

## Standard Summary Project Fiche – IPA centralised programmes

### Project number 9: Education for All - Increasing the Availability and Quality of Education for Children from Marginalised Groups

#### 1 BASIC INFORMATION

- 1.1 CRIS Number : 2008/020-406
- 1.2 Title: **Education for All - Increasing the Availability and Quality of Education for Children from Marginalised Groups**
- 1.3 ELARG statistical code: 01.36
- 1.4 Location: Republic of Serbia

#### Implementing arrangements:

- 1.5 Contracting Authority: EC Delegation to the Republic of Serbia
- 1.6 Implementing Agency: EC Delegation to the Republic of Serbia
- 1.7 Beneficiary (including details of project manager):

The Project Manager is the State Secretary of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia.

Address: 22-26 Nemanjina St., 11000 Belgrade, Serbia.

A Project Team consisting of five people will coordinate project implementation.

A Steering Committee will have regular meetings every six months, or as needed. The Steering Committee will be chaired by the Project Manager.

#### Financing:

- 1.8 Overall cost: **3,000,000 EUR**
- 1.9 EU contribution: **3,000,000 EUR**
- 1.10 Final date for contracting: 3 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement
- 1.11 Final date for execution of contracts: 5 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement
- 1.12 Final date for disbursements: 6 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement

#### 2 OVERALL OBJECTIVE AND PROJECT PURPOSE

##### 2.1 Overall Objective:

To contribute to social inclusion and poverty reduction by enabling greater access to the regular public education system in Serbia for children from marginalised and special needs groups.

##### 2.2 Project purpose:

To increase the inclusion of children from marginalised and special needs groups in the system of preschool and elementary education and to reduce their dropout rate by

formalising and broadening the support that is provided by teaching assistants and community liaison coordinators.

### **2.3 Link with AP/NPAA / EP/ SAA**

The project aim is to include children from vulnerable groups (predominantly Roma and children with disabilities) into the regular education system and to support the preschool and basic education of poor and excluded children as a pre-condition for other expected results such as greater access to employment, social inclusion and poverty reduction.

The project will help to prompt the education system to be more inclusive and free of discrimination on the grounds of gender, colour, ethnic origin, disability or religion (emphasized in Article 102, Education and Training, of the SAA). The project will strive also to promote continuity in educational and training opportunities for the targeted groups by contributing to a decrease in their dropout rate at the elementary school level.

The project directly relates to the **EC Serbia 2007 Progress Report**, where it is indicated (page 16) that:

- Roma teaching assistants have been employed in a number of schools.
- Guidelines for the improvement and legalisation of Roma settlements have been adopted.
- Twenty Local Action Plans for Roma were drawn up and Roma coordinators have been employed in 20 municipalities.

This project intends to broaden the scope of the programme for introducing Roma teaching assistants in schools so as to include other marginalised children, particularly children with disabilities, and to further develop and institutionalise this programme.

The project contributes to achievement of certain priorities defined by the **European Partnership 2007**:

- Political Criteria priorities, as follows, “To continue with efforts aiming at inclusion and improvement of conditions for children with disabilities. To reform the childcare system and assure formal education for children belonging to national minorities”;
- Short-term priorities of Political Criteria under Minority Rights, Cultural Rights and Protection of Minorities (page 9), “Continue efforts to promote good inter-ethnic relations, including measures in the field of education”; and
- Medium-term priorities of the Economic Criteria (page 29), “Implement appropriate policies for an increase in the quantity and quality of education at all levels.”

Aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion, the project will contribute to accomplishment of requirements under Employment and Social Policies in the EP (European standards): “Further develop social inclusion and social protection policies” (page 17).

The project will result in higher educational attainment of poor and marginalised children and youth, increased school completion rates and greater access to possibilities for continued education. This will help to boost the employability and improve the living conditions of some of the most vulnerable populations. In the long run, the project will contribute to reduce the high unemployment rate and the number of social assistance beneficiaries.

By helping to break the vicious cycle of trans-generational poverty which is prevalent among particularly vulnerable groups in Serbia, the project will contribute to enhancing the social inclusion of minority and disabled populations.

### **2.4 Link with MIPD<sup>1</sup>**

The strategic framework for the proposed project is based on the priorities defined by the MIPD (2007–2009), particularly those concerning the fight against discrimination and the

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<sup>1</sup> Multi-Annual Indicative Planning Document

promotion of human and minority rights, systemic support for marginalised and vulnerable social groups, their integration and their full participation in political, civic, economic, cultural and social life, and building a general, society-wide culture of tolerance towards national minorities as a basis for coherent and meaningful inclusion policies (section 2.2.1.1). The project puts special emphasis on the integration and inclusion of Roma children and children with disabilities.

A main priority of the MIPD socio-economic chapter (section 2.2.2) is promotion and implementation of education system reforms in order to support economic development and to meet the demands of the Lisbon Agenda. The inclusion of marginalised groups (predominantly Roma) and children with special needs into the regular education system is of particular importance. This project will support preschool and elementary education reforms, with a special focus on poor and vulnerable children, and will have a longer-term goal of reducing poverty and social exclusion.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve access to quality preschool and elementary education for children from marginalised groups, through the introduction of Assistants for Support in Education and Community Liaison Coordinators. This will increase the number of Roma children and children from other vulnerable populations that attend preschool and elementary school, support their integration and participation in social life and enhance a society-wide culture of tolerance towards national minorities. The programme will contribute to the expected MIPD result, "Human and minority rights are promoted and a climate of inter-ethnic tolerance has been developed" (section 2.2.1.2).

The project has a direct impact on increasing social inclusion. Project activities aim to remove the obstacles to raising the educational level and strengthening the competences of poor and marginalised populations which will later improve their position in the labour market.

