assistance (ex-ante assessments/guidance in implementation)
- g) ECEC Infrastructure (**desegregation**)
- h) Revision of the national strategies (**defining budgets**)





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