

## Croatia

### Update on the context and situation of children

An EU Member State since 2013, Croatia is a **high-income country** with US\$14,936 GDP per capita in 2019, with a demonstrated capacity to absorb EU funds. Although growing public and private investments improved the quality of life of children and their families, the **COVID-19 pandemic** and two strong **earthquakes** heavily affected many sectors.

The World Bank projects a **real GDP decrease** of 8.6 per cent in 2020 because of the pandemic and the country's strong reliance on tourism. Combined with the need for the Government to provide economic stimulus (including payment deferrals, reduced VAT, grants for the preservation of jobs), this could cause significant fiscal consequences with the public debt surging to about 87 per cent of the GDP in 2020.

After months of on-line education, schools organized in-person education since September, in line with UNICEF and WHO recommendations, with only a few periods of virtual education if local infections increased.

The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 included **income reduction challenges** in 51.2 per cent of households with children; 33 per cent faced unexpected costs, mostly for the purchasing of hygiene items. Material deprivation is more significantly reported in households with children with disabilities. Parents emphasized challenges in access to services for children across sectors. 46.1 per cent of caregivers claimed **parenting became more difficult**, while 10.6 per cent expressed the need for professional help.

A series of strong **earthquakes** caused **human and material losses**. In March, the earthquake in Zagreb **took one child's life**, and twenty-seven people were injured. Some 1,000 people lost homes and 600 buildings were damaged. In December, after a series of strong earthquakes in the poorest region of Banija, the **Government declared a state of disaster in that region**. The full effects of the earthquakes are to be identified and addressed in 2021. Seven persons, including one child, **lost their lives**; 50,000 people were **left without homes**, 9,000 houses and buildings were severely damaged, including the region's largest hospital, several schools and health centres. A total of 13,750 children are affected.

Despite a decrease from 21.4 per cent children at-risk-of-poverty in 2017 to 17.1 in 2019, **the negative effects of both crises can be expected**. The persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate for children decreased to 12.5 per cent in 2019, but it remains a source of concern. The government's political commitment to address child poverty and social exclusion is confirmed through its strong engagement in the modelling of the **Child Guarantee**, financed by the European Commission and implemented with UNICEF's technical support. A new national plan for combating poverty should accelerate poverty reduction.

According to the 2020 data on **subjective wellbeing**, 90 per cent of children are satisfied with their lives; they feel generally safe at home, happy with their families, friends and neighbourhoods. Still, children are worried about the situation in the country and their families' finances. Their level of satisfaction and the feeling of being safe decrease with age.

Critical challenges for **gender equality** concern the labour market, women's entrepreneurship and their role in politics and business, the situation of Roma girls and women, and care work distribution. **The gender pay gap** is 12 per cent. Victims of gender-based violence and harassment are mostly girls/women. Secondary school attendance is significantly different for Roma boys (36%) and girls

(26%), which further reduces girls' chances of entering the labour market.

Access to **healthcare** is adequate, including regular vaccination and care for prematurely born babies and pregnant women, with concerns because of unequal access to specialised services for children in rural areas. Croatia excels in UNICEF-supported implementation of Baby-Friendly Hospital principles. A **mental health** survey among 15-year-olds shows that 28 per cent of girls and 11 per cent of boys felt low more than once a week and services are not equally available throughout Croatia.

With the lowest **pre-primary enrolment** rates in the European Union (80.6% boys and 81.5% of girls), Croatia increased funds (additional 1.61 mil HRK, which is more than half of regular annual investment) to expand access to preschool.

Enhanced data on children out of school show a drop in the **enrolment rate** (gross rate 94.6 and net rate 87.5) compared to what was previously reported - with no gender differences. **The latest PISA scores** (2018) were below the OECD average for numeracy and reading. The positive effects of the curricular reform "School for life", 2019, are yet to be established.

A mismatch between secondary school programmes and the labour market needs results in high **youth unemployment** (NEET rate for 15-24 years olds in 2019 was 11.4% for males and 12.1% for females). **Distance learning** revealed underlying inequities, primarily concerning the digital gap, domestic violence, and the necessity of free school meals for poor children. The need for mental health and psychosocial support for teachers and students increased.