## **2.5 Link with National Development Plan (where applicable) n/a**

## **2.6 Link with national / sectoral plans**

The proposed project incorporates strategic directions covered by the **National Strategy of Serbia for Accession to the EU** on increasing the access of national minorities and socially excluded groups to the education system, "Inclusion of Roma into the educational system and ensuring the continuity of education, ensuring quality education, developing tolerance, respecting differences and cherishing cultural identity."

The project directly contributes to realisation of Millennium Development Goal 2, "Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015".

In this way, the project contributes to fulfil the following tasks from the **National Millennium Development Goals**, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2006 (pages 18-19):

- Ensuring that 100% boys and girls enrol elementary education;
- Ensuring that 98% boys and girls complete elementary education;
- Reduce the dropout rate of children entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade to under 1%; and
- By 2015, ensure that 70% of all children aged 3 to 7 years are attending preschool, with particular emphasis on children from vulnerable populations (children living in rural areas, Roma children, children with disabilities, etc.).

According to the **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)**, a low and inadequate educational level has been identified as one of the main causes of poverty, especially among vulnerable and socially excluded groups of children in Serbia. This particularly refers to the Roma ethnic group, which falls under nearly every defined category of vulnerability (section 7.5).

The project directly addresses application of the PRSP in the area of education for poverty reduction. The project will have direct implications on mid-term priorities defined in the Second Report on PRS Implementation (adopted in 2007, pages 121-122):

- 1) Improve access to education for children from vulnerable groups, and
- 2) Develop mechanisms that will prevent the drop-out of children from elementary and secondary school and enable their reintegration into the regular education system.

The first two priorities of the **Government's National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children**, adopted in 2004, are:

- 1) Poverty reduction among children; and
- 2) Quality education for all children.

As the proposed project aims to improve access to preschool education for marginalised children, the project will contribute to the achievement of the second Strategic Goal in the NPA for Children, "Increase the proportion of children covered by quality preschool education and take special measures to include children from population groups that are currently not enrolled in preschool."

Moreover, the "Dakar Framework of Action Programme" defines the goals for the international Education for All programme and the proposed project aims to contribute toward the realisation of five of the six **Dakar** objectives:

- Promotion of preschool education;
- Universal and compulsory elementary education;
- Reduction of illiteracy;
- Elimination of gender inequity in education; and
- Overall improvement of education quality.

The Republic of Serbia, together with all the countries in the region, has signed the **Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015**, which aims to reduce disparities (socio-economic, health, educational, etc.) between the Roma and the rest of the population. With a view to improving Roma education as one of the topmost priorities in this area, the Decade countries tried different approaches in order to ensure that as many children as possible could complete their schooling and acquire professional qualifications so as to meet the Roma Decade objective, "Improving the position of the Roma in society. "

The project also links to the basic goal of the **Common Action Plan for Advancement of Roma Education in Serbia**, "Inclusion of Roma in the education system and ensuring continuity in education." The project will implement a set of systemic measures to improve access to early education for Roma children, promote their non-segregated inclusion in the education system and encourage their continued schooling while decreasing the dropout rates among Roma children.

Moreover, the proposed project will help to address Objective 8 of the **Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia**, "Ensure all persons with disabilities can exercise their right to adequate education and ensure equal opportunities for learning and development in the local community for all children, youth and adults with disabilities." Within this objective, the following stated activities are linked directly to this project:

- Undertake appropriate measures to ensure that children with disabilities have equal opportunities in using the services of preschool institutions together with other children.
- Develop and implement training programmes for experts and staff who work with persons with disabilities at all levels of education.
- Gradually introduce and develop accessible and inclusive education at all levels.

In the **National Strategy for the Economic Development of the Republic of Serbia** (2006-2012), under the framework of the strategic goal, "Strengthening the Transfer of Know-

how aimed at Economic Development", and the fourth objective, "Establishment of a Modern Education System in compliance with EU principles" are cited the following mid-term measures and activities as part of the Strategy's Action Plan for 2007-2009:

- Systemic measures aimed at increased inclusion of children in preschool programmes, with a special focus on Roma children inclusion
- Implementation of the Strategy for Education of Children with Special Needs
- Harmonisation of current legislation and elaboration of new sub-legal acts pertaining to new laws
- Providing access to quality education of children with special needs, specially gifted children, national minorities, with a special focus on education of marginalised social groups
- Implementation of activities in the framework of the Roma Decade
- Capacity building of National Minority Councils for further partnerships aimed at the development of minority education

With its focus on inclusive education and provision of better educational opportunities for children from marginalised social groups, the proposed project will contribute to the achievement of these measures.

## **2.7 Key stakeholders**

- Government of Serbia
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Ministry of Health
- Roma community
- NGOs
- Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities
- Preschool staff
- Elementary school staff
- Local self-government

## **3 DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

### **3.1 Background and justification:**

In the field of pre-school education in Serbia, the draft Law on Preschool Education was prepared and is currently in the parliamentary procedure for adoption. The law will regulate and standardise preschool education so that it complies with existing legislation as well as with changing socio-economic realities.

#### ***Preparatory preschool programme***

Starting with the school year 2006/2007, a significant measure was introduced for the first time – an obligatory and free preparatory preschool programme. For the purpose of realisation of the programme, the National Educational Council has adopted, in October 2006, the *Bylaw on the Basis of the Preschool Programme*. The Bylaw includes a basis of programmes for three levels of preschool age: nursery school (until the age of 3), preschool (ages 3 to 5½), and the preparatory preschool programme (starting one year before a child enters elementary school).

