



KHETAUN (TOGETHER): With Key Steps to Inclusion of Romani Children into Quality Early Childhood Programs

Training Module
and materials for training
of professional and for general public

Programs for empowering Roma families with regard to childcare and encouraging child development

Prepared by:



2017



Introduction

This training module is addressed to teacher trainers working with Roma parents or families from socially disadvantaged areas. It presents background, theory, and activities needed to conduct training on activities for empowering Roma families with regard to childcare and encouraging child development.

This module is made for leaders of activities with Roma parents from socially disadvantaged areas. The purpose of the activities is to strengthen parental competencies of Roma parents. The module is designed on the principle of building on cultural appropriateness and search strategies of how to strengthen parental skills within their cultural context. It is based on recognising parental competencies of Roma parents and strengthening them. The module also emphasizes the forming of mutual trust among leaders of activities and participants.

The international training module covers 16 hours.

This training material covers the fundamental concepts and ideas of the training. Participants will receive this material directly at the training in printed form.

Training includes a combination of presentation of theory and participants' activity. Activities include individual work, as well as small and large group activities. The training is intended to stimulate intellectual thinking, as well as personal responses. Time for reflection is embedded in the agenda.

Target group:

- Roma parents from socially disadvantaged areas
- Organizers of activities with Roma parents

Outcomes of the training:

- Learn about building trust among Roma families and educators
- Learn about building cooperation among key actors (preschool and school management, professional staff, Roma families, Roma and local community)
- Familiarization with the situation of Roma children in Czech education throughout history and today
- Familiarization with the consequences of social disadvantages on the educational

path of children

- Adopt basic information on human communication and techniques leading to problem-free communication
- Explore the similarities and differences between children and adult learners
- Contribute towards pedagogizing of family environment in Roma families
- Strengthening of Roma parents' competencies to learn together with their children and help them with preparation for school

Theoretical background

Social exclusion is a specific situation, for which there are several common themes. Commonly, we distinguish between these types of exclusion: spatial, economic, social and cultural. Some effects of exclusion are obvious and easy to identify. For example, spatial exclusion can manifest itself in the quality and accessibility of housing. Family affected by spatial exclusion lives in a poorly accessible place, which results in significantly lower standard of living. Often, there are no people with a different life situation living in spatially excluded areas.

The most visible and clear effect of economic exclusion is long-term unemployment, which leads to specific lifestyle habits and mental state and which are then further disadvantageous for finding employment. Together with unemployment comes the dependency on the state's social system. Economic exclusion is also characterized by insufficient functional literacy, which is tied to education. Education is then also tied to both social and cultural exclusion. Children often do not attend any pre-school education and are more likely to suffer from educational problems and school failure in mainstream education facilities. This exclusion often manifests itself also by high absence, either with or without leave. As for the parents, they often completed only elementary education, often on former *special schools*.

This specific educational history is one of the causes of social exclusion, where all social contacts and acquaintances fall under the family circle, where all members are in the same life situation. There are no acquaintances or family members with a different social status or different way of life. Consequently, these families also lack wider cultural awareness and tend to be rather passive in searching for various activities. In families affected by long-term exclusion, even regular health checks and disease prevention becomes problematic. Parents'

experience with regard to education then reflects their attitudes while upbringing children. Parents are not familiar with preparation for education, are not aware of what activities cultivate what skills or what kind of knowledge is important for education. They are also not familiar with practices, which would encourage their children to be successful at school. Most importantly, they also lack motivation, because their own life experience suggests that education does not have any significant effect on one's life and does not contribute towards finding a place within the mainstream society.

Effects of social exclusion on preparation for school education

Listed below are some of the basic areas, which can be considered specific for education in socially disadvantaged families, and also a description of consequences, that these specific conditions have on child's development, especially on children in preschool age.

1. In family, regular order is missing and time is not clearly structured. Even more so when parents face long-term unemployment does family get up late, the day is not filled with any routine tasks that need to be completed at a specific time and even eating together at a specific time is not customary. Children often do not have their own room or even a designated space their things and do not have a desk (the whole big family often lives in a two-room apartment and the rooms do not have a designated function).

Consequences:

- For the adults, perception of time is more subjective and the exact time is less important than specific circumstances of what is going on at the moment. Children adopt this subjective perception of time from a young age.
 - Inexperience with regular daily routine and ignorance of terms, which are tied to it.
 - Insufficient capability of adapting to a set of rules.
 - Unpreparedness for meeting one's obligations and duties.
 - Lack of concentration and orderliness.
 - Inability to take care of one's belongings and focus on one activity.
2. Children spend most of their time at home. They usually do not attend preschools, children's clubs or circles, do not take part in past-time activities, do not visit

cottages or summer houses and do not attend excursions, trips or other events. They do not have privacy, a designated place for their belongings or a desk.

