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

22nd International Steering Committee Meeting
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Project Manager A Good Start Project
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

With support from the European Union
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
With support from the European Union
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>number of children aged 3-7 years</th>
<th>A at home and not enrolled</th>
<th>B mother/child programme</th>
<th>C Crèche</th>
<th>D kindergarten</th>
<th>E community center</th>
<th>F primary school</th>
<th>G special primary school</th>
<th>H other institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With support from the European Union
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 deprivation, poor housing conditions
- health status of children

With support from the European Union
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

With support from the European Union
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

With support from the European Union
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
- evening meetings for mothers
- facilitate access to social services

AGS Eastern–Macedonian localities – transportation issues, poverty
- commitment of municipalities, joint investment in infrastructure
- transportation provided, staff employed partly by AGS, partly by the municipalities
- financing tuition fee

With support from the European Union
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 empowerment
devolving 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

With support from the European Union
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 Community-based Programs
- Applying regular monitoring tools

With support from the European Union
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
c) Long term strategies/provisions – moving away from pilot project
d) Targeting of deprived micro-region and urban centers
e) 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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