In the school year 2006/07 the realisation of the preparatory preschool programme, which is required by the draft law and free for all children, was initiated in practice. The programme is being implemented in the year before a child starts elementary school (that is, for children aged 5½ to 6½) and it lasts at least 6 months for at least 4 hours a day. The preparatory preschool programme covers about 78,000 children. This inclusion rate is estimated to reflect

about 90% of all children in this age group, although the stated proportion is not considered to be entirely reliable. The problems that exist are those related to unequal inclusion by regions and the lack of data for marginalised groups such as the Roma, children from villages in underdeveloped regions, children with developmental disabilities and children from families with lower levels of completed education. While enrolment in the preparatory preschool programme is fairly high, inclusion of children in overall preschool education (all forms of inclusion in the public sector for children aged 3 to 7) is rather small: in 2004 it was 37.3% and in 2005 it was 39.2% (DevInfo). A particular problem is that preschool education to a much lesser degree encompasses children with the greatest need for it, such as those mentioned above. The network of preschool institutions and inclusion of children in preschool education is insufficient with regard to the needs of the country and cannot fulfil the requests from families nor the many categories of children. Serbia does not possess a sufficiently developed network of preschool institutions and the existing network is territorially distributed unevenly.

### ***Elementary School***

Even though there is a legislative guarantee of compulsory, universal, free elementary education, not all children are enrolled in elementary school. The drop-out rate among children in elementary school averages 5%, which represents about 80,000 children. The drop-out rate is significantly higher for children from vulnerable groups. Almost one fifth (19%) of the children living in rural areas are not enrolled in elementary school, and the rate increases to nearly 25% among girls from rural environments.

According to available data, it appears that the inclusion of Roma children in the first grade of elementary school is increasing: from 73.9%<sup>2</sup> in 2002 – 77.9% for boys and 69.7% for girls<sup>3</sup> – to 82.5% and 89.6%, respectively, in 2004<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately, we cannot rely on either of these data, as the exact number of Roma and Roma children is not available. Roma children often enrol in school later than the appropriate age, and only 66% of Roma children are enrolled on time, as opposed to 94% of children in the general population<sup>5</sup>.

Data on children with development difficulties and disabilities is not available either, but due to social deprivation, a large number of children from marginalised groups are enrolled in special schools for children with disabilities. According to data from the Republic Institute for Statistics (RIS) in 2005, almost all children enrol in the 5th grade (98.86%). However, this is not a reliable measure, since it does not cover the entire generation (only those children that are enrolled in elementary school and have reached the 4<sup>th</sup> grade are taken into account), and real percentages are certainly much lower. However, even this data shows that rural children continue their education after 4th grade in much smaller proportions (77.62%, RIS, 2005), especially girls (boys: 78.37%, girls: 76.83%, RIS, 2005). Analysis suggests that the drop-out rate of Roma children in this period is high, and the data on children with development disabilities is unavailable.

On the basis of the Unified Action Plan adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, for realisation of programme activities during the Roma Decade (2005-2015), as well as on the basis of the NPA for Children, the Ministry of Education has implemented certain projects aimed at securing quality education for all, and especially for children with special needs and children from marginalised groups. The project “Expanding Access to Preschool Education of Roma Children” was carried out in cooperation with the National Council of the Roma National Minority with financial aid from the Roma Education Fund (REF). The project was implemented in the period between December 2005 and January 2007, and has comprised 24 preschool institutions from underdeveloped parts of the Republic of Serbia, with a total coverage of 600 children from Roma families. This project has shown that there is a need for systematic engagement of assistants, not only at the elementary school level, but principally at the preschool level, in order to successfully assure an equalisation of the experiences that are needed for a successful start in education for children from marginalised groups. The

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<sup>2</sup> Percentage of children whose parents declare themselves as Roma

<sup>3</sup> Republican Institute for Statistics, Census 2002

<sup>4</sup> Roma Education Fund, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Research of Multiple Indicators of Women’s and Children’s Status (MICS 3) conducted by UNICEF, preliminary results

project showed that assistants in preschool institutions have a significant role in carrying out compensatory activities that make up for the deprivation of experiences which otherwise support a child's development.

The following data on preschool education helps to justify the need for the proposed project:

- The network of preschool institutions and inclusion of children in preschool education is insufficient with regard to the needs of the country, and cannot fulfil requests from families and many categories of children.
- The largest problem related to inclusion in preschool education is that it encompasses to a much lesser degree those children whose need for it is greatest (a fact upon which the EFA<sup>6</sup> programme insists in the Dakar Declaration): children from poor and rural families, children from marginalised ethnic groups and children with developmental disabilities. On the basis of preliminary results of the research of multiple indicators of women's and children's status (MICS 3), conducted by UNICEF in 2005<sup>7</sup>, between the ages 36 to 59 months, preschool education covers 45% of children from urban areas and only 14.4% of children from rural areas; among families in which parents have only elementary education, the inclusion rate is only 7.5%; in the group of the poorest it is 7%; and among the Roma population in Roma settlements it is only 3.9%.

With regard to elementary education, existing data show a clear need for additional inputs that are necessary to improve access for vulnerable groups:

- Even though there is a legislative guarantee of compulsory, universal, free elementary education, not all children are enrolled in elementary school. The drop-out rate among children at enrolment in elementary school is on average 5%, which represents a large number among the nearly 80,000 children that are enrolled. Dropping out is significantly more prevalent among children from marginalised groups.
- Nearly one fifth of the children from rural areas do not enrol in elementary school, and the figure is more pronounced for girls – only 77.72% girls compared to 82.15% boys from this group enrol (RIS, 2005).
- According to available data, it appears that the inclusion of Roma children in the first grade of elementary school is increasing: from 73.9%<sup>8</sup> in 2002 (77.9% for boys and 69.7% for girls)<sup>9</sup> to 82.5% – 89.6% in 2004<sup>10</sup>.
- No data is available for children with development difficulties and disabilities, but due to their social deprivation, a large number of children from marginalised groups are inappropriately enrolled in special schools for children with disabilities. According to statistical data, almost all children progress into the 5th grade, although in reality this type of education is not appropriate for them.
- The elementary school completion rate is high (even though this only applies to those children who enrol in the first place) at 95.29%, 94.71% for boys and 95.89% for girls (RIS, 2005). The figure, however, reflects a much higher than realistic statistic because it does not reliably incorporate data on vulnerable groups.
- A study carried out on a sample of Roma children has shown that the number of Roma children who have successfully completed elementary school is 72% lower than the number of those enrolled in the 1st grade, indicating that their school drop-out rate is extremely high<sup>11</sup>.
- The number of children with developmental difficulties completing elementary education is not known. According to a study on a sample<sup>12</sup> of persons with