Consequences:

- Ignorance of common social interactions.
 - Inexperience with separating from one's family, with outside authorities, with acting in public.
 - Ignorance of other social rules and manners and inexperience with respecting instructions and rules.
 - Often little experience with cultural activities and facilities (theatres, cinemas, exhibitions, clubs, historical sites, zoos, public holidays etc.) and limited experience with the outside world. Children are often not familiar with many things and words, because they never encountered them in their lives, and miss many connections that arise from experiencing various types of environments.
 - Lack of impulses for gross motor skills development (unavailability of children's playgrounds and sport clubs, absence of common family and sport activities such as family cycling trips etc.).
3. The way of upbringing lacks targeted activities supporting the development of a wider range of knowledge (for example names of animals, seasons, colours etc.) and skills (cognitive functions such as visual and auditory perception, gross and fine motor skills etc.). Activities and impulses that prepare children for school education are missing. Any form of didactic influence is largely missing from upbringing. The children usually have less toys, and if they have them, they are not useful for preparing for school education. There is only a very small number of books in the family and they are mostly not used as a form of entertainment for the children.

Consequences:

- Unfamiliarity with the objects used for games or their materials.
- Ignorance of working procedures and mechanisms that different tasks are based on.
- Ignorance of schematic drawings (missing commentary).
- Unfamiliarity with working with an image – insufficient visual perception practise.
- Inexperience with repetitive, concentrated and focused work that has its rules and time frame.
- Inexperience with delaying pleasure and with goal-directed action with distant effects.

- Ignorance of terms, often even basic ones, for example the names of shapes, colours or ignorance of prepositions or adverbs.
 - Practise of fine motor skills is missing (drawing, modelling, cutting, playing with building sets or jigsaw puzzles). The same goes for reading, practicing nursery rhymes etc. Insufficient practise of auditory perception is also characteristic.
4. Language practise can also be limited in some families. Speech tends to be more conceptually unified and semantically rich, but the variety of situations in which it can be used is more limited. This is caused by the fact that social interaction is very much limited to members of closest family, with whom the contact is very intense. A lot of the meanings can thus be expressed in a substitutive manner and the meaning of terms can be more comprehensive and used to describe more complex ideas. Nowadays, it is also not very common to read books or tell fairy tales and the children are not being explained wider links and connections about the world as much.

Consequences:

- Limited vocabulary.
- Alternative interpretation of terms.
- With regards to standard Czech, the number of incorrect grammatical forms is higher than in common colloquial Czech.
- Often, different accent than in common colloquial Czech is present.
- Insufficient preparedness for acquiring new terms due to ignorance of important links and connections. Children do not have enough knowledge of what is related and lack context and structured thinking, which is helpful when acquiring new information.

It is important to note that the manifestations listed above cannot be generalized. A family can prepare a child for school education very consistently, while being socially disadvantaged. However, a combination of these manifestations can be expected at a higher rate with children from socially disadvantaged families. Therefore, it is necessary to give these children more attention and care, if we want them to success in their future education.

Activities (training agenda)

Day 1	
Session 1 (1 h)	<p><i>Welcome message</i></p> <p><i>Introduction of participants</i></p> <p><i>Introduction of the outcomes of the training</i></p> <p><i>Participants' expectations</i></p> <p><i>Activity: "The Chair"</i></p>
Session 2 (2 h)	<i>Mind Map: Problem of the Roma in the Czech educational system</i>
Session 3 (1,5 h)	<i>Presentation: Consequences of socially disadvantaged environment on education</i>
Session 4 (2,5 h)	<p><i>Presentation: Roma in Czech educational system in the past and today</i></p> <p><i>Reflection of the Day 1 of the training</i></p>

Day 2	
Session 1 (1,5 h)	<p><i>Main points from the first day</i></p> <p><i>Open questions: Czech educational system (mapping the individual educational stages in groups)</i></p> <p><i>Contusion by the facilitator: Other types of education – possibilities of preschool and extra-curricular activities on local and regional level</i></p>
	<i>Parents as Partners in Learning</i>

Session 2 (1,5 h)	<i>Poems and Songs: how can parents learn with their children</i>
Session 3 (1,5 h)	<i>Learning styles of my children and myself</i>
Session 4 (1,5 h)	<i>How to be a supportive parent: working with the advisory card for parents</i>
	<i>Open questions</i> <i>Reflection, summary of main principles and goals of the training</i>

Day 1

Session 1

Introduction to the project and the course, theme induction and meeting of participants

Outcomes:

- Participants meeting each other, eliminating initial tensions between participants.
- Finding out participants' expectations and their knowledge of the topic.
- Induction of questions that will be discussed further in the course.

