STRATEGY FOR EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO (2016–2020)
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ACRONYMS

EU – European Union
IDEP – Individual Development and Education Programmes
IS – Interactive Services
LIP – Local Implementation Plan
LG – Local Governments
MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoEd – Ministry of Education
MLSW – Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoH – Ministry of Health
NGO – Non-governmental organisation
OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PI PS – Public Institution Primary School
PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment
SEN – Special Educational Needs
PPP – Preschool Preparatory Programme
PI – Preschool Institution
PSE – Preschool Education
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
BES – Bureau for Educational Services
BTTA – Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids

NOTE: In the present paper, the terms used in the masculine gender when referring to natural persons imply the same terms in the feminine gender.
THE STRATEGY DRAFTING PROCESS

The Strategy for Early and Childhood Education (2016–2020) has been developed through a participatory process including the relevant public sector and civil society stakeholders. It is underpinned by mapping out of pertinent policies and practices, i.e. a review of various inputs including primary and secondary legislation, strategies, reports, studies and other relevant materials.

Moreover, an overview of key international documents, standards and guidelines has been made, while focus groups and questionnaires have been used to examine present needs and the status of implementation of the recommendations given in the previous Strategy for Early and Childhood Education (2010–2015).

The 2016–2020 Strategy has also been a matter of public discussion involving the representatives of the education sector (preschool, primary and higher education), healthcare and welfare institutions, other line ministries, local self-governments, donor community, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc.

The drafting of Montenegro’s Strategy for Early and Childhood Education 2016–2020 has been supported by UNICEF Montenegro.
The Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro 2016–2020 is a major document that will enable all preschool-age children in Montenegro to be included in the education process in the best way possible. The goals, tasks and activities set forth in the Strategy are founded on the universal values and principles of equal opportunities, flexibility, progression, effectiveness and sustainability, whose validity is proven by both research and practice.

The present policy document identifies challenges, methodologies, ways and means, and the sequence of planned measures and activities to be carried out over a specified period of time with the assistance of stakeholders. We believe that accessibility, quality and sustainability of preschool education services needs to be provided by ensuring an inclusive, safe and enabling environment for early childhood development and learning.

Preschool programmes should provide children with a range of play-based activities to learn, practice and demonstrate knowledge and skills in all areas of development and learning. Effective early-learning programmes should prepare the youngest to participate as active members of society in the future. This will, at the same time, reinforce the confidence of parents that their children are being provided with good quality care in a stimulating and safe environment.

The pre-service training and continuous professional development need to be complementary and matching processes in order to develop competent staff able to respond to children’s needs. Both the support to preschool staff and monitoring of the quality of service delivery need to be carried out in continuity. Strong partnerships with communities, businesses, universities and other organisations are needed to support preschool children. At the same time, the citizens of Montenegro are to be informed regularly of the values and importance of early childhood education, and encouraged to participate in making progress in the process.

We will continue working on providing the infrastructure needed to improve the coverage and quality of services for families and young children. The Ministry of Education believes that the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education 2016–2020 will be a valuable resource for all stakeholders, whether children, parents, educators, theoreticians, researchers, decision-makers, community members or non-governmental organisations, in designing, planning, implementing and monitoring actions in this reform area.

Predrag Bošković, M.A.
Minister of Education
Preschool age is crucial for the overall development of child’s abilities. Evidence provided by neuroscience proves that neurological development is most intensive in children up to five years of age, indicating the significance of investing in and stimulating learning in young children.

Apart from being critical for a child to grow, flourish and build character, many empirical studies show also substantial positive social and economic impacts of preschool education to society at large.

The Nobel laureate in economics, James Heckman, shows the age-dependent profitability of investing in education. The return on each dollar invested would be largest for children under 3, followed by preschool-age children, then schoolchildren. The least return is seen with investments into post-formal education. Hence, investing in early education has a much greater impact than any subsequent investment during a lifetime.

The analysis of the 2009 PISA test results in 34 OECD countries showed link between preschool attendance and subsequent school attainment. Fifteen-year-olds who attended preschool longer than a year on average performed better in reading literacy than those with no preschool education. The difference was 54 points, which corresponds to 18 months of formal education. Moreover, such linkage is more pronounced: 1) when preschools cover a wider portion of the student population; 2) when PSE lasts longer; 3) with lower student-to-teacher ratios; and 4) with a higher level of monetary investment per child before starting school.

The Strategy for Early and Preschool Education 2016–2020 sets the goals and directions for preschool education based on a review of the previous 2010–2015 Strategy, the Study on Investing in Early Childhood Education in Montenegro, and the additional Situation Analysis of Preschool Institutions Regarding their Infrastructural Capacities, Coverage and Teaching Staff.

The guiding principle of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education 2016–2020 is to make sure that all children from birth until school age have their developmental needs met through services with adequate programming and infrastructure, run by competent professionals and staff, with active involvement of communities and parents.

The Strategy goals are:

1. Universal preschool coverage of all children aged 3 to school age in line with international standards;
2. Improve the quality of preschool education; and
3. Introduce innovative, optimal and sustainable funding models.

The principles underpinning the Strategy are:

- Experience-based and high quality services
- Integration, individualisation and accessibility of services
- Participation and shared responsibility
- Innovation and sustainability

Furthermore, the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education is aligned with relevant European and international standards, while including the most recent, evidence-based scientific findings and best practices in early childhood education. The emphasis on the importance of stimulation for early development is clearly visible in Europe 2020, which identifies early learning as
one of its priorities. One of the goals set by the Europe 2020 Strategy is that 95% of children aged 3 up to compulsory school age should be covered by early childhood education.

At the same time, the Strategy focuses on equality, in line with the objectives set at the summit held in Barcelona in 2002. These so-called Barcelona Objectives are a set of priorities developed by the European Union in 2002 with the aim of providing accessible quality childcare to at least 90% of children. The accompanying objectives include the “availability of high quality, affordable childcare facilities for young children from birth to compulsory school age”. Hence, early learning must be available to children from all groups in Montenegrin society, regardless of region, ethnicity, financial circumstances, or physical and cognitive abilities.