Croatia improved **access to efficient justice for children** ranking 24th on the Child Rights International Network's **Access to Justice Index**. The country is translating legislation and regulatory progress into proper support for children, particularly vulnerable ones.

The **social welfare system** has advanced primary legislation and a substantial workforce, including the drafting of the new Social Protection Law from 2020. Enhanced structuring and targeted investments would further improve the system, following a positive example of UNICEF-supported programme addressing the needs of foster care and families at risk "For a Stronger Family".

Remote areas and vulnerable groups (Roma and families of children with disabilities) lack **equal access to community-based services**. A Situation Analysis revealed regional disparities in access to **Early Childhood Intervention services**, with only 12 per cent of children in need receiving interventions critical for their development.

Although Croatia has gradually reduced the use of residential institutions due to the recognition of their potential harm, there are still 1060 **children in residential care** (675 M; 385 F), including 309 children with disabilities (210 M; 99 F).

A slight improvement in **children's participation** include a prominent example in the **Child-Friendly Cities initiative**, with 390,000 children living in child-friendly communities, and the UNICEF's ZABUM platform with strong mechanisms for adolescents' participation.

## Major contributions and drivers of results

Together with partners, donors, and children, CO had to demonstrate and **reconfirm** the importance of **resilience** in 2020.

The pandemic and several strong earthquakes demanded a quick **response, regrouping** and **refocusing of the CO**, focusing, as always, on the most vulnerable girls and boys. Throughout all challenges, **great support** from regular donors and supporters allowed CO to react quickly to urgent

needs in emergencies in 2020. Thanks to the Childhood Guardians, corporate donors, and UNICEF's global regular donors, CO interventions included emergency supplies, support to education, health and social services, advocacy and communication about the needs of children and families.

Within the initial response to COVID-19 pandemic within the framework of the global COVID-19 HAC, the CO procured medical equipment (10 oxygen concentrators, 3 respirators), 7.3 tons of personal protective equipment for health and social service workforce as well as hygiene kits for 1.800 most vulnerable persons (e.g., Roma and asylum-seeking families). UNICEF shared accurate information on combating the virus and keeping children and families safe. **A rapid assessment in shelters for survivors of gender-based violence and family violence during the pandemic and lock-down** showed limited access to services, lack of quarantine premises and weak service providers' capacities to adequately support children in distance schooling. Their budgets decreased because available funding was re-directed for purchasing PPE and medical equipment. Based on these findings, supporting the Government's efforts to ensure adequate protection for children and women, UNICEF and partners developed recommendations for the protection of women and children, survivors of gender-based violence during the pandemic.

To secure the **continuity of the antenatal courses for future parents** during the pandemic, UNICEF in partnership with the NGO Roda and World Bank created and launched three new e-courses including modules for fathers (Childbirth Preparation, Postpartum Preparation and Breastfeeding Preparation), making it accessible to people who live in rural areas or islands. More than 5050 mothers and fathers completed the e-courses with the highest satisfaction rates. UNICEF partnered with the NGO MURID to develop an e-learning platform with four self-paced online modules for guidance, timely and quality support for early intervention practitioners. During the pandemic, the direct contact between service providers and families of children with developmental delays or disabilities was interrupted or impossible, and 501 professionals completed all modules on tele-intervention.

In order to support online schooling for students who otherwise could not participate (identified by the Ministry of Education), UNICEF provided 100 tablets and 500 SIM cards. For preschool children from vulnerable groups UNICEF provided 450 early learning packages. The CO provided a larger server to the Ministry of Education for online education, which resulted in a smooth **access to online teaching and learning for all** Croatian teachers and students while ensuring their online safety. UNICEF contributed to the official distance schooling program with the co-production of 17 online lectures. **Online support to professionals was provided** as well as peer support for 244 **foster parents** through the info-phone line.

Croatian most prominent **business and CSR associations** supported UNICEF's response to the pandemic engaging their members to share UNICEF's guidance and different tools for business. The CO recorded significant in-kind support of +13,000 hygienic products donated by partners from the FMCG sector and donation of 450 preschool supply kits.

Besides the long-term efforts aimed at improving **access to quality pre-primary education**, new activities introduced in 2020 concerned primary and secondary education regarding the COVID-19 risks, as well as skills building. Through the study "**Kindergarten for all**" UNICEF gathered evidence to inform government's plans for expanding the network of kindergartens through improved decisions on financing and locations of new kindergartens.

