

MONTANA/GABROVNITSA

INTEGRATED PROJECT FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION OF THE ROMA AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The integrated project for social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups in the region of Montana focuses on improving the life of the most vulnerable: children aged between three and ten/eleven years, their parents and families, young people and people without health insurances. The ZOV team works mainly in the two Roma neighbourhoods of Montana “*Kosharnik*” and “*Ogosta*”, as well as in *Gabrovnitsa* including the villages *Virove* and *Bezdenitsa*.



23 children had unforgettable days during the summer school, organized by the local team of ZOV Programme

The project uses an integrated approach: renovations and refurbishments of healthcare and educational institutions will improve the social environment for children and young families; after school programmes, catch-up classes, training of teachers and motivational work with parents will contribute to a better access to and quality of kindergarten and primary education. Improved access to primary medical services, awareness campaigns on prevention and family planning, mediation between the community and the medical centers will be in support of inclusive healthcare. The philosophy of the project is to prevent children from dropping out from schools and kindergartens, provide them with better quality education and include vulnerable people in good quality healthcare.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In 2016, the local government of Montana started the construction of a new kindergarten in the Montana Roma neighbourhood *Kosharnik*. For the past 32 years, this will be the first newly built kindergarten to replace a dated one in the same neighborhood.

The education component focuses on the improvement of the motivation for learning, the regularity of attendance and educational achievements of the children from the partnering kindergarten No. 5 *Daga*, kindergarten No. 8 *Prolet*, primary school *Georgi Benkovski* in *Kosharnik*, first primary school *Cyrl and Methodius* and the sixth primary school, *Lyuben Karavelov* in Montana, primary school *St. St. Cyril and Methodius* in *Gabrovnitsa*. This will be the task of the newly appointed educational mediators – representatives of the Roma community, and of the consultant on integration activities who will work with children and their parents.

Other scheduled activities:

- ❖ Catch-up classes for children who do not cover the requirements of the state educational standards. These activities will encompass: Roma children aged 5 – 6, and pupils who have difficulties with learning, from first to fourth school grades;
- ❖ Extracurricular activities for pre-school children and students in grades 1st – 4th;
- ❖ Summer schools for the pupils after the 4th school grade in *Kosharnik* neighborhood with the purpose to prepare them to integrate better in the desegregated schools in Montana, grades 5-8;
- ❖ Working with the parents to improve their parenting skills and to motivate them to ensure their children's attendance in school;
- ❖ Training of school teachers and directors on innovative methods of teaching with the purpose to improve quality of schooling;
- ❖ Training of teachers, directors, and mediators on methods and techniques for drop-out prevention of children and students and on keeping them in the educational institutions.



Construction of a new building for kindergarten No. 8 “Prolet,” started in Kosharnik at the beginning of 2016.

HEALTHCARE ACTIVITIES

The local government will refurbish the old medical centers to turn them into modern facilities in *Ogosta* neighbourhood (in Montana) and in *Gabrovnitsa*. The municipality of Montana funds the construction of a new medical center in Kosharnik, for which ZOV provides the medical equipment. These centers were chosen to be inside or close to the communities aiming at increasing the chances of their representatives to visit doctors regularly. The health education and prevention, and the medical examinations will be targeted mainly at children, young people, young mothers and families. The centers will be equipped according to contemporary medical standards with ZOV funding.

Health prevention and immunization activities entail the work of health mediators and the medical professionals from the medical centers in Ogosta, Gabrovnica and Kosharnik. The mediators will be hired under the project but will continue to work beyond its end, being funded either by delegated budgets or by the private practices of the engaged doctors. An important goal is to convince uninsured people to start to contribute for their insurance plans so that they could enjoy the advantages of regular health care protection and treatment.

Activities:

- ❖ Appointment and training of health mediators;
- ❖ Mapping and identification of health cases to be addressed by health mediators and doctors
- ❖ Training for medical professionals and health experts in Montana Municipality on working in the Roma community;
- ❖ Health campaigns on building awareness on health prevention and family planning intended for young people and families;
- ❖ Building awareness of adolescents on the need to have health insurance, attend doctors regularly and comply with hygiene standards;
- ❖ Work with young parents and youngsters on the importance of prevention of early pregnancies and the use of contraception.

Activities of the medical centres:

- ❖ Improvement of access to sexual and reproductive care for women and mothers from the community.
- ❖ Improvement of maternal and child health through medical checkups for pregnant women without health insurances and newborn babies and children.
- ❖ Organizing of preventive check-ups for people without health insurances for diagnosing socially significant diseases.

KEY INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

THEMATIC FOCUS

Integration, inclusion and improving of living conditions of Roma and other vulnerable groups

BUDGET

1 309 565 CHF

AMOUNT OF SWISS GRANT

1 113 130 CHF

BULGARIAN CO-FINANCING

- ❖ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- ❖ Ministry of Education and Science
- ❖ Ministry of Health

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Programme Management Unit

EXECUTING AGENCY

Municipality of Montana

PROJECT PARTNERS

- ❖ First Primary School *Cyril and Methodius*
- ❖ Kindergarten No. 8 *Prolet* and No. 5 *Daga*
- ❖ Centre for social and healthcare services “St. Mina” – Montana
- ❖ Community Centre “Zvezda 2007”
- ❖ National Network of the Health Mediators

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

- ❖ Primary School *Cyril and Methodius*,
- ❖ Gabrovnica Primary School *G. Benkovsky*, Kosharnik

DURATION

February 2016 – December 2018

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