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<sup>6</sup> EFA - Education for All, UNESCO

<sup>8</sup> Percentage of children whose parents declare themselves as Roma

<sup>9</sup> Republican Institute of Statistics, Census 2002

<sup>10</sup> Roma Education Fund, 2004

<sup>11</sup> More than the official estimate – position of Roma children in Serbia, Center for child rights, Save the children, Belgrade, 2006

<sup>12</sup> There were 545 people in the sample, of which 20.6% were aged 24 and under. Research conducted by the Association of Disabled Students in Serbia, 2006.

disabilities in 15 municipalities in Serbia, 4% had not completed elementary education<sup>13</sup>, and 17.8% had not completed secondary education.

- Although there has to date not been any comprehensive programme for inclusive education aimed at children with disabilities, there have been some positive examples of individual cases where these children have attended regular schools and have had the support of teaching assistants. .

The project will use experience from European countries in this field (Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia). It is also urgent since its implementation will help to provide greater access to education for the large number of children from returning families (readmission) as many of these families are Roma.

### **3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact (where applicable)**

Financial means for services, applicable expenditures and maintenance costs will be incorporated into the budget of the Republic of Serbia upon project completion.

The project contributes to the realisation of goals defined by the Ministry of Education Strategy for the period 2005-2010 and the goals defined by the Law on the Basis of the System of Education.

The project will endeavour to enable assistants and coordinators to be accepted in schools and in local communities as persons who are able to provide professional assistance in ensuring quality education for children from marginalised groups. The longer-term efficacy of this project will to some degree depend upon how well this is achieved.

The status and the role of assistants (job descriptions) will be included in proposed sub-laws, which will thus assure financing of their positions through the national budget over the longer-term.

Professional conventions at local, regional and national level are planned, where the achieved project results will be presented and possibilities for additional improvement of defined models will be considered.

Upon project completion, publishing and promotion of best practice examples is planned, making subsequent replication in other schools and communities possible. Furthermore, based upon results of this project, it is anticipated that model centres for support in education of children from marginalised groups will be established, and in this way the proposed project will contribute to the sustainability of results that will be achieved.

This project will enable additional municipalities to create government-funded positions for these teaching assistants. The project's results will be a catalyst for broadening the scope of this model in the future and thus will contribute to greater social inclusion and to fulfilment of the Lisbon Agenda principles in Serbia.

### **3.3 Results and measurable indicators**

**1. Systemic conditions are established to facilitate the implementation of foreseen activities by assistants and community liaison coordinators starting with academic year 2010/2011.**

Measurable indicators for reviewing progress include:

- A by-law is adopted and published by autumn 2010 to regulate the status of assistants and coordinators

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<sup>13</sup> Association of students with handicap, 2006

## **2. Capacities of relevant groups are increased (assistants, coordinators, schools' and preschool institutions' employees, pedagogical advisors) by August 2011**

Measurable indicators for reviewing progress include:

- Relevant staff from targeted preschool institutions, elementary schools and regional school authorities has successfully completed the training programme by August 2010.
- 80 elementary schools and 48 preschool institutions are selected, enabled and prepared to fully participate in project implementation by August 2010.
- 128 assistant and 128 coordinators completed training by the end of June 2011.

## **3. A system of qualitative support for the education of children from marginalised groups in preschool institutions and elementary schools is established and provides support for the target schools and children.**

Measurable indicators for reviewing progress:

- 128 assistants and 128 coordinators engaged in 80 elementary schools and 48 preschool institutions by the beginning of the 2010/2011 school year.
- 80 schools and 48 preschool institutions implement programmes and activities to support children from marginalised groups education during 2010/2011
- Schools and preschool institutions included in project achieve higher marks as a result of self-evaluations and external evaluations in the "ethos" key area, by the end of 2011
- Pupils' and their parents', educators' and teachers' satisfaction with conditions and results of work of children from marginalised groups increased by 10% from June 2010 to June 2011

### **3.4 Activities:**

#### **Result 1**

- Drafting, adopting and publishing of by-law which will regulate the status of assistants and coordinators
- Creating job descriptions for assistants and coordinators
- Developing and publishing alterations and amendments to the by-law on standards for teachers, educators and professional assistants

#### **Result 2**

- Establish a Working Group
- Create criteria for selection of elementary schools and preschool institutions where the project will be implemented
- Selection of institutions where the programme will be realised
- Develop an action plan for implementation of acquired knowledge and skills at the institutional level
- Design and deliver training programmes for assistants, coordinators elementary schools' and preschool institutions' employees and educational advisors
- Organise study tours to other European countries which have best practice examples from similar initiatives for 20 assistants and coordinators as well as 10 representatives from the Ministry of Education (10 days' duration)

### **Result 3:**

- Engage assistants and coordinators in elementary schools and preschool institutions for work with marginalised groups
- Introduce an appropriate number of innovative classes to be implemented by the team of assistant, teacher and pedagogical advisor
- Conduct an assessment of the targeted institutions' educational material needs relating to the implementation and develop technical specifications for the necessary teaching tools and equipment.
- Procurement of relevant equipment for participating schools and development of individual materials for pupils' work
- Visits of pedagogical advisors to elementary schools and preschool institutions and organisation of professional exchange of experiences and joint problem-solving
- Meetings organised among assistants and coordinators to share experiences
- Creation of quality indicators and instruments for internal and external monitoring of results of introduction of teaching assistants and coordinators
- Targeted elementary schools and preschool institutions in the project organise internal evaluations and prepare a report with defined strengths and weaknesses and a report on the quality level in the ethos key area
- Educational advisors organise external evaluations of the work in targeted elementary schools and preschool institutions and produce a report on the quality level
- Research conducted to assess the satisfaction among pupils, parents, teachers and educators involved in the project