Working with partners, CO modelled scalable **social innovation initiatives** for young people equipping them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for addressing community challenges and for accessing the labour market. Programs for adolescent girls and boys (eUPSHIFTs, Financial Literacy Workshops, Meetups, and Hackathon for Social Change) included 131 in-person (76 F, 55 M) and 283 participants (176 F, 106 M, 1 other) in digitalized programmes following the COVID-19 restrictions.

The CO engaged 27,783 **adolescent girls and boys** through platforms such as **Junior Ambassadors for the Rights of Children and Young People, Children’s Participation Advisory Board, Digital Hub on Mental Health, ZABUM voice (U-Report), Voices of Youth, Children’s Rights Festival, Schools for Africa**. By partnering with youth associations and organizations through innovative, real-time digital participation platforms, the CO contributed to increasing adolescents’ access to information and knowledge of their rights. Young people were engaged through UNICEF’s online platforms in communication for prevention of the spread of coronavirus and for preserving mental health during the pandemic and after earthquakes, including cyber bullying, gender-specific inequalities in accessing mental health.

The joint advocacy of the Croatian and Romanian COs during the Croatian EU Presidency resulted in the Council’s Conclusions on youth in external action on May 29, 2020, stating the importance that EU Member States integrate the issue of youth, particularly young women and girls' empowerment, in policy and political dialogue.

Following the Zagreb earthquake in March 2020 and in the context of the pandemic, UNICEF supported online training for the **Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU)** on the advantages, the use and storage of donated human milk. The UNICEF-supported national **Human Milk Bank** became operational in March and provided critically needed milk to more than 180 premature babies. UNICEF and the Ministry of Health continued capacity building of NICU staff aiming to further advance the implementation of BFHI standards.

Immediately after the late December earthquake, the CO launched its **humanitarian appeal** “Help Children in Croatia Affected by the Earthquakes” to assist children and their families, especially the most vulnerable ones. Thanks to regular donors and UNICEF’s international and flexible resources for humanitarian relief, UNICEF was able to respond quickly and secure the first shipment of equipment that allowed families whose homes had been affected by the earthquakes to protect their assets from further destruction from the rain and snow. Based on the consultations with partners and findings from the rapid assessment, UNICEF has identified key needs that will be addressed in early 2021.

Apart from responding to two major crises that hit the country in 2020, UNICEF continued to work on its **regular programmes** as part of the five-year cooperation programme with the Government of Croatia.

Strong and continuous media presence (29 % increase compared to 2019) contributed to UNICEF’s positioning as one of the key national stakeholders in the area of Early childhood development and the protection of children and families in the context of the pandemic. More than 600 multimedia products were produced and disseminated to children, young people, caregivers and experts.

The **integrated campaign for children with disabilities** created an unprecedented public interest, tripling the number of participants in the virtual Milky Way humanitarian race compared to 2019 (7,210, including 970 children). The unique online concept of the race was designed to promote inclusion, leading to the participation of 70 children and young people with disabilities and 21 associations that work with children with disabilities. The race was held under the auspices of the President and the Government of the Republic of Croatia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Science and Education, the Ministry of Labor, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, and the Croatian Paralympic Committee. The 2020 cause aimed at improving the living conditions of children with disabilities, promoting social inclusion and equal rights for every child in Croatia, with further development of early intervention services, sensory integration and education.

UNICEF helped improve the **availability of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)** solutions and strengthen national capacities for early identification and intervention for children with developmental difficulties and complex communication needs. Over four years, the capacity of 481

professionals, mostly women, from 56 early childhood intervention institutions increased significantly when it comes to the identification and support provided to young children with speech, language, and communication-related difficulties. Fifty-six institutions received assistive technology for communication and standardized diagnostic tools. An open-source online training platform for early childhood development professionals was developed and an open-source AAC application C-board was adapted to the Croatian language. To address the need for system strengthening, UNICEF's key partners developed recommendations for AAC service provision in health care, social welfare, and the education system. A total of 1.586 children with disabilities up to 8 years of age benefited from the programme, and 5.000 children with disabilities indirectly.