Over the past decade, Montenegro has made substantial strides in improving its rate of preschool attendance (rising from 26% to 40%), which has resulting in meeting the goal set by the previous Early and Preschool Education Strategy. The enrolment rate is 53% for children aged 3–6, and the average attendance rate is 40%. The Government of Montenegro has recognised that these figures represent a lost opportunity and have committed to meeting the objective of increasing the coverage of 3–6 year-olds in line with European standards.

Additionally, there has been a major shift in the awareness of the need for Montenegrin children to be prepared for future learning, personal and academic development.

Providing universal access to quality preschool education has been identified by the Council of the EU as one of the most effective policies that a nation can adopt to prevent students from leaving school early.
In 2010, the Government of Montenegro adopted the *Early and Preschool Education Strategy in Montenegro 2010–2015*, developed by the Ministry of Education with support from UNICEF Montenegro. Its overarching goal was to put in place all the assumptions for early and preschool education to provide accessible, high quality, comprehensive, culturally appropriate, inclusive services for all children in Montenegro, from birth until compulsory school age, particularly focusing on the most vulnerable children.

Given the importance of investing in early and childhood education for individual and long-term social and economic development, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNICEF Montenegro, commissioned a *Study on Investing in Early Childhood Education in Montenegro*. The Study was to examine the state of play regarding coverage of children, infrastructural capacities and the teaching staff in preschool institutions, and to offer preschool education funding model for Montenegro with a view to increasing coverage by ECE services. It had three main tasks:

- Develop funding scenarios to ensure universal coverage by preschool education (a year before compulsory school age) and a scenario for gradual increase in preschool coverage to all...
children aged 3 to 6, towards reaching universal coverage. The focus is on the most vulnerable children;
- Give recommendations for funding models for preschool services to include all children/families; and
- Give recommendations for optimising the use of existing preschool resources within the available/planned budget.

An additional systemic breakthrough in this area was provided through the *Situation Analysis of Preschool Institutions regarding Infrastructure Capacities, Coverage and Teaching Staff.*

Based on both the Study and the Situation Analyses, and aiming towards universal preschool coverage, it is recommended to introduce a free-of-charge preschool preparation programme lasting three hours a day. All children in the programme would receive a free meal.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNICEF Montenegro, carried out the Preschool for All campaign in the northern municipalities of Andrijevica, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Plav and Rožaje aimed at raising the awareness of parents and communities in the North of Montenegro to increase coverage by early learning and preschool education services.

Through a credit arrangement with the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Government of Montenegro launched the construction of preschool facilities in Pljevlja, Ulcinj, Bar and Podgorica (including the Borough of Tuzi). The following data was used to set the priorities: the 2011 Population Census, the demographic analysis, the number of preschools by region and by municipality, the number of children in preschools, the number of educational units, the number of age groups and the average number of children per group. The average number of children per group, limited space for educational work following the curricula, the existence of plans envisaging the construction of preschools, and the property relations indicated the need to build preschools in Podgorica in the neighbourhoods of Stari Aerodrom, Blok VI, Zagorič, then in the Borough of Tuzi, and the municipalities of Bar, Pljevlja and Ulcinj. The implementation of the *Strategy for Early and Preschool Education* will go in parallel with the above mentioned construction works.

The Ministry of Education has decided to use the above findings, the available examples of good practices, and to focus the 2016–2020 Strategy on expanding preschool coverage, improving the quality and diversity of services offered to children and families (focusing on the most vulnerable ones), by reinforcing inter-sectoral collaboration involving the education, welfare and health sectors. Integrated services may lead to greater cost-effectiveness and increased interactions among different childcare service providers.

Hence, the *Strategy for Early and Preschool Education 2016–2020* is a document that highlights the key areas, tasks and activities, suggesting concurrent delivery and combining services and activities, with a focus on making them actionable and measurable for short- and long-term implementation. The activities take note of and acknowledge the regional, local and specific needs of children, profiled on the basis of strategic directions. The activities are designed to be measurable and attainable, results-based and time-bound.
Preschool education covers children up to their enrolment in primary school at six years of age. Children under 3 are enrolled in nurseries, while children aged 3 to 6 are entered in kindergarten classes in accordance with their age group.

In Montenegro, preschool education is delivered in preschool institutions, which may be public or privately owned. For the 2014/2015 academic year, Montenegro had 21 public preschool institutions with a network of 103 educational units, with children split into 515 age-determined groups. The northern region has 10 PSIs with 25 educational units; the central region has five PSIs with 47 educational units; the southern/coastal region has six PSIs with 31 educational units. Privately owned PSIs (14 PSIs licensed by the MoEd) exist only in a few urban areas and cover a small number of children (maximum 3% of the total number of children attending PSIs). They deliver publicly recognised curricula.

The total number of children in preschool institutions during the 2014/2015 academic year was 15,955 (in 2010/2011 a total of 13,176 children; in 2011/2012 a total of 14,329 children; in 2012/2013 – 14,592 children, while in 2013/14 a total of 15,068 children).

