Towards kindergarten for all in Croatia: Creating opportunities for children at risk of poverty and social exclusion – challenges and successes

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Towards kindergarten for all:

• **State of play:**
  - Percentage of 4-7 year olds in kindergarten: 81%
  - Compulsory attendance during the last year of ECEC (150-250 hours a year)
  - Financial support for municipalities and privately owned kindergartens
  - Additional preschool teacher for children with special educational needs
  - Kindergartens in hospitals

• **The needs:**
  - Creating opportunities for ECEC until enough spaces are available for all
  - Equilization of regional differences
  - Legislative changes
  - Parental conceptions of kindergarten
Creating opportunities for ECEC until enough spaces available for all:

- 22,500 new kindergarten spaces (approx. 219,000,000,00 €)
- Equalization of regional differences
- Percentage of 4-7 year olds in kindergarten until 2030: 96%
Legislative changes:

More hours of compulsory attendance during the last year of ECEC

Enrollment priorities: 4 years and older
(children with disabilities, children of single parents, children in foster care, children of parents who’re receiving child allowance)

Short programmes - 3 hours daily
(not replacement for kindergarten but important for children not enrolled in kindergarten, benefits of informal services as a transition towards formal ECEC)
Towards kindergarten for all:

Financial support for municipalities and privately owned kindergartens

Strong partnerships with local governments


- Children of national minorities: approx. 1.000.000,00 €
- Children with special needs: approx. 6.900.000,00 €
- Children attending compulsory last year of ECEC (150-250 hours a year): approx. 4.000.000,00 €
- Roma children attending kindergarten: approx. 2.145.000,00 €
Towards kindergarten for all:
Phase III: Testing the Child Guarantee in Medjimurje county

Inclusion
- Localities with a high percentage of children at risk of social exclusion and poverty (Roma children)

Opportunities for Play and Learning
- Informal services as a way to bring ECEC to Roma communities
- Benefits of informal services as a transition towards formal ECEC
- 946 children benefitting from CG interventions in Medimurje county

Capacity building and perspective change
- Outreach to families at risk
- Competencies of ECEC practitioners for educational inclusion and multicultural education
- 895 parents and 252 professionals benefitting from CG interventions in Medimurje county
“We adults must see the real humanity in children, the humanity which will take our place one day, if we are to have social progress. Social progress means that the next generation is better than the one before.”

* Maria Montessori