

Zaštita romske dece kroz praćenje i zastupanje



Protection of Roma Children Monitoring and Advocacy

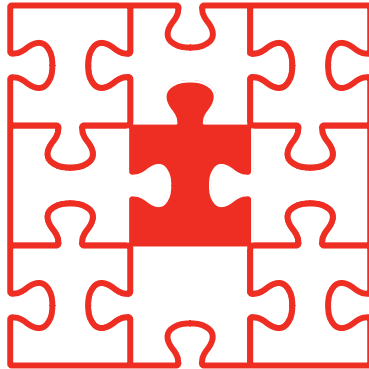


Centar za prava deteta



Save the Children

Zaštita romske dece kroz praćenje i zastupanje



Protection of Roma Children Monitoring and Advocacy



Dragana Ćuk Milankov

Izdavač / Publisher

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Nevena Vučković Šahović,

direktor / director

Urednik svih izdanja / Editor

Nevena Vučković Šahović

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Jasna Alibegović

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O projektu

U Srbiji danas živi između 100 000 i 450 000 Roma (procene variraju u zavisnosti od izvora), većinom u naseljima bez infrastrukture, u kojima vlasti nisu obezbedile ni najosnovnije uslove za život, kao što su električna energija i uklanjanje smeća. Često se sprečava njihov ulazak na javna mesta, ne pružaju im se usluge u institucijama, a izloženi su i fizičkom nasilju, čak i od strane pripadnika policije.

Nepovoljni ekonomski i socijalni uslovi, kao i nedovoljna otvorenost edukativnih institucija za specifičnosti položaja romske populacije, umanjuju mogućnost školovanja dece. Stoga prosečna romska porodica živi u siromaštvu, veoma je malo uključena u institucije sistema, i izolovana od savremenih društvenih tokova. Mnoga romska deca počinju da rade/zarađuju u ranom detinjstvu, proseći na ulici, ili skupljajući otpad. Većina te dece, čak i mlađe od šest godina, to vreme na ulici provodi sama, bez zaštite i brige odraslih.

Siromaštvo romske populacije i diskriminacija kojoj su izloženi, vode ka kršenju mnogih njihovih prava. Neka deca, iako imaju porodice, bivaju smeštena u institucije za decu bez roditeljskog staranja, institucije za decu sa smetnjama u razvoju, ili u institucije za mlade u sukobu sa zakonom. Besplatno školovanje u specijalnim školama i davanje socijalne pomoći su takođe faktori koji otežavaju socijalnu inkluziju Roma, u tom smislu što siromaštvo romskih porodica dodatno podstiče njihovo odlučivanje na upis dece u specijalne škole, pa i na smeštaj dece u institucije socijalne zaštite. Stoga je neophodno uticati na vlast da preduzme dugoročne mere radi uključivanja Roma u obrazovni sistem i život lokalne zajednice, koje bi ciljale na relevantne i suštinske uzroke održavanja Roma u poziciji socijalne izolacije.

Usluge institucija su često niskog kvaliteta, i nedovoljno prilagođene potrebama romske dece. S druge strane, obuhvatna i održiva društvena promena nije

moguća bez učešća institucija sistema. Na primer, problem školskog neuspeha Roma i rano isključivanje iz sistema školovanja, ne može se adekvatno rešavati bez učešća zajednice. Stoga je važno ojačati kapacitete institucija lokalne zajednice da pruža usluge koje su u skladu s potrebama romske populacije.

Obrazovanje ima ključnu ulogu u poboljšanju položaja Roma i uspostavljanju odnosa između Roma i drugih zajednica, kako povećanjem njihovih ekonomskih i socijalnih mogućnosti, tako i povećanjem interetničkog razumevanja kroz učešće Roma u obrazovnom sistemu. Ipak, romska deca se suočavaju sa mnogim teškoćama i preprekama u pristupu obrazovanju, i na taj način se ciklus deprivacije i izolacije obnavlja.

Stoga je projekat ***Zaštita romske dece – praćenje i zastupanje***, koji je sproveden u partnerskoj realizaciji *Centra za prava deteta* i organizacije *Save the Children* uz donatorsku podršku Ministarstva inostranih poslova Vlade Kneževine Luksemburg, imao za cilj da doprinese uspostavljanju održivih mehanizama zaštite putem zastupanja za unapređenje položaja dece romske nacionalnosti. Usmeren je na razvoj mehanizama i veština praćenja položaja Roma i zastupanja za njihova prava, osnažujući na taj način civilni sektor lokalne zajednice da bude aktivni subjekat promene. Koncept projekta promovise pristup usmeren na ljudska prava, kao osnov obuhvatnog i sistematičnog modela unošenja prepoznatljivih promena u svakodnevni život romske dece.

Na taj način, projektne aktivnosti su vodile unapređenju mehanizama praćenja poštovanja prava romske dece na nivou lokalne zajednice; razvoju metodologije zastupanja u slučajevima kršenja prava deteta; podizanju svesti o položaju dece romske nacionalnosti, kao i promovisanju modela dobre prakse u okviru mreže relevantnih socijalnih aktera.

Projektne aktivnosti su bile namenjene NVO aktivistima lokalnih zajednica (8 romskih i ne-romskih predstavnika), njihovom osnaživanju za praćenje položaja romske dece, i zastupanje njihovih prava na nivou lokalne zajednice.

Na taj način, su uticale i na romsku zajednicu, a pogotovo na romsku decu, i to ne samo rešavanjem konkretnih problema već i podizanjem svesti o ljudskim pravima, i mogućnostima zalaganja za njihovo ostvarivanje, i osnažile ih za preuzimanje društvene inicijative.

Indirektno, projektne aktivnosti su uticale na lokalne zvaničnike, predstavnike nadležnih institucija, medije i širu javnost, kako na lokalnom, tako i na nacionalnom nivou.

Projekat je trajao 12 meseci, i realizovao se u dve opštine: Pirotu i Vranju, uz NVO Romski kulturni centar i NVO Pralipe, kao lokalne implementacione partnere.

Prvi deo projekta, odnosio se na procenu stanja prava deteta romske nacionalnosti na lokalnom nivou. U tu svrhu, predstavnici nevladinih organizacija su bili edukovani za praćenje stanja u oblasti prava deteta (identifikovanje i prikupljanje relevantnih podataka). Njihov rad na terenu bio je olakšan i sistematizovan upitnicima za procenu stanja prava deteta u oblastima socijalne zaštite, zdravstva i školstva (razvijenim od strane *Centra za prava deteta*). Zadatak im je bio da posete sve obrazovne, zdravstvene, institucije socijalne zaštite i lokalne samouprave u zajednici, kao i da intervjuišu reprezentativan broj romskih porodica. Na taj način su trebali biti identifikovani konkretni primeri kako kršenja, tako i poštovanja prava romske dece.

Nakon što su na ovaj način prepoznati postojeći problemi, zastupnici su sproveli akciju zastupanja u 7 identifikovanih slučajeva kršenja prava deteta i jednu akciju direktne asistencije, kojima je ukupno obuhvaćeno 82 deteta. U kojim će se slučajevima sprovesti akcija zastupanja, birano je na osnovu procene socio-ekonomske ugroženosti porodice/grupe; na osnovu hitnosti rešavanja problema, kao i na osnovu opsežnosti i dugoročnosti ishoda koje bi akcija proizvela. Stoga su NGO aktivisti posebnu pažnju posvećivali teškoćama ostvarivanja prava na obrazovanje romske dece.

Kako bi ovaj deo projekta bio kvalitetno realizovan, NVO aktivistima je pružena edukacija u oblasti organizovanja i vođenja procesa zastupanja, kao i brošure koncipirane od strane *Centra za prava deteta – Vodič za studiju slučaja i Vodič kroz postojeću legislativu i mehanizme u okviru sistema* (kao sredstvo usmeravanja direktnih intervencija u slučajevima kršenja prava deteta). Cilj akcija je bio kako poboljšanje uslova života romske dece kroz direktne intervencije u lokalnim institucijama, tako i promocija samog procesa zastupanja.

Kako je proces zastupanja ključno sredstvo realizacije projektne ideje, on će biti nešto detaljnije prikazan u sledećem poglavlju.



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Proces zastupanja



Zastupanje se odnosi na aktivnosti čiji je cilj izmena zakona, politike, uobičajene prakse ljudi na položajima ili povećanje uticaja određene populacije na proces donošenja odluka u zajednici. Mogu ga vršiti obučeni profesionalci raznih struka, članovi nevladinih organizacija, lokalnih grupa i udruženja, lokalne samouprave.

Tri su moguća pristupa zastupanju:

1. Zastupanje ugrožene populacije (populacije zahvaćene problemom)

Primenjuje se u situacijama kada ugroženoj populaciji nedostaju znanja i veštine da sama sebe zastupa, te da sama bude agens promene. Organizacije koje poštuju principe participacije i osnaživanja, obično mu pristupaju kao početnoj opciji, sa ciljem da s vremenom, ugrožena grupa sama preuzme zastupanje svojih interesa.

Probleme kojima se na ovaj način pristupa, često je identifikovao neko van same ugrožene populacije i vezani su za zvaničnike.

Pošto ovaj vid zastupanja sprovode obučeni profesionalci, u procesu se raspolože većim brojem informacija, kao i uvidom u širu perspektivu problema. Takođe, na ovaj način brže se pristupa rešavanju problema, ali se ne podstiče povećanje kapaciteta za delanje ugrožene grupe.

2. Zajedničko zastupanje u saradnji s ugroženom populacijom

Cilj ovog oblika zastupanja je, pored globalnih, gore navedenih, i jačanje kapaciteta ugrožene populacije da sama zastupa svoje interese.

U ovom slučaju, spoljni faktor mobilise kapacitete ugrožene populacije. Akcije se zajednički planiraju i izvode.

Primenom ovog modusa zastupanja, povećava se pristup moći odlučivanja ugrožene grupe i razvijaju se njihove sposobnosti zastupanja svojih interesa. S druge strane, u odnosu na prethodno navedeni vid zastupanja, ovaj može biti sporiji u dostizanju cilja, jer zahteva dogovor i slaganje svih strana koje u njemu učestvuju.

3. Ugrožena populacija samostalno zastupa svoje interese

Jedan od specifičnih ciljeva ovog oblika zastupanja je i povećanje svesti same grupe koja ga preduzima o mogućnostima, produktivnosti zastupanja, kao i o svojim sposobnostima za izvođenje tih aktivnosti. Iako proces zastupanja planira, organizuje i izvodi sama ugrožena populacija, on može biti u nekim situacijama iniciran spolja.

Ovaj vid zastupanja u najvećoj meri osnažuje ugoženu grupu, daje im samopouzdanje i samopoštovanje, kao i svest o mogućnosti borbe za svoja prava i interese i ubuduće. Opasnost ovog oblika zastupanja, je moguće prisustvo osvete koja usmerava akcije, a čega često na početku, a ponekad i tokom celog procesa, grupa nije svesna. Pošto u ovaj proces najčešće nisu uključeni profesionalci, raspolaze se i manjim brojem relevantnih informacija, i/ili nedostaje šira perspektiva viđenja problema.

Ciklus zastupanja

Proces zastupanja se može podeliti na pet etapa. Svaka od njih ima svoju specifičnu ulogu i značaj i logički slede jedna iz druge. Odvijaju se sukcesivno, jedna za drugom, mada se u praksi često i preklapaju.

Prva etapa se bazira na definiciji problema. Na početku je potrebno što preciznije odrediti šta je problem kojim će se grupa baviti.

Sušтина druge etape je istraživanje i analiza problema. Ispituju se što detaljnije njegovi izvori i posledice.

Treća faza se tiče planiranja strategije. Definiše se cilj koji se želi postići; strategija, način na koji će se on postići; tehnike koje će se pri tom koristiti; ko su potencijalni saveznici grupi na tom putu; koji su potencijalni rizici; pravi se vremenski plan aktivnosti; raspodeljuju se obaveze i odgovornosti; određuju se pokazatelji uspeha i način njihovog procenjivanja.

Četvrta faza se odnosi na izvođenje planiranih aktivnosti, koje se sve vreme prati i koordinira.

Peta faza je evaluacija. Ona podrazumeva i praćenje aktivnosti (da li su se odvijale u skladu s postavljenim vremenskim planom; da li su postizale predviđenu svrhu...), i procenu dostizanja konačnog cilja, prema unapred utvrđenim merilima.





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Predstavljanje sprovedenih akcija zastupanja

Kao što je u uvodnom delu rečeno, u okviru projekta je sprovedeno sedam akcija zastupanja: jedna u Pirotu i šest u Vranjskoj Banji, dok je u Vranju izvedena akcija direktne asistencije.