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1 Study on Investing in Early Childhood Education in Montenegro
## Table 1. Coverage, number of preschools, educational units, age groups during the academic year 2014/2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Preschool Institution</th>
<th>No. of children</th>
<th>No. of educational units</th>
<th>No. of age groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrijevica</td>
<td>JPU “Bajo Jojić”</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>JPU “Vukosava Ivanović–Mašanović”</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berane</td>
<td>JPU “Radmila Nedić”</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijelo Polje</td>
<td>JPU “Dušo Basekčić”</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budva</td>
<td>JPU “Ljubica V. Jovanović – Maše”</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cetinje</td>
<td>JPU “Zagorka Ivanović”</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danilovgrad</td>
<td>JPU “Irena Radović”</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herceg Novi</td>
<td>JPU “Naša radost”</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolašin</td>
<td>JPU “Sestre Radović”</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotor</td>
<td>JPU “Radost”</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mojkovac</td>
<td>JPU “Jevrosima Rabrenović – Jevra”</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikšić</td>
<td>JPU “Dragan Kovačević”</td>
<td>1,519</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plav</td>
<td>JPU “Dječji vrtić”</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pljevlja</td>
<td>JPU “Eko bajka”</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plužine</td>
<td>JU Obrazovni centar – Plužine</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podgorica</td>
<td>JPU “Ljubica Popović”</td>
<td>3,259</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JPU “Đina Vrbica”</td>
<td>3,488</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rožaje</td>
<td>JPU “Boško Buha”</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tivat</td>
<td>JPU “Bambi”</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulcinj</td>
<td>JPU “Solidarnost”</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šavnik</td>
<td>JU Obrazovni centar</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>15,955</strong></td>
<td><strong>103</strong></td>
<td><strong>515</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of children attend full-day programmes (more than 98% in nurseries and 88% in kindergartens), while fewer than 2% of nursery schoolchildren and 11% of kindergarten children attend the half-day programmes. However, there are great disparities in access to and the enrolment in preschool services across several segments of Montenegrin society. For example, the coverage of children with PSE varies from quite high (88%) in the central and the southern regions, to very low in the northern region (27%). The main reasons are the low population density and the distance from the nearest facility, coupled with the fact that these same municipalities are under-developed, with higher poverty and unemployment rates compared to the rest of Montenegro. Some additional factors may include a lack of information on the importance of early learning, then life patterns in multigenerational families, where while parents work and grandparents take care of preschool children.
The average class sizes in public preschool institutions also vary greatly depending on the region. For instance, there are 39 children per group on average in the Ljubica Popovic School in Podgorica compared to an average of 10 per group in Andrijevica.

While many PSE institutions in the southern region of Montenegro frequently work above their capacity, northern facilities remain underused. The lack of space for children prevents access and quality services from being extended in the South, while geographical distance and an inability to penetrate into rural communities hamper efforts in the North. There is a serious gap in PSE attendance rates between children from rural and urban areas. Attendance stands at 19% in rural areas compared to 55% in urban centres.

Innovative preschool services have already been recognised as a possible response to the needs of the northern region, with good practice examples of interactive services found in Danilovgrad, Berane and Rožaje, which may be replicated in other low-coverage areas to draw children from rural settlements that gravitate towards these centres.

Finally, the attendance rates for Roma and Egyptian children in Montenegro is twice as low as the rate for ethnic Montenegrin children, standing at 20%.

During the 2014/2015 academic year, preschool institutions in Montenegro employed 1,870 staff. Preschool staff includes teaching staff (those responsible for direct interactions with children), professional services (professionals of various profiles such as psychologists, pedagogical experts, speech therapists, rehabilitation and education experts, nutritionists, etc.) and administrative and support staff (cleaning, nutrition and security). In nurseries, a nurse and a preschool teacher work in tandem. Two preschool teachers work in tandem per age group of children aged 3 to 6, and health-care is provided by one nurse for several age groups. In institutions that meet the requirements for additional staff, teachers and nurses are assisted by professionals of other profiles.

The Bureau for Educational Services (BES)² drafted and the National Education Council endorsed the following programmes: Brief Programme for Preschools – Working with Children About to Enrol in Primary School, The Care and Education Programme for Children under 3 Years, and the Programme for Preschools (age groups 3 to 6).

The Analysis of the Pre-school Sector identifies nearly 80% of the total preschool education costs as being covered by the central budget, while fees paid by parents make up the remainder of the costs. Parents are obliged to pay 40 euros a month for the full-day programme, and 20 euros a month for the half-day programme on average. The funds collected as fees from parents are earmarked and used for providing meals for preschool children. The Study on Investment in ECE in Montenegro revealed low collection rates for these fees.

The total PSE budget in 2014 represented 0.38% of Montenegro’s GDP. This is lower than the average in OECD countries, where it amounted to 0.58% of GDP in 2010.³ Out of the total allocation, some 80% goes for the salaries and other income of

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² In 2011

staff, and the rest for routine maintenance, pedagogical materials, other services and capital expenditures.

In spring 2015, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education launched the Preschool for All public awareness campaign to promote early childhood education in the five municipalities of the northern region with lowest enrolment rates. The campaign was preceded by an initial survey which revealed that two thirds of parents believe that preschool educational institutions are the best form of childcare. Yet, one in four parents still believe that grandparents provide the best quality of care. This attitude needs to be taken into account when attracting parents to additional preschool programmes beyond the core free programme and collecting fees from them.

The Action Plans for five municipalities (Andrijevica, Bar, Danilovgrad, Podgorica and Rožaje) are being drafted to estimate costs and propose the human and infrastructural resources needed for different scenarios of increasing PSE coverage (innovative options for using the space for the core programme, the space to be used for three-hour programmes, the space for interactive services, etc.).

During the implementation period of the previous Strategy for Early and Preschool Education, a new kindergarten and nursery was opened in Blok V in Podgorica, in April 2008. In September 2008, an educational unit of the PSI Eko bajka from Pljevlja was opened in Žabljak. The new educational unit of the PSI Ljubica V. Jovanović-Maše in Budva started operating in 2010. In 2010 in Nikšić (the neighbourhood of Kličevo) the prefabricated building of the PSI Dragan Kovačević was opened. The new central building of the PSI Bambi was opened in Tivat in September 2013. In September 2013, a new educational unit of the PSI Đina Vrbica was opened in Golubovci, a borough of Podgorica. In September 2013, the reconstruction and extension works on the kindergarten and nursery building in Vojna Lješnjaka St. in Bijelo Polje, were completed. In September 2013, in Nikšić (the neighbourhood of Ozrinići) the new prefabricated building of the PSI Dragan Kovačević was opened. In January 2015, the reconstruction and extension works on the kindergarten and nursery building in Lenka Jurišević St. in Bijelo Polje, were completed.

It has already been noted that preschools are being built in Pljevlja, Ulcinj, Bar, and in Podgorica, in the neighbourhoods of Stari Aerodrom, Blok VI and Zagorič, and in the Borough of Tuzi.

