

## Roma Education Research Project Local Research Plan

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of Project:</b>     | <b>Kindergartens In Rroma Settlements – Step by Step program</b> |
| <b>Name of Country:</b>     | <b>Yugoslavia</b>                                                |
| <b>Name of Researchers:</b> | <b>Milena Mihajlovic, Dragana Koruga</b>                         |

*After each research question, please describe any issues, modifications, or additions that are relevant to your specific project or country.*

### **Research Question #1 – How effective is your project in (A) getting and keeping Roma children in school through completion and (B) improving their educational achievement?**

#### **Issues, Modifications, or Additions Specific to Your Project/Country?**

One of the main goals of our kindergarten work in Rroma settlements is preparing children for, and assisting in their enrollment in regular schools. We believe that the biggest influence of our work is specifically in this domain, because their later education achievements depend on the continued work with them, at which time our Program does not have as of important role. Therefore, we are assessing detailed data connected to the enrollment of children into 1<sup>st</sup> grade of Elementary School.

- From the total number of children who attended kindergarten, 87.4% enrolled into 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
- In Yugoslavia, all children are obliged to be tested prior to enrolling into 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The test achievements data is of great importance to us, because it shows to which extent the children are prepared for education (knowledge, conduct, level of the language knowledge).

A systematic assessment of the education of Rroma children, who have attended SbS kindergarten from the beginning of the Project implementation, i.e., 1997 through September 1999, showed that:

- completed (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) - 94,86%
- achievements of the children who have completed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- excellent – 8,65%
  - very good – 32,7%
  - good – 46,1%
  - satisfactory – 12,45%
- over 80 % regularly attended classes

These achievements were accomplished due to our educating them as well as adapting the Step by Step program to their needs:

- they have accepted the language they are using in their school
- they have accepted the hygiene habits
- they have received books and school supplies- free of charge
- they have received clothing and footwear through the Rroma societies

**Research Question #2 – Has your project promoted institutional or policy changes in the public schools which advance goals of equity and educational quality?**

**Issues, Modifications, or Additions Specific to Your Project/Country?**

Considering that there is a small number of our kindergartens in comparison to the number of Roma children and schools in Serbia, for the time being we cannot anticipate greater changes on the level of the school system.

**Research Question #3 – Has your project results in (A) a change in attitude toward Roma children among teachers and other school staff, (B) a change in attitude toward Roma children among non-Roma children and their parents, and (C) a change in self-characterization by Roma children?**

**Issues, Modifications, or Additions Specific to Your Project/Country?**

A) Children that attended our kindergarten have been accepted in schools they are attending and are achieving substantial results.

B) There is a great dispersion of our children during their enrollment into school, therefore we have not made assessments regarding the relationship between Roma children and children of other population.

C) The Program encompasses children between the ages of 3-7, and it is very difficult to follow and rate their advancement in self-characterization at that age. Assessment of children from our kindergartens during schooling, till now did not consider this question, rather it was directed to the children's achievements.

It is realistic to expect that by encompassing a larger number of children to attend kindergartens will result in positive changes – in the relationships of the school personnel towards the Roma children and their families, as well as in the relationship with the non-Roma population.

**Research Question #4 – What is the feasibility of replicating your project within your country or in other countries based on issues of cost, resources, institutions, and culture?**

**Issues, Modifications, or Additions Specific to Your Project/Country?**

**Program Implementation possibilities**

· We believe that the implementation of the Program is possible in different environments in our country where Roma children live, because our experiences show that. Considering that the Roma settlements and problems of Romas is similar in other European countries, the program can be implemented there as well, and include their particularities.