Pirot

Tim Romskog kulturnog centra je izabrao problem slabe uključenosti romske dece u srednjoškolsko obrazovanje, što dalje ima dalekosežne posledice na njihov socio-ekonomski status i društveni položaj. Cilj akcije zastupanja je definisan kao podrška i osnaživanje romske dece u osmim razredima osnovne škole za polaganje prijemnog ispita za upis u srednju školu. Izabrane su tri osnovne škole: OŠ Sveti Sava, OŠ Dušan Radović, i specijalna osnovna škola Mladost. Akcijom zastupanja je obuhvaćeno 19 dece romske nacionalnosti iz redovnih škola i 18 dece iz specijalne škole, a izvodila su je dva tima RKC-a.

Članovi timova RKC-a su obišli pomenute redovne osnovne škole, predstavili direktorima/kama i predstavnicima/cama psihološko-pedagoške službe sam projekat, njegov cilj i ulogu škole u ponuđenoj saradnji na realizaciji cilja. Nakon što su škole prihvatile saradnju na ovom projektu, sledeći korak je bio razgovor sa razrednim starešinama osmih razreda, uz pomoć kojih su identifikovani romski učenici.

U akciju su uključene i njihove porodice. Timovi RKC-a su obišli porodice svih učenika, i predstavili im akciju koju žele da sprovedu. U većini porodica je od početka bila prisutna motivacija za nastavak školovanja dece. Porodice koje su želele da deca nakon završene osnovne škole počnu da rade, navodile su da nemaju dovoljno materijalnih uslova da im omoguće dalje školovanje. Kontakt s porodicama je nastavljen tokom realizacije projekta, tako da je sa

njima rađeno i na motivisanju za nastavkom školovanja dece, uz isticanje da određene vidove pomoći mogu dobiti i od strane lokalne samouprave. Do kraja školske godine, sve porodice su podržavale srednjoškolsko obrazovanje dece.

RKC je u akciju uključio i lokalni Centar za socijalni rad – upoznali su Centar sa projektom i inicirali pružanje jednokratne materijalne pomoći porodicama romske dece koja su uključena u akciju zastupanja, kako bi se i na taj način olakšala njihova priprema za polaganje prijemnog ispita za srednje škole.

Sledeći korak u realizaciji ove akcije zastupanja je bilo angažovanje profesora matematike i srpskog jezika i književnosti, koji bi davali besplatne časove pripreme romskoj deci. U isto vreme, pažnja je posvećena i slabim ocenama romske dece, koje bi mogle ugroziti njihovo završavanje osmog razreda. Radi prevazilaženja ovog problema, timovi RKC-a su razgovarali kako sa predmetnim nastavnicima, tako i sa roditeljima.

Sva deca su redovno dolazila na pripremu, uspešno završila osmi razred osnovne škole, svi su izašli na prijemni ispit i svi su ga položili!

Timovi RKC-a su obišli porodice i razgovarali sa decom o izboru srednje škole, oslanjajući se prvenstveno na preferencije dece. Koristeći mogućnosti koje pruža afirmativna akcija pri upisu dece Roma u srednje škole i univerzitete, tim je aplikacione formulare dece poslao Ministarstvu prosvete Republike Srbije i Kancelariji za manjinska pitanja.

Sva deca uključena u projekat su upisala srednju školu.

U okviru projekta, tim je obišao i specijalnu osnovnu školu Mladost, sa ciljem upućivanja pomoći romskoj deci iz osmog razreda koja imaju slabe ocene, da završe osnovnu školu. Pomoć je pružana kroz razgovore s predmetnim nastavnicima i roditeljima.

Iz izloženog se vidi da je cilj akcije zastupanja u potpunosti ostvaren. Po mišljenju tima RKC-a, tome je doprinelo dobro planiranje projektnih aktivnosti, kao i konstantni kontakti na terenu s roditeljima i školama. Informisanje lokalne javnosti o položaju romske dece i o ciljevima projekta, su takođe, po mišljenju tima, doprineli razumevanju i prihvatanju projektnih aktivnosti od strane šire socijalne sredine.

Značajan olakšavajući faktor je svakako i otvorenost lokalne sredine za akcije u ovom pravcu, koju obezbeđuju usvojeni strateški dokumenti u opštini Pirot: Strategija za inkluzivno obrazovanje romske i druge marginalizovane dece i Akcioni plan za decu.

Tim ne izveštava o teškoćama tokom procesa realizacije projekta.

Vranje

NVO Romski kulturni centar iz Vranja kao problem identifikuje izuzetno lošu socio-ekonomsku situaciju porodice Hiseni – interno raseljenu sa Kosova, koja živi u vrlo nepovoljnim materijalnim i stambenim uslovima, nerešenog građansko-pravnog statusa, koja ne ostvaruje ni prava dece na zdravstvenu zaštitu i obrazovanje. Cilj aktivnosti je pomoć porodici u ostvarivanju ovih prava kroz izradu zdravstvene knjižice, i upis dece u školu. Projektna aktivnosti obuhvataju šestoro dece porodice Hiseni. Organizovane su i izvedene u formi direktne asistencije, a ne akcije zastupanja, no, bila je podržana u okviru projekta iz više razloga. S jedne strane, putem izvedenih asistencija se rešava relevantan problem socijalno ugrožene porodice, i ostvaruju prava deteta važna za njihovo uključivanje u institucije sistema i dugoročno unapređenje njihovog položaja. Pored toga, ova akcija obezbeđuje polaznu osnovu za eventualno dalje planiranje procesa zastupanja.

Projektna aktivnosti su se prevashodno odnosile na prikupljanje dokumenata neophodnih za izradu zdravstvene knjižice i upis dece u školu. Izvršiocima aktivnosti su bili NVO aktivisti, članovi porodice su bili u pratnji. U kasnijim fazama procesa, po rečima aktivista, roditelji postaju i aktivno uključeni.

U oblasti zdravstvene zaštite, aktivisti su došli do svih neophodnih dokumenata i regulisali deci status zdravstvenih osiguranika.

Kada je u pitanju uključivanje dece u obrazovni sistem, NVO aktivisti su kontaktirali lokalnu osnovnu školu, i dobili informaciju od direktora da je, s obzirom na uzrast dece i činjenicu da do sada nisu bila obuhvaćena ni jednim oblikom obrazovanja (mlađa deca) ili ne idu u školu od kada su izbegli sa Kosova (starija deca), uslov upisa nalaz nadležne komisije za razvrstavanje. Tim povodom NVO aktivisti kontaktiraju pomenutu službu u Domu zdravlja, i odlaze zajedno s porodicom na zakazani pregled.

Kroz kontakte s porodicom, aktivisti su podsticali i motivaciju, prevashodno roditelja, za školovanjem dece. Kao vid dodatne podrške uključivanju dece u školu, aktivisti su ponudili obezbeđivanje materijalne pomoći (kroz akciju prikupljanja stare odeće i razgovore sa lokalnim NVO koji bi takvu pomoć mogli obezbediti), kao i redovne sastanke sa decom. I deca i roditelji su bili zainteresovani za školovanje, ali su insistirali na pohađanju specijalne škole.

Cilj akcije vezan za ostvarivanje prava dece na zdravstveno osiguranje, je u potpunosti ostvaren – sva deca su dobila zdravstvene knjižice.

Kada je u pitanju upis dece u školu, najstarije dete je zbog uzrasta, upisano u večernju školu.

Ostala deca još uvek nisu upisana pošto je procedura razvrstavanja u toku.

Procenjujući dobre strane sprovedene akcije, aktivisti smatraju da su realizovali sve što su planirali, što im je u pojedinim situacijama bilo olakšano i pozivanjem na Centar za prava deteta.

Govoreći o otežavajućim faktorima prilikom realizacije aktivnosti, u prvi plan stavljaju administrativne teškoće – neusaglašenost funkcionisanja institucija, teškoće dobijanja prave informacije u vezi s potrebnim podacima i dokumentima, uvođenje novih procedura, i sl. Pored toga, kao otežavajuću okolnost identifikuju i nepismenost majke, i procenu da su roditelji nemarni u odnosu prema deci. Njihova sugestija za dalji rad na sličnim problemima, je promena izbora korisnika („Drugi put bi odabrali običnu romsku porodicu”).

Vranjska Banja

Aktivisti Romskog kulturnog centra su u Vranjskoj Banji izdvojili šest problema na čijem su se rešavanju angažovali kroz akcije zastupanja:

- Problem mladića N. B. (17 godina) se odnosio na nemogućnost ostvarivanja prava na rad i zdravstvenu zaštitu.

N. B. živi u petočlanoj porodici, u kojoj ni jedan član nije zaposlen. Želeo je da se prijavi Nacionalnoj službi za zapošljavanje, kako bi imao mogućnost zapošljavanja i regulisanja zdravstvenog osiguranja.

Prilikom procesa evidentiranja, dajući tražene podatke, N. B. je naveo da svira. Nadležna službenica je tada odbila da ga upiše na evidenciju tržišta rada, obrazloživši to procenom da mladić već svakako zarađuje van redovnih procedura („na crno”).

Aktivisti NVO su kontaktirali službenicu. Nakon razgovora u kojem su se pozvali na prava koja se mladiću krše i mogućnost ulaganja pritužbe na ovakvu praksu službe, dogovorili su da mladić dobije listu za aktivno traženje posla. Pečati potencijalnih poslodavaca će potvrđivati da je mladić tražio posao, što će biti osnova da i u sledećem periodu N. B. ostane uključen u sistem evidentiranja Nacionalne službe za zapošljavanje.

Aktivisti RKC-a su uputili mladića u načine na koje može pratiti ponude zapošljavanja. Praćenje slučaja je pokazalo da je nakon tri meseca N. B. imao listu overenu pečatima poslodavaca kao pokazatelj da je tražio posao, što mu je osiguralo ostanak na evidenciji Nacionalne službe za zapošljavanje. Cilj akcije zastupanja je time u potpunosti ostvaren.

Tim RKC-a smatra da je dobra strana ove akcije, koja je značajno doprinela njenoj uspešnosti, pozivanje na prava koja se krše, kao i na pravo stranke da

uputi žalbu nadležnima na rad određenog javnog servisa. Druga karakteristika procesa koja je od strane tima istaknuta kao pozitivna, je činjenica da su pomoć i podrška NGO aktivista bili upućeni na taj način da podstiču samostalno funkcionisanje N. B. u lokalnim društvenih okvirima.

Teškoće na koje su naišli prilikom realizacije aktivnosti odnose se na prisustvo predrasuda prema Romima i rasne diskriminacije.

- Drugi problem koji su identifikovali aktivisti ove NVO je teškoća ostvarivanja prava na školovanje romske dece iz Trebešinja, usled nedostatka redovnog prevoza do susednog sela u kojem se škola nalazi. Akcijom je obuhvaćeno devetoro dece.

Aktivisti stupaju u kontakt sa načelnikom opštinskog sekretarijata za obrazovanje. Upoznaju načelnika sa problemom, i dobijaju obećanje da će problem od septembra biti rešen.

Do završetka projekta, deci nije omogućen besplatan prevoz, ali tim i dalje dobija uveravanja sekretarijata da će problem biti rešen. Svakako su spremni da se i dalje zalažu za njegovo rešavanje, uključujući i druge instance ukoliko se problem na ovom nivou ne reši. Njihov plan daljih akcija uključuje: organizovanje debata s roditeljima o pravima deteta kroz upoznavanje sa Zakonom o osnovnom obrazovanju; konferencije za štampu na ovu temu; slanje dopisa svim resornim Ministarstvima (sa potpisima roditelja); i traženje pravne pomoći (angažovanje advokata).

Kao dobru stranu ove akcije, tim vidi činjenicu da je na ovaj način demonstrirano nadležnima da Romi prate zakone i poznaju kako svoja prava, tako i načine na koje se mogu zalagati za njihovo ostvarivanje. Komentari projektnog tima ukazuju da je akcija imala i opštiji efekat od planiranog, pošto je uticala na povećanje svesti zaposlenih u lokalnim institucijama o teškoćama položaja dece u lokalnoj zajednici generalno.

Navodeći rezultate akcije, ističu da prvi put neko iz romske zajednice kontaktira predstavnike izvršnih organa (opštinskih organa vlasti), pozivajući se na zakon i tražeći poštovanje i ostvarivanje prava deteta.

Otežavajući faktor je bila nedostupnost nadležnih u smislu teškoća ostvarivanja kontakta.

- Treći identifikovani problem odnosi se na nemogućnost ostvarenja prava na školovanje grupe romske dece, pošto roditelji usled slabog materijalnog stanja nisu bili u mogućnosti da obezbede izvod iz matične knjige rođenih za decu, kako bi ih upisali u predškolsku ustanovu. Akcija je obuhvatila 22 romske dece.