In parallel, the development of inclusive education is one of the stated education reform priorities. The Inclusive Education Strategy 2014–2018, among other things, focuses on early detection, intervention, learning, development, and psycho-social support for children and their families. In particular, it highlights a timely and harmonised response adapted to a child’s features and needs, coordination among service providers, and ongoing sharing of information between and within sectors. The need for continuous professional development and pertinent support for staff has been recognised. Given that preschool attendance favours early learning, children with special educational needs (SEN) are included in preschools under preferential terms (free of charge)⁴. Specialised institutions have been transformed into Resource Centres, and their experts are engaged to support regular schooling of children with SEN. The Resource Centre Podgorica provides early support for children with physical, combined and sight impairments, then training of staff following modern programmes and approaches to early intervention. The Resource Centre 1 Jun provides early intervention services,

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⁴ Based on referral decisions.
support for children with intellectual disabilities and autism, and assistance and training for staff. The Resource Centre _Kotor_ is a place where parents with children with hearing impairments go for early intervention, especially after cochlear implantation surgery, and which provides rehabilitation services: audiologic and speech therapies; hearing examinations and assessment, to evaluate indications for surgical treatments.

Roma and Egyptian children are yet another vulnerable group of children. For them, failure to attend preschool can make the barriers to linguistic and cultural participation in primary school even greater. The principle of integration is prevailing in the education system for Roma and Egyptian children, i.e. support for early childhood development. Apart from regular activities, for the fourth year in a row, there are in place preparatory preschools in eight public PSI in Podgorica, Nikšić, Berane, Tivat, Herceg Novi, Ulcinj, Bar and Bijelo Polje. This involves interactions with families, the Roma and Egyptian communities, local self-governments, local Red Cross organisations, Centres for Social Work and the schools in which children are to enrol. The BES provides training and supports the engagement of Roma and Egyptian mediators. Efforts need to be invested for them to be integrated through continued regular activities, i.e. to be at least included in the free three-hour programmes.

Children without parental care placed in institutions also need to be more intensively integrated into regular peer activities.

Overall, there is room for an improvement of the capacity of ECE systems and service providers, particularly as regards vulnerable children in Montenegro. _The Strategic Assessment of the Situation of Children and Families in Montenegro_ states:

“Despite the presence of children’s rights frameworks, the major blockages to realising the children’s rights identified by most assessments and key informants seem to be poor implementation, enforcement and following through of laws and policies at the local level, partly because of inadequate resourcing, but also due to the absence of appropriate frameworks of cooperation, coordination and communication between duty-bearers at local and central level; limited professional capacity; indifferent public attitudes; and a civil society either not empowered or not active enough in this field. Another area for improvement is the capacity to produce and use child-focused data and statistics.”

A number of recent studies on early learning and preschool education in Montenegro have identified the advantages and disadvantages of the current approaches, and the opportunities for change, as well as the options for financing new programmes.

One of the proposed solutions for preschool education coverage involves the introduction of preschool preparatory programmes that last three hours a day. To ensure equity and universal coverage, the programme has to be free (with one meal provided) to be particularly accessible to vulnerable children. While implementing the Strategy, the most practical, justified and efficient model needs to be chosen. It should be borne in mind that there are possible regional disparities and greater costs incurred in remote and inaccessible places than in areas with higher population density and higher income among the target
populations. The possibility of organising the three-hour programme into shifts in afternoons, using the rooms of regional school buildings or other spaces adapted for this purpose, could be considered. This enables the expansion of coverage without any substantial investments in new infrastructure.

The interactive services model has already been tested and could constitute part of the strategy to expand coverage and provide high quality services which may help raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development and preschool education. To that effect, attention should be given to the availability of staff and the so-called “travelling kindergarten” model should be considered.

Within the framework of the programme of Support to Integration and Voluntary Return of Internally Displaced Residents of the Konik Camp in Montenegro – IPA 2011, the KHAM\(^6\) toy library was organised for children and parents in Roma and Egyptian communities offering opportunities to develop their own skills and understand the developmental role of play. In addition, the NGO Parent Association was granted by the Ministry of Defence use for five years, free of charge, of the space needed for the toy library (parents/members rent free of charge certain didactic materials for a specified period of time). Such experiences may be helpful and inspiring for PSI themselves to expand their services in this direction.

Following the development of the five municipal Action Plans already mentioned, which will indicate the needed capacities and staff with cost estimates for preschool education...

\(^6\) The word means “sun” in the Romani language.
education (including the three-hour programme), these need to be piloted, applied and replicated in all PSIs.

Current and future professionals, with the proper competencies, confidence and commitment to practically apply such knowledge, are vital for further developments in this field. The PSIs (public and private alike) must be encouraged to show initiative and autonomy, stronger teamwork, the habit of producing and using self-assessments (to assess the needs and improve the work of the given institution). The cooperation and support at the institution level needs to be strengthened, and the possibility of hiring more professionals of various profiles (psychologists, pedagogical experts, special educators and therapists and other staff) improved. Accordingly, meaningful, targeted, thematic and needs assessment-based training of staff is needed, redefining the normative standards for their engagement (by taking into account the relevance of support in early childhood).

The need to improve the way data is collected and used has also been recognised, concerning all children, but particularly vulnerable ones. This should be a meaningful and well-coordinated process which clearly sets the roles, responsibilities, powers and resources of relevant actors at different levels (horizontally and vertically).

Another challenge is reflected in the fact that the central budget does not provide appropriations for periodic maintenance and repairs of the existing buildings, hence new funding models should be developed for these purposes.

The Preschool Education Law is in need of amendment to envisage a fee of a certain percentage payable by parents to cater for the costs of core programmes (both half- and full-day ones) to replace the current model in which parents cover only the costs of the meals provided to their children. In addition, better collection of the fee payable by parents is needed, to reach at least 80% (at the pre school institution level).

With reference to the explicit evidence in favour of the overall development, social, financial and economic effects of investing in early childhood education, the increase of preschool will be a challenge.

Another imperative is to continue raising the awareness of parents and the professional public regarding social inclusion. The pertinent measures must respond to the needs of Roma and Egyptian children with a view to their integration, preparation for better school attainment and social participation. Well-concerted actions are needed in order to carry out deinstitutionalisation and include these children in regular, integrated peer activities.

