



Thematic report on education

Enhancing access to quality education for children from Pata Rât

1. Coordination of the activity of the Mobile Unit in Pata Rât, facilitation of school enrollment of children from the Ramp community, preparing and accompanying their school attendance

During the period July-September 2014 a micro-intervention was carried out by the team of specialists with the specific aim of enrolling the children from the garbage dump from Pata Rât.

The preparation phase (July-September 2014) had the following steps:

1. *Evaluation of all families on the Ramp and identification of the children of school age (6 to 8 years old).* A database with all identification data of the children from Pata Rât was elaborated. 16 children were identified in the 6-8 years old age range, potentially to be enrolled in school starting September 2014.
2. *Planning of the school enrollment activities on institutional and human resource level.* An action plan containing the necessary steps and the needed resources for the schooling program was elaborated.
3. *Organizing and caring out daily educational activities for a group of 16 children with the aim of preparing them for school.* Educational activities have been organized on daily basis for the 16 children in the Mobile Unit from PataRât in order to create a daily routine necessary to prepare their school attendance. Both children and their parents have been involved in these daily activities. The educational program also aimed to give the opportunity to the professionals to evaluate children's school maturity and areas where children need further help in their development on social, affective and cognitive level. The activities aimed to help them form basic social skills necessary for school integration. An evaluation report for each child was done during this activity. At the end of the program 14 children out of 16 children were enrolled in school – two of them in a school outside the Cluj County.
4. *Organizing preparation activities for parents.* Parents of all children took part in an assessment process which helped draw a support plan for each family in order to see the needs and resources the program was relying on. Individual discussions and group meetings were organized in order to find out about the conditions the parents could send the children to school to and the type of support each family needed.
5. *Identifying schools in the Cluj Municipality and Metropolitan Area where to enroll the children.* Identification of schools was anticipated by presenting the program to the County School Inspectorate, which approved the policy approach of the program. Thus, a number of 20 schools were contacted for helping with Roma children enrollment. Most of schools refused the enrollment on various reasons

avoiding to directly address children's residency. Two of the school principals refused the enrollment of the children from the Ramp expressing anxiety regarding expected negative reactions from other parents from the school. Three principals from four schools were totally open from the very beginning and accepted to enroll 12 children, 3 in each school.

6. *Preparing the files of the children and their families containing: medical exams, evaluations of the school maturity, evaluations of the families' needs and necessary resources for supporting children's school attendance.* The preparations for enrollment included: registering children for a family doctor, evaluations, medical exams requested by the school enrolment procedure, filling out the requested forms and having them signed by parents. Children's files were filled in.

7. *Mobilizing the necessary resources for school attendance in terms of:*

- a. Transportation
- b. School supplies
- c. Clothes
- d. Food
- e. Support staff

8. *Evaluation of the needs of schools which enrolled the children and preparing response in terms of support.* Teachers were contacted and a needs assessment was done in order to respond in an efficient way and to prevent potential school dropouts.

9. *Organizing resources and coordinating the school attendance support on a daily basis.* Staff was hired and trained to carry out the activities during the project period.

2. Supporting children's school attendance (15th September – present)

The *daily program* follows the pattern:

- 5.15 a.m. waking up the parents and children;
- 5.45 a.m. transporting the children from the garbage dump to the Mobile Unit;
- 5.45-6.45 a.m. showering the children and changing clothes;
- 6.45-7.15 a.m. breakfast;
- 7.15 a.m. staff accompanying children to school;
- 7.15-8.15 a.m. cleaning up the mobile unit;
- 11-12 a.m. leaving to school to wait for the children;
- 13-15.30 p.m. receiving the children back at the Mobile Unit, getting rest, having lunch, doing homework;
- 15.30-16.30 p.m. accompanying children back to home.

The *average school attendance rate* up to February 10 is close to 80%. When children missed or skipped school members from the mobile unit visited the parents

and if necessary the gathered information about the situation was further transmitted to the case managers.

Regular visits are done to the barracks on the Ramp with the purpose of *giving feedback to the parents* about their children's school activities and performance and of gathering information about the family's situation and needs. 3 parents out of 7 families were willing to visit the schools and observe children's activities. Their feedback was all positive and they appreciated the schools' openness and other parents' inclusive attitudes. Health issues, illness of family members or children, have been communicated to doctors visiting the Mobile Unit, or, in 7 instances, they were communicated to the case managers.