Materials required:

PC, projector, course structure written on a flipchart, flipchart papers, markers, musical accompaniment (such as fast paced Romani music), speakers, several chairs (for the activity "The Chair"), cards with written questions (for the activity "The Chair").

Description of implementation:

Part one: Course introduction

The facilitator introduces to participants:

- Himself/herself
- Main goals of the course
- Programme of the course
- Length of the course (16 hours)
- Rules of the course (speaking one at a time, addressing one another, putting away mobile phones)
- Course methods and how they lead to course goals (interactive presentations, practise of communication techniques in model situation)

The facilitator needs to:

- Leave space for questions and comments.
- Find out, if all the participants intend to stay for the whole 16 hours.

Part two: Group activity: The Chair

First, we ask the participants to stand up from their chairs and arrange them so that there are always two chairs facing each other. Then, we explain the rules:

Participants move around the room, while music is playing. When music stops, each person sits at the closest chair (so that they form pairs facing each other). We the instruct them to shake hands and introduce themselves. Then, they will discuss topics listed below. One person will speak for one minute and then the other one will do the same. The facilitator will notify the couples when their minute is up.

Topics to discuss:

1. Many teachers complain that communication with Roma parents is difficult.
2. 80% of children attending practical schools are Roma.
3. Parents are the only ones responsible for their children's' education.

At the end:

We instruct each participant to introduce his/her "opponent": what's his name, what

interesting arguments did he use etc.

In the end, we invite the participants to share their thought on the topics. If situation allows it, we let them speak without commenting.

We ask the participants to put the chairs in a circle and invite each of them to introduce themselves: what is their experience with this topic (if he/she is a parent, how old are his/her children, if he/she works in the education sector etc.)

Part three: Participants' expectations

Materials required:

- post-its of different colours (yellow, blue, green)
- pens
- flipchart entitled "Mosaic of Expectations".

Each participant gets 3 post-its. On a yellow post-it, they write, how they would like to feel during the training and what kind of feelings they would like to experience. On a blue post-it, they write, what they would like to learn during the training or what kind of knowledge and skills they would like to gain. On a green post-it, they finish the sentence: *I don't want/like...* When they finish, they put their post-its on the flipchart with the name "Mosaic of Expectations".

At the end of the second day of the training, the facilitator comments and reflects on information obtained during the activity "Mosaic of Expectations".

Session 2

Mind map: Problems facing Roma in Czech educational

Outcomes:

- Think about the problems that Roma face in the Czech Republic with regards to education and also about the causes of those problems.
- Uncover the various connections and links among the problems.

- Learn to analyse the given problem and express one's thoughts.

Materials required:

Flipchart papers, multi-coloured markers for each group

Description of implementation:

It is a group activity. The facilitator explains the principle of creating a mind map. He also writes down the topic on a paper and makes sure that everyone understands it. He explains that the topic is the conflict or friction areas facing Roma in our educational system and also defining main problems that Roma face in education.

The participants then create a mind map in groups of 4-5. It is essential to give enough time to define the main problems.

When that is done, the groups will try to depict the links between the various terms by a different coloured marker – which terms are connected, which are subordinate, which are superordinate. These links can be depicted by connecting lines. If the participants think of other terms to add, they can also write them down.

After a while, the facilitator instructs the groups to circle all the terms or problems, which are on the side of teachers or “the system”, with a red marker. With a blue marker, they circle the problems that they feel are on the side of parents or pupils (i.e. Roma families).

Then, the facilitator asks a spokesperson for each group to present their mind map. After the end of each presentation, other groups are encouraged to comment, add on or discuss this presentation. The facilitator steps in only when something is unclear, but he/she needs to make sure that the participants stick to the topic and they do not share their personal stories at this point.

Common questions for reflection:

- Was it easy to decide on who is responsible for a problem, if it is the educational system or the parents? Is it even possible to separate that? What were you most hesitant about?
- Which problems relate solely to the Roma? Which relate to socially disadvantaged children (social, not ethnic factor – possibly needs explanation)?

- Which points can a school work on and improve?
- What are the things that Roma parents and children can improve?

The facilitator assures the participants that they will have a chance to return to all the important conclusions of this activity and discuss them later in the course. He will reference other parts of the course's programme while doing so.