### **3.5 Conditionality and sequencing:**

#### ***Conditionality***

- Secured cooperation of competent individuals, organizations and institutions (Institute for improvement of education, National Council of the Roma National Minority, Secretariat for the Roma National Strategy, relevant and expert NGOs etc.)
- The needs assessment that is presently underway is completed to provide information on the existing conditions in elementary schools and preschool institutions with regard to the number, state and needs for education of children in the target groups, in order to define criteria for selection of elementary schools and pre-school institutions in which the model will be implemented.
- It will be possible for the Government to secure the necessary budgetary means to regularly finance the salaries of employed assistants and coordinators.

#### ***Sequencing***

Two contracts will be needed, one service contract for TA and one supplies contract for equipping the schools that are targeted in this programme. The equipment does not need to be delivered in order for the project to start so sequencing will not be an issue. The service contract should thus be signed before the investment contract.

### **3.6 Linked activities**

On the basis of Action Plans adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, for realization of programme activities during the Roma Decade (2005-2015), as well as on the basis of National Plan of Action for Children, adopted by the Government of the RS in 2004, the Ministry of Education has realized certain projects aimed at securing quality education for

all, and especially for children with special needs and children from marginalized groups. We especially highlight experiences and results achieved in the following projects:

Teaching assistants are trained to help children be included in the regular teaching programme. S/he takes part in the same group as the child with special needs and helps the teacher carry out the daily activities. The role of the teaching assistant is to create an environment that is more inclusive for all children and to enable the child with special needs to qualitatively participate in the group. The teaching assistant has various responsibilities both in terms of helping the child and his or her parents as well as toward the child's classmates and teacher. The teacher and the assistant are partners in this process

In 2007, a total of 39 children with special needs (from 3 to 8 years of age) were supported in this way in preschool institutions, and in 2008 another five children will receive this type of support from teaching assistants.

The project "Support and Aid to Roma – Introduction of Roma Teaching Assistants", with support provided by the OSCE. In this project, for the first time, an initiative of the responsible government body for introduction of new system solutions, by introducing teaching assistants in elementary schools. Even though the project was limited to the 2006/2007 school year, all project activities have been implemented in a way that has made it possible to gain significant experience. During the realization of this project it has been noticed that the assistant engaged in a given school lacks professional support from his colleagues, which can be provided through the activities of local community cooperation coordinators (it was recommended that this role be assigned to a member of the teaching staff). In the school year 2006/2007, the 28 assistants engaged in 26 elementary schools have made important achievements in providing additional support to children from marginalised groups. In this period significant tools have been developed which can be used during the drafting of legislation and in the design and delivery of trainings for assistants and coordinators as well as in the follow-up of their work. Additionally, we consider involvement of assistants who have gathered their teaching assistance experiences in other NGO projects as beneficial. In the capacity of informal mentors, they were a valuable aid in the course of trainings carried out for candidates, as well as in solving problems and challenges that new assistants and schools included in the project encountered.

The project "Expanding Access to Pre-school Education of Roma Children," carried out in cooperation with the National Council of the Roma National Minority with funding from the Roma Education Fund (REF). In this project the following specific goals were set:

- Increase availability of quality pre-school education to Roma children,
- Increase inclusion of Roma children in quality elementary education,
- Improvement of their achievement in schools and lowering of their drop-out rate, instigation of active participation by parents of the Roma children in the educational process,
- Establish better communication between Roma local communities and local institutions,
- Increased motivation, sensitivity and professional competence of educational staff for work with the Roma children, and
- Overcome stereotypes and prejudices and develop an environment of tolerance towards differences.

The project was carried out in the period between December 2005 and January 2007, and has encompassed 24 educational institutions from underdeveloped parts of the Republic of Serbia, with total coverage of 600 children from Roma families.

In IPA 2008 the regional project on **Social Inclusion: Regional support to the marginalised communities** worth 1 million Euro contributes to the goal of the Education for all project. With its project purpose of facilitating access to free legal aid for the provision of personal documents, it will increase the possibility of marginalised young population to regulate its status and to facilitate their school enrolment. Lack of personal document is one

of the major obstacles for the marginalised youth to enrol into the standard education system. This project will be implemented by the UNHCR.

### **3.7 Lessons learned**

From the OSCE project Roma Teaching Assistants, and other local and international projects, we have learnt that it is necessary to:

- Achieve good preparation of preschool institutions and schools for inclusion of assistants and coordinators;
- Prevent segregation;
- Design a detailed programme of work for assistants, to be approved by the Teaching Council and School Board;
- Time-distributed continuous training, especially learning from experience and through ongoing problem-solving;
- Presence, within the institution, of a person for the assistant to work with in a team;
- For the purpose of assuring sustainability, it is necessary to adopt appropriate legislation;
- Provide permanent sources of financing for assistants' salaries;
- Provide grants for essential equipment and teaching aids in institutions where the project activities are taking place;
- Organization of broad media promotion is necessary; and
- Establish a firm cooperation with the NGO sector.

Moreover, an evaluation of the REF-funded project, Expanding Access to Preschool Education of Roma Children, has shown that progress has been made in the following areas:

- Improved knowledge of Serbian language among the Roma children;
- Improved fine motor skills in Roma children;
- Heightened level of self-confidence in Roma children, especially from the point of view of equality for children belonging to other nationalities;
- A higher degree of motivation among Roma children to attend preschool programmes and the level of interest toward enrolment in elementary school;
- Enriched experience of Roma children (toys, notebooks, drawing equipment, picture books, books, etc.);
- Prejudices lowered in relation to Roma children, both on the side of other project participants as well as among the Roma children toward others;
- Roma parents better comprehend the importance of education and are better motivated to include their children in the education system;
- The presence of teaching assistant in preschool education has been shown to contribute to an increase in the number of children that attend preschool institutions.
- Based upon available case studies to date, children with special needs are more likely to be included into the regular school system when they have had the support of a teaching assistant.
- Preschool institutions employees are better equipped for acceptance and for work with children from marginalised groups; and
- The percentage of enrolment of Roma children was increased (95% of the children involved in the project were enrolled in elementary school).