3. Providing support for schools to function in a more inclusive and tolerant way

The aim of the activities with children, teachers and parents is to increase solidarity, tolerance, and mutual help in the school.

The importance of the *collaboration with partner schools* is beneficial not only in providing the connection link between families and school, but also in providing tools for specialists, parents, children and for the assessment in conflict management and educational issues. Conflicts and misunderstandings usually have their origin in not knowing, not caring about the perspective of the perspective of the other person. Two group meetings have been organized on a *crisis intervention* situation in one of our partner schools. One of the meetings was held with the participation of parents and educators, the other only with children. The mediator and group leader was a psychologist working in the project. Sociometry and group plays were the ludic activities developed in the group. It is important to approach the schools based on similar principles the case managers use to evaluate family's needs, to inform them and to try solve the emergency situations. This action includes the classroom, parents and educators. One way of working with schools is through restorative practices: there have been developed some meetings where the parties fallen under conflict and misunderstandings had the chance to report the happenings and to express their feelings regarding the event. The expected result of these meetings was a mutual understanding of the perspective of other people who feel the consequences of the event and to find a way to socio-emotionally reconnect to the others.

The way of collaborating with the inclusive schools was the *mediation between educators, children and parents*, the ludic/playful meetings with children having as purpose the socialization, the free expression of the personal needs and conflict mediation.

Meetings with school teachers have been held about educational, behavior issues. As a result one small group of three children is benefiting therapeutic meetings with a psychologist. Two children are helped for speech correction activities, and three have weekly meetings with school mentors. There is a further need for providing speech therapist for three other children.

Individual and small group psychotherapy sessions are continued for three children attending the Montessori school. We are considering intervention for two other children. We organized a meeting with the topic of special counseling and intervention needs for the Roma children from this school and the services that our project can offer. We discussed with the social worker and the school director and received a list with the children from the Roma community from the Pata Rât that learn in this school and the problems they encounter in the educational process.

At the beginning of March there was a *meeting* at CCRDII, the former Special School no 2, occasion with which, in an interdisciplinary context, with the participation of the social worker, school mediator and the director of the education unit, we made a presentation of our project and came to meet the school's need to identify its needs. We did this in order *to correlate the educational activities with the identified needs*. We chose this school because there are enrolled approximately 70 children who live in the Pata Rât communities.

We used the multilevel approach in identifying the needs: pupil, family, community, school and we looked for common areas of intervention and we thus proposed the intervention in the school through organized advisory groups using the restorative techniques.

Among the identified themes we list: positive punishments and manipulating the limits in order to optimize the instructive-educative process, the triad relationship pupil-family-teacher, cultural features, supporting pupils in order to prevent school dropout, social inclusion etc.

4. Carrying out social assistance activities in the selected schools for preventing dropout

The activity aims to: identify children and families in risk of school dropout focusing on children from Pata Rât area, evaluate the needs and resources, and prepare a service plan and referral to other institutions (child protection services, other service providers, case managers from the project in more serious cases).

Seen though an ecological perspective, school dropout is tightly correlated with the family environment and the neighborhood the children live in. *Case managers' intervention* has at its foundation an approach founded on strengths and aims at exploring and making use of the family resources from the Pata Rât community. A central aspect is the family empowerment in supporting children to continue their

education or to their school integration by enrolling them in the formal education system.

The *evaluation of strengths and of the family resources* regarding children's educational support is multidimensional, concerning both the protection and the care children get in the family, identification of the supporting adults and the relationship between family members, and the interactions with the external environment. It is also important to highlight the importance of the *continuous evaluation* during the intervention process and the importance of the all following steps during the intervention.

Considering the importance of creating *trustful relations* with the assisted families, the case managers' entrance in the community happened gradually, during a large number of visits. Family evaluations led to taking over 16 families with 24 children that attend school; the intervention, in this case actively contributing to the prevention of school dropout. The case of the 12 children attending school, coming from 8 families from the Ramp community represent another component of dropout prevention work the social workers do.

