

SIRIUS

PEER REVIEW ZAGREB

10 AND 11 OCTOBER 2012

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The SIRIUS project

In January 2012 SIRIUS started as a network of 13 countries. The main aim of SIRIUS is to contribute in closing the achievement gap between students from native and migrant backgrounds. SIRIUS intends to develop “a powerful professional learning community across Europe to transform the education for children and youngsters from migrant background in the EU” (p. 5, Sirius position paper, draft 2012).

Among migrant students average dropout rates are higher, migrant students are over-represented in lower educational tracks and they show lower PISA scores in mathematics, science and language.

Three thematic areas are selected according to the original EU call for the SIRIUS network: policy implementation, schooling and educational support. Each thematic area has its own work package and activities. The current report lies in the area of schooling (Work package 2). In this work package we organize several peer reviews to review practices in countries within our network. This in order to help the reviewed unit to improve its program making and for the peers (and their organizations) to learn new methods in education practice to develop migrant children.

Peer Review aim and subject

On an elementary school in the northwest suburb Podsused-Vrpaće of the capital of Croatia, Zagreb, a team of 8 peers examined the implementation of the International Teacher Leadership project (ITL) among a group of teachers and their Roma students. We were invited by the Network of Education Policy Centers (NEPC) and the Forum for Freedom in Education (FSO) to inform the school, funders and policy makers on effectiveness of the initiative, the ITL methodology as well as the possible ways of making it a systemic and replicated practice for other communities in similar circumstances. The school specially wants to learn how to (possibly) improve and sustain the initiative.



Peer Review Methodology

In this paragraph a short explanation will be given in what peer reviewing is about.

The definition of the term Peer Review in the present context has not been specifically defined. However, the expression has a shared meaning when reading reports, documents etc. (Gutknecht-Gmeiner, 2007; Pagani, 2002; OECD, 2007).

Peer review is basically a systematic examination and assessment of the performance or practices of a specific unit of governance by a group of other units of the same level and range. The ultimate goal is helping the reviewed unit to improve its policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established standards and principles. The examination is conducted on a nonadversarial basis, and it relies heavily on mutual trust among the peers involved in the review, as well as on their shared confidence in the process.

The Peer Review exercise results in a report that assesses accomplishments, spells out shortfalls and makes recommendations. Every peer review has a common procedure, consisting of 3 main phases.

1. The preparatory phase

The first phase of the review often consists of background analysis and of some form of self-evaluation by the country/project under review. This phase includes work on documentation and data as well as a questionnaire. The questionnaire, which can be a sophisticated instrument, is sent to the country for responses by the competent authorities or as an agenda for a dialogue in the next phase. Peers are here recruited and trained.

2. The consultation phase

In this phase the Peer Review Visit take place. Peers visit the city and carry out their consultation. This part contains a tour of the premises (on-site visits), observations and interviews with different groups of stakeholders (such as civil servants, policy makers, teachers, principal, mentors, parents, students, researchers etc). The Peer Reviewers choose from their midst a Moderator (leading the interview) a Secretary (writing down the notes) and a Report Writer (writes afterwards the Peer Review Report with the experiences of the visit). The rest of the Peer Review team interviews, observes, discusses and also make notes to be given to the Report Writer.

3. The assessment phase

In this phase the Reporter prepares a draft of the final report, which follows a model comprising an analytical section, where the project performance is examined in detail and individual concerns are expressed, and an evaluation or summary section setting forth the conclusions and recommendations. The report in draft is shared and discussed with the Peer Review Team and with the reviewed country and may make adjustments it considers justified before the draft is submitted to the members of SIRIUS and the European Commission.

Generally, approval of the final report is by consensus, unless the procedures of the particular peer review specify otherwise. In some cases, the procedures may call for the final report to state the differences among the participants.

Often, the final report is followed by a press release, which summarizes the main issues for the media, and press events or dissemination seminars are organized to publicize the findings of the review.

And then the results and recommendations from the Peer Review are transferred into concrete actions for improvement, which are planned and implemented.

Peer Review Organization

From The Netherlands and Austria two peer review teams were selected, which contains four peers each. Due to circumstances one from the Dutch team and two from the Austrian team could not join the peer review. Besides these, the workshop leader and senior assistant of work package 2 of SIRIUS were also present. In the table below, the participants are listed.