Aktivisti su kontaktirali roditelje i napravili spisak s relevantnim podacima o deci. Prilikom prvog susreta, izabran je i predstavnik roditelja koji će zajedno sa članovima NVO da realizuje planirane aktivnosti. U daljim fazama, tim je preduzeo neophodne administrativne korake za dobijanje ovog dokumenta. Podneta je i posebna molba matičnom uredu opštine Vranje kako bi izvodi za decu bili dobijeni besplatno. Matična služba je izašla u susret ovoj molbi – za svu decu su dobijeni besplatno izvodi iz matične knjige rođenih i podeljeni roditeljima, koji su upućeni u dalju proceduru u vezi s upisom dece u predškolsku ustanovu. Neposredno po dobijanju izvoda, 12 dece od 22 je upisano u vrtić.

Tim je pratio i dalje celu grupu dece, kontaktirajući kako s porodicama, tako i s predškolskom ustanovom. Prevažodno su kontaktirane porodice koje nisu upisale decu u predškolsku ustanovu neposredno nakon dobijanja izvoda, da bi se reagovalo na eventualno javljanje drugih poteškoća koje ometaju upis. Do početka septembra, svih 22 dece je upisano.

Dobijanjem izvoda bez materijalnih izdataka i upisom sve dece u predškolsku ustanovu, postavljeni cilj akcije je ostvaren. Tim smatra da je za to zaslužno dobro planiranje aktivnosti. Njihov zaključak je da su regularne administrativne

procedure efikasan način realizacije prava građana, te da je veoma važno poznavati ih i koristiti.

- Četvrti problem koji je NVO identifikovala je bila nemogućnost ostvarivanja prava na obrazovanje grupe mladih Roma (16-18 godina), usled odbijanja službenika Nacionalne službe za zapošljavanje da ih uvede u evidenciju tržišta rada kao nezaposlena lica, što je neophodan uslov finansiranja nastavka njihovog školovanja. Akcijom je obuhvaćeno petoro mladih Roma.

Odbijanje je obrazloženo nedostatkom potvrde o završenom osnovnoškolskom obrazovanju (svedočanstva).

U pitanju je grupa mladih koji se edukuju u okviru projekta ***Funkcionalno osnovno obrazovanje odraslih Roma***, akreditovanog od strane Ministarstva prosvete i Ministarstva rada, zapošljavanja i socijalne politike Republike Srbije. Nacionalna služba za zapošljavanje je partner na ovom projektu i finansira dalje školovanje polaznika. Da bi se finansiranje nastavilo, neophodno je da polaznici budu evidentirani kao nezaposlena lica. U okviru pomenutog projekta, mladi su završili osnovnu školu. U trenutku obraćanja za pomoć NVO-u pohađali su kurs konfekcije, ali će tek nakon završenog kursa dobiti svedočanstvo o završenoj osnovnoj školi.

Aktivisti RKC-a su kontaktirali nadležnu službu Nacionalne službe za zapošljavanje. Prvi razgovori su ukazali na nedovoljno razumevanje službenika i grupe mladih, u smislu da status mladih i svrha evidentiranja nisu bili razjašnjeni. Stoga je akcija tima bila usmerena na razjašnjenje pozicije mladih (upoznavanje nadležnih službenika s projektom čiji su oni polaznici, i problemom pred kojim se sada nalaze), kao i na prikupljanje potrebnih dokumenata za njihovo evidentiranje.

Od petoro mladih, za četvoro je u kratkom vremenskom periodu pribavljena potrebna dokumentacija i izvršeno evidentiranje u Nacionalnoj službi za

zapošljavanje. Proces je bio odložen samo u slučaju jednog mladića, koji nije tada uspeo da reguliše građansko-pravni status, pošto je majka, koja je jedini staratelj detetu, na sezonskom radu u Vojvodini, te nije mogla da potpiše saglasnost za dobijanje lične karte. Početkom septembra su dobijena sva potrebna dokumenta i za ovog mladića, te je i on evidentiran. Time je cilj akcije u potpunosti ostvaren.

Kao otežavajući faktor, aktivisti navode nedovoljnu komunikaciju različitih službi u okviru Nacionalne službe za zapošljavanje, što dovodi do neusaglašenosti administrativnih procedura i ometa građane u ostvarivanju svojih prava.

- Peti identifikovani problem se takođe odnosi na teškoće ostvarivanja prava na obrazovanje, usled lošeg materijalnog stanja.

Devojka A. Ć. je Romkinja koja je dugo s porodicom živela u Nemačkoj, da bi zatim u procesu readmisije bili vraćeni u Srbiju. Završila je Filološku gimnaziju u Novom Sadu s odličnim uspehom. Problem zbog kojeg se obratila Romskom kulturnom centru je bio nemogućnost izlaska na prijemni ispit na željenom fakultetu, usled nedostatka novca za uplatu polaganja ispita. Pošto je bilo važno rešiti problem u vrlo kratkom roku (prijemni ispiti su već bili u toku), aktivnisti NVO-a su kontaktirali predsednika opštine Vranje. Na sastanku kojem su prisustvovali i dete i roditelji, predsednik opštine je upoznat s problemom i odobrio je isplatu traženih finansijskih sredstava.

Devojka je položila prijemni ispit. Kako je po broju poena razvrstana u grupu samofinansirajućih studenata, tim NVO-a je kontaktirao Sekretarijat za manjinska prava, pozivajući se na mere afirmativne akcije pri upisu Roma. Korisnica je uključena u pomenute mere, te je na fakultetu ostvarila status budžetski finansirane studentkinje.

- Šesti problem na čijem se rešavanju angažovao tim RKC-a, je teškoća mladića S. J. da ostvari pravo na obrazovanje na način na koji je želeo.

S. J. je bio odličan učenik Gimnazije u Vranju, koji je želeo da nastavi dalje školovanje. No, s obzirom na broj poena ostvarenih na prijemnom ispitu, nije mogao da upiše željeni smer na odabranom fakultetu. Tim je kontaktirao fakultet i Sekretarijat za manjinska pitanja pozivajući se na afirmativnu akciju pri upisu Roma. Mladić je uključen u mere afirmativne akcije, upisan je na željeni smer i to u grupi budžetski finansiranih studenata.





Zaštita romske dece
kroz praćenje i zastupanje

Analiza i komentari



Kao što je pomenuto prilikom opisa projekta, većina izvedenih akcija bila je usmerena na prevazilaženje teškoća ostvarivanja prava na obrazovanje romske dece. Ukoliko se razmišlja o zastupanju kao načinu unapređenja položaja određene ciljne grupe, obuhvatnost i dugoročnost postignutih izmena je jedan od ključnih kriterijuma planiranja akcija. Izmene u sferi obrazovanja upravo to obezbeđuju: veća uključenost dece u obrazovni sistem bi podsticala socijalnu inkluziju Roma, pružala mogućnost zapošljavanja i unapređenja socio-ekonomskog položaja, podsticala razvoj građanske svesti i time mogućnosti aktivističkog i političkog delovanja, a uticala bi i na smanjenje predrasuda zajednice. Da bi se pomenuti procesi ostvarivali, svakako je nužno pored osnaživanja same ciljne grupe, delovati i na sistem kako bi se uobičajeni mehanizmi koji vode socijalnoj izolaciji menjali. Akcije koje su sprovedene u okviru projekta su u većoj meri usmerene na pružanje podrške i osnaživanje samih Roma, ali su kao takve važan i nužan početni korak u pravcu kreiranja održivih društvenih promena. Pored toga, mogu i trebaju biti i osnov planiranja daljih akcija zastupanja.

Kao što je rečeno prilikom predstavljanja akcija, aktivnosti sprovedene u cilju rešavanja problema neostvarivanja prava na obrazovanje i zdravstvenu zaštitu dece porodice Hiseni, su realizovane u formi direktne asistencije. Veći deo drugih akcija zastupanja, takođe sadrži i tu komponentu, što je bilo uslovljeno i vrstom problema koji su na terenu identifikovani. Naime, jedan od ciljeva projekta jeste bio i osnaživanje lokalnih pripadnika civilnog sektora da prate stanje poštovanja prava deteta romske populacije. Na osnovu utvrđenog stanja

na terenu, dakle realnih teškoća sa kojima se suočavaju romska deca, su dalje definisani problemi čijim će se rešavanjem NVO baviti, kao i odgovarajući plan akcije tj. način na koji će pristupiti rešavanju problema. Činjenica da veliki deo romske populacije u opštinama u kojima su se odvijale projektne aktivnosti ne ostvaruje pravo na zdravstveno i socijalno osiguranje, kao ni pravo na obrazovanje, i ne poznaje administrativne puteve za njihovo ostvarivanje, direktna asistencija u pravcu obezbeđivanja potrebnih dokumenata i upućivanja u funkcionisanje institucija sistema je bila nužna i značajna vrsta podrške. Važno je istaći i da su u većini slučajeva, NVO aktivisti bili usmereni ka uključivanju roditelja i njihovom osnaživanju za samostalno snalaženje u socijalnim okvirima lokalne sredine. Na primer, u slučaju obezbeđivanja besplatnog izvoda iz matične knjige rođenih za decu radi upisa u vrtić, na prvom sastanku s roditeljima je izabran njihov predstavnik koji će ceo proces zastupanja realizovati zajedno s timom NVO aktivista. I u drugim akcijama zastupanja roditelji su bili prisutni pri realizovanju većine aktivnosti (odlasci u matičnu službu ili druge opštinske službe, odlasci u Centar za socijalni rad i sl.). Upoznavanje s administrativnim procedurama kroz praktičan primer, jeste važan izvor sticanja iskustva. Angažman roditelja se u nekim slučajevima tokom procesa zastupanja i povećavao – na primer, upravo u pomenutoj akciji zastupanja porodice Hiseni, NVO tim napominje da su se roditelji, koji su u početku samo pratili tim pri odlasku u institucije, u kasnijim fazama projekta aktivno angažovali na realizaciji aktivnosti. Roditelji su i edukovani od strane NVO aktivista, objašnjavanjem procedura i načina funkcionisanja institucija. Na taj način ishodi projekta prevazilaze ostvarivanje kratkoročnog cilja rešavanjem konkretnog problema, već osnažuju romsku populaciju da slične probleme u budućnosti rešava samostalno, što i jeste karakteristika procesa zastupanja.

Još jedan pozitivan ishod ovakve saradnje s romskim porodicama, je i uspostavljanje odnosa poverenja. U kojoj meri je romska populacija stekla

poverenje u NVO aktiviste sa kojima su bili u kontaktu, pokazuje i njihovo samoinicijativno obraćanje organizacijama za pomoć, kojeg je tokom realizacije projekta bilo sve više.

Na primer, u Pirotu, tokom procesa zastupanja dece iz osmih razreda za upis u srednju školu, timovi aktivista NVO Pralipe su odlazili u kućne posete porodicama i tako uspostavljali blizak odnos. Tokom jedne posete, porodica im je poverila da je njihova ćerka, koja nije bila korisnica u okviru projekta, napustila porodicu radi udaje. Tim je u cilju pružanja pomoći porodici, kontaktirao nadležni Centar za socijalni rad.

Timu Romskog kulturnog centra su se, tokom trajanja projekta, obratili za pomoć dvoje odraslih Roma s problemom ostvarivanja penzije, na čijem se rešavanju tim takođe angažovao. Neke od akcija zastupanja koje je sproveo RKC u okviru projekta, su takođe proistekle iz samoinicijativnog obraćanja Roma za pomoć, a ne iz prvobitnog monitoringa stanja poštovanja prava deteta u romskoj zajednici: slučaj obezbeđivanja izvoda iz matične knjige rođenih radi upisa dece u predškolsku ustanovu, pomoć pri upisu fakulteta A. Č. i S. J., problem prijavljivanja na evidenciju tržišta rada maloletnog N. B. Uspostavljen odnos poverenja takođe proširuje efekte projektnih aktivnosti i na period nakon završetka samog projekta. Pošto su se nevladine organizacije Pralipe i Romski kulturni centar etablirale u svojim sredinama kao organizacije koje su zaista usmerene na potrebe romske zajednice i mogu pružiti praktičnu pomoć, pretpostavka je da će se njihova saradnja nastaviti i dalje. Time se zapravo na lokalnom nivou kreirao mehanizam koji vodi unapređenju položaja Roma, i koji može biti prvi korak u podsticanju relevantnih društvenih promena u pravcu otvaranja ka multikulturalnosti.

Kao što se iz navedenih prikaza sprovedenih akcija vidi, sprovedeno je pet grupnih i tri individualne akcije, kojima je ukupno obuhvaćeno 82 dece. I individualnim i grupnim akcijama su rešavani slični problemi, većinom

vezani za ostvarivanje prava na školovanje. Rešavanju se pristupilo na sličan način – obezbeđivanjem nužne dokumentacije i kontaktima sa nadležnim institucijama.