Session 3

Effects of social exclusion on the educational path of children

Outcomes:

- Distinguishing between problems caused by social exclusion and problems tied to Roma ethnicity
- Familiarizing with the causes and consequences of social exclusion, which brings about specific circumstances even for education of children
- Learning about the effects of social exclusion on educational path of children
- Learning about historical and present position of Roma in the Czech Republic with regards to education

Materials required:

PC, projector, PowerPoint presentation

Description of implementation:

Lecture with presentation

At the beginning of the session, it is important to make a distinction between two factors:

1. Children's' educational path is negatively affected by social disadvantages.
2. There were or there are cases of discrimination of Roma children in Czech educational system on the basis of their ethnicity.

Part one: Consequences of social disadvantages on education

Lecture with presentation

The facilitator tries to incorporate some of the problems listed in the previous session (mind map) into his lecture.

Part two: Roma in Czech educational system in the past and today: cases of discrimination

Lecture with presentation

The facilitator tries to incorporate some of the problems listed in the previous session (mind map) into his lecture.

Session 4

Communication between school and parents

Outcomes:

- Participants describe specific problematic situation, which they get into while communicating with the school.
- Participants familiarize themselves with the basic elements of human communication.
- Participants learn about techniques leading to problem-free communication.
- Participants share (with each other and with the facilitator) successful proven forms of cooperation between school and parents.

Materials required:

PC, projector, PowerPoint presentation

Description of implementation:

The first part of the session involves working in pairs, the second part is a lecture.

Part One: Outlining communication situations

Work in pairs

The facilitator instructs the participants to make pairs.

The goal is to describe one or two specific communication situation involving a parent, which was interesting or difficult to handle. The pairs will first be given time to exchange stories

and situations, but they have to come up with a very brief description of each situation. For example: Parent complains about pupil's assessment; Teacher criticizes parent, because his/her child is not well groomed etc.

The facilitator then explains the purpose of collecting these examples of communication. It will be used to demonstrate the workings of relational signals in communication, how our brain processes them and what kind of effect it has on mutual understanding.

In the end, each pair is encouraged to briefly share one communication situation with the rest of the group. Depending on the number of participants, it is not necessary that everybody does so.

Part two: Lecture with presentation: Communication between parents and school

Part three: Closing reflection

The facilitator distributes papers and ask the participants to each write down one thing that could improve communication between them and the teacher of their children. This is followed by group discussion.

Day 2

Parents role in children's' education

Main points from the first day

Open questions: Czech educational system

Participants divide into groups. Each group then tries to outline a diagram of the Czech educational system – different stages and levels with the respective age of children.

When needed, the facilitator completes the outline. Everyone then tries to think of the various dates of enrolment or entrance exams, where to find information on them and how to prepare.

The facilitator also adds information concerning other types of education: preschool and afterschool education and activities on local and regional level.

Session one

Parents as Partners in Learning: Six Principles

Outcomes:

- Explore the similarities and differences between children and adult learners.
- Develop problem-solving skills for common early learning issues.
- Helping participants to think about the following questions:
 - How do we learn?
 - What helped you learn?
 - How do children learn? In what ways is your learning similar to childrens' learning?

Materials required:

Piece of paper, card with questions / six parenting principles

Description of implementation:

Part one: Activity in Pairs - Your Adult Learning Experiences

Each participant will turn to his/her neighbour and discuss a personal experience of his/her learning process.

Each pair will obtain a card with key questions:

- What were you learning at home?
- Who was helping you? How did they help you?
- Where were you learning? How did the physical environment look like?
- Why were you learning?
- What made this a successful learning experience?
- Were there any obstacles to your success?
- How did your parents support you? Who else supported you?

Participants can also share their experiences with the whole group. The facilitator should then ask participants how these ideas can guide them in parenting.

Part two:

Write the following basic beliefs about parent learning on a piece of flipchart paper.

- Parents can direct their own learning.
- Parents have strong, individual learning styles.
- Parents need to share their experiences.
- Parents need information about parenting.
- Parents need a balance of information and support.
- Parents need to apply what they have learned.

Working in small groups, assign one principle to each group and ask them to discuss the following questions:

- What do these principles mean?
- Do you agree with these principles?
- Is there any other principle you would add?

Then, each group should make a brief presentation highlighting the main points of their discussion. After these presentations, the facilitator will highlight the key points and add any additional information as necessary.

Part three: Final reflexion - Common discussion

The facilitator asks the parents to identify their information needs. What do they want to know? The parents should name topics that interest them and then develop a meeting agenda that addresses their needs.

The facilitator tries to balance topics so they focus on the child as well as the parents.

Source:

Landers, C., Hayes, K., David, J. (2005). Budapest: Preparing Parent Facilitators A Training Guide International Step by Step Association.