In 2020, the CO continued to strengthen national capacities for an **improved child protection system and policies**, through a partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (MLPSFSP), and leading national experts and civil society organisations within the joint programme initiative '**For a Stronger Family**'. Formative evaluation of the programme (2020) showed that the parenting programmes for highly vulnerable parents improved mothers' and fathers' childcare skills. In 2020, more than 246 parents (202 mothers) benefited from the programme, and developed models are integrated as services in the social welfare system to ensure sustainable service provision. The family centres started the implementation of the new parenting support programme for vulnerable parents, which is further adapted to Roma families within the Child Guarantee testing phase. To ensure timely, effective, efficient and qualitative **case management and interventions** to more than 13.690 children living in **at-risk families**, UNICEF supported the development of new assessment tools. The evaluation showed that developed tools for case management and the foster care system have been widely used by social workers, and generally been found to enhance work with caregivers and are being integrated into the government social welfare application (SocSkrb) what will improve monitoring of assessed risks.

In line with national priorities, UNICEF continued to support and promote quality **foster care** for more than 2,235 **children** and 1,318 foster carers through the **strengthening of the umbrella association of foster parents** and the development of a comprehensive **curriculum for the education of foster parents** including gender responsive foster parenting for children with behavioural problems. In 2020, UNICEF supported the specialization of 110 judicial professionals. It resulted in enhancing their knowledge and skills in communication with children and adolescents, applying restorative and community-based measures, etc. UNICEF is working closely with the Judicial Academy to ensure the development of sustainable, gender-sensitive and institutionalized lifelong training curricula for 1,300 judicial officials and non-legal child professionals.

Evidence and good practices generated in parental support programmes, in the prevention of peer violence were successfully shared and used in Belarus, Georgia, Bulgaria, Uzbekistan via webinars and different mentors' training.

The CO provided **training for teaching staff from five Croatian universities**, to instil values, knowledge, and skills so future teachers can better cater to the needs of vulnerable children on their pre-primary education journey.

Reaffirming the commitment to sustain quality mother and new-born health services through improved capacities of professionals, UNICEF distributed **Mother and Baby – Friendly manual** to all maternities, initiating its adaptation for online learning. Additional support included the provision of equipment for family-friendly practices in maternity hospitals.

More than 60 companies participated in the 4th generation of the UNICEF-supported Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Academy - Training on **Child Rights and Business Principles**. The special event aiming at motivating companies to be more engaged in protecting and promoting children's rights organized on World Children's Day promoted the results of mapping the responsible business

practices regarding children in Croatia, collected by students from the University of Zagreb.

The implementation of the **research, study and evaluation**, including evidence and recommendations on financing of pre-school, early childhood intervention services, children's subjective wellbeing, and the family-based care component of the UNICEF programme, informed advances in programming for children and accelerating the implementation of child-friendly policies. A comprehensive Study on the participation of children from vulnerable groups resulted with information and guidance for strengthening their participation, and with recommendations for children's meaningful engagement in research processes.

The Overall Situation Analysis of children and adolescents in Croatia was drafted in a participatory manner with the line ministries, NGOs, Ombudsperson for Children. Additional online and offline consultations with close to 40 adolescents ensured that their voice and perspective is adequately built into the recommendations of the Analysis.

In agreement with the Government, the **existing Country Programme** has been extended until the end of 2022 to generate additional knowledge that will support evidence-based planning of the new programme, particularly related to the effects of COVID-19 and lessons learned from the EU supported Child Guarantee programme. The new five-year Country Programme will be designed in 2021.

UNICEF will model several **Child Guarantee** interventions to support the argument for future allocation of resources that would benefit the most marginalized children, families and communities from the first days in life. To do it, UNICEF will support the establishment and provision of early childhood programmes, parenting workshops with special provisions to targeting male care givers and fathers and addressing gender norms, preschool opportunities as well as programmes in which young people can express their ideas and develop their potential in Medjmurje County. Compressing practically the complete Country Programme in a **relatively short timeframe and on a limited geographic area**, CO will be collecting the knowledge, presenting the evidence and advocating for scaling up all the best elements to the level of the European Union.