Kada je u pitanju obrazovanje Roma, prateći probleme na čijem su se rešavanju NVO aktivisti angažovali, očigledno je da se romska populacija na svakom nivou susreće sa teškoćama:

- Identifikovane su teškoće koje ometaju upis dece u predškolsku ustanovu (nedostatak informisanosti o dokumentima potrebnim za upis, nedostatak informisanosti o institucijama nadležnim za izdavanje određenih dokumenata, i o administrativnom postupku kojim se do dokumenata dolazi, nedostatak finansijskih sredstava, nedostatak informisanosti o daljoj proceduri upisa, nakon što su obezbeđena potrebna dokumenta);
- Teškoće su identifikovane i u procesu upisa dece u osnovnu školu (aktuelni sistem institucionalnog funkcionisanja ne prati romske porodice, ne prati obuhvaćenost romske dece obrazovnim sistemom niti motiviše romske porodice u tom pravcu; zahteva rešenje o kategorizaciji dece i ako su u pitanju deca koja dolaze iz ekstremno socijalno-ekonomski depriviranih sredina, dok je upućivanje dece na tretman u pravcu podsticanja kognitivnog razvoja na nivou lične inicijative i odgovornosti profesionalaca; neinformisanost roditelja o proceduri upisa dece u školu, uključujući i potrebna dokumenta i način njihovog ostvarivanja; teškoće prevoza dece do škole usled lošeg materijalnog stanja dece i nepoštovanje prava na besplatan prevoz dece na način koji je definisan Zakonom o osnovnoškolskom obrazovanju);
- Na prelazu između osnovne i srednje škole su takođe identifikovane specifične teškoće (loši finansijski i stambeni uslovi porodica, kao i nemogućnost roditelja da pomognu deci u učenju usled njihovog niskog obrazovnog nivoa, utiču na slab uspeh velikog broja romske dece tokom osnovnoškolskog obrazovanja; obrazovni proces nije otvoren za različitosti

generalno, pa nije prilagođen ni specifičnostima aktuelne pozicije romske populacije – izmene procesa rada radi uključivanja romske dece, su na nivou dobre volje pojedinih profesionalaca; demotivisanost romske populacije za obrazovanje generalno, koje usled pomenutih karakteristika vide kao još jednu instancu socijalnog stigmatiziranja i diskvalifikovanja; neinformisanost o proceduri upisa srednje škole, potrebnim dokumentima i institucijama koje ih izdaju);

- Za mlade Rome koji su završili srednju školu i žele i dalje da se edukuju, i prelaz od srednje škole ka fakultetu nosi teškoće, vezane prevashodno za lošu finansijsku situaciju porodica (nedostatak novca za polaganje prijemnog ispita, nedostatak novca za samofinansirajući oblik školovanja).

Problemi koji su bili osnov planiranja i izvođenja akcija zastupanja su dobro definisani, jasno povezani s pravima koja su korisnicima ugrožena. Na osnovu informacija/pritužbi korisnika, članovi tima su uspešno prepoznavali suštinu problemske situacije.

Ciljevi su takođe jasno definisani, konkretni, realni, merljivi i ostvarivi. Direktno su povezani sa problemom od kojeg su pošli.

Akcioni planovi su konkretni i jasni, usmereni ka ostvarivanju postavljenog cilja. Koraci u realizaciji cilja su dobro identifikovani, kao i vremenski raspored aktivnosti. U isto vreme, članovi timova su bili dovoljno fleksibilni da akcioni plan menjaju prilagođavajući ga specifičnoj situaciji na terenu (kao što su teškoće uspostavljanja kontakta sa nekim predstavnicima institucija ili odlaganjem procedura, kao što je pregled deteta na komisiji za razvrstavanje koja se sastoji od više članova, pa se nije mogao završiti prilikom prve posete). U tim situacijama su ponekad menjali način pristupa (na primer, neformalnim obraćanjem umesto formalnog), što je uglavnom vodilo bržem postizanju cilja. Sve u svemu, timovi su bili fleksibilni kada su nailazili na teškoće u ostvarivanju planiranih aktivnosti, posmatrajući ih pre kao izazov, i koristeći svoje prethodno

iskustvo u traganju za načinima njihovog prevazilaženja. S druge strane, utisak je da su i predstavnici lokalnih institucija većinom bili vrlo otvoreni da čuju problem, i spremni da se angažuju na njegovom rešavanju. Većinom su to činili u okviru svojih redovnih poslova ili ovlašćenja, dok je dvoje profesora iz Pirota čak prihvatilo da u svoje slobodno vreme daje besplatne časove romskoj deci, kako bi ih pripremili za polaganje prijemnog ispita za upis u srednju školu. Jedini negativni primer je izrazita diskriminacija u Nacionalnoj službi za zapošljavanje opštine Vranje (odbijanje službenice da upiše u evidenciju tržišta rada romskog mladića koji povremeno svira, uz obrazloženje da već radi „na crno”, komentarišući dodatno predstavniku NVO-a koji je na pomenuto odbijanje reagovao u svojstvu zastupnika mladića: „Šta je to dete do sada radilo – nikad ništa!”).

Kada su u pitanju kontaktirani predstavnici institucija, generalna je procena da su članovi NVO timova dobro identifikovali institucije nadležne za rešavanje određenih problema, i u okviru njih, relevantne službe. Njihov broj je varirao u akcijama zastupanja, zavisno od tipa problema. Najopsežnije uključivanje predstavnika lokalne zajednice je postignuto u akciji zastupanja romske dece iz osmih razreda osnovne škole, radi upisa u srednje škole, realizovanoj u Pirotu. Uključeni su direktori tri škole, psihološko-pedagoške službe, razredne starešine i neki predmetni nastavnici istih škola, celokupne porodice dece, Centar za socijalni rad, načelnik za vanprivredne delatnosti opštine Pirot i mediji. Pomenuti predstavnici institucija su ne samo animirani da svojim angažovanjem doprinesu rešavanju problema, već su tokom realizacije projekta i međusobno povezani kroz saradnju organizovanu od strane NVO tima. Na taj način, otvara se mogućnost da postignute promene u lokalnoj zajednici budu dugoročne.

Govoreći o akciji realizovanoj u opštini Pirot, važno je imati na umu da se ona oslanjala na, u nekoj meri izgrađenu, senzibilisanost lokalnih institucija, pristeklu iz implementacije dva važna strateška dokumenta: Plana akcije za

decu, čija je realizacija otpočela 2005. godine i Strategije i akcionog plana za inkluzivno obrazovanje romske i druge marginalizovane dece. U ovim dokumentima su, po rečima koordinatora tima NVO Pralipe koji je bio uključen u izradu Strategije, jasno zacrtani ciljevi vezani za obrazovanje Roma i predviđene razne aktivnosti usmerene na decu i roditelje koje imaju za cilj motivisanje Roma za obrazovanje, te obezbeđivanje veće uključenosti dece u sve nivoe edukativnog sistema. Ovaj podatak govori o dobro isplaniranoj akciji zastupanja koja uzima u obzir olakšavajuće faktore, predviđene aktivnosti zasniva na njima i nadograđuje ih kreirajući sredinu bolje prilagođenu potrebama ciljne grupe.

Procenjujući poruke koje su NVO aktivisti tokom akcija zastupanja upućivali osobama bitnim za rešavanje problema, upadljivo je da u njima dominira pozivanje na prava, isticanje kršenja procedure, i pozivanje na mogućnost upućivanje žalbi građana nadležnim službama na nepravilnosti u funkcionisanju javnih servisa. Ovakva koncepcija poruka ukazuje na izgrađenu građansku svest pripadnika lokalnog civilnog sektora, te njihovu osposobljenost da budu nosioci društvenih promena u svojim sredinama. Participiranje Roma (korisnika) u akcijama koje prožimaju poruke usmerene na poštovanje prava građana, ima snažno edukativno dejstvo, podstiče prepoznavanje situacija kršenja prava i inicijativu u pravcu njihove zaštite. No, daleko najbitniji efekat je smanjenje doživljaja društvene bespomoćnosti, prisutnog kod pripadnika I pripadnica marginalizovanih grupa i kreiranje vere u mogućnost društvenih promena. Tek ova psihološka promena stvara osnovu za prekidanje začaranog kruga socijalne izolacije.

Posmatrajući prilagođenost poruke efektu koji se želeo postići, utisak je da su poruke upućivane roditeljima u najmanjoj meri bile prilagođene željenom efektu. Namera je bila da se roditelji motivišu da uključe decu u institucije i obezbede im time korišćenje prava, pre svega prava na obrazovanje, što bi dugoročno vodilo unapređenju njihovog socio-ekonomskog i političkog

statusa. Poruke su bile upućivane u formi isticanja prednosti iznetog stanovišta, ali uz nedovoljno razumevanje razloga neodlučnosti roditelja, njihovih strahova i briga. O ovoj će temi biti nešto više reči u narednom poglavlju koje se odnosi na sugestije za unapređenje sledećih faza projekta.

Skoro sve izvedene akcije su postigle postavljene ciljeve. Ciljevi nisu do kraja realizovani u slučajevima u kojima je to zavisilo od procedure koja je u manjoj meri u opsegu moći uticaja NVO aktivista: u slučaju asistencije porodici Hiseni deca nisu upisana u školu u vremenskom roku predviđenom projektom usled odlaganja pregleda dece od strane članova komisije, i zatim nužnog perioda procesuiranja nalaza; u slučaju zastupanja dece iz Trebješana povodom obezbeđivanja besplatnog prevoza do škole, cilj nije postignut usled zastoja u realizaciji dogovora postignutog sa načelnikom Sekretarijata za obrazovanje opštine Vranje. U ovom drugom slučaju, aktivisti imaju već dalji plan akcije u smislu angažovanja drugih članova lokalne zajednice koji mogu doprineti rešenju problema, kao što je izneto prilikom opisa procesa zastupanja (upoznavanje roditelja sa Zakonom o osnovnoškolskom obrazovanju, upoznavanje nadležnih ministarstava s problemom, kontakti sa medijima, angažovanje advokata). Ovaj podatak, s jedne strane govori o kvalitetu planiranja i izvođenja akcija zastupanja. Timovi su imali jasnu i realnu procenu i pri izboru problema kojim će se baviti, i pri kreiranju akcionog plana. Birali su probleme veoma značajne za pojedince/grupe, a koji se pri tom mogu rešiti u vremenskom roku predviđenom projektom. S druge strane, time što su skoro sve sprovedene akcije ostvarile svoj cilj, one šalju i poruku lokalnoj javnosti o mogućnosti unošenja društvenih promena u život lokalne zajednice, te o značaju društvenog aktivizma.

Iako su birani konkretni problemi koji mogu delovati uskog obima, značaj njihovog rešavanja za korisnike je izuzetno velik. Rezultat kao što je upis u srednju školu sve romske dece iz osmih razreda dve osnovne škole u Pirotu, koja su da bi to postigla redovno pohađala dodatne časove pripreme i u isto

vreme ulagala dodatni napor da poprave slabe ocene kako bi položila razred, je zaista sjajan! Dalje, 22 dece koje je upisalo predškolsku ustanovu, prevazilazeći problem slabijeg snalaženja roditelja u administrativnim procedurama, je takođe izuzetan. Promena postignuta kroz asistenciju porodici Hiseni, takođe ima veliki značaj – porodici koja je živela u ekstremno teškim materijalnim uslovima van svih sistema društvene pomoći, je sada omogućeno korišćenje zdravstvenih usluga i obrazovanja za svu decu. Ništa manje značajni nisu ni rezultati ostvareni u individualnim slučajevima zastupanja: dvoje odličnih učenika Gimnazije ne bi upisalo fakultet usled finansijskih teškoća, da nije sprovedena akcija zastupanja; mladić koji živi u petočlanoj porodici u kojoj niko nije zaposlen ne bi uspeo da se prijavi na evidenciju Nacionalne službe za zapošljavanje, da nije sprovedeno zastupanje.

Promene postignute u svim slučajevima su uvele korisnike u sistem institucija, kroz koji mogu dalje ostvarivati svoja prava i unapređivati svoju društvenu poziciju. Tim pre što su projektne aktivnosti uticale i na razvoj građanske svesti Roma, doprinele su njihovom poznavanju administrativnih procedura i institucija, i, što je najvažnije, doprinele prevazilaženju doživljaja društvene bespomoćnosti. Uspostavljen odnos poverenja između NVO aktivista i lokalnih romskih zajednica ukazuje da romska populacija u nevladinoj organizaciji vidi saveznika kojem se može obraćati kada naiđe na probleme koje u tom trenutku ne može da reši. Iz svega rečenog je jasno da rezultati izvedenih akcija zastupanja imaju ne samo značajne, već i dugoročne ishode.