Finally, the measures envisaged by the present Strategy need to be made compatible with the ones in the Inclusive Education Strategy, particularly as regards better cooperation among different sectors responsible for childcare, focusing on those dealing with early interventions, health care, psycho-social support and family services.
The guiding principle of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro (2016–2020) is to make sure that all children from birth until school age have their developmental needs met through services, with adequate programmes and infrastructure run by competent professionals and staff, with the active involvement of communities and parents.

The Strategy will also:

1. Improve, extend, monitor and measure the scope, intensity and quality of services and service providers, and review and ensure the observance of pedagogical norms and standards;
2. Using innovative approaches, expand the interactive services model and, book and toy libraries, apply the three-hour preschool preparatory programme, and expand the offer of specialised programmes; improve public–private partnerships responsiveness to regional and institutional specificities;
3. Focus on increasing access, equity and the preparedness of children for primary school;
4. Advocate integrated, culturally sensitive and individually responsive play-based activities;
5. Be focused on raising the awareness of parents, experts and the general public of the importance of early learning and the participation of civil society in education processes.
6. Propose the drafting of efficient and sustainable funding models for preschool education.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS FOR EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro 2016–2020 stresses the importance of high quality early intervention services and responses through individualised approaches and differentiated services, methodological strategies to address each child’s unique needs. Relevant indicators are set in order to monitor the pace of implementation and plan further developments in the early and preschool education sector.

The Strategy indicates the need for systemic alignment of policies and legislation, for reforming and restructuring some areas towards integrating the supply of services that start at childbirth. To that end, empowering professionals to support early identification, intervention and learning processes will be paramount. Implementation needs to be monitored and mutual consistency and sharing of information ensured.

Accordingly, the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro is premised on the following principles:

Experience-based and high quality services

Programming and services will be based on research and best practices. They will reflect the importance of developmentally appropriate activities and play-based learning for young children.

The openness of staff to lifelong learning and the readiness to improve practices to be better able to develop children’s potentials will be encouraged. Didactic aids, materials and resources will be developed to support best practices.

The quality of educational work (both public and private PSIs) will be monitored and evaluated.
Integration, individualisation and availability of services

All children in Montenegro deserve the best possible start in life. Therefore, the support and services will be integrated, coordinated, child-centred, family-focused and available to all. Cooperation within and among sectors will be improved, upgraded and streamlined to ensure that children flourish in all areas and according to their individual needs and abilities. In order to achieve an integrated approach, support and services will constitute part of a single system managed in a coordinated manner working towards a common goal and sharing information, tasks and responsibilities.

The three-hour preschool preparatory programme will complement, not replace the primary programme and will be available to meet the needs of all children and families. The programmes will reflect the understanding and respect of vulnerable children, particularly children with SEN, RE children, children under the care of the state, and rural children. Better early identification and intervention programmes must be made available for all children and families. Full integration of RE children will be pursued, and special attention will be devoted to children and families in remote rural areas to ensure equity of access.

Participation and shared responsibility

Parents, communities, decision-makers, employers and other stakeholders will contribute to creating a supportive and healthy environment, and will adapt their services to address the unique needs of children and their families. Communication will be transparent and constant, and will ensure that strong partnerships are built with families and communities. The roles and responsibilities will be reviewed to ensure all levels of early childhood education services are aligned with the strategic vision.

All citizens of Montenegro have a right to participate in and be informed of the significance, values, importance, and progress in early and preschool education. Leadership will be accompanied by the sense of shared responsibility among all actors and other stakeholders.

Innovation and sustainability

Innovative models will be explored, including alternative programmes for preschool, home-based learning, interactive services, new technologically integrated practices and other alternatives to address the needs of rural areas. The options will be considered to provide appropriate spaces (new, alternative and improved) for children and families. The facilities need to be made accessible, inviting, safe and creative, with new materials, equipment, books, toys and didactic aids (structured and non-structured) including specialised equipment and aids for children with disabilities.

Public funding, restructuring, better collection of fees and project-based activities (grants, donations) will be the main sources of revenues.

Cost sharing is an important factor in sustainability, provided that everyone has a shared responsibility for the strategy to flourish and produce lasting results. Sustainability will demand commitment, funding, dialogue and the engagement of wider communities. It will all require the alignment of inter-sectoral services, commitment from municipalities and knowledge of and the capacity to support equity and inclusion.
GOALS OF THE STRATEGY FOR EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The guiding principle of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro (2016-2020) is to make sure that all children from birth until school age have their developmental needs met through services with adequate programming and infrastructure, run by competent professionals and staff, with the active involvement of communities and parents.

Goal 1) Increase coverage by PSE to all children, particularly those aged 3 to compulsory school age in line with international standards.

Goal 2) Improve the quality of PSE services

Goal 3) Introduce innovative, optimal and sustainable funding models.

GOAL 1: Increase coverage by PSE to all children, particularly those aged 3 to compulsory school age in line with international standards

All preschool children in Montenegro need to be ensured the best possible start in life as a precondition for developing their full potentials by inclusion into the preschool education system.

In future we will aspire to meet international standards and the expectations set regarding the coverage of children aged 3 to school-entry age.

This will be achieved through: a) improving infrastructure: building new spaces, refurbishing existing and adapting the alternative spaces: use of regional primary school buildings or other public and/or private facilities; b) expanding interactive services and book and toy libraries; c) introducing innovative and flexible programmes (the free three-hour programme, staggered scheduling); d) intensive integration of the RE population; e) better detection and responses to the needs of children with SEN; f) programming active participation of parents; g) collecting and using data within and between sectors.
GOAL 2: Improve the quality of PSE services

Preschool education programmes should offer children a wide range of activities in all areas of development to impact overall attainments. This calls for staff to competently respond to the needs of children. For effective and efficient implementation of preschool education programmes, constant support for staff is needed, as well as quality assurance of services delivered in the public and private sectors.

This will be achieved through: a) designing developmentally adequate, stimulating, high quality, integrated and accessible programmes and services for all children; b) improving pre-service training and enhancing professional competencies of current and future practitioners; c) improving support, monitoring, supervision and counselling services for the staff; and d) further development of quality standards and indicators to monitor impact and outcomes.