The CO's **advocacy and positioning** proved to be important for securing regular support from donors, decision-makers and advocates, including young people influencing UNICEF's readiness to respond to urgent and increasing priorities for children. **Partnerships** with key business decision-makers, IFIs, public and private sector donors, key media, celebrities, and influencers were managed strategically and responsibly to secure UNICEF's positioning and reconfirm its relevance in a high-income country.

In line with annual management priorities, a successful **resource mobilisation strategy** resulted in US \$ 4.6 million raised in 2020 from the private sector in Croatia. The fundraising efforts allowed UNICEF to fully fund its programme, while also contributing to global programmes and regular resources. Some 48,500 donors contributed to UNICEF programmes through monthly donations and in response to specific appeals in 2020, and an additional 40,000 individuals supported UNICEF with one-off donations. Altogether, more than 93,000 individuals contributed financially and were engaged with UNICEF's mission during 2020 (some 2.5 per cent of the total adult population of Croatia).

Collaboration with the **corporate channel** engaged 3,245 companies (including SMEs) in the CO's activities. The most valuable financial support came from retail, finance, FMCG sector and one big collaboration with UNICEF's global partner. Despite positive developments in 2019, the collaboration with the tourism sector was delayed because of the pandemic.

The increase in response rates to UNICEF House List fundraising appeals from 25% in 2019 to 30% in 2020 confirms the **brand recognition and trustworthiness** resulting from a continued focus on inspiring communications, donor relations, and donor care programmes implemented by the CO.

The funding needs for UNICEF response to COVID-19 resulted in multiple emergency appeals, and the December earthquakes added to **emergency fundraising** results of 2020.

## UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

Widely recognised as a credible, trusted and expert body, particularly on equity issues, UNICEF maintained relationships with the Government, corporate and implementing partners, with new avenues of collaboration, contributing to overall results, especially in responding to the pandemic and earthquake crisis. A partnership with Johnson&Johnson (first for CO) provided additional PPE for pediatricians and visiting nurses in three counties most affected.

Within the **UN umbrella**, the CO engaged with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Embassies and the International Financial Institutions. Having the biggest UN presence in the country without the UN Resident Coordinator system, UNICEF cooperated closely with UN organisations in supporting the government emergency response.

Partnership with the **academia and research community** extends beyond knowledge generation, supporting also evidence-based policies, modelling programme models, and enhancing relevant professionals' capacities. A good example is the introduction of new university-level curricula for professionals working with children on children's subjective wellbeing at the Faculty of Law in Zagreb.

Close collaboration with the **World Bank** in researching socio-economic effects of COVID-19 on children and families shed light on the situation, knowledge and behaviour relevant to the general population with a focus on households with children, including children with disabilities. This synergy generated evidence about the perceived availability of public services, with a focus on children's access to social welfare, education and health services, and the subjective well-being of individuals, parents/caregivers and children. The findings were jointly presented to the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy to feed the government's plans for social and economic recovery, announcing also a future collaboration on generating new evidence and on developing policy briefs.

Additionally, the cooperation with the World Bank and NGO Roda led to the creation of "**E-education for pregnancy and parenting during COVID-19**", allowing the dissemination of antenatal care materials among hard-to-reach populations, including marginalized communities. Reaching more than 5,000 women/families, materials helped to improve maternal, neonatal and child nutrition and parenting practices, including for marginalized communities otherwise potentially deprived from such medical support during the pandemic.

UNICEF's engagement aimed to leverage the role of the **EU Croatian Presidency** from January to June to promote children's rights at the EU level. Although the schedule and format of the Presidency were revised due to the COVID-19, CO managed to support the MFEA during the COHAFa and Agenda 2030 high-level EU Council meetings in Brussels. Through the Junior Ambassadors Programme, UNICEF supported line ministries in assuring that the children's rights are included in discussions and high-level events. Adopted conclusions regarding youth are considered especially important.

The global partnership between the **International Chamber of Commerce and UNICEF** was formally confirmed in Croatia, focusing on improving respect for children's rights in the corporate sector and supporting UNICEF appeals, campaigns and initiatives.

In cooperation with **Zagreb Stock Exchange**, CO produced and distributed video material on children's rights perspectives as part of sustainable finance in addition to specialized webinars for financial companies, to increase the awareness of the financial sector on its impact on children's rights.