Participants	Function	Country
Guido Walraven	Lecturer	Holland
Ype Akkerman	Municipal official	Holland
Cees Kom	School team leader	Holland
Daniela Gronold	Municipal official	Austria
Martin Zsifkovits	Principal elementary school	Austria
Sabine Severiens	Work package 2 leader	Holland
Tomislav Tudjman	Peer review report writer	Holland

Table 1.1: Peer reviewers

The team visited Zagreb on the 10th and 11th of October. In appendix 1 the program of the peer review visit is to be found. In Zagreb we interviewed the following persons.

Participants	Function	Organization
Eli Pijaca Plavšić	Organizer Peer Review (Executive Director of Forum)	Forum for Freedom in Education (FFE)
Lana Jurko	APREME project coordinator (Executive Director of NEPC)	Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC)
Vlasta Vizek Vidović	School mentor ITL	Centre for Educational Research and Development Zagreb (CERD)
Iris Marušić	School mentor ITL	Centre for Educational Research and Development Zagreb (CERD)
Aelita Jurak	School coordinator of the project	OŠ bana Josipa Jelačića
Ankica Simunic	Principal	OŠ bana Josipa Jelačića
Teachers	Teacher	OŠ bana Josipa Jelačića

Parents and students	Roma parents and students	OŠ bana Josipa Jelačića
Ankica Rakas-Drljan	School pedagogue – school coordinator of the ITL project	OŠ Gvozd
Gordana Miljević	Regional coordinator ITL	Centre for Education Policy (CEP)
Mirko Marković	Representative MoE	department of national minorities MoE

Table 1.2: Interviewees

CHAPTER 2: APREME AND ITL PROJECT AND BAN JOSIP JELAČIĆ SCHOOL

In this chapter we give a description of the Advancing Participation and Representation of Ethnic Minority Groups in Education (APREME) project and the International Teacher Leadership project which was run in the Ban Josip Jelačić School where the peer review took place.

APREME project

APREME was funded between 2009 – 2011 by ES DG Enlargement and Open Society Foundations Education Support program¹.

Six civil society organizations from five countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia) and one EU country (Romania), active in the field of promotion of minority rights, worked together to build a functional regional network for advancing educational inclusion.

The overall objective of this intervention is to contribute to building all-inclusive education systems in West Balkans countries that promote equal access to quality education for all and model respect for ethnic diversity.

The emphasis was on empowering students, teachers and parents to build initiatives that advance participation and representation of ethnic minorities in elementary (compulsory) education. Within the project qualitative studies were conducted to collect opinions of parents and other relevant community members on the current practices of school-parent-community involvement strategies, examples of good practices on the topic in the six countries were collected, while in each country six school initiatives were selected and supported through mentorship and funding (Pijaca Plavšić & Jurko, 2012).

ITL project

Teacher leadership is seen as a key lever for developing teachers' professionalism and supporting educational reform.

However, the dominant approach assumes that such leadership is only undertaken by individuals with special aptitude who are selected for designated roles as teacher leaders (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In contrast, the distinctive approach taken in the ITL project assumes that all teachers have the capacity to lead innovation, that they are entitled to exercise leadership (Lambert, 1998) and that leadership can be cultivated in all members of the teaching profession, if they are provided with appropriate support.

¹ www.apreme.net

In the ITL project there is a shared assumption that all members of learning communities have some capacity for leadership which does not depend on designated positions of authority (Frost, 2008). ITL is essentially an action research project aimed at discovering how to support teacher leadership in schools². It aims to build capacities within school for the teacher-led school development through supporting and mentoring teachers.

The APREME project decided that some of the selected schools will conduct their initiatives with the aid of ITL mentors through a set of teacher leadership workshops by special trained mentors. So the ITL project was parallel coupled to the APREME project. These projects are interesting for Croatia because of the rigid teacher culture (presentation G. Miljević and I. Marušić):

- The status of teaching profession is low, teachers feel underpaid and undervalued,
- Usually management of the educational system in Croatia is very top-down at all levels,
- In general teachers are not expected to give initiative and take responsibility for the overall quality of the school and
- they do their work in classrooms by themselves, they seldom develop and implement new ideas in teams.