GOAL 3: Introduce innovative, optimal and sustainable funding models

Sustainable funding and strong partnerships, promoting early-learning values are needed to increase coverage and improve the quality of services intended for preschool children and their families.

This will be achieved through: a) considering the possibilities for increasing government spending on preschool education; b) public and private partnerships to fund programme improvements; c) redefinition and better collection of fees payable by parents; d) self-funding programmes; e) alignment of the legal framework; and f) constant promotion of the role and relevance of preschool education and raising the awareness of the public to encourage the idea of overall participation and investment.
Improved infrastructure

The Ministry of Education will focus on creating the infrastructure to support all preschool education programmes. In doing so, the regional and individual specificities of institutions will be taken into account. Plans will be developed to establish where new preschool buildings are needed, where the refurbishment of existing facilities is in order, and which existing facilities may be used for ECE activities (regional primary school buildings, community centres, primary healthcare centres, cultural centres, business premises, etc.). Further work will be done on developing public–private partnerships and licensing private preschool facilities.

Facility standards will be reviewed so as to ensure that all facilities are of high quality, safe, accessible, in line with current legislation, stocked with play-based learning materials, including specialised equipment and aids for children with disabilities.

Increasing coverage

Apart from creating the spatial requirements, interactive services will also be organised in all municipalities with remote rural areas. More intensive work will be done to set up and use book and toy libraries to empower parents for autonomous, targeted and structured work with their children. The best three-hour preschool preparatory programmes will be selected, piloted and applied. The application of specialised internationally recognised programmes will be reinforced.

An environment that is accepting and in which diversity is respected and valued will be cherished. In cooperation with partners and the Roma community, the role of early learning and inclusion of children in regular programmes that foster their integration will be promoted. Linkages with the healthcare and welfare sectors will be reinforced for better support for children with special educational needs and their early development within their peer community. Models supporting deinstitutionalisation will be designed. Data collection, sharing and use will be improved.

Improved programming

In order for early learning services to be of good quality and developmentally adequate, the work programme will be upgraded and fine-tuned. Current methodological approaches and forms of work will be innovated and alternative approaches will be followed. Creative combinations of different models supporting early learning will be pursued. The three-hour preschool

GOAL 1: Increase coverage of PSE to all children, particularly those aged 3 to compulsory school age in line with international standards
preparatory curriculum will be designed to suit the local context.

Programme quality standards need to be developed together with the indicators for their monitoring and evaluation (in public and private facilities alike). A schedule of visits to provide counselling support to staff (in public and private facilities) will also be prepared.

**GOAL 2: Improve the quality of PSE services**

**Professional competencies**

To be able to respond to the needs of all children, the competencies of staff need to be strengthened (in both public and private institutions) to follow a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, teamwork and partnership with parents; stimulate development according to personal characteristics; promote the values of non-violence, tolerance and acceptance of differences; and apply modern approaches in working with children with SEN depending on the type of their developmental disability. Staff will be trained to apply innovative services.

Through the pending curriculum reaccreditation process, the pre-service training curricula need to be improved. Special emphasis will be given to contemporary evidence-based early childhood learning and development trends supported by theory, science and research, and providing continued practical work for students.

**Quality of ECE services and service providers**

In order to support holistic early childhood development, attention should be to providing staff of relevant educational backgrounds, and to ensuring professionalism and key competencies. The staff will be further supported through the development of optimal pedagogical norms.

Better two-way linkages among education system institutions will be needed.

Clear roles, duties and responsibilities will be defined for the administration, ECE services providers, and professionals, which include operational and licensing quality standards.

Moreover, a monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed (for both public and private PSIs).

The staff will be supported through developing a plan of visits to provide more intensive and meaningful counselling services, through thematic counselling sessions, setting up teacher teams and networks of practitioners, sharing good practices, drafting instructions for stimulating and evaluating certain developmental areas and publishing ECE materials.

**Family support and parent engagement**

Parents as the child's first teachers will be more strongly recognised as partners and
beneficiaries. They will be better informed of the importance and efficacy of enrolling their children in ECE programming. Programmes for parents’ participation and training will be designed. Thematic programmes for strengthening parental skills and more active role in their child’s upbringing and learning will be provided.

Parents should be made to feel welcome and be active participants in the processes of taking part in the preschool community. They will be trained to apply creative, appropriate, tailored and structured child-centred activities in their homes.

It is important to work on formatting and formalising the transition programmes for primary school enrolment to ensure continuity and timely and smooth transition. Educational and information materials will be developed and disseminated.
GOAL 3: Introduce innovative, optimal and sustainable funding models

Funding and legal framework

The Ministry of Education will undertake consultations with stakeholders, including investors and businesses, to review diverse options for improving the supply of the ECE services and strengthen them.

The possibility of increasing government spending on preschool education to 0.53% of GDP will be considered.

Universal preschool preparatory programmes are a priority because of their multiplicative effect on child development, particularly for children from lower socio-economic and less educated backgrounds. Local Implementation Plans will be developed to estimate specific costs.

Preschool institutions will be encouraged to initiate self-funding programmes. The sharing of costs by parents will be improved by including the costs of meals and didactic and other materials needed for play-based learning of children in preschools equally.

Public–private partnerships, fund-raising and project implementation will be more precisely defined and strengthened.

The legal framework will be improved in line with the new PSE solutions to ensure unhindered achievement of planned coverage, application of new services, quality assurance, and introduction of new, optimal and sustainable funding models.

Communication, collaboration, promotion

The improved universal preschool system needs to be generally understood and accepted by all actors in order to be fully applied.

With a view to meeting the principles and goals of preschool education, special attention will be given to communication. Collaboration among relevant actors working towards the same goal of improving early childhood learning and development in Montenegro will be improved.

Communities will be informed of the importance of PSE programmes. The communication and collaboration plan is important to ensure the buy-in of individuals and the media to send the important messages that need to be told.
ACTIVITIES AND METHODOLOGIES FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes the activities and methodologies for achieving each of the three main goals, with the understanding that activities will frequently overlap in their execution.

The Strategy is accompanied by the Action Plan that identifies more specifically the lead institutions, timelines and outcome indicators for each activity stream.