This project has shown that there is a need for systematic engagement of assistants, not only at the elementary school level, but particularly at the preschool level, in order to

successfully assure an equalization of experiences that is needed for a successful start to education for children from marginalised groups. It turned out that assistants in preschool institutions have a major role in carrying out compensatory activities that make up for the deprivation of experiences that support the development of children. These lessons learned have been incorporated in the design of the proposed project.

#### 4 INDICATIVE BUDGET (AMOUNTS IN €)

			SOURCES OF FUNDING									
			TOTAL EXP.RE	IPA COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION	
ACTIVITIES	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	EUR (b)	%(2)	Total EUR (c)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional/ Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (d)	% (2)
Activity 1												
contract 1.1	x		1.800.000	1.800.000	100							-
Activity 2												
contract 1.2		x	1.200.000	1.200.000	100							-
.....												
TOTAL IB			1.800.000	1.800.000	100							
TOTAL INV			1.200.000	1.200.000	100							
<b>TOTAL PROJECT</b>			<b>3.000.000</b>	<b>3.000.000</b>	<b>100</b>							

Amounts net of VAT

(1) In the Activity row use "X" to identify whether IB or INV

(2) Expressed in % of the **Total** Expenditure (column (a))

## 5 INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Contracts	Start of Tendering	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Service Contract 1.1	T + Q1	T + Q4	T + Q12
Supplies Contract 1.2	T + Q5	T + Q8	T + Q12

## 6 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

Cross-cutting issues will be addressed in the project so as to comply with the best EU standards and practices in the area of inclusive education. The beneficiary will make sure its objectives, policies and interventions have a positive impact on, and are in line with, the main principles of gender equality, social inclusion of marginalised groups and environmental sustainability.

### 6.1 Equal Opportunity

The project directly contributes to improving the access to quality education for all children in Serbia. As it has been shown that enrolment rates are lower among girls in rural settings as well as among marginalised groups, the project will strive to offer girls from these target populations an equal chance at attaining preschool and elementary education. Community liaison coordinators will work at the local level to encourage families and members of the local community to support greater inclusion of girls in the regular education system. This, in the long run, will enable young women from marginalised groups to continue their education and to have enhanced employment opportunities.

### 6.2 Environment

By introducing environmental issues into curricula, school design and facilities, the project will aim to improve educational outcomes and have wider livelihood and health benefits.

### 6.3 Minorities

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the greater social inclusion and poverty reduction of children from marginalised and special needs groups by ensuring their participation in the regular education system in Serbia. The project thus aims at improving inclusive education practices in Serbia, with particular emphasis on minority groups such as the Roma and on children with disabilities. The project results are expected to help institutionalise systemic measures that will improve access to early education for Roma children and children with disabilities, promote their non-segregated inclusion in the education system and encourage their continued schooling while decreasing their dropout rates. Overall, the project aims to help develop an environment of tolerance towards differences.

## ANNEX I: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

<b>LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR Project Fiche</b>	<b>Education for All – Increasing availability and quality of education for children from marginalised groups</b>	
	Contracting period expires 3 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement	Disbursement period expires 6 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement
	Total budget : 3,000 000 EUR	IPA budget: 3,000 000 EUR

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
To contribute to social inclusion and poverty reduction by enabling greater access to the regular public education system in Serbia for children from marginalised and special needs groups.	Increased number of children from marginalised groups who are included in programmes of educational work of preschool institutions prior to obligatory preparatory programme, into the obligatory preparatory program and into elementary school in Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EIS – database of Ministry of Education</li> <li>- Official data from regional school administrations</li> <li>- Official data from Republican Institute for Statistics</li> <li>- DevInfo</li> </ul>	
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions

<p>To increase the inclusion of children from marginalised and special needs groups in the system of preschool and elementary education and to reduce their dropout rate by formalising and broadening the support that is provided by teaching assistants and community liaison coordinators.</p>	<p>Number of children from marginalised groups encompassed by the preschool education in preschool institutions where the assistant and a coordinator is introduced increased by 5%</p> <p>Number of children from marginalised groups encompassed by elementary education in schools where assistants and coordinators are engaged increased by 5%.</p> <p>Decrease of 5% in the number of pupils from marginalised groups who drop out from elementary school in Serbia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EIS – database of Ministry of Education</li> <li>- Official data from regional school administrations</li> <li>- Official data from Republican Institute for Statistics</li> <li>- DevInfo</li> </ul>	<p>It will be possible for the Government to secure needed budget means to finance, regularly and timely, employed assistants and coordinators.</p>
<p><b>Results</b></p>	<p><b>Objectively verifiable indicators</b></p>	<p><b>Sources of Verification</b></p>	<p><b>Assumptions</b></p>
<p>1. Systemic conditions are established to facilitate the implementation of foreseen activities by assistants and community liaison coordinators starting with academic year 2010/2011.</p> <p>2. Capacities of relevant groups are increased (assistants, coordinators, schools' and preschool institutions' employees, pedagogical advisors) by August 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A by-law is adopted and published by autumn 2010 to regulate the status of assistants and coordinators</li> <li>▪ Relevant staff from targeted preschool institutions, elementary schools and regional school authorities has successfully completed the training programme by August 2010.</li> </ul>	<p>Official Gazette – Education Gazette of the Republic of Serbia</p> <p>Criteria available at the MoE website</p> <p>Documentation of regional school administrations on the process of selection of PUs and elementary schools to be included in the project</p>	<p>Secured cooperation of competent individuals, organisations and institutions (Institute for improvement of education, National Council of the Roma National Minority, Secretariat for Roma national strategy, relevant NGOs etc.)</p> <p>Provided insight in existing conditions in elementary schools and preschool institutions with regard to the number, state and needs for education by children in target groups, in order to define criteria for selection of</p>