The ITL workshops empowers teachers to:

- Take the initiative in their school to improve practice
- Act strategically with colleagues to embed change
- Gather and use evidence in collaborative processes
- Contribute to the creation and dissemination of professional knowledge.

through a series of workshops that were conducted with the school team from November 2010 – April 2011.

Education in Zagreb

Croatia is not a migration country, the majority of its citizens are from Croatian origin (92%). Next to them there is a minority of Serbs, Slovenians, Bosniaks, Hungarians, Italians and Roma.

The education system in Croatia comprises approximately 815,000 children and youth enrolled at all education levels. From these 4800 are Roma children.

Croatian elementary education consists of eight years and is compulsory. Children begin schools at the age of 6 or 7. There are three segments of elementary education: compulsory elementary education conducted in regular elementary schools and special institutions for students with developmental difficulties, art education in elementary music and dance schools, and elementary education of adults conducted in regular schools and specialized institutions.

² Developed by prof David Frost from University of Cambridge, UK

The eight classes in elementary schools are split in two stages:

- 1st through 4th grade, being taught by one teacher per class, with subjects such as Croatian, mathematics, visual art, nature and society, physical education, music education, religion and at least one foreign language (usually English)
- 5th through 8th grades, where different teachers teach different subjects, with added subjects such as history, geography, biology, chemistry, physics, informatics and in addition to English, often a second language, usually German, French or Italian.

Regular schools were mostly founded by the units of local self-government and the towns (828), while some were established by other physical and legal persons (10). In private elementary schools alternative elementary education is available according to special pedagogical principles (Waldorf, Montessori). Education of children with more significant developmental difficulties is conducted in 21 special institutions. Art education is conducted in 56 institutions, 3 of which are private.

Education of the representatives of national minorities is carried out in 24 elementary schools, where the program is conducted in the language and writing of a relevant national minority, while 61 elementary schools have classes with program conducted in the language and writing of a relevant national minority.

Ban Josip Jelačić School

The Ban Josip Jelačić School lies in the most western suburb of Podsused-Vrpaće. It has 552 students, 248 students in grade 1 till 4 and 304 students in grade 5 to 8.

The self report (Pijaca Plavšić & Jurko, 2012) states that the school has a number of Roma students that have low Croatian (language of instruction) language skills and therefore face problems in completing their school tasks, at the same time their parents are even less proficient in Croatian which makes any kind of participation or assistance to children by the parents almost impossible.

Actually two Roma families visit the Ban Josip Jelačić School. Besides language problems, further problems within this group are:

- girls are not often sent to school
- boys drop out early (from the age of 12) in order to work in the family business.

The school identified these problems and started working on them with its own resources. It was not a central problem in the local policy as the Roma community is rather small, the problem is however much larger in other regions and communities in Croatia and the national policy has started implementing special educational programs for Roma communities (including early childhood programs and language learning, Roma assistants etc.). However due to small number of Roma in this particular school it did not receive this support. Since the school applied to the APREME call for school initiatives and received a grant of 2500 Euro, it could invest in a program for Roma students. Together with the ITL program the school could do both things: invest in their own teacher leadership and make programs for Roma students. In the next chapter these workshops are explained.

CHAPTER 3: CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKSHOPS AND LESSONS

Workshops International Teacher Leadership

From autumn 2010 four workshops, each lasting 2 to 3 hours, were given to five teachers of the Ban Josip Jelačić School following ITL framework and methodology: interactive and experiential learning activities documented in teacher's portfolio.