These two sections are intended to guide the Strategy implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and may be revised and updated as goals are met.

1. Increase the coverage by preschool education to all children aged 3 to school age according to international standards

1.1 Develop and apply plans for construction of new facilities, reconstructions and refurbishing of existing ones and other available spaces in line with regional; and institutional specificities.

1.2 Prepare an analysis and a plan to arrange services in regional primary school buildings and other local institutions that may be used for the delivery of PSE services (community centres, cultural centres, primary health-care centres, business and other available premises).

1.3 Select, pilot, improve, apply and monitor the three-hour preschool preparatory programme.

1.4 Organise interactive services in all municipalities with remote rural areas.

1.5 Set up and use book and toy libraries focusing on pre-literacy and pre-numeric activities for children.

1.6 Develop efficient and effective sharing of information within the system,
as well as with the healthcare and welfare systems, and improve and apply the data collection, sharing and usage procedures.

1.7 Continue with subsidies for the inclusion of vulnerable children, while developing a model for integrating children without parental care to accompany the deinstitutionalisation process.

1.8 Promote the role of ECE and integration RE children into daily activities in cooperation with partners and the Roma community.

1.9 Improve early detection and support for children with special educational needs, their inclusion and development among peers.

1.10 Develop a plan with areas of cooperation with the civil society.

2. Improve the quality of PSE services

2.1 Review the existing norms and develop and apply new pedagogical norms.

2.2 Define clearly the roles, duties and responsibilities of the administration, PSE service providers, and professionals, which include operational and licensing standards.

2.3 Develop the PSE quality framework and standards (for the public and private sectors) with monitoring and evaluation indicators.

2.4 Improve and upgrade current programmes to include innovative approaches, and create the three-hour preschool preparatory programme.

2.5 Develop a timeframe for visits to institutions (public and private) for provide counselling support to the staff.

2.6 Develop the plan and carry out thematic counselling on: tailored planning and learning environment, individualisation, holistic and multidisciplinary approaches, promote non-violence, acceptance of differences, approaches; in working with children with SEN depending on the type of disability, teamwork and partnership with families, the three-hour preschool preparatory programme, interactive services, book and toy libraries, etc.

2.7 Set up teacher teams and networks of practitioners (both in the public and in the private sector); establish forums for sharing good practices; develop guidelines to stimulate certain developmental areas and to record progress made by children, and develop other education and information material for the expert and general public.

2.8 Develop and carry out the ECE publishing plan.

2.9 Carry out re-accreditation of pre-service training curricula for teachers and professionals focusing on ECE and practical work of students.

2.10 Develop and implement the information plan, meetings with parents, thematic programmes, workshops to reinforce parental skills and assuming the active role in child’s upbringing and learning, and formalise the primary school transitional programme.
3. Introduce innovative, optimal and sustainable funding models

3.1 Upgrade the legal framework to ensure unhindered achievement of the planned coverage, quality and funding.

3.2 Develop the plan and increase government spending for PSE.

3.3 Develop Local Implementation Plans envisaging the participation of and the role for municipalities.

3.4 Plan and apply self-funding programmes.

3.5 Improve collection of fees payable by parents and make such fees to include both the costs of meals and didactic and other materials needed for play-based learning.

3.6 Develop and apply public–private partnerships to improve coverage.

3.7 Promote the role and significance of PSE and raise awareness of the public – with the accompanying ongoing campaign, featuring educational programmes in the media intended for preschool children, their parents, experts and other interested public.
CONCLUSION

Given the persuasive evidence about the benefits of ECE, there is a strong call to further invest in and reform this area, and provide programmes that are accessible and equitable for all children and parents and are beneficial to Montenegrin society.

Leading change in ECE requires flexible evidence-based approaches that are responsive to the diverse needs of families and children. It is therefore important to create interpersonal and intergovernmental collaboration and cooperation.

It is important to map out a reasonable, cost-effective and measurable implementation plan and ensure shared and individual responsibility for implementation through a high degree of cooperation and motivation.

The management and delivery will be shared among state actors, practitioners, local communities, non-governmental organisations, businesses and other partners.
THE ACTION PLAN ACCOMPANYING THE STRATEGY FOR EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION 2016–2020

The Action Plan is a five-year implementation framework for the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education. It is intended to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy, and is open for revisions and modifications.

