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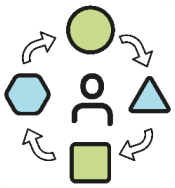

Summary of the Croatian National Adaptation Plan

1) Presentation of the National Adaptation Plan (purpose, topics addressed, structure) (approx. 400 words)

Considering the Croatian education system so far, based on the questionnaire results (done to get inputs from SE professionals, school teachers and principals and other practitioners and researchers) as well as the best practices presented during study visits, the challenges/problems/topics has been identified to be addressed as follows:

1. The national centralized **education system is not flexible and effective enough**.
2. **Lack of a quality organizational process** which would clearly identify all the steps and procedures needed to resolve individual cases quickly and efficiently (improvement of IT systems, simpler and more accessible databases, improved results tracking system, etc.).
3. **Lack of good quality, available, systematic and free of charge courses for additional education** of all included stakeholders, primarily for parents/guardians, but also for the teachers/experts in educational institutions.
4. **Systematic resolution of the problem of peer violence** is also a problem that is not sufficiently recognized in society and it is resolved sporadically and declaratively without systematic prevention.
5. **Insufficient financial support for families** at risk of poverty, especially those families that have unsettled family relationships and have children with special needs (the issue of divorced parents and the alimony payments are particularly emphasized here).
6. **Lack of permanent financial sources** that will ensure the sustainability of the implemented activities (those that have been previously determined to give results and have been proven to be necessary and useful).
7. The system of **non-institutional assistance through specialized non-government organizations (NGO) is complicated to maintain**, often without sufficient financial support, and it is not an "extended hand" to specialized institutions.
8. **Lack of school counsellors** at all levels of the educational process (psychologists, pedagogues, social workers, therapists, educational rehabilitators) in such a way that they go regularly to educational institutions and provide their support.
9. **Parents' support** through educational content and examples of good practice in better organization of spending quality time with their children outside of school activities.
10. **Lack of cooperation with companies** that could employ (according to their capabilities) children with special needs and provide them with certain activities after graduation or finishing school.

2) Proposals for ensuring (more) social inclusion in education in Croatia (approx. 400 words)

Based on the seen examples of best practices, it is currently possible to implement the following actions in the Croatian system relatively quickly and without major financial investments:

- conduct a survey and valuation of knowledge, attitudes, motivation, practices and competencies of teachers to the inclusion of students with difficulties (prepared by Tomislav Špoljar Centre, conducted by Varaždin County; deadline: 6 months after the project's end)
- based on survey's results, suggest changed or/and new subject of learning at the Faculty for teacher education (Varaždin County in cooperation with Tomislav Špoljar Centre, VET School and Faculty of Organization and Informatics; deadline: 6 months after the project's end)
- suggest and implement topics for the education of all relevant stakeholders in inclusive education and professional development of teachers through the LLL centers (prepared by Tomislav Špoljar Centre and schools, conducted by Varaždin County; deadline: 8 months after the project's end)
- organize the exchange of services between school counsellors in Tomislav Špoljar Centre and schools in Varaždin County (assure the financial means, promote, inform, implement / Varaždin County in cooperation with Tomislav Špoljar Centre and all schools; deadline: 18 months after the project's end)
- to initiate programs for inclusion in the framework of existing Centre of competence in Medical high School Varaždin (deadline 12 months from the completion of the project)
- develop and implement a regional skills forum for tracing early leavers, curriculum flexibility, promotion of the culture of education, evaluation, self-evaluation and self-responsibility for education etc. (Faculty of Organization and Informatics, Varaždin County in cooperation with all schools; deadline: 18 months after the project's end)
- develop special funds for schools for additional and special projects related to inclusion (Varaždin County; deadline: 24 months after the project's end)
- prepare the project proposal and find the funding for the implementation for mobile teams consisting of different experts which will work with children with any kind of difficulties, come to the school and help and educate the school staff (Varaždin County in cooperation with Tomislav Špoljar Centre, VET school and FOI; deadline: 24 months after the project's end)
- encourage secondary schools to provide more activities that include parents (VET school in cooperation with the County¸ deadline: 8 months after the project's end)
- encourage secondary schools to organize a learning support center (VET school in cooperation with the faunder; deadline: 18 months after the project's end)
- encourage more intensive work of experts for career pathway planning and guidance in primary schools and improve cooperation between primary and secondary schools (Varaždin County as a lead partner in cooperation with schools; deadline: 24 months after the project's end)
- increase the number of Roma helpers and teachers in schools of Varaždin County, (Varaždin County in cooperation with schools; deadline 24 months).

3) Further steps in the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan in the Croatian educational system (approx. 400 words)

Varaždin County is the founder of the educational institutions on its territory and it should be leader and initialize all suggested changes, as well as be mediator between the local stakeholders and national government (based on national law about its responsibilities and local rulebooks and budget).

In the NAP analysis are highlighted expected contribution of each stakeholder (government, ministries, agencies, local government - counties, cities, municipalities; school principals, teachers, and other practitioners; educational experts, academics, researchers; parents and university students (e.g., teachers in training but also to other professions) in the implementation of the NAP and the inclusive education support. We expected from all of them to support realization of all actions in inclusive way of education in Croatia.

4) Key messages for creating the European Adaptation Guidelines (approx. 200 words)

The key messages according important elements/aspects of inclusive education assurance are present and described more details in the NAP in the Final Recommendations Table (created according to defined key stakeholders) are as follows:

- **Laws and regulations, politics and procedures:** Systematize, harmonize, systematically set and implement legislation and regulations, recommendations, politics and procedures related to inclusive education which are consistent, coherent, involve all informed stakeholders, it is tracked and its results are measured for the purpose of enhancement.
- **Educational system:** Ensure an educational system that is flexible, adapted to the needs of all participants, “user friendly” and self-improving.
- **Human resources:** Build and support a strong and effective community / network of professionals (and institutions) that enable inclusive education.
- **Education of SE professionals:** Ensure education which provides more SE professionals equipped with competencies for work on inclusive education and strengthens the position of the profession in the society / public.
- **Support:** Ensure stable, continuous and effective support for inclusive education.
- **Quality assurance:** Build a strong quality assurance system in order to maintain and constantly improve quality and effectiveness of inclusive education.