The International leadership project is using the approach of school developmental action planning in order to empower school teachers to systematically plan, conduct and monitor their activities. ITL project is based on a series of workshops (mentorship meetings) organized around the topics: development of action plan, development of leadership competences, using evidence to develop project and monitor the progress, dissemination of the results across the school and role of portfolio. The specific content of these workshops were (from presentation APREME-ITL project):

<p>Workshop 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand key concepts: teacher leadership and school development project • To recognize personal concern and need for change within the context of proposed APREME school project • To define the individual aim in school project and formulate the first steps of the action plan • To recognize the importance of portfolio as a tool for documenting the realization of development project 	<p>Workshop 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognize one's leading potential • To understand the role of initial research in problem analysis • To learn methods of data collection in school settings in needed for elaboration of the action plan • To learn about effective learning strategies • To finalize planning of one's own school project
<p>Workshop 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognize what kind of impact the project is having so far • To identify challenges and barriers to the realization of the project • To relate one's own project to the reading and information from other sources • To make decision about contribution to the forthcoming Network event • To reflect on learning about leadership and learning on learning 	<p>Workshop 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on experiences and ideas from Network event for project improvement • To find ways to expand project impact • To check and fully organize portfolio • To evaluate what has been learned about learning and leadership • To start thinking about the new area for school change

Table 3.1: Content of the ITL workshops

The second language program for the Roma students

Next to the ITL workshops the school has developed Croatian as a second language program for the Roma students aimed at raising the reading and writing comprehension and proficiency of its Roma pupils. The target groups are Roma students from grades 1 to 8 and their parents. To develop and conduct this initiative the school was supported by mentors using the methodology of the ITL in order to implement their educational program for Roma pupils and their parents. With the help of ITL the school team developed:

1. a program for younger students (grades 1 -4) consisting of 2 modules basic & advanced
2. a program for older students (grade 5 -8) based on the concepts of functional literacy and life skills oriented interpersonal communication, including basics of IT literacy
3. developed parents workshop on roles of parents in education and participation with the help of the Roma volunteer assistant (a former student)

Activities

This program has been carried out as an extracurricular activity with Roma children conducted after regular school hours twice a week for four months (35 to 40 hours in total for each group). Roma students do not understand Croatian language sufficiently therefore workshops with increased learning of Croatian language on different levels have been organized – from initial learning of reading and writing, adopting new words and learning how to correctly speak sentences to developing communication skills by asking questions and giving answers, and using modern ways of communications like email and letters. Some of the language learning was attended by parents as well.

Parallel to that, series of 5 workshops for their parents were carried out in order to enhance parents support to children's school attendance and school learning.

The workshops were held by school teachers supported by a Roma assistant who translated. The topics were parenting styles, parent and school expectations, importance of parent involvement. The school does not have a large Roma student population. Twenty four Roma students and their parents were originally planned to enter the program, finally 13 students and 7 parents were involved in the program.

Outcomes

At the end of the ITL-project, the children presented what they had learned to their parents and teachers. According to our interviewees, especially the parents were very enthusiastic about their children's progress. Even though they did not have had the possibility to continue schooling themselves, they were supportive of helping their children and they were keen that their children will continue school.

Teachers said that they localize their students' skills and that therefore the project is beneficial for all – the teachers, the parents, the children. The principal states that it also has prevented early school leaving and children are less often skipping classes. Parents show interest that their children continue the classes.

Before the project started, the school had one of the highest rates of truancy of Roma children within Zagreb. These rates went down when the projects was implemented. Roma parents realized the importance of school, and that it is their legal obligation to send children to school. Among the Roma children attitude changes were visible; Roma children became more successful, they were less excluded and the project improved the self-esteem of the children.

Future

The school would like to continue the program, for the school year 2012/2103 the Ministry has approved funding for half time teacher to provide Croatian as Second language program for the Roam students. The school would also like to continue working with ITL with teachers who have not completed the program; however they lack funds for it. The ITL program has received the official recognition by the Education and teacher Training Agency and ITL Croatia team would like to continue work in this school as well as in other schools in Croatia. However, they did not manage to obtain funding for it. Several attempts were made by NEPC, CERD and other regional ITL partners through EC and other grant proposals, but thus far they were not successful.

CHAPTER 4: PEER REVIEW ANALYSES AND REFLECTIONS

Introduction

The Peer Review team has analyzed all their interview material and combined these findings with what they heard from presentations and seen in the school.

From reports done by the program Advancing Educational Inclusion and Quality in South East Europe (AEIQ)³ we know that teacher education in Croatia lack education for topic on social inclusion, building school – parents – community partnership, research and leadership skills. Besides that, parents' participation in the life of school is in most cases formal. It is seen as desirable, but it is not really supported by schools and those most in need (the poor, Roma) in general receive the least.