- The working Program with children is based on contemporary psycho-pedagogic knowledge about the development and education of children
- The Program has a worked out methodology for all phases and aspects of work (opening and equipping of a kindergarten, role and participant's obligations, families and local community, education of adults that work with children, assessment and supervision, evaluation of the program effects.)
- The Program covers all the important working segments (educational work with children, health protection, work with families and local community)
- The Program is flexible and can be adapted to the needs of Roma children, families and local community
- The Program has been developed throughout the three year period implementation, therefore now it has a clear structure based on the experience
- Roma personnel in the kindergartens helped the development of the Program by being the link between the Program and the Roma community, which as a result helped the Roma culture and language integrate into the Program itself, and developed the family cooperation strategy.

- Our experience shows that opening of kindergartens has the most effects:
  - in the Roma settlements themselves (possible greater influence on the Roma community, clear organization, and less expensive because transportation expense for children is not required.)
  - in cooperation with local schools or public kindergartens and if possible, in their buildings (is more economical because space already exists, kindergarten or school partially participate in covering the costs, including Roma children and parents directly into governmental institutions)
  - it would be desirable that groups consist of Roma children and children of other nationalities (they learn the language faster, integrate better, exchange children's and parent's cultural differences)
- Connecting with other programs to the same Roma settlement and local community, contributes a greater effect, because they have influence in more than one direction and respond to a number of Roma needs.
  - Compensatory Program for school children helps them to achieve school requirements that is even for the children from cities a very difficult one.
  - Counseling for parents which intensively works on educating parents and helps them achieve different skills.
  - Working Program which helps to enables parents for work and employment
  - Publishing Program which would enable collecting, printing, distribution of picture books, books and magazines with Roma stories, children's poems and fables. Books and magazines for adults who might be engaged in Roma cultural patrimony and have inadvertently education effect. This written material should be in Romani language, but it is preferred to be bilingual so that other nationality population would get familiar with the Roma culture.
  - Assistance in realization of the rights in the field of education, health and social protection
  - Humanitarian aid such as clothing, footwear, medicaments and food.

Considering that the problems are complex, we can say that being involved with Romas there are numerous problems we have to foresee. These programs are quite complex and entail a large amount of financial support. It also entails knowledge about Roma culture, customs and their way of life in order to enable their interaction in the society and at the same time keeping their authenticity.

***Please describe your current plans or best estimates for carrying out the research associated with the Roma Education Research Project in your home country. In your descriptions, indicate an approximate timeline for completing the different phases of the plan. Where appropriate, indicate how the responsibilities for the research activities will be divided among the researchers. If any or all of the activities associated with any phase of the research project are not relevant to your local plan, indicate that in your responses to the appropriate planning questions below.***

***We recognize and expect that some activities, allocations of responsibility, or schedules will change as you carry out your local research plan. When it becomes apparent that any of the plans included in this document need to change, please notify us as soon as possible.***

**Phase#1 – Prepare a brief written background on (A) the structure and operation of the public school system in your country, (B) the geographic distribution of Roma children in your country, and (C) educational problems and challenges facing Roma children in Yugoslavia**

**What sources do you expect to use in preparing this written background description:**

- Available Roma literature in Yugoslavia: data from the population census, data about their participation in the educational system
- Our experience in the work with Roma children and parents
- Law about preschool and elementary school education

**When do you expect to complete this document**

We are planning to complete it by 10<sup>th</sup> November 2000.

**Phase # 2 – Gather information to prepare Program Profile by (A) conducting initial interviews the Project Director, other project managers, and representatives of organizations knowledgeable about the project (Soros Foundation, other funders, national and local governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations) and (B) obtaining and review written documents, new articles, and videotapes related to the project.**

**Who do you expect to interview (indicate position and organizational affiliation)**

- Tatjana Pavlovski, MA psychology, Assistant at the University of Psychology... – Program Director and Director of CIP
- Tatjana Stojic, Androgogue – Coordinator for the Program at the Fund for an Open Society
- Jadranka Stojanovic, Pedagogue – Coordinator of Roma Programs at the Fund for an Open Society and former coordinator of our program

**What steps do you expect to take and what sources do you expect to employ to obtain written documents, news articles, and videotapes related to the project?**

We are planning to do the foreseen interviews, and the remaining materials we have possession of as part of the Program documentation.