<p>3. A system of qualitative support for the education of children from marginalised groups in preschool institutions and elementary schools is established and provides support for the target schools and children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 80 elementary schools and 48 preschool institutions are selected, enabled and prepared to fully participate in project implementation by August 2010.</li> <li>▪ 128 assistant and 128 coordinators completed training by the end of June 2011.</li>   <li>▪ 128 assistants and 128 coordinators engaged in 80 elementary schools and 48 preschool institutions by the beginning of the 2010/2011 school year.</li> <li>▪ 80 schools and 48 preschool institutions implement programmes and activities to support children from marginalised groups education during 2010/2011</li> <li>▪ Schools and preschool institutions included in project achieve higher marks as a result of self-evaluations and external evaluations in the “ethos” key area, by the end of 2011</li> <li>▪ Pupils’ and their parents’, educators’ and teachers’ satisfaction with conditions and results of work of children from marginalised groups increased by 10% from June 2010 to June 2011</li> </ul>	<p>Annexes to the development plans and curricula in institutions involved in the project</p> <p>Training materials available in electronic version and in hard copy</p> <p>Action plan available at MoE website</p> <p>A list of assistants and local community liaison coordinators available at regional school administrations and at Project Implementation Team</p> <p>Quality indicators available in electronic and printed versions</p> <p>Educational advisors’ notes on visits and activities with assistants, coordinators and other employees</p> <p>Completed questionnaires and an internal evaluation report available in every institution involved in the project</p> <p>Reports by educational advisers available from regional school administration and from the project team.</p>	<p>elementary schools and preschool institutions in which the model will be implemented.</p>
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Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
<p><b>Relating to Result 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drafting, adopting and publishing of by-law which will regulate the status of assistants and coordinators</li> <li>▪ Creating job descriptions for assistants and coordinators</li> <li>▪ Developing and publishing alterations and amendments to the by-law on standards for teachers, educators and professional assistants</li> </ul> <p><b>Relating to Result 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a Working Group</li> <li>▪ Create criteria for selection of elementary schools and preschool institutions where the project will be implemented</li> <li>▪ Selection of institutions where the programme will be realised</li> <li>▪ Create an action plan for implementation of acquired knowledge and skills at the institutional level</li> </ul>	<p><b>Service contract</b></p> <p>Procurement of school supplies</p>	<p><b>1.8 million</b></p> <p><b>1.2 million</b></p> <p><b>Total: 3.0 milion</b></p>	<p>Established Team for coordination of project implementation of the project where relevant representatives of interested sides and representatives of organisations and institutions will participate.</p>

- Design and deliver training programmes for assistants, coordinators elementary schools' and pre-school institutions' employees and educational advisors
- Organize study tours to other European countries which have best practice examples from similar initiatives for 20 assistants and coordinators as well as 10 representatives from the Ministry of Education (10 days' duration)

***Relating to Result 3:***

- Engage assistants and coordinators in elementary schools and preschool institutions for work with marginalised groups
- Introduce an appropriate number of innovative classes to be implemented by the team of assistant, teacher and pedagogical advisor
- Conduct an assessment of the targeted institutions' educational material needs relating to the implementation and develop technical specifications for the necessary teaching tools and equipment.
- Procurement of relevant equipment for participating