## Lessons Learned and Innovations

As a result of advocacy activities within the business community and based on the newly established partnership with the Croatian Office of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and Croatian Chamber of Economy, the first-ever **award for responsible business practices towards children** “CSR Index” was introduced as part of the national CSR awards in 2020. It is based on UNICEF’s methodology for assessing the integration of CR into business policies and practices. It will help raise the visibility of children’s rights in business and serve as an inspiration to Croatian companies to implement responsible practices and initiatives focused on children.

Due to the epidemiological situation and earthquakes that hit Croatia in 2020, most of UNICEF **programmes had to be adapted and moved to an online format**. This also proved to be an opportunity for reaching the furthest behind children. As the burden of mental health conditions among adolescents has increased, programmes related to developing socio-emotional skills of adolescent boys and girls to build their resilience were not sufficient. In light of this, and taking gender needs in consideration, the CO initiated a programme for young people to promote **positive adolescent development** by expanding the quality of online support and adequate digital content for young people across Croatia.

Thus, UNICEF supported the 12th **Children’s Rights Festival**, successfully redesigned to an online format, preserving and expanding its unique inclusive character and mainly focusing on COVID-19 pandemic, mental health, media literacy, enabling engagement of a record number of 27,107 children and adolescents (55% girls and 45% boys), which represented an increase of 130 % compared to 2019. It also included 123 children with disabilities, who participated in offline and online events, workshops, debates and were able to watch films adapted for the visually and hearing impaired. Public awareness on children’s rights was increased through a media partnership with the Croatian National Television which broadcasted trailer-ads and 3 films from the Festival, 69 media articles and a social media campaign, reaching 272,000 people on Facebook (267% increase compared to 2019).

The **Media Literacy Days**, also organized in an online format, focused on providing educational resources for distance learning and the national social media campaign, supporting parents, children, and educational professionals in understanding the media, critical thinking, recognizing fake news, tackling misinformation and online violence prevention. Media experts and educators produced 12 videos used for distance schooling and 4 new educational packages hence 4,731 children and adolescents participated in 69 offline/online events. Web platform reached a record of 339,000 users (300% increase in the age group 18-24). The educational content was used over 1 million times and 3,000 teachers applied to a dedicated Facebook group. UNICEF strengthened its position as one of the key stakeholders in media literacy education through the strong media presence and cross-border knowledge-sharing. UNICEF co-created educational materials were taken over by Agencies for Electronic Media counterparts in Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, while the Croatian concept of Media Literacy Days was used in Montenegro.

UNICEF also reconfirmed its readiness to respond to shocks, emergencies, and crisis – most of the **communications, partnerships and external relations** required innovations, quick decisions and adjustments to new circumstances hence they were all moved to the digital and online space.

Specific circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the realization of public events, which diminished opportunities for offline engagement, while media saturation with COVID-19 and

earthquakes related topics made it challenging to penetrate the key media. To mitigate the negative impacts on advocacy and programme results for children, UNICEF developed concepts for **digital campaigns**, redesigned its **online platforms**, and established new partnerships with experts, media and public influencers to provide the most relevant content and support for families, children and adolescents in the COVID-19 context.

Key public events were redesigned to virtual formats supported by expanded digital communication activities, which opened new pathways for growth. The best example is the virtual Milky Way humanitarian race, which created unprecedented public interest growing in the number of supporters by more than three times compared to 2019 and securing wide support of key national high-level decision-makers. Accordingly, the CO confirmed its ability to synergize communications, advocacy and partnerships, responding to innovative challenges and emergencies and preserving its recognizability, brand and reputation.

In terms of **resource mobilization**, the unprecedented pandemic situation has brought about changes in the habits of citizens which may provide opportunities for the future, as digital channels were in use more than ever. Still, these same changes pose a risk to our established fundraising channels (F2F, school collections, etc.). and a risk assessment will have to take place to examine how to reach future income targets and innovate in digital areas should the pandemic measures remain in place for the longer term. The major innovation of organizing the virtual race brought many benefits and allowed the CO to hold a truly inclusive sporting event and engage more than 8,500 participants for improving the living conditions of children with disabilities and promoting social inclusion and equal rights for every child in Croatia. Of adults participating, 66% were women and 34% men, and of children participating, 45% were girls and 55% boys.