The Action Plan needs to link the Strategy with practice with the financial context and to sketch out the roles, responsibilities and expected results. The 2016–2020 Strategy responds to the questions of Why and What is planned and intended, and the Action Plan responds to Who, When, Where and How. It gives a framework for autonomous implementation of measures, forging of partnerships, participation of domestic and international non-governmental and other organisations, and offers possibilities for project-based fulfilment of goals and actions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible entity and timeframe</th>
<th>Indicators and sources of verification</th>
<th>Cost estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Increase preschool coverage to all children aged 3 to school age in line with international standards</td>
<td>Development of LIPs responding to local and regional specificities</td>
<td>MoEd, MoH, MLSW, MoC, LG, PVO, donors Deadline: 2016/17 academic year</td>
<td>Number of regional school buildings, community buildings, culture centres, primary healthcare centres, business premises put to use as PSI</td>
<td>€ 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction plans for new buildings developed and applied</td>
<td>MoEd, PSE Deadline: 2016–2020</td>
<td>Reports, recommendations, number of new facilities</td>
<td>€ 1,000,000 per facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plans developed and facilities refurbished</td>
<td>MoEd, PSE Deadline: 2016–2020</td>
<td>Reports, recommendations, number of refurbished facilities</td>
<td>€ 50,000 per facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piloting the chosen three-hour preschool preparatory model</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, donors Deadline: 2016–2020</td>
<td>Chosen model piloted. Number of children covered, reports</td>
<td>€ 50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application of the chosen three-hour preschool preparatory programme:</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, donors Deadline: 2016/17</td>
<td>Chosen model applied. Number of children covered, reports</td>
<td>€ 600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 5-year-olds in 2017/18</td>
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<td>• 4-year-olds in 2017/18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3-year-olds in 2017/18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set up interactive services in all municipalities</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, LG, donors Deadline: 2017</td>
<td>Number of IS, number of children covered</td>
<td>€ 75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set up and use book and toy libraries</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, BES, NGOs, donors Deadline: 2017</td>
<td>Number of book and toy libraries and users</td>
<td>€ 20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement of RE children in daily activities</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, LU, NGOs, donors Deadline: continuous</td>
<td>Number of RE children</td>
<td>€ 30,000 a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Responsible entity and timeframe</td>
<td>Indicators and sources of verification</td>
<td>Cost estimate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Increase preschool coverage to all children aged 3 to school age in line with international standards</td>
<td>Develop cooperation procedures, effective and efficient sharing of information within and among systems</td>
<td>MoEd, MoH, MLSW, BES, PSE, primary healthcare</td>
<td>The procedure established and operational, number of meetings, reports, number of measures</td>
<td>€ 10,000</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Improve data collection and use</td>
<td>MoEd, MoH, MLSW, primary healthcare</td>
<td>MEIS upgraded, exchanges with other sectors, operational reports, number of counselling sessions, number of children and services</td>
<td>€ 25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve early detection and support for children with SEN</td>
<td>MoEd, MoH, MLSW, BES, PSE, primary healthcare</td>
<td>Number of services, number of staff, number of training events and number of children covered</td>
<td>€ 100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve data collection and use</td>
<td>MoEd, MoH, MLSW, BES, PSE, CSW, primary healthcare</td>
<td>Number of children, financial reports</td>
<td>€ 60,000 a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidised inclusion of vulnerable children</td>
<td>MoEd, MoH, MLSW, PSE, CSW</td>
<td>Number of children covered; number of NGO services and people covered</td>
<td>€ 10,000 a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidised inclusion of vulnerable children</td>
<td>MoEd, NGO, PSE</td>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidised inclusion of vulnerable children</td>
<td>MoEd, NGO, PSE</td>
<td>Roles defined and set, reports</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidised inclusion of vulnerable children</td>
<td>MoEd, NGO, PSE</td>
<td>Programmes updated and applied</td>
<td>€ 15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidised inclusion of vulnerable children</td>
<td>MoEd, NGO, PSE</td>
<td>Number of visits, reports</td>
<td>Number of visits, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Ensure quality of preschool education services</td>
<td>Define roles, responsibilities of the administration, educators and civil society</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE</td>
<td>Roles defined and set, reports</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development and implementation of the model for including children without parental care</td>
<td>MLSW, MoEd, PSE</td>
<td>Number of children, financial reports</td>
<td>€ 60,000 a year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidised inclusion of vulnerable children</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE</td>
<td>Number of children, financial reports</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Updating the existing and designing the three-hour programme</td>
<td>BES, PSE</td>
<td>Roles defined and set, reports</td>
<td>€ 15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing quality standards with indicators for monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>BES, PSE</td>
<td>Number of visits, reports</td>
<td>Number of visits, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing schedule of visits to provide counselling support for staff</td>
<td>BES, PSE</td>
<td>Number of visits, reports</td>
<td>Number of visits, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Responsible entity and timeframe</td>
<td>Indicators and sources of verification</td>
<td>Cost estimate</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Ensure quality of preschool education services</td>
<td>Develop plan and carry out counselling and training</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE Deadline: 2016/17 and onwards</td>
<td>Reports: number of training sessions &amp; trainees, number and type of topics, counselling and people covered</td>
<td>€ 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set up teacher groups, networks of practitioners and models for changing good practices</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, donors Deadline: 2016/17 and onwards</td>
<td>Number of meetings, good practices</td>
<td>€ 15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop guides for stimulating certain developmental areas and recording progress</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, NGOs, donors Deadline: 2016/17 and onwards</td>
<td>Guides developed and applied; reports</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop, disseminate and apply educational and informative materials</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, NGOs, donors Deadline: continuous</td>
<td>Material designed and disseminated, number and type of materials</td>
<td>€ 10,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop and implement the ECE publication plan</td>
<td>BTTA, PSE Deadline: 2016/17 and onwards</td>
<td>Number and type of publications</td>
<td>€ 15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and apply parent meeting plan, thematic programmes, parent workshops</td>
<td>MoEd, PSE, NGOs, donors Deadline: 2016/17 and onwards</td>
<td>Number of meetings, workshops, thematic programmes, parents covered</td>
<td>€ 1,500 per institution a year</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop formats and apply transition programmes for primary school</td>
<td>MoEd, PSE, donors Deadline: 2016/17 and onwards</td>
<td>Transition plan developed, number of trainings, number of trainees, reports</td>
<td>€ 10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct surveys</td>
<td>MoEd, BES, PSE, NGOs, donors Deadline: continuous</td>
<td>Number of surveys, reports, recommendations followed through</td>
<td>€ 5,000 a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review and align curricula for pre-service training of staff</td>
<td>University Deadline: 2017</td>
<td>Curricula adopted and aligned with international standards</td>
<td>€ 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Responsible entity and timeframe</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Indicators and sources of verification</td>
<td>Cost estimate</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Introduce innovative, optimal and sustainable funding models</td>
<td>MoEd</td>
<td>Improvement of legal and normative framework</td>
<td>Legal framework adopted, norms improved, number of professionals</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEd, MoF</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve government spending on PSE</td>
<td>Budgetary appropriation</td>
<td>0.53% GDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEd, PSE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve collection of fees from parents</td>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>80% collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEd, PSE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop plan and apply self-funding programmes</td>
<td>Number of programmes, number of children covered, financial statements</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEd, private sector</td>
<td></td>
<td>Redefine and improve collection of fees from parents</td>
<td>Number of programmes, number of children covered, financial statements</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEd, PSE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and apply the PPP plan</td>
<td>Number and type of PPPs</td>
<td>€ 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEd, PSE, donors, media</td>
<td></td>
<td>Promote and raise awareness about early childhood learning</td>
<td>Number of advertisements, campaign reports</td>
<td>€ 50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEd, PSE, media</td>
<td></td>
<td>Design and apply the plan of interactions with the media</td>
<td>Number of educational shows and programmes</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>