From the beginning of January 2015 there have been meetings with the case managers from the project aiming to better communicate with families in order to prevent school dropout. In two cases there has been *immediate intervention*. In both cases children were absent from school and real motives had to be identified. One case was immediate success while in the other case the absence from school is sometimes reoccurring because of the child's duty of caring for younger siblings.

5. School enrolment

Kindergarten

The daycare center Țara Minunilor will start the activities in a repaired building starting April with 10 children from Rampei area. They will attend kindergarten.

Classes 0

We have received requests from families from Pata Rât to help them facilitate the enrollment of 14 children of pre-school age to schools from Cluj-Napoca they have chosen. The list and the requests have been sent to the County School Inspectorate on the 12th of March 2015.

Second chance

There are 26 adults and 43 youth enrolled in the program "Second chance". Out of the four communities there have been created 5 groups out of which 3 are composed of children coming from the Ramp area and two lists with adults. The lists have been taken by the Cristiana Association, association accredited by the School Inspectorate.

We had three meetings with representatives of Cristiana Association to set up and clarify the details concerning the organization of activities. Educative activities will take place at the Mobile Unit after 4 pm. The first meeting will take place during the last week of the month, at the Mobile Unit. During April-August there will be preparing activities for the next school year, 2015-2016, delivered by the Cristiana Foundation.

6. Supporting school attendance for children already enrolled in school

Community organizers will ensure that every morning the children from all 4 communities will be present at the school bus. The material needs of the families will be evaluated and supported so that they will be able to send their children to school (e.g. shoes, clothes, school supplies).

7. Organizing and carrying out educational activities for youth

At least 100 children will participate on *extracurricular activities* during the first year of the project: meditation, music, dance, sports (football, athletics, and martial arts), organized in different locations in the city; activities will be provided by schools and other public institutions. When the Transit Youth Center (TYC) will be ready, the activities will be organized there. Meals will be provided for the children who take part in these activities (approx. 50 children daily). Sportswear will be provided for children who are enrolled in sport activities (approx. 70 children).

Members of the education team (Bumb Ioana and Petrov Ljubomir) and the team of facilitators (Alex Boguş and Vlad Mureşan) have been invited to take part at the second meeting of "Let's play Europe!" this year that took place on the 27th of February 2015. *They facilitated the discussions and group dynamics as part of the raising awareness activities in the project.* The broad topic of the debate was discrimination and social exclusion with interest in awareness and affirmation of fundamental rights; NEETs (*not in education, employment, or training*) youth assistance; support of and social inclusion of ethnic minorities, disabled people and other vulnerable groups. There were 40 pupils and representatives of the County Council of Pupils who attended the discussion and 5 teachers.

The meeting was structured in two steps: first where, through psychodramatic techniques and group intervention methods, the participants have been introduced the topics - sociometry and role-play - and the second, open debate and share of personal experiences related to situations of social and other types of exclusion, all presented in their contexts. Pupils' feed-back has been fully positive regarding the methods of raising awareness over the main topics and

regarding the context of assertive and participative communication of all those involved. There was high interest in organizing activities on social inclusion topics.

The "*Let's play Europe!*" initiative has been launched by a joint initiative of The North-West Regional Development Agency, through the Regional Center Europe Direct North Transylvania, in partnership with SHARE Federation Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca Municipality City Hall, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Journalism Department and Babeş-Bolyai University Online Radio for the young people of Cluj-Napoca. Each month, students and pupils have the possibility to debate interesting themes for their generation. The purpose of these reunions is to identify mechanisms through which youth of the Cluj community debate interesting topics for them, to propose solutions and develop initiatives. The events making part of this initiative, can be followed on the Center's website <http://europedirect.nord-vest.ro/> or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/europedirect.cluj> and are aligned to the communication priorities of the European Commission and President's Juncker Agenda with regard to employment opportunities, growth, equity and democratic changes. In this context

The partners from the Coastei community signaled the need for collaboration concerning *sport and educative activities for the adolescents in the community*. The motives of such a need were signs of school dropout, lack of opportunities to practice sports and their expressed needs of attending sport activities. After a couple of discussions with children the activities they prefer the most have been identified; they shown interest in football and boxing. Further discussions proved that it is important to choose the right trainers for each sport, as sports besides being a physical and performance activity, is also a process through which children and youth learn discipline and self-discipline.