**When do you expect to complete these activities?**

- 10 November 2000

**Phase # 3 – Collect statistical records on (A) the project's impact on Roma students, (B) direct services provided by the project to school staff, Roma parents, and other adults, (C) the project's budget and expenditures.**

**Which Roma students do you expect to use to assess the project's impact, including age/level, type of community, geographical region, and other relevant characteristics? If only a sample of students benefiting from the project will be included in the research, indicate the anticipated size of the sample and the list the criteria to be used in selecting the sample.**

As we are planning to rate the school achievements, through the research, we will encompass all children that have attended our kindergartens and completed at least 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Our, 4 kindergartens have commenced work at the end of last year and those children have just enrolled in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, therefore, they cannot be included in the research.

We are planning to encompass children that are attending (6) our kindergartens :

**Surdulica (far south Serbia)**, city of approx. 15 000 population.

- Masurica (typical Rroma settlement on the city boarder) – children that have completed 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Binovce (village)- children that have completed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. These children have the compensatory program from 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

**Niš**, 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in Serbia of approx. 200 000 population in south Serbia (large Rroma enclave in the city) – children that have completed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

**Kragujevac**, city of approx. 150 000 population, in the central Serbia (Rroma settlement in the city) – children that have completed 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

**Kruševac**, city of approx. 60 000 population, in south Serbia (large settlement in the city) – children that have completed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

**Subotica**, city of approx. 100 000 population in Vojvodina, north Serbia

- Cantavir (village) – children that have completed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

### **What are the relevant characteristics of the students that you expect to use as comparison group(s)?**

- Comparison group of Rroma children that have not attend our kindergarten, but attend the same schools and same classes as do the Rroma children from our kindergartens. We believe that this orientation is the best, because in this way the comparison group will geographically level out with our sample. As in the Elementary School, these children will most probably be from the same settlement as the sample children. The other characteristics we are not able to assess.

### **What type of records (i.e. enrollment, attendance, course grades, completion, and disciplinary) will seek to obtain for both the target population of Rroma students and the comparasion group?**

#### **Kindergarten attendance :**

- duration of attendance (on the basis of the attendance list of the kindergartens – percentage of children according to the following categories: till 3 months, from 3-6 months, 6-12 month, 2 years, 3 years)
- cooperation of the kindergartens with the families (attending parental meetings: percentages by categories - regular, part-time, never)

#### **Enrollment into 1<sup>st</sup> grade** (data from the psychologists/pedagogues)

- test achievements of the children when enrolling into 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- test achievements: (percentage of children bt categories: far below average, below average, average, above average, high above average)
- command of the language which will be used in school: (percentage of children bt categories: good, poor)
- enrollment into 1<sup>st</sup> grade of regular Elementary Schools (percentage of children by the enrollment into regular classes)
- children that have not enrolled in regular schools
- precentage of children by categories: sent back to kindergarten, enrolled into special institutions, have not enrolled anywhere
- the reasons why the children haven't commenced regular school (percentage by categories: insufficient psycho-physical maturity of the child, poor financial conditions of the family, relocation, children with special needs)

#### **Education** (data received from the elementary school teachers)

- school achievement (percentage of children by categories: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory)
- conduct (percentage of children by catebories: satisfactory, very good, good, poor, unsatisfactory)
- regularity of attending class (percentage of children by categories: regular, part-time, very seldom)
- dropping out of school (percentage)

### **IF RELEVANT, what type of records will you seek to obtain for adults (school staff, parents, or others) who are direct recipients of project services or direct participants in project activities?**

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**When do you expect to complete these activities?**

- By the end of December

**Phase # 4 – Conduct surveys or interviews of project staff, knowledgeable school staff, adult participants in project activities, and representatives of government agencies and non. government organizations who know about the project. Surveys or interviews will focus on project structure and operation, direct services provided by the project, and project impact on Rroma students, families, communities, schools, and others.**