That makes projects like APREME and ITL even more interesting to adapt, since it influences the structure and culture in Croatian schools. For the Ban Josip Jelačić School these projects were seen as an opportunity, and it was seized.

In this chapter we give our general, teachers and critical reflections on the implementation of the project and the results derived from them.

General reflections

The Peer Reviewers found it interesting to see the connection between the APREME and ITL project: the concepts were well adapted to fit the context and a lot could be done with the little funding money they had. Organizers of the project and workshops were well equipped for their tasks. But to really implement it into school the role of the principal is critical. At Ban Josip Jelačić School we have seen an enthusiast principal about the project who has giving lots of support to her school team.

Through this a lot of energy arises among networking activities: a feeling of motivating and supporting others was created.

APREME and ITL created more attention for underprivileged children. Besides that working in small Roma groups resulted in that Roma children experienced more attention (they liked it and were not ashamed) and got more understanding of their culture and customs. An outcome for them was that they are more motivated to go to school then before.

Furthermore the projects created a lot of mutual learning: teachers learned from teachers, Roma children learned from teachers and teachers got more insight in the culture and language of Roma children. An example of knowledge exchange in this matter among teachers: ideas of how to use

³ <http://www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/>

computer and email were exchanged. Another example was that teachers learned how to make a workshop and to make an action plan from their school pedagogue.

Teachers Reflections

We noticed that there was a positive attitude among participants. Teachers, organizers, principal and the school pedagogue expressed enthusiasm, their courage to change school culture and demonstrated their commitment to the leadership concept. The teacher leadership has been the most challenging concept for the teachers in a culture where it is not common to handle as a (teacher) leader.

Teachers we had spoken to expressed their satisfaction with overall support they received through sessions and consultation. They were particularly satisfied with the encouragement to engage in projects they have never done and the support to overcome the barriers and complete the program. They were not accustomed to take initiative and prompt other colleagues in school to join in and share their innovative ideas and practices.

The main challenge for teachers has been the systematic approach to the planning and documenting their project work. More than before they participated in these projects, teachers said they were aware of the situation of Roma children and aware that they can change the situation of these children.

These changes cost time and due to a short time limit of the project they could not handle the content as thoroughly as they would have liked to.

Their wishes were quite clear: continue with the projects and continue with the network activities. Furthermore they made clear that they want more workshops, funds, time, teachers to participate and enough support from the Ministry of Education.

Next to these it also became clear that only two ITL trainers is not enough to cover all the workshops, so it is necessary to build capacities of other trainers who could run the program with their support and supervision.

A lot of attention was and is given to the Roma children, but their parents should also be educated in language.

All these wishes are for their main desire to get better education and jobs for all Roma children and for all these children to integrate into Croatian society.

Critical Reflections

As critical friends we want to help the reviewed provider to improve their projects and policies. In this paragraph we will raise some critical reflections on the APREME and ITL projects.

First we have to state that because of very little amount of funding money, these projects remain consequently small, and therefore we must be careful with high expectations. Nevertheless, we can make the following remarks:

A team of six teachers have followed the workshops and were making and leading lessons for the Roma populations on the school. Important is that these teachers *transfer* their knowledge to other teachers, as they will also benefit from the learning and, even more importantly, will know how to 'deal' with Roma children, as they have these children also in their classroom.

We noticed that the school has a lot of facts and figures collected and that is good to see. However it is not very common yet to use these facts and figures in such a way that they can improve their school programs.

It was striking to hear a Roma pupil, who said: "I am glad that my teachers understand us a lot better, that makes me happy, but I am still not being invited for birthday parties from my other schoolmates." That brings us on the point that (understandably) the focus was on one group, the Roma, but impact will be increased if other pupils are included as well, at some point in a project aimed at understanding the Roma culture. In that way the Croatian pupils could also learn to comprehend their fellow Roma pupils more and probably integrate more with them in and out of school.

The above is all concentrated inside the school, but there is also more attention needed for the areas outside the school, because other living-spheres are waiting there such as home, leisure and care. For these areas other professions are needed to help and implement projects. Professions such as social work, family coaches, youth workers, etc. This is necessary if you want to work towards an inclusive society. Big challenges on segregation and isolation are there of course, but for this support from the Ministry and probably for the EU is needed.