Zaštita romske dece
kroz praćenje i zastupanje

Sugestije i preporuke



Na početku prethodnog poglavlja je navedeno da su sprovedene akcije zastupanja u ovoj fazi pilot projekta unapređivale položaj Roma u lokalnim zajednicama pružanjem direktne pomoći i podrške korisnicima/cama. S obzirom na činjenicu da veliki broj Roma nije koristio ni one mehanizme socijalnih usluga koje već funkcionišu u zajednicama (zdravstvene usluge, mogućnost školovanja, mogućnost besplatnog prevoza do škole, itd.), ova vrsta podrške je bila nužan prvi korak ka socijalnoj inkluziji Roma. Nakon što su ove akcije sprovedene, u lokalnim sredinama se formirala osnova za iniciranje daljih društvenih promena. Fokus akcija zastupanja u narednoj fazi bi se mogao pomeriti sa ciljne grupe ka institucijama/organizacijama/pojedincima relevantnim za položaj Roma. Isti tip problema od kojih su polazile akcije u ovoj fazi, bi se mogao rešavati podsticanjem promena u njihovoj praksi i/ili politici. Na primer, ostvarivanje prava na zdravstvenu zaštitu i uključivanje Roma u sistem evidentiranja (matične knjige) bi se moglo unaprediti i osmišljavanjem aktivnosti u okviru procesa zastupanja koje bi promenile praksu nadležnih centara za socijalni rad na taj način da službenici u određenim vremenskim periodima odlaze u romska naselja, prate ko nije evidentiran i ko ne ostvaruje prava koja mu/joj država garantuje, uzimaju potrebne podatke, obezbeđuju građanima/kama potrebna dokumenta i upućuju ih u dalje procedure. Na taj način bi se kreirale promene koje su obuhvatnije, dugoročnije i održivije. Pored toga, odnosile bi se na celu lokalnu romsku populaciju, a ne samo na pojedince/ke i grupe.

Dugoročnosti postignutih promena bi doprinelo i pomeranje fokusa na ranije faze nastanka problema. Na primer, podsticanje srednjoškolskog obrazovanja romske dece bi se moglo realizovati već od viših razreda osnovne škole, osiguravajući na taj način redovnost pohađanja nastave, blagovremeno postizanje dobrog školskog uspeha, i pripremu za polaganje prijemnog ispita za upis u srednju školu. Članovi NVO Pralipe to i sami zapažaju, sugerišući u svojim komentarima realizovanog projekta da bi sa aktivnostima koje su oni sprovodili trebalo započeti od početka školske godine sedmog razreda.

Imajući u vidu da aktivisti Romskog kulturnog centra kroz izveštaje o svojim aktivnostima govore i o potrebi motivisanja romskih roditelja za upis dece u predškolsku ustanovu, jasno je da su aktivnosti koje podstiču uključivanje dece u obrazovni sistem neophodne na svim uzrasnim nivoima.

Da bi aktivnosti ovog tipa bile svrhovite, važno je na pravi način razumeti razloge male obuhvaćenosti Roma sistemom školovanja. Interpretacija pojave sa pozicije većinske grupe, vodi etiketiranju i društvenom odbacivanju Roma, a kako su to društveno uobičajeni stavovi, osobe ih često ne prepoznaju kao stigmatizirajuće i nisu svesne njihovih implikacija.

NVO aktivisti uljučeni u projekat, i pored razvijene građanske svesti i odanosti borbi za unapređenje položaja Roma, u nekim aspektima dele većinske stavove. Tako o pojavama kao što su niža tendencija upisivanja dece u školu, prisutnost sive ekonomije i dečijeg rada, govore kao o „lošim navikama” Roma („Uzrok problema su dugogodišnje loše navike Roma da decu daju samo u osnovnu školu, što rezultira niskim nivoom obrazovanja romske populacije”). Pri tom se gubi iz vida uloga sistema u kreiranju i održavanju uslova ovih pojava. Ukoliko društvo održava romsku populaciju u statusu siromaštva otežavajući joj školovanje na različite

načine, i otežavajući zapošljavanje kako kroz nedovoljno omogućavanje sticanja viših kvalifikacija, tako i kroz diskriminaciju prilikom prijema u radni odnos, onda je siva ekonomija jedan od načina da romska porodica preživi u takvim uslovima suženih mogućnosti.

S obzirom da su akcije zastupanja bile usmerene na obrazovanje, treba posebno obratiti pažnju na način razumevanja manje prisutnosti romske dece u školama, i osvestiti sve uzroke ove pojave od nedovoljnog poznavanja roditelja administrativnih procedura i institucija usled vekovne socijalne izolacije Roma, slabijeg poznavanja jezika sredine i od strane roditelja i od strane dece, do loših materijalnih i stambenih uslova porodica usled sistemski održavanog siromaštva, što uzrokuje odrastanje dece u kognitivno nedovoljno stimulatívnoj sredini. Kada se dete koje je odrastalo u takvim uslovima uključi u obrazovni sistem, njegova startna pozicija se značajno razlikuje od pozicije dece iz većinske grupe, a pred njega/nju se postavljaju isti zahtevi. Kada dete ne može da odgovori postavljenim zahtevima, etiketira se kao dete sniženih intelektualnih sposobnosti, ili kao lenjo i nezainteresovano za školu, a slične etikete dobija i cela porodica. Ovakav stav škole samo doprinosi demotivisanju porodica i povlačenju dece iz procesa obrazovanja. S obzirom da je ovakvo iskustvo porodica višegeneracijsko, jasni su razlozi njihove nepoverljivosti prema školi kao instituciji, i sumnje u efekte školovanja dece.

Poseban vid etiketiranja predstavlja razvrstavanje dece koje je zvanična procedura integrisana u obrazovni i zdravstveni sistem Srbije. Procedura razvrstavanja ne uzima u obzir kulturološku različitost, različitost iskustva, socio-ekonomsku deprivaciju u kojoj je dete odrastalo, podvrgava ga testovima sposobnosti koji su kulturološki zasićeni sadržajima dominantne kulture i odstupanje deteta od takvih merila tumači kao intelektualni deficit. Na taj način posledice društvene opresije se smeštaju u karakteristike pripadnika/

ca marginalizovane grupe – niže sposobnosti se shvataju kao karakteristika deteta, a ne kao posledica sistematskog društvenog isključivanja i dete se time sekundarno viktimizuje. Nalaz komisije svrstava dete u nepromenljivu kategoriju sa brojnim implikacijama (na primer, daljim održavanjem socijalne izolacije uključivanjem dece u specijalne škole koje su i fizički, i psihološkim barijerama udaljene od redovnih škola, smanjenjem opsega izbora zanimanja itd.).

S obzirom na usmerenost ovog projekta na lokalne okvire, od NVO aktivista se svakako nije očekivalo lobiranje za velike društvene izmene kao što bi bile izmene u proceduri razvrstavanja dece. No, ukoliko se proces kategorizacije posmatra na iznet način, prepoznaje se neophodnost uključivanja dece u neki od oblika profesionalnog stimulisanja kognitivnog razvoja što duži period pre izlaska na komisiju za razvrstavanje.

U komentarima NVO aktivista uključenih u projekat jasno je prisustvo internalizovane opresije – pojave dugoročne izloženosti predrasudama i diskriminaciji dominantne grupe, pripadnici marginalizovane grupe počinju sebe da vide na onaj način koji im plasira dominantna grupa. Tako na primer, govoreći o teškoćama u realizaciji asistencije porodici Hiseni, NVO tim navodi da je otežavajuća okolnost bila nedovoljna zainteresovanost majke za školovanje dece. Stoga daju sugestiju da se prilikom sledećih akcija zastupanja i u tom smislu posveti pažnja prilikom izbora korisnika.

Radi unapređenja aktivnosti i pristupa korisnicima/cama programa, bilo bi korisno da NVO aktivisti kroz edukaciju iz oblasti obrazovanja za društvenu pravdu dobiju mogućnost da sagledaju društvene i individualne mehanizme koji vode diskriminaciji i opresiji marginalizovanih grupa.

Da bi planirane aktivnosti u okviru procesa zastupanja bile svrhovite, veoma je važno razumevanje uzroka pojave na čiju izmenu akcija cilja. Ukoliko se

želi podstaći motivisanost romskih roditelja za obrazovanje dece, bitno je razumeti njihovo stanovište, njihove stavove, brige, razloge nepoverenja, pokazati im to u kontaktu i osmisliti aktivnosti koje ciljaju na izmenu uzroka koji su u osnovi ove pojave.

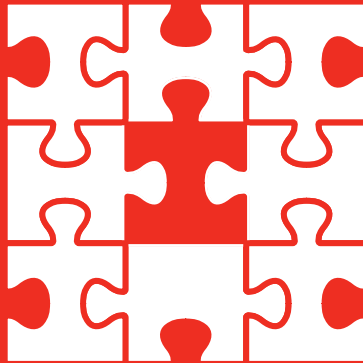
Grupni rad s roditeljima i uključivanje celih porodica u ovaj proces, kao što su to aktivisti i radili tokom projekta, je svakako efikasan pristup problemu. Rezultati bi mogli biti još bolji ukoliko bi osim predočavanja prednosti školovanja, aktivnosti bile tako organizovane da se kroz interaktivni oblik rada podstiče i razmena iskustva roditelja, tokom koje bi dobili razumevanje za svoje stavove, grupnu podršku, a zatim bili motivisani kroz argumente koji su njima relevantni, koji su odgovor na njihove strahove i iskustvo. Otpor promenama koji je generalno ljudska karakteristika, kod pripadnika i pripadnica marginalizovanih grupa često je izraz naučene bespomoćnosti. Sve u svemu, tek posmatranje problema na koji se želi uticati iz perspektive same populacije koja je njime pogođena, daje osnov za kreiranje zaista učinkovitih aktivnosti.

Predložene smernice razvoja daljih akcija zastupanja prava romske dece (usmerenost na izmenu prakse lokalnih institucija; vršenje uticaja na same uzroke marginalizovanosti Roma u lokalnoj zajednici; reagovanje na ranijim nivoima razvoja pojave koja se želi promeniti; kreiranje dugoročnih i obuhvatnih izmena), mogu se realizovati samo ako se i vreme predviđeno za trajanje procesa zastupanja produži.

Akcije zastupanja realizovane u fazi pilotiranja ovog projekta su prevashodno ostvarile značajne rezultate za korisnike. Pored toga, obuhvatile su predstavnike različitih institucija relevantnih za položaj Roma u lokalnoj zajednici. Na osnovu izveštaja o sprovedenim aktivnostima može se pretpostaviti da se i njihova senzibilisanost za teškoće sa kojima se romska

deca susreću povećala, a time i spremnost da u okvirima svoje profesionalne uloge reaguju. Sami NVO aktivisti su kroz sprovođenje procesa zastupanja pokazali da mogu da budu agensi društvenih promena u svojoj sredini. Uvođenje aspekta prava deteta u zalaganja za poboljšanje položaja romske dece (umesto pozivanja na dobru volju pripadnika dominantne grupe) je već samo po sebi izuzetno značajna promena, i za predstavnike lokalne zajednice, i za same Rome.

Iskustva tokom realizacije akcija su bila podsticajna i za kreiranje mogućih daljih pravaca razvoja, čime bi se učvrstile postignute izmene, učinile obuhvatnijim, dugoročnijim i održivijim.



Protection of Roma Children
Monitoring and Advocacy

About the Project

Between 100 000 and 450 000 Roma people (estimates vary depending on the source) live in Serbia, the majority of which live in settlements lacking infrastructure, where governments have not provided even basic living conditions such as electricity and waste disposal. They are often denied entry into public facilities, services are not provided to them in institutions, and they are subjected to physical violence, even by members of the police.

Adverse economic and social conditions, as well as insufficient understanding of the educational institutions of the specific position of the Roma population diminish the possibility of schooling children. Hence the average Roma family lives in poverty, insignificantly involved in system institutions and isolated from contemporary society. Many Roma children start to work and earn money in their early childhood by begging on the streets or by gathering garbage. Most of those children, even those younger than the age of six spend that time on the street alone, without parental care and protection.

The poverty of the Roma population and the discrimination they are exposed to lead to violation of many of their human rights. Some children, even though they have families, are placed in institutions for children without parental care, institutions for children with disabilities or institutions for juvenile delinquents. Free education in special schools and welfare are also factors that hinder the integration of Roma people in society, in the sense that the poverty of Roma families additionally encourages them to enroll their children in special schools, as well as to place them in institutions for social protection. It is therefore necessary to pressure the government to design long term measures that would facilitate the integration of Roma people in the educational system and the local community, measures that would target the relevant and quintessential causes which maintain the Roma people in the position of social isolation.

Services of institutions are often of low quality, insufficiently adapted to the needs of Roma children. On the other hand a thorough and sustainable social transformation is not possible without the participation of institutions of the system. For example, the problem of unsuccessfulness of Roma children in school, and their early exclusion from the schooling system cannot be solved without participation of the community. It is therefore important to strengthen the capacities of local community institutions for providing services in accordance with the needs of the Roma population.

Education has a key role in improving the status of Roma people and developing a relationship between the Roma and other communities, by improving their economic status and social possibilities, as well as by improvement of interethnic understanding through Roma participation in the educational system. However, Roma children are confronted with many difficulties and obstacles in accessing education, and in this way the cycle of deprivation and isolation continues.