schools and development of individual materials for pupils' work

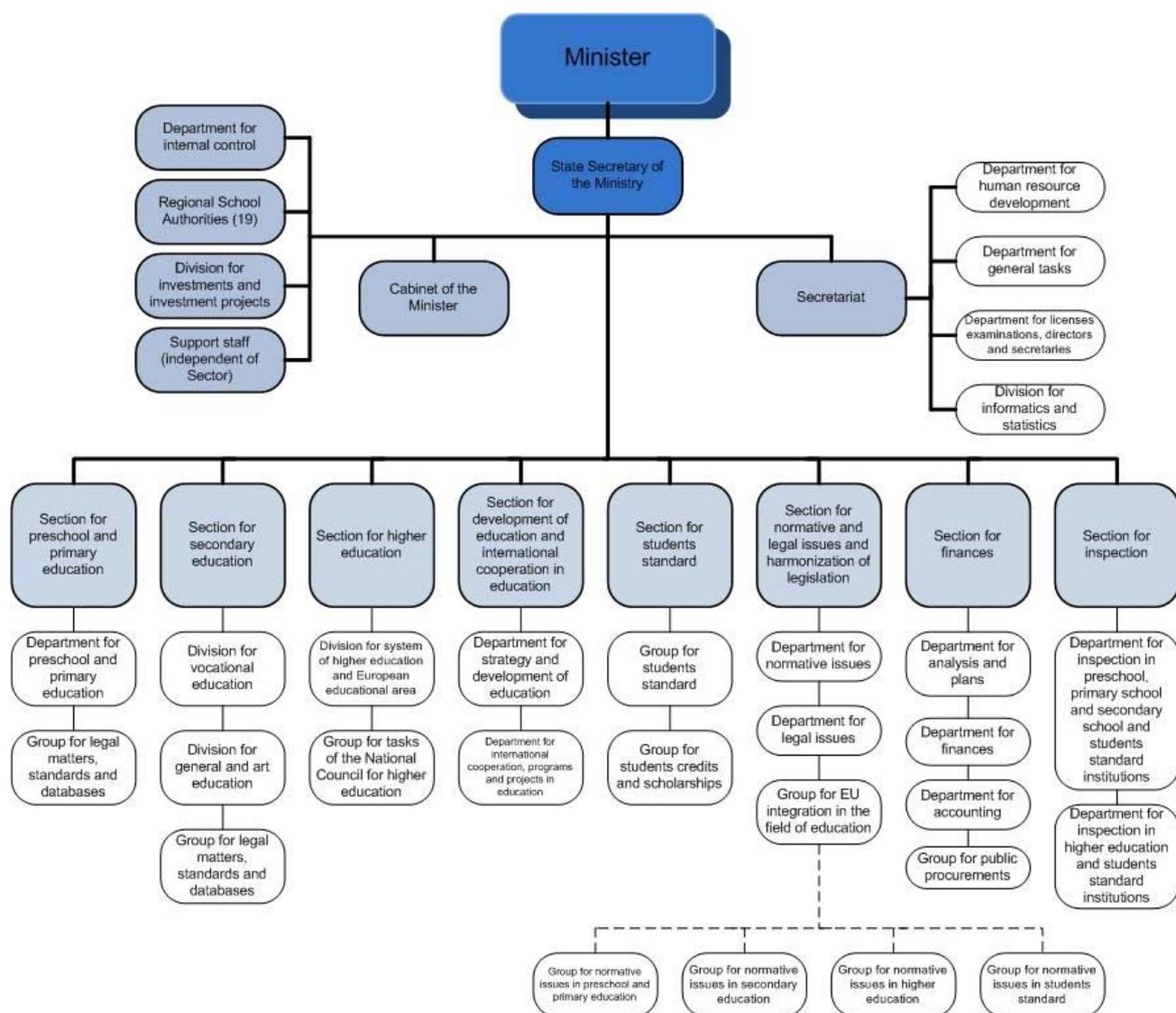
- Visits of pedagogical advisors to elementary schools and preschool institutions and organisation of professional exchange of experiences and joint problem-solving
- Meetings organised among assistants and coordinators to share experiences
- Creation of quality indicators and instruments for internal and external monitoring of results of introduction of teaching assistants and coordinators
- Targeted elementary schools and preschool institutions in the project organise internal evaluations and prepare a report with defined strengths and weaknesses and a report on the quality level in the ethos key area
- Educational advisors organise external evaluations of the work in targeted elementary schools and preschool institutions and produce a report on the quality level
- Research conducted to assess the satisfaction among pupils, parents, teachers and educators involved in the project

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**ANNEX II: Amounts (in €) Contracted and Disbursed per Quarter – IPA contribution only**

<b>Contracted</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q6</b>	<b>Q8</b>	<b>Q10</b>	<b>Q12</b>	<b>Total</b>
Contract 1.1	1,800,000					1,800,000
Contract 1.2			1,200,000			1,200,000
<b>Cumulated</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>		<b>3,000,000</b>			<b>3,000,000</b>
<b>Disbursed</b>						
Contract 1.1	180,000	405,000	405,000	405,000	405,000	1,800,000
Contract 1.2			540,000	540,000	120,000	1,200,000
<b>Cumulated</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>585,000</b>	<b>1,530,000</b>	<b>2,475,000</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>

## ANNEX III: Institutional Framework



#### **Annex IV - Reference list of laws, regulations and strategic documents:**

1. Law on basis of the system of education (2003)
2. Law on the Prevention of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities
3. The Decision 2008/213/EC on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC (2008)
4. National Strategy of Republic of Serbia for Serbia and Montenegro Accession to the EU (2005)
5. Stabilisation and association agreement (2007)
6. Poverty reduction strategy paper (2003)
7. Strategy of the Ministry of Education (and Sports) for 2005-2010
8. Strategy for development of social welfare
9. Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia
10. Millennium development goals
11. Common Action Plan for the Advancement of Roma Education in Serbia
12. National action plan for children
13. National action plan for Roma children
14. Instrument for pre-accession, Multi-annual indicative planning document for the Republic of Serbia for 2007-2009

## **ANNEX V: Details per EU funded contract**

### **Service Contract**

The tasks that the Technical Assistance experts will be expected to carry out include the following:

- Support the drafting of the by-law which will regulate the status of assistants and coordinators
- Create job descriptions for assistants and coordinators
- Advise on possible alterations and amendments to the by-law on standards for teachers, educators and professional assistants
- Create criteria for the selection of elementary schools and preschool institutions where the project will be implemented
- Conduct an educational materials needs assessment in these institutions and procure the necessary teaching tools and equipment
- Develop an action plan for implementation of acquired knowledge and skills at the institutional level
- Design and deliver training programmes for assistants, coordinators elementary schools' and preschool institutions' employees and educational advisors
- Organise study tours for assistants, coordinators and representatives from the Ministry of Education
- Support assistants and coordinators in elementary schools and preschool institutions in their work with marginalised groups
- Introduce an appropriate number of innovative classes to be implemented by the team of assistant, teacher and pedagogical advisor
- Procurement and development of individual materials for pupils' work
- Organise visits of pedagogical advisors to elementary schools and preschool institutions and organisation of professional exchange of experiences and joint problem-solving
- Organise meetings among assistants and coordinators to share experiences
- Create of quality indicators and instruments for internal and external monitoring of results of introduction of teaching assistants and coordinators
- Advise targeted elementary schools and preschool institutions in the project on the organisation internal evaluations
- Support educational advisors in the organisation of external evaluations of the work in targeted elementary schools and preschool institutions
- Conduct research to assess the satisfaction among pupils, parents, teachers and educators involved in the project

### **Supplies Contract**

The procurement of equipment for participating schools will be completed under the Service Contract. The actual list of supplies will be formulated based upon an assessment of needs, and keeping in mind the educational materials that will be needed to implement this project in preschool institutions and elementary schools. This is expected to include computers, textbooks and other tools for learning. The complete technical specifications will be made by the TA team in consultation with the Ministry of Education.