



Human rights & youth participation

Experience of the **Centre for Education Initiatives, LATVIA**

Liga Klavina
International conference «Civil
society: trends in working with
children and youth»
Bucharest, 14-15/10/2013





Centre for Education Initiatives (CEI)

» Established in 2001 with the aim of raising the awareness about children's and family rights, promoting the dissemination of the ideas of democratic education, and facilitating and the introduction of child-centred approach in the educational system of Latvia.

» Beliefs and values of CEI are based on humanistic approach to education, when each child is treated as a unique individual, regardless gender, racial, national, religious differences, physical and mental abilities, and when each child is guaranteed an equal access to quality education.

» CEI is a member organization of the International Step by Step Association.





Centre for Education Initiatives

- » implements projects related to education, development of civic society and society integration
- » organizes trainings and workshops for educators, parents, municipal authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders in all regions of Latvia on quality education, anti-bias education, children's rights, parent and community involvement in education
- » implements teacher in-service training programmes on child-centered and inclusive education
- » carries out research in education and integration of ethnic minorities and at risk groups of society
- » provides consultations for schools and other educational institutions, municipal and regional governing bodies and other organisations as well as individuals





INTERNATIONAL
STEP by STEP
ASSOCIATION

ISSA Principles of Quality Education

Focus area: Inclusion, Diversity and Values of Democracy

- 3.1 The educator provides equal opportunities for every child and family to learn and participate regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, culture, native language, religion, family structure, social status, economic status, age, or special need.
- 3.2. The educator helps children understand, accept, and appreciate diversity.
- 3.3. The educator develops children's understanding of values of civil society and the skills required for participation.



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Different
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Inclusive culture

» **Secure, accepting, collaborating, stimulating community**

- **everyone feel welcome**
- **children helps each other**
- **teachers/ administrators/ specialists work together**
- **teachers and children treat one another with respect**
- **partnership between school and parents**

» **Every one is valued**

- **everyone involved shares a commitment to inclusion**
- **expectations are high for all children**
- **all children are treated as equally important**

The principles and values in inclusive cultures guide decisions about policies and practice

Booth T, Ainstow M, Kingston D, Index for inclusion, CSIE, 2006



Roma inclusion

Background: Roma ethnicity in Latvia

- » Deeply rooted prejudices towards Roma people among the majority of population
- » Direct or indirect social discrimination in labour market and community life
- » Low socio-economic level of Roma population
- » Lack of access to economic life and social relations
- » Low educational level of the Roma population
- » Inadequate number of Roma children in special schools (16,7%)
- » Drop out of school or preschool of Roma children creating a backlog in their education right from the beginning (12%)
- » Lack of access to many aspects of information and technology

The vicious circle: lack of necessary education, no job, inadequate social security, and the same pattern is repeated in the next generation of the Roma family





Roma inclusion

Aims in the field of education:

- » to involve Roma children in the preparatory stage (5-6 year olds) for education
- » to introduce inclusive principles into schools' curricula
- » to offer opportunities for Roma to return into education system at every stage previously interrupted
- » to ensure stable and continuous children education



Complex approach

- » setting up educational environment, appropriate for children
- » training teachers and Roma teacher assistants for work with Roma children and parents
- » encouraging and training Roma parents and leaders of the Roma community
- » creating prejudice-free attitude of the public towards Roma
- » involving Roma teacher assistant



Functions of the Roma teacher assistant

- » to help the 5-7 years old Roma children overcome difficulties of entering an alien cultural environment (different language, routine of the day, certain rules)
- » to provide help to the teacher to better involve Roma children in learning activities
- » to establish cooperation with Roma families - a mediator in teacher work with other Roma parents
- » to make the Roma language heard in the classroom
- » to introduce characteristic features of the Roma culture in the classroom everyday life
- » to help children who have difficulties in understanding of the teacher's instructions



General requirements for Roma teacher assistant

- Roma ethnicity
- Knows and respects the cultural traditions of the Roma
- Knows Roma language, read and write Roma language
- Knows state language, read and write in Latvian or Russian (depending on schools teaching language)
- Likes to work with children
- Understands that Roma children need education
- Has authority among compatriots
- Promotes Roma integration in the society



Trainings for Roma teacher assistant



The first group of the Roma teacher assistants







Roma teacher assistant promise

I remember:

- I am a model for children - both at work and language
- I am helping child, but do not do in his place
- I do not tell information about children and their families out of school or kindergarten.

I take care:

- That all children are safe
- That Roma children attends school regularly
- That Roma children understands what teacher is saying
- That no one stands aside
- That every one is polite and friendly





Roma teacher assistant promise

I undertake to :

- conscientiously perform my teacher assistant duties,
- support children's learning,
- learn myself,
- listen and work with teachers and parents,
- keep my promises,
- respect opinions of others and express mine,
- teach children to respect other people,
- be patient, understanding, attentive, honest, trustworthy, self-possessed.



E-manual for Roma teacher assistants

Content:

- ❑ What should a Roma teacher's assistant do at school
- ❑ What she/he has to know and follow at school work
- ❑ What is child - centered , multicultural education
- ❑ How to build cooperation with parents
- ❑ 5-7 year-old children's psychological characteristics
- ❑ Video and photo examples of the Roma teacher's assistant work.



Results of Roma teacher assistants work



- **No dropouts** among the Roma children who started their school on 1 September in the pilot classrooms
- **No Roma children assigned to the special schools**
- **Parents are satisfied** with the inclusion process of their children
- **Roma children go to school with pleasure, feel free and relaxed there and increase their knowledge**



Project «Impulse for future»

**Latvia's NGO funding programme
for integration of society
«Out of school activities»**

**Financed: Republic of Latvia
Administering: Society integration fund**

Project target: promote youth cooperation of different nationalities, their inclusion in local community, using cultural elements of different groups

Target groups (youth and children , age 14-20)	Number
Latvians	42
Russians	30
Polish	10
Ukraininans	5
Byelorussians	5
Roma	5
Other nationalities	3
Kopā:	100



Galvenā balva - 7.a klasei par
video par Jēkabpili dzīvojošo tautību dziesmām un
materiāliem, kas raksturo tautības





Project «Parents' school»

Example of NGO and municipality cooperation

Financed: Jekabpils city

Implemented: Centre for education initiatives



Thank you !

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