Therefore, the goal of the *Protection of Roma Children – Monitoring and Advocacy* project was to contribute to the implementation of sustainable mechanisms of protection, through advocating for the improvement of the position of children of Roma nationality. It aims to develop mechanisms and skills for monitoring the position of Roma and advocating their rights, in that way empowering the civil sector of the local community to be an active subject of change. The concept of this project is to utilize human rights as the basis of a thorough and systematic model of introducing recognizable changes in the everyday life of Roma children.

In this way, project activities lead to the improvement of mechanisms for monitoring the respect of rights of Roma children in the local community; development of advocacy methodology in cases of violation of child rights; raising awareness about the position of children of Roma nationality, as well as promotion of best practice models within the network of relevant social actors.

Project activities were intended for NGO activists in local communities (8 Roma and non-Roma representatives), to empower them monitoring the position of Roma children, and advocating their rights in the local community. In this way they affected the Roma community as well, especially the Roma children, not only by solving specific problems but also by raising awareness on human rights and the possibilities for achieving their realization, and empowered them taking social initiatives. The project activities indirectly affected local officials, representatives of authorized institutions, the media and the general public, on the local and on the national level.

The project lasted 12 months, and was carried out in two municipalities: Pirot and Vranje, with the participation of the Roma Cultural Center and Pralipe NGOs as local implementation partners.

The first part of the project aimed to assess the state of child rights of Roma children at the local level, for the purpose of which, representatives of non-governmental organizations were trained for monitoring the state of child rights (identifying and gathering relevant data). Their field work was facilitated and systematized with questionnaires for the evaluation of the state of child rights in the areas of social protection, healthcare and education (designed by the Child Rights Center). Their task was to visit all educational, healthcare, social protection, and local government institutions in the community, as well as to interview a representative sample of Roma families, in order to identify specific example of child rights violation as well as examples of respecting child rights.

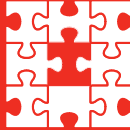
After they identified the existing problems through this method, the advocates took advocacy actions in 7 identified cases of child rights violations, and one direct assistance activity, in total involving 82 children. The cases for advocacy actions were chosen based on the socio-economic situation of the family/group, the urgency of solving the issues, as well as based on the dimensions and the lasting effect that the activities would produce. Therefore, the NGO

activist paid special attention to the difficulties in implementing the right to education of the Roma children.

In order to guarantee a high level of quality in the realization of this project, the NGO activists were provided education in the field of organizing and managing the advocacy process, as well as brochures made by the Child Rights Center – *Case study guidelines* and the *Guidebook for existing legislature and mechanisms within the system* (as a tool for guiding direct interventions in cases of child rights violations). The aim of the action was to improve living conditions of Roma children through direct intervention in local institutions, as well as promotion of the advocacy process itself.

As the advocacy process is a key resource in the realization of the project idea, it will be presented in detail in the next chapter.

Protection of Roma Children – Monitoring and Advocacy is the second phase of a three-year project **Inclusive education for Roma children in Serbia**, and follow up of a project **Roma Children rights Monitors Net** which take place in 2005, and partially in 2006. During the first phase of a project, methodology for collecting and analyzing data on a state of Roma children was developed and local roman activists were empowered for systematic approach to state of Roma children problem. In the second phase, we went further and we have worked on development of sustainable mechanisms for protection by advocacy process for improvement of Roma children rights. Results of our work are presented in this publication.



Protection of Roma Children
Monitoring and Advocacy

The Advocacy Process



Advocacy refers to activities which aim to amend laws, policies or common practices of people in office, or increasing influence of a certain population on decision making in the community. It can be performed by trained professionals of various occupations, local groups and associations, the local government.

There are three possible approaches to advocacy:

1. Advocating for a vulnerable population (a population dealing with problems)

This is applied in situations where the vulnerable population is lacking knowledge and skills to advocate for itself, to be an agent of change on its own. Organizations that respect the principles of participation and empowering usually view this approach as the primary option, aiming that over time, the vulnerable group takes over advocating for it self.

The problems that are addressed through this approach are frequently identified by persons outside the vulnerable population, and are related to officials.

Because this form of advocacy is carried out by trained professionals, there is more information at the disposal of the actors in process, as well as a broader perspective of the problem.

Furthermore, this way provides a quicker approach to resolving the issues, but it does not encourage raising capacities of the vulnerable groups.

2. Joint advocacy in cooperation with the vulnerable population

The goal of this form of advocacy is, besides the general aforementioned goals, to strengthen capacities of the vulnerable population to advocate for its own interests.

In this case, an outside factor mobilizes the capacities of the vulnerable population. Activities are jointly planned and carried out.

In applying this mode of advocacy, decision making abilities are improved within the vulnerable group, and their capabilities to advocate their interests are bettered. On the other hand, compared to the above mentioned advocacy approach, this one can be slower in achieving set goals, because it requires an agreement and compliance of all participating parties.

3. The vulnerable population advocates its interests on its own.

One of the specific goals of this approach to advocacy is raising awareness within the group itself about the possibilities, productivity of advocacy, as well as of their capabilities for conducting these activities. Although the advocacy process is planned, organized and conducted by the vulnerable population itself, it can be initiated from outside in some situations.

This form of advocacy, out of the three, does the most to empower the vulnerable population, develop their self esteem and self respect, as well as consciousness of the possibility to struggle for their rights and interests in the future. The threat that this form of advocacy poses is the possible presence of revenge that drives the activities, of which the group is frequently not aware in the beginning and sometimes throughout the whole process. Since professionals do not usually participate in this process, there is less relevant information available, and/or a broader perspective of the problems is not considered.

The Advocacy Cycle

The advocacy process can be divided into five stages. Each of the stages has its own specific role and meaning, logically precedes the previous. They are carried out successively, one after another, although in practice they frequently overlap.

The first stage is based on the definition of the problem. At the start, it is necessary to identify what problem the group will be dealing with.

The substance of the second stage is the research and analysis of the problem. Its roots and consequences are researched in detail.

A strategic plan is made in the third stage. The goals are defined; strategy, the way in which they will be achieved; techniques that will be used; potential partners of the group are defined; the potential risks are considered; the time line of activities is planned; obligations and responsibilities are assigned; success indicators, and how to measure them, are defined.

The fourth phase is where the planned activities are carried out, monitored and coordinated.

The fifth phase is evaluation. It implies the monitoring of activities (were they carried out in accordance with the planned time line; did they achieve the anticipated results,...), and the analysis of achieved results according to predefined indicators.





Protection of Roma Children
Monitoring and Advocacy

Presentation of Advocacy Activities

As stated in the introductory part, seven activities were carried out as part of the advocacy project: one in Pirot and six in Vranjska Banja, while a direct assistance activity was carried out in Vranje.

Pirot

A team from the Roma Cultural Center elected the problem of unsatisfactory participation of Roma children in high school education, which has broad and far reaching consequences on their socio-economic status and position in society. The goal of the advocacy activity is defined as support and empowerment of Roma children, students of the eight grade of primary school, for taking high school entrance exams. Three primary schools were chosen: P. S. Sveti Sava, P. S. Dusan Radovic, and special primary school Mladost. Advocacy activities were carried out by two RCC teams with 19 children of Roma nationality from regular schools and 18 children from the special school.

RCC team members visited the regular primary schools, and presented the project, its goal and the role of the school in the proposed cooperation towards the achievement of the goal to principals and to members of the psychological – pedagogical departments of the school. When schools accepted cooperation on this project, the next step was to talk with the class leaders of the eight grades, with whose help Roma students were selected.

Their families participated in the activities. RCC members visited families of all of the students and presented the proposed activities. Most of the families expressed motivation for the children to continue their education. The families that wished that their children begin working once they finish school explained that they did not have the material resources to support their children's further education. Contact with the families was maintained

throughout the realization of the project, and efforts were being made to motivate them to continue their children's education, with emphasis on the fact that they were eligible to receive various forms of support from the local government. By the end of the year all of the families supported the high school education of their children.

The RCC invited the local Center for Social Work to participate in the activity – introduced the project to the Center and initiated the provision of one-time material support to the families of the Roma children taking part in the advocacy activity, so that in this way their preparation for high school entrance exams is eased.

The next step in the realization of this advocacy activity was contracting mathematics and Serbian language and literature tutors, whom would give free preparation lessons to the Roma children. Simultaneously, attention was paid to the poor marks of the children that might jeopardize their passing the eight grade. In order to overcome this problem the RCC representatives discussed this problem with teachers of the subjects in question and with the families of the students.

All of the children were regularly attending the preparation classes, successfully completed the eight grade, took the entrance exam, and passed it!!!

The RCC teams visited the families, talked to the children about their choice of high schools, primarily taking into account the preferences of the children. Taking advantage of possibilities provided by affirmative action for Roma children in instances of high school and university enrolment, the team sent the applications of the children to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia and to the Office for Minority Affairs.

All of the children that participated in the project enrolled into high school.

As part of the project the team visited the special primary school Mladost, providing aid for Roma children with poor marks in the eight grade to complete their studies. Aid was provided through discussions with teachers of the relevant subjects and with the parents.

Based on the aforementioned it is clear that the goal of the advocacy activities was successfully achieved. In the opinion of the RCC team, good planning of project activities, as well as regular contact with the parents and the schools contributed to the success of the activities. It is the opinion of the team that informing the local community about the position of Roma children and about project goals also contributed to the understanding and accepting of project activities by the broader community.

Preparedness of the local community for activities like these, facilitated by a strategic document approved by the Municipality of Piro: Strategy for the inclusion of Roma and other marginalized children into the education system and the Action plan for children, significantly contributed to the execution of the project.

The team does not report on difficulties encountered throughout the execution of the project.

Vranje

The Roma Cultural Center NGO from Vranje, identified as a problem the severely bad socio-economic status of the Hiseni family, internally displaced from Kosovo, living in very unfortunate economic and lodging conditions, with unresolved citizenship-legal status, and unrealized child rights, healthcare and education rights. The aim of the activity is to aid the family in realizing their rights by requesting health insurance cards and enrolling the children in school. Project activities are directed towards the six children of the Hiseni family. Activities are organized in the form of direct assistance not as advocacy. However, the activities were supported as part of the program for various reasons. On the one hand, a relevant problem of a socially vulnerable family is being solved, and rights of the children regarding their inclusion in the institutions of the system, and long term improvement of their status are realized. On the other hand, this activity secures a starting point for possible future planning of advocacy processes.

The primary project activities were gathering of documents necessary for requesting health insurance cards and enrolling the children in school. Persons carrying out the activities were NGO activists, while the family members accompanied them. In later phases of the projects the parents became actively involved, by account of the activists.

In the field of health insurance, activists managed to obtain all necessary documents, and settled the status of the children as insured persons.

Regarding the inclusion of the children into the education system, the NGO activists contacted the local primary school, and received information from the school principal that, based on the age of the children and the fact that they previously have not taken part in any form of education (younger children) or do not go to school since they have left Kosovo (older children), the condition for enrolment is an assessment of the authorized committee for classification.

The NGO activists then contacted the mentioned department in the local health center, and went for the scheduled checkup with the family.

Through contacts with the family, activists attempted to motivate first and foremost the parents for having the children go through education. As a form of additional support for children to join the school, activists offered aid in securing material support (through activities of gathering second-hand clothing and discussions with local NGOs that could provide that sort of assistance), as well as regular meetings with the children. Both the children and the parents showed interest for schooling, but insisted that they be enrolled in special schools.

The goal of realizing the right of the children of health insurance was fully achieved – all of the children received health insurance cards.

As for the case of enrolment of the children on schools, the oldest child was enrolled in night school because of his/her age.

The other children still haven't enrolled because the classification procedure has not been completed.

In evaluating the positive outcomes of the activity, the activists think that they have accomplished everything set forth by the plan, which was at certain instances made easier by referring to the Child Rights Center.

As factors that made the process complicated, the activists emphasized first of all certain administrative difficulties – absence of harmonization in the functioning of institutions, the difficulty of obtaining the right information regarding the necessary documents and data, implementation of new procedures, etc. Other difficult circumstances were the illiteracy of the mother and general neglect of the parents towards their children. Their suggestion for further involvement in similar problems is a different choice of beneficiary (“Next time we would choose an ordinary Roma family”).

Vranjska Banja

Activists of the Roma cultural center in Vranjska Banja selected six problems that they would engage in through advocacy activities:

- The problem of (17 year old) N. B. was that he could not realize his right to work, and right of social protection.

N. B. is part of a five member family, of which none are employed. He wanted to register at the National employment service, so that he could have employment opportunities and settle the issue of health insurance.

During the registration process, while providing the required information, N. B. said that he plays an instrument. The authorized official than refused to register him on the job market explaining her actions by saying that the young man surely already has illegitimate earnings (on the black market).

NGO activists contacted the official. After their discussion in which they referred to the rights of the young man that were being violated and the possibility of a law suit, they agreed that the young man be placed on a list for active employment search. Stamps of potential employers will confirm that the young man searched for employment, which will be the basis on which the young man N. B. will continue to be included in the registry system of the National Employment Service.