But starting with small projects in the Roma areas will have an impact too.

Doing this it would also become possible to reach parents in a better way. Reaching parents is still a big problem for the school, especially the fathers. Most of the parents tend to keep traditional approach to the cooperation with school where school is seen as responsible for education and parents do not want to interfere if not specifically asked. Parents mostly expect initiative from the school and then they are willing to respond.

Parents are a vital link in the relationship between school and pupils. Parents and school are in fact partners in education. For an optimal progress of the school career of a pupil, it is important that they meet regularly with information: about school orders, development of talent, progression or stagnation in school work, on the socio-emotional development of the pupil, his or her home situation, etc.

There are numerous ways to encourage parental involvement. How do we determine the best fit for this school? By examining which activities appeal to parents, to find out on which areas parental involvement is not yet clearly revealed and to make a critical analysis of the school culture.

The school has shown that it is capable of making Roma pupils open themselves, a challenge would be to make parents more communicative. Schools should offer parents more information about possibilities of participation. They should inform parents of the possible ways of volunteering, their rights and the possibilities of influencing in the process of school's decision-making. The school should also create opportunities for parents networking enabling them to get to know each other in non-threatening relaxed atmosphere.

What we have seen in this project is that the Achilles' heel is that a lot depends on a small number of persons. What would happen to the projects if they fall out? Here we refer again to the fact that transferring knowledge to others is vital for the durability of such projects.

CHAPTER 5: FINAL REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Ban Josip Jelačić School, as well as NEPC and FSO, wanted to learn from the peer review how to improve and sustain the initiative to build capacities within school for the teacher-led school development through supporting and mentoring teachers. In chapter four we gave some directions for improvement. In this last chapter we will summarize the main topics and give some recommendations for future sustainability.

Remarks

It was for the Peer Review team interesting to see that those attracted to the ITL project are seeking for an alternative perspective which recognizes that teachers' sense of self-efficacy and empowerment are the key to innovation and improvement.

Teacher leadership is useful for Croatia for certain reasons,

- The ITL projects gives room to also work on social cohesion projects, building school – parents – community partnership
- There is a growing attention for those in need (Roma, poor)
- There is a possibility of sharing knowledge between ITL schools.

From the presentation G. Miljević and I. Marušić (c.f. Zgaga, 2006; OECD, 2007) we know that at the moment there are enough teaching staff at all school levels but in the near future Croatia could experience a lack of teachers since many teachers are close to retirement age, especially primary school teachers.

The teaching profession in Croatia is often mentioned in the context of its low material and social status in society compared with other employees in public institutions and teachers feel they have to constantly 'prove' the relevance of their profession to the public as well as to the authorities in order to be recognized as one of the main stakeholders of the education system.

Croatian teachers generally believe that the study programs should be improved and more focused on specific teaching competencies and practical experiences in order to provide all key competencies for prospective teachers (Zgaga, 2006).

The International leadership project (ITL) is using the approach of school developmental action planning in order to *empower* school teachers to systematically plan, conduct and monitor their activities. It influences the structure and culture in Croatian schools and is highly interesting, because teachers who participated were very satisfied. They would like to continue working with ITL with teachers who have not completed the program; however they lack funds for it.

Next to the funding problem, culture changes take time and due to a short time limit of the project, the content could not be worked out as thoroughly as they would have wanted to.

We seen that a lot of attention was and is given to the Roma children, but their parents (also fathers) should also be involved (education in language and parental involvement) as well as involving the other Croatian children in school (for *understanding* Roma culture). Parents and school are in fact partners in education; you will need them in working towards an *inclusive* school society. For this is also important that teachers who followed the ITL workshops *transfer* their knowledge to other teachers and make good use of the already available facts and figures.

A lot depends on a small number of persons; getting more people involved reduces the chance that knowledge disappears when key persons ‘fall out’.

Working from an inclusive school structure to an inclusive society means that other living-spheres are waiting outside to be taken on, such as home, leisure and care with the help of other professionals in tackling segregation and isolation.