**Who do you expect to interview or survey (indicate position and organizational affiliations)?**

In this phase, we are planning to create questionnaires for the 6 our kindergarten personnel:

- kindergarten organizers (4 are Directors of Rroma Associations/Societies and 1 vice-president of NGO-who is also involved in Rroma problematics and is an organizer of two kindergartens)
- head teachers (6)
- preschool teachers (3 because master teachers and teachers are in other groups)
- preschool teacher assistants (15)

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**Do you expect to conduct interviews or survey with each these groups?**

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**What steps do you expect to take to identify individuals to interview, obtain their participation, and conduct the interviews?**

- translation and distribution of the questionnaire
- collecting
- processing
- writing the a report

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**When do you expect to complete these activities?**

by the end of December

**Phase # 5 – Conduct site visits to school and direct service locations operated by the project (i.e. centers) for (A) tours of the school and/or locations, (B) observation of classroom or project activities, (C) follow-up interviews with the project director, other project management staff, and project direct service staff, and (D) interviews and/or focus groups with school staff, students, parents, and others.**

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**How many schools do you expect to visit? What are their relevant characteristics? If you are visiting only a sample of schools that are participating/benefiting from the project, what criteria dis you use to make selections?**

In this phase we are planning to visit schools in which children from our kindergartens are attending:

- interview with the school psychologist/pedagogues
- questionnaires for teachers that have children from our kindergartens (due to a large number of teachers in every school)

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**IF RELEVANT, how many project services sites (i.e. centers) will you visit?**

We are planning to visit 12 schools that children from (6) our kindergartens attend:

- Niš – 3 schools
- Kragujevac – 3 schools

- Kruševac – 3 schools
- Surdulica - Masurica – 1 school
- Surdulica - Binovce – 1 school
- Subotica – Cantavir – 1 school

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**How do you expect to conduct the site visits?**

by bus or car

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**What steps do you expect to take to recruit interview subjects among program staff? How do you expect to conduct the interviews?**

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**What steps do you expect to take to recruit interview subjects among school staff, students, parents, and others? How do you expect to conduct the interviews?**

- make appointments by phone
- interview with the psychologist/pedagogues at the school
- distribute and collect the questionnaires for the teachers

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**When do you expect to complete these activities?**

by the end of January

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**Phase # 6 – Conduct field interviews with Rroma students, Rroma families, and other appropriate interview subjects. Field interviews should be conducted in homes, community centers, or other community location.**

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**What steps do you expect to take to identify potential interview subjects and to obtain their participation in the interviews?**

We are planning interviews with the parents of the children that attended (6) our kindergartens

- the interview will encompass a large number of parents whose children attended our kindergartens and have started school
- the interview will be conducted at homes or on kindergarten premises

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**How do you expect to conduct the interviews and particularly how do you expect to deal with language differences and with gaining the confidence of the Rroma interview subjects**

The interview will be conducted by the preschool teachers and their assistants from kindergartens that have a knowledge of Rromani language and know the parents

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**When do you expect to complete these activities?**

by the end of February

| <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>Justification</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Cost Estimate</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| a fee for 5 associates who would conduct the interviews with parents (one would do the interview with the children from 2 kindergartens in the same city) | that would be 5 persons that work in the kindergarten and 1 psychologist from the Elementary School that our children attend. They know the parents and speak Rromani language, therefore we believe that they will more successfully conduct the interviews with the parents, than we would. | <b>300\$</b>         |
| visits to schools and kindergartens                                                                                                                       | researchers' expenses for the kindergarten and school visits: travel expenses and accommodation expenses for the visits to 6 sites (6 cities)                                                                                                                                                 | <b>180\$</b>         |
| copying and postal expenses                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>50\$</b>          |
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**Total of: 530\$**