Activists of the RCC acquainted the young man with methods he can use to keep track of employment offers. Monitoring of the case concluded that after three months the N. B. had a list attested with stamps of employers that proved that he had been searching for employment, which allowed him to stay registered with the National Employment Service. With that the goal of the advocacy process was achieved.

The RCC team believes that the positive aspect of the activity, which significantly contributed to its success, is referencing to the rights being violated, as well as the right of the client to submit a formal complaint on the activities of a certain public service. Another characteristic of the process noted as positive is the fact that the help and support of the NGO team were directed in a manner that motivates independent functioning of N. B in the local society.

Prejudice toward the Roma people and racial discrimination are some of the difficulties that they had encountered during the execution of activities.

- The second problem identified by activists of the NGO is the difficulty of that children from Trebesinje encounter in realizing their right to education, due to the lack of regular public transportation to the neighboring village where the school is situated. Activities were directed towards nine children.

The activists contacted the director of the Municipal Secretariat for Education. They present the problem to the director and they are promised that the problem will be solved by September.

By the end of the project the children were not provided with free transportation, but the team is still being reassured by the Secretariat that the problem will be solved. They are prepared to continue to be engaged in solving the problem, and to contact higher authorities if the problem is not solved at this level. Their plan of action includes: organizing debates with parents on child rights through introducing the Law on primary school education; press conferences on this topic; sending communication to all ministries (with parents' signatures); requesting legal aid (contacting lawyers).

The team considers that a positive aspect of this activity is the fact that in this way it has been demonstrated to the authorities that the Roma people keep track of laws and know their rights, as well as ways in which they can advocate

for their realization. The comment of the project team implies that the activity had a broader effect than principally planned, because it raised awareness of employees in local institutions about the difficulties that children face in the local community in general.

In specifying the results of the activities, they emphasize that for the first time someone from the Roma community contacted representatives of the executive authorities (municipal government authorities), referring to the law, and asking for respect and realization of child rights.

A complicating factor was the inaccessibility of authorities in the sense of difficulty of contacting them.

- The third identified problem refers to the impossibility of realizing of the right to education of a group of Roma children, because due to bad economic circumstances, their parents were not able to provide extracts from the birth register for the children, which is necessary to enroll them in preschool. The activity was directed towards 22 Roma children.

Activists contacted the parents, and made a list of relevant data of the children. A representative of the parents, who will carry out the planned activities together with members of the NGO, was chosen at the first meeting. In further phases, the team took necessary administrative steps for acquiring these documents. A special request was made to the registry in Vranje asking to receive the extracts for the children free of charge. The registry accepted this request – extracts from the birth registry were obtained free of charge for all of the children and distributed to the parents, who were then referred to the further procedure for enrolling their children into preschool. Shortly after receiving the extract 12 of the 22 children were enrolled in preschool.

The team continued monitoring the complete group of children, maintaining contact with the parents and the preschool. Priority contact was maintained

with families that have not enrolled their children in preschool soon after receiving the extracts, in order to take action in the event of occurrence of further difficulties in enrollment. By the beginning of September all 22 children were enrolled.

By acquiring birth registry extracts free of charge and enrolling all of the children into preschool, the goal of the activities was achieved. The team considers good activity planning to be the key success factor. Their conclusion is that normal administrative procedures are an efficient way of realizing citizens' rights, so that it is very important to be acquainted with them and to follow them.

- The fourth problem identified by the NGO was the inability of a group of young Roma (16–18 years of age) to realize their right to education, due to the refusal of officials of the National Employment Service to register them on the employment market as unemployed persons, which is a necessary condition for financing the continuance of their education. The activities were directed toward five young Roma people.

The refusal was justified by a lack of certificate of completed primary school education (diploma).

The group of young people in question is being educated as part of the ***Functional primary education of mature Roma people*** project, accredited by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Welfare Policy of the Republic of Serbia. The National Employment Service is a partner on this project and finances the education of the students. For their education to continue, it is necessary that the students be registered as unemployed. The youth have completed primary school education as part of this project. At the time they requested assistance from the NGO, the youths were taking a clothing industry course, but only after completing it will they receive a primary school diploma.

Activists of the RCK contacted the authorized department at the National Employment Service. The first discussions indicated that there was a lack of understanding between the officials and the group of youths, in the sense that the status of the youths and their reasons for registering were not clear. Therefore the activity of the team was directed towards clearing up the position of the youth (introducing the project that they are members of to the officials, and with the problem they are facing), and toward gathering necessary documents for their registering.

Of the five youths, four of them shortly gathered all of the necessary documents and registered at the National Employment Service. The process was postponed only in the case of one young man, who by then did not succeed in sorting out his citizen–legal status, because the mother, who is the only guardian of the child, was on temporary work in Vojvodina, so she was unable to sign his request for the issuing of a personal identity card. At the beginning of September all necessary documents were obtained and the young man was registered. With that the goal of the activity was achieved.

As a complicated factor, the team emphasizes insufficient communication between different departments at the National Employment Service, which leads to the absence of harmonization in administrative procedures, interfering with citizens realizing their rights.

- The fifth identified problem also refers to difficulties in realizing the right to education due to poor economic circumstances.

A. C. is a young Roma woman that lived for a long time with her family in Germany. In the readmission process they were sent back to Serbia. She graduated from the Philological Gymnasium in Novi Sad with outstanding grades. The problem with which she turned to the Roma Cultural Center was that she was not able to take the university entrance exam due to lack of money. Because it was important to find a solution to the problem quickly (entrance

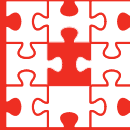
exams were already taking place), NGO activists contacted the President of Vranje Municipality. In a meeting at which the child and the parents were present, the President of the Municipality was informed about the problem and authorized the transfer of required funds.

The young woman passed the entrance exam. As according to her score on the exam she was in the group of self-financing students, the NGO team contacted the Secretariat for Minority Rights, calling upon affirmative action in enrolment of Roma people. The beneficiary approved the measures, and realized the status of student financed from the budget.

- The sixth problem that the NGO team embarked on solving was the difficulty of S. J. a young man of realizing his right of education in the way he wished.

S. J. was a student with outstanding grades at the Gymnasium in Vranje who wanted to continue his studies. However, with regard to his score on the entrance exam he could not enroll in the desired major at the faculty of his choice. The NGO team contacted the Secretariat for Minority Rights, calling upon affirmative action in enrolment of Roma people. The case of this young man was included in affirmative action measures, he enrolled in the desired major and received financing from the budget.





Protection of Roma Children
Monitoring and Advocacy

Analysis and Comments



As described in the description of the project, most of the activities carried out were directed towards overcoming difficulties in realizing the right to education of Roma children. If advocacy is thought about as a way of improving the status of a certain target group, the scope and scale of achieved results are one of the key criteria in planning the activity. Changes in the field of education secure this: increased participation of children in the education system would stimulate the social inclusion of Roma, provide possibilities of employment and improvement of their socio-economic status, stimulate the development of social awareness and with that the possibility of activism and political action, and would contribute to decreasing prejudice within the society. In order to achieve the mentioned processes, besides empowering the target group, it is necessary to influence the system so that the mechanisms that lead to social marginalization would change. Activities carried out in the project are mostly directed toward providing support to and empowering the Roma people themselves, but are as such an important and necessary first step in the direction of creating sustainable social changes. Besides that, they should be and must be the basis for planning future advocacy activities.

As mentioned in presenting the activities, they were carried out as direct assistance, with the goal of solving problems of unrealized rights to education and healthcare of children of the Hiseni family. Other advocacy activities, for the most part, also have this component because of the type of problems identified in field work. Namely, one of the goals of the project was to empower members of the local civil sector to monitor the state of child rights

of the Roma population. Based on the situation in the field, the realistic difficulties Roma children have to cope with and problems that the NGOs would face solving were defined, as well as an action plan i.e. the way in which the problems would be addressed. The fact that most members of the Roma society in the municipalities in which project activities were carried out do not realize their right to social and medical insurance and education, do not know the administrative ways of realizing their rights, direct assistance in acquiring necessary documents and introducing them with the functioning of institutions was a necessary and important manner of support. It is important to emphasize that in most of the cases, NGO activists made efforts to include family members in the process and empower them to independently deal with issues in the social framework of the local community. For example, in the case of acquiring birth registry extracts free of charge in order to enroll children into preschool, a representative of the parents was chosen on the first meeting with the NGO activist, who would then participate in carrying out the process. In other advocacy activities parents were present during the realization of most of the activities (visits to the birth registry and other municipal departments, visits to the Center for Social Work, etc.) Getting acquainted with administrative procedures through practical examples is an important source of experience. The participation of parents throughout some of the advocacy activities even increased – e.g. in the mentioned advocacy action for the Hiseni family, the NGO team emphasizes that while the parents at first just accompanied the team in their visits to the institutions, later they actively participated in the realization of activities. The parents were instructed by NGO activists about the procedures and the functioning of institutions. This way the outcome of the project surpassed its short term specific goal of solving the problem, and empowers the Roma population to solve similar problems independently in the future, which is a characteristic of the advocacy procedure.

Another positive outcome of this type of cooperation with Roma families is the establishment of a relationship of trust. The trust that the NGO activists earned from the Roma people was shown by the fact that the Roma people requested the organizations help themselves, instances of which increased during the realization of the project.

For example, in Pirot, during the advocacy process for children in 8. grade, teams of NVO Pralipe activities visited families and made a close connection with them. During one visit, parents complained that their daughter (she was not beneficiary of a project) left family to get married. Team contacted social centre in order to help family to solve the problem and keep a girl in family and education process.

During the course of the project the team of the Roma Cultural Center was asked for assistance by two adult Roma with their problem of realizing their right to receive pension, which they engaged in solving. Some of the advocacy actions carried out by the RCC within the project also came as a result of independent Roma enquiries for assistance, not from the original child rights monitoring activities in the Roma community: the case of obtaining birth registry extracts for preschool enrolment, assisting A. C. and S. J. to enroll in university, the problem of registering minor N. B. on the employment market. The established trust extends the effect that the project activities have to the period after their termination. Since the Pralipe and Roma Cultural Center NGOs have established themselves in their communities as organizations that are genuinely concerned with the needs of the Roma community, the presumption is that their cooperation will continue in the future. In this way a mechanism that leads to the improvement of the status of Roma people has been created, which could be the first step in inducing relevant social changes facilitating the beginning of establishing real multiculturalism.

As presented in the explanation of activities, there were three group and five individual activities, which targeted a total of 82 children. The individual and group activities dealt with similar problems, mostly problems with realizing the right to education. The problems were addressed similarly – by acquiring the necessary documentation and contacting authorized institutions.

When we look at the issue of Roma education and the problems which the NGO activists attempted to overcome, it is clear that the Roma population experiences difficulties at every level:

- Difficulties that prevent children enrolling in preschool have been identified (a lack of information about necessary documents, lack of information about institutions that issue certain documents, and of the administrative procedures for acquiring the documents, lack of financial resources, lack of information about the next steps of the enrolment procedure after obtaining the documents).
- Difficulties have been identified in the process of enrolling children in primary school (the institutional system in place does not monitor Roma families, and does not monitor the participation of Roma children in the education system, nor does it motivate Roma families towards that goal; it requests decisions on categorizing children even though the children are coming from socio-economically deprived surroundings, while the referral of children to treatments towards cognitive development remains on the level of individual initiative and professional responsibility; the lack of information of parents on the procedure for enrolling children in school, including necessary documents, and ways of achieving it; the problems with transportation to school children encounter due to their poor economic situation and the violation of their rights to free transport in the way it is defined by the Law on primary school education).

- Further specific problems were identified upon the children's move from primary school to high school (poor financial and lodging conditions of the families, as well as the parents inability to assist their children in studying due to their low level of education, affect the poor grades of a large number of Roma children in primary school education; the education system in general is not open towards differences, so it is not adjusted for the specific circumstances of the Roma population – amending practices in order to include Roma children depend on the good will of individual professionals; the general lack of motivation of the Roma population to educate themselves, who see it as another social instance of stigmatization and disqualification; lack of information on procedures of enrolment in high school, the necessary documents and institutions that issue them).
- For young Roma people that have completed high school and wish to continue their education, the move from high school to university also carries its difficulties, generally in connection with the poor financial situation of the family (lack of money for entrance exams, lack of tuition money).

The issues that were the basis for planning and executing advocacy activities are well defined and clearly connected to the rights of the beneficiaries being violated. Based on the information/complaints of the beneficiaries, the team members successfully recognized the essence of the issues.

Furthermore, the goals were clearly defined, specific, realistic, measurable and accomplishable. They were directly connected to the outstanding issues.