Recommendations

To improve and sustain we offer the following recommendations for APREME and ITL like projects in schools:

- Take a system approach and long time view when implementing projects in schools: involve all children, community and take a sustainable school improvement approach.
- to make sure your projects are doing the right thing, monitoring and research is vital: these belong to a learning attitude and will help to move towards defining the (SMART) goals, making adjustments to the project and will help obtain funds, because results can be shown.
- Communicate to schools and governments in *Eastern Europe: Equity in education pays off* (OECD, 2012). Inequitable education policies and practices have a negative impact on individuals and also limit economic and social development. Improving equity in education and preventing school failure is cost-beneficial, even more in the context of the current economic crisis.
- Funding possibility and probably possibility to create (more) political commitment: the Decade for Roma Education: “The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 is an unprecedented political commitment by European governments to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma. The Decade is an international initiative that brings together governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as Romani civil society, to accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma and to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way. The Decade focuses on the priority areas of education, employment, health, and housing, and commits governments to take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming.⁴”

⁴ www.romadecade.org

Sustainability is important for each project because all the choices we pursue and all the actions that we make today will affect future processes. We need to make sound decisions at present in order to avoid limiting the choices of Roma generations to come. We take the following in consideration:

- Make sure that the whole process does not depend on one person and a few quality trainers.
- Consider a train the trainer approach, so that more trainers are equipped for the job/workshops.
- For a better cooperation between schools, projects etc., finding allies is critical.
- Parent involvement needs consistent focus (father role): parent involvement is essential.
- Nourish the teachers that are involved: they are the ambassadors and your professional capital! Let them feel appreciated.
- Focus on Roma children who followed the course: keep them on track (before the drop out at the age of 12).
- Keep testing language skills before and during school career with the Roma pupils.
- also look outside the school in the Roma Community.
- Start class observations to monitor what happens in practice: do Roma pupils perform better etc.

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APPENDIX I: PROGRAM

October 9, arrival of participants

Hotel Astoria, Petrinjska 71, Zagreb

17:00	Meeting of Peer Reviewers in the hotel lobby
19.00	Welcome dinner in hotel

October 10, day 1

Time	Activity	Participants	Venue
9:00 – 9:45	Welcome & Introductions presentation of APREME + ITL Eli & Lana	all	Pogon, address: Kneza Mislava 11 5 minutes from hotel
9:45 – 10.30	Presentation of OS bana J. Jelacica school project Vlasta Vizek Vidović - school ITL mentor Aelita Jurak - school coordinator of the project	all	
10.30 -12	Finalizing the questionnaires for teachers, project staff, funders, policy advisors	Peer review team	
12-13	Lunch	Peer review team +	TBC
13-13.30	Travel to project school		
13.30-14	Tour of the school		
14-17	Interviews in separate groups (parallel?)	Peer review team Interviews with: teachers principal students/ parents	OŠ bana Josipa Jelačića, Podsused
17 – 17.15	Tea break		OŠ bana Josipa Jelačića, Podsused
17.15 – 18.00	Travel back to Zagreb	Peer review team	
18 – 19	Preliminary analyses of the results	Peer review team	Hotel Astoria
20.00	Dinner outside	All	TBC

October 11, day 2

Time	Activity	Participants	Venue
9 - 10	Presentation of complete project (what happens in the other participating schools) Gordana Miljević – ITL in the region Iris Marušić – ITL in CRO	all	Pogon Pogon, address: Kneza Mislava 11 5 minutes from hotel
10-12	Interviews of project staff of other schools and funders	Peer review team Interviews: with School mentors : VVV & IM Other ITL Croatian school reps:) Gordana Miljević- funder	Pogon Pogon, address: Kneza Mislava 11 5 minutes from hotel
12-13	Preliminary analyses of results	Peer review team	
13-14	lunch	All	Zlica I vilica
14-15.00	Interview department of national minorities	Rep of Ministry – Mirko Marković	Pogon Pogon, address: Kneza Mislava 11 5 minutes from hotel
15-16.00	Preliminary analyses of results	Peer review team	
16-16.30	Feedback session: Presentation of preliminary results, asking for missing information	all	
16.30-17	Closing session	Peer review team	
19:00	Dinner	All	TBC

Departure on Oct 12th during the day



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