Action plans are specific and clear, and directed towards achieving a certain goal. The steps taken towards realizing the goals are well defined, as well as the activity time-line. At the same time, team members were flexible enough to adjust and adapt the action plan to specific conditions in the

field (such as difficulties in making contact with representatives of some institutions, or postponement of procedures such as the review of a child's case at the classification committee which is composed of a number of members so it was not accomplished during the first visit). They sometimes changed their approach in such situations (for instance informal approach instead of formal), which usually lead to quicker accomplishment of goals. In general, the teams were flexible when they encountered difficulties in realizing planned activities, considering such situations as challenges, and using their previous experience in searching for ways of resolving them. On the other hand, the impression is that representatives of institutions were ready to hear about the issues, and ready to engage in their resolving. Most of the time they did this as part of their usual job or authority, while two professors from Pirot even accepted to give free classes to Roma children in their spare time. The only negative example was the obvious discrimination in the National Employment Service in Vranje (the refusal of an official to register a young Roma man in to the job market registry because he sometime plays an instrument, giving the explanation that he already works on the "black market", commenting to the NGO activist who was there advocating for the young man: "where and what has this child been doing until now – nothing and nowhere!").

The general impression is that the NGO team members were successful in identifying authorized institutions and the departments at these institutions for solving the issues in question. Their number varied from one advocacy case to another, depending on the type of issue. The greatest number of representatives of the local community participated in resolving the problem of Roma children from the eight grade to enroll in high school, carried out in Pirot. The officials that participated were three school principals, physiological-pedagogical departments, class teachers and a number of subject teachers from the same schools, as well as the children's families. Members of the institutions were not only motivated to contribute to finding a solution,

but during project realization they were connected through cooperation organized by the NGO team. Hence, there is a possibility that the changes achieved in the local community be long term.

Speaking about the activity carried out in the municipality of Pirot, it is important to have in mind that, to a certain degree, it relied on the somewhat developed sensibility of the local institutions, due to the implementation of two important strategic documents: Action plan for children, the realization of which started in 2005, and the Strategy and Action plan for inclusive education of Roma and other marginalized children. These documents specify, according to the coordinator of the Pralipe NGO team who participated in drafting the strategy, clearly identified goals related to the education of Roma children, and provide various activities directed towards children and parents that aim to motivate Roma people to educate themselves, as well as to secure greater participation of children at all levels of education.

In assessing the messages that NGO activists sent to persons important for solving the issues during advocacy activities, it is notable that they are dominated by referrals to the law, emphasizing procedure violations, and referrals to the possibility of filing civic complaints to authorized institutions for violations of procedures in public services. This concept indicates a highly developed civic awareness of members of the local civil sector, as well as their ability to be the carriers of social change in their communities. The participation of Roma people (beneficiaries) in activities that are pervaded by messages about respecting civic rights has a strong educational effect, promotes recognition of similar situations of rights violations and initiative towards their own protection. However, by far the most important effect is decreasing experiences of social helplessness present among members of marginalized groups, and creating belief in possibilities of social change. Only this psychological change creates a basis for a cessation of the vicious cycle of social isolation.

In comparing the message and its desired effect, the impression is that the messages directed at parents were the least in line with the desired effect. The intention was to motivate parents to involve their children in institutions and with that secure them their rights, primarily their right to education, which would secure the improvement of their socio-economical and political status in the long run. The messages were aimed at placing emphasis on the benefits of the presented point of view, but with lack of understanding of the parents' reasons for being undecided, their fears and worries. This topic will be elaborated in detail in the next chapter that refers to suggestions for improvement of future project stages.

In nearly all of the activities aims were achieved. Goals were not fully achieved in cases in which success depended a procedure that NGO activities had little influence on: in the case of assisting the Hiseni family, the children were not enrolled in school in the timeframe defined by the project because of the postponment of the review of children by the members of the committee, and the subsequent necessary period of processing the findings; in the case of advocating for the children from Trebjesani regarding free transport to school, the aim was not achieved as a result of a halt in realization of the agreement with the director of the Education Secretariat of the Municipality of Vranje. Activists have already a plan for further action in this case, which includes involving other members of the local community that can contribute to the solution, as described in the in presentation of this advocacy process (introducing the parents to the primary school education law, informing authorized Ministries about the problem, contacting the media, hiring lawyers). This data, on the one hand speaks about the quality of planning and executing advocacy activities. The teams made a clear and realistic assessment when choosing which issues to deal with, and in creating action plans. The chosen issues that were very important to individuals/groups, which can be solved in the timeframe defined by the project. On the other hand, the fact that almost all of the activities were successfully carried out, it sends a message

to the local public about the possibility introducing social changes in the life of the local community, and the importance of social activism.

Although specific problems of a narrow impact were chosen, the importance of their resolution is of great significance for the beneficiaries. Results like the enrolment of Roma eight grader of two schools from Pirot into high school, who took additional preparation classes at the same time making the extra effort to improve their grades in order to achieve this, are truly fantastic! Furthermore, the 22 children that enrolled in preschool even though their parents were not resourceful in administrative procedures, is also remarkable. The change achieved through assistance to the Hiseni family is also very important – a family living in extremely difficult economic conditions, outside the scope of any social aid system, is now able to benefit from healthcare services and child education. Results achieved with individuals are of no lesser value: two outstanding high school pupils would have not enrolled in university due to financial difficulties, if it had not been for the advocacy activity; a young man living in a family of five out of which not one was employed would not have been able to register at the National Employment Service, if it had not been for the advocacy activity.

Changes accomplished in all of the cases have led to the inclusion of beneficiaries into institutions of the system, through which they can further realize their rights and improve their social status. Because project activities influenced the development of civic consciousness of the Roma, they contributed to the recognition of administrative procedures and institutions, and most importantly, contributed to overcoming feelings of social helplessness. The relationship of trust that has developed between NGO activists and the local Roma communities shows that the Roma population recognizes NGOs as allies which they can turn to when they encounter problems which they cannot solve by themselves. From the above said, it is clear that the results of the advocacy activities carried out have not only important, but also long term outcomes.





Protection of Roma Children
Monitoring and Advocacy

Suggestions and Recommendations



At the beginning of the previous chapter it was explained that the advocacy activities executed in this phase of the pilot project improved the status of Roma people in the local community by providing direct assistance and support to the beneficiaries. Having in mind the fact that a large number of Roma people were not even beneficiaries of social service mechanisms already in place in communities (healthcare services, education possibilities, possibility of free transport to schools, etc.), this sort of support was a necessary first step towards the social inclusion of Roma people. After these activities were carried out, the basis for initiating further activities in local communities was created. The focus of advocacy activities in the next phase could make a shift from the target group towards institutions/organizations/individuals relevant for the situation of Roma people. The same type of problems that these activities dealt with could be solved by instigating changes in their practice and/or policies. For example, the realization of rights to healthcare protection and including Roma people in to the registry system (birth registry) could be improved by developing activities within the advocacy process that would attempt to change the practice of authorized Social work centers so that their officials would visit Roma settlements on a regular basis, monitor who is not registered and who is not realizing his/her rights guaranteed by the state, take down the necessary data, provide citizens with the necessary documents and direct them towards further procedures. This method would impose broader, long term and more sustainable changes. Furthermore, these changes would affect the whole Roma population, not just individuals or groups.

Long term changes would shift the focus to previous stages of the problems' origin. For example, instigation of high school education of Roma children could be started from the fifth or sixth grade of high school, in that way securing their regular attendance of classes, timely achievement of good grades, and preparation of high school entrance exams. Members of the Pralipe NGO noticed that themselves, suggesting in their comments on the process that the activities they carry out should start from the beginning of the seventh grade.

Having in mind that activists of the Roma Cultural Center through their activity reports speak about the necessity of motivating Roma parents to enroll their children in preschool, it is clear that activities instigating the inclusion of children into the education system are necessary at all age levels.

For these activities to be useful, it is necessary to correctly understand the reasons for the low participation of Roma in the education system. Interpreting this phenomena from the position of a majority group leads to stigmatizing and social rejection of Roma people, and because those are socially accepted attitudes, people frequently do not recognize them and are not aware of their implications.

NGO activists taking part in the project, besides a developed civic awareness and their dedication towards the improvement of the status of Roma, in some aspects share the attitude of the majority. In that sense, phenomena such as a lower tendency to enroll children in school, presence of the black market and child labor are regarded as "bad habits" of Roma people ("The cause of the problem are long lasting bad habits of the Roma to enroll children only in primary school, the result of which is a low education level of the Roma population."), At the same time, the role of the system in creating and maintaining conditions for these phenomena has not been not taken into account. If society maintains the Roma population in poverty, complicating their education in various ways, and complicating employment by not providing

opportunities to obtain qualifications and discriminating in employment, than the black market is one way for a Roma family to survive.

Having in mind that advocacy activities were directed towards education, it is very important to note the way people understand the reduced presence of Roma children in schools, and disseminate awareness of the causes of this phenomena, starting with the Roma lack of understanding of administrative procedures and institutions due to their centuries old isolation, weaker proficiency in the language of their surroundings of the Roma parents and children, poor material and lodging conditions of the families due to systematically sustained poverty, which causes the children to grow up in a cognitively non-simulative surroundings. When a child that has grown up in such conditions is included into the education system, its starting position greatly differs from that of the children from the majority group, but the same is demanded from that child. When the child can not perform to the level required, it is stigmatized as a child of lower intellectual ability or as lazy and uninterested in school, and the family is similarly stigmatized. This kind of attitude of the school only contributes to the decrease of motivation of families and children's withdrawal from education. Having in mind that these experiences of the family go back generations, the reasons for their distrust of school as an institution and their doubts towards the effect of schooling are clear.

A special form of stigmatizing is the categorization of children which is the official procedure of their integration in the educational and healthcare system in Serbia. The categorization procedure does not take into account cultural differences, difference in experiences, and the socio-economic deprivation that the child grew up in, while it subjects the child to ability tests which are saturated with contents of the dominant culture, and interprets the child's failure to meet such set criteria as intellectual deficiency. This turns the consequences of society's oppression into characteristics of members of the marginalized group – lesser abilities are understood as characteristics of the child, not as a

consequence of systematic social exclusion, with which the child is indirectly victimized. The findings of the commission place the children in the unalterable category (e.g. further maintaining of social isolation by enrolling the children in special schools which are by physically and psychological barriers separated from common schools, decreasing the scope of possible occupations, etc.).

Being that this project is local in nature, NGO activists were not expected to lobby for paramount social changes such as changing the procedure for categorizing children. However, if the categorizing process is viewed as such, the necessity of involving children in a form of professional stimulative cognitive development in the period well before their session with the categorization committee, is recognized.

The comments of NGO activists that participated in the project indicate an obvious presence of internalized oppression – a phenomena that due to long term exposure to prejudice and discrimination of the dominant group, members of the marginalized group start to look upon themselves in the way that the dominant group sees them. For example, speaking about the difficulties in providing assistance to the Hiseni family, the NGO team mentions that the indifference of the mother towards her children's education was an impediment to the process. Henceforth they suggest that in selecting beneficiaries in future advocacy activities attention should be paid to this phenomenon.

In order to improve activities and the approach to beneficiaries of the program, it would be useful for NGO activists to receive training in the field of education for social justice, in order for them to be able to consider social and individual mechanisms that lead to discrimination and oppression of marginalized groups.

In order for planed advocacy activities to be useful, the understanding of causes of the phenomena for which change is sought is very important. If we want to motivate Roma parents to educate their children, it is important to understand

their point of view, their attitudes, worries, reasons for distrust, show them understanding, and develop activities that attempt to modify the causes that are the basis of this phenomena.

Group activities with parents, involving whole families in the process, as the activists did during the process are surely an efficient approach to the problem. The results could be even better if, in addition to the explanation of the advantages of schooling, the activities were organized to, through an interactive approach to work, instigate the sharing of experiences among the parents, where their positions would be understood through group support. They would henceforth be motivated through arguments relevant to them, which are in fact answers to their fears and experiences. Resistance to change, which is a general human condition, is frequently an expression of accustomed helplessness of members of marginalized groups. Eventually, only scrutinizing the problem from the perspective of the population affected by it provides a starting point for developing really effective activities.

The proposed guidelines for the development of further Roma child rights advocacy activities (concentrating on changing practices in local institutions; influencing the causes of Roma marginalization in the local community themselves; reacting in earlier phases of development of the phenomena that is wished to be changed), can be implemented only if the planned duration of the advocacy process is extended.

Advocacy activities carried out in the pilot phase of this project achieved important results primarily for the beneficiaries. Besides this they involved representatives of various institutions relevant for the status of Roma in the local community. On the basis of this report on advocacy activities carried out, we can presume that their sensibility towards the difficulties that Roma children face have improved, and with this their readiness to react within the scope of their profession. The NGO activists themselves have shown

through the advocacy process that they can be agents of social changes in their surroundings. The introduction of the child rights aspect in efforts to improve the status of Roma children (instead of pleading for the good will of the dominant group) is in itself an important change, for local community representatives and for the Roma people themselves.

The experiences during the realization of activities have been stimulating for creating possible future directions for development, which would strengthen and broaden achieved changes, provide them durability and sustainability.

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