Session two

Poems and Songs

Outcomes:

- Learn to use songs and rhymes for learning.
- Contribute to pedagogization of the environment in Roma families through working with songs.

Materials required:

Piece of paper

Description of implementation:

Part one:

The facilitator asks the participants for suggestions on how parents can use songs and rhymes to enhance early literacy and writes down the responses.

Then, the facilitator reads this text to the participants:

„Poetry paints verbal pictures for children, tells them stories, and expresses emotions that they are feeling. Poetry is a unique use of language. The rhythm of poetry, and sometimes its rhymes, provides young children with the predictability that is important in their development and understanding of language and literacy. Poetry helps children develop auditory differentiation and provides pleasurable listening experiences with sound, repetition, and imagery. Kids particularly love nonsense verse and the marvellous sound of words that rhyme.“

Part two:

The facilitator distributes and reviews the handout “Learning through Poems and Songs.” Note that this handout can also be copied and distributed to parents during one of the parent group meetings.

Learning Through Poems and Songs

Counting:

- Recognize and count spaces between words
- Number of words
- Number of letters

Comparing:

Two poems:

- What is similar
- What is different
- Compare the number of lines and the number of words
- Look for words that appear in both poems
- What words begin with the same sound

Rhyming Words:

- Pause, ask child to fill in the rhyme
- Point to words as you read
- Make up new words
- Find a word that begins with the letter . . .

Part three:

The participants then have to come up with 10 to 15 Romani songs or poems (if that’s not possible, Czech songs or poems for kids can also be used) appropriate for young children that can be included in the materials.

Facilitator shows how to link the above teaching strategies to one of these songs or poems.

Part four:

Participants divide into pairs and choose one of the poems or songs selected. The pairs then enact a conversation between a parent and a child using the strategies suggested in the handout. Then, two to three volunteers show their conversations to the whole group. The rest of the group has to identify the strategies used during the role-play. Try to put the stress mainly on the opportunities for using open-ended questions in songs and poems.

Part five:

The facilitator reads or explains the benefits of rhyming.

Rhyming

The ability to recognize or create a rhyme is highly important for learning to recognize phones in words. Encourage parents to read and recite poems and rhymes and sing songs with children. It is recommended to start from easier words, rhymes and forms and continue to the harder one. It's good to print out one specific poem, rhyme or song for the parents (if possible, print pictures accompanying the story as well).

The easiest way to work with these materials is to read them aloud and learn them by heart. It is possible to work with the individual rhymes, songs or poems further. For example, it is possible to repeat them together with a repetitive task, explain the story, paint with them (using the story to paint or draw simple shapes when the poem is repeated). Teaching the children to recognize the rhymes is one of the more difficult tasks. Similarly, pre-school children can also be asked to come up with rhymes.

In the end, the group will discuss the possibilities of implementation and the benefits of these methods of learning with children.

Sources:

Landers, C., Hayes, K., David, J. (2005). Budapest: Preparing Parent Facilitators A Training Guide International Step by Step Association.

Varianty (kol): Říkáme si společně / Vakeras jekhetane. Metodika pro podporu předškolního vzdělávání. Příprava na čtení a psaní pro děti ze sociálně znevýhodněných rodin.

Session 3

Advice for parents on how to learn with their children

Outcomes:

- Gain info from a text on how to learn with children
- Learn to draw important information from a text and try to sort them on known, new and credible information

Materials required:

Cards with advice for parents for each participants, Table - I.N.S.E.R.T. worksheet for each participant, writing materials

Description of implementation:

1. The facilitator poses questions: “How do you learn with children? What works? What does not work?”
2. Explanation of the method I.N.S.E.R.T.

The facilitator instructs the participants, that they will receive a text, which they have to mark using the I.N.S.E.R.T. method.

He/she then explains the method, especially the fact that the marks will help quick orientation in the text and writing down important pieces of information, regardless of whether they are new or known, if we agree or disagree.

✓ Tick the passage, if it confirms, what you know, what you think or what you.

– Write a minus, if an information is contradictory to what you know. You can also use this mark for contradictions with the text or disagreeing with a method or a piece of advice.

+ Write a plus, if a piece of information is new and useful to you.

? Write a question mark, if you do not understand, if you wish to learn more or if you are confused.

! Write an exclamation point if you had a moment of surprise or sudden realization (Aha! Moment) while reading a piece of information.

The facilitator explains that it is not necessary to mark every piece of information with the text. It is possible to give, more or less, two marks per paragraph. However, it is crucial to give marks to the text when one is reading it for the first time.

3. The facilitator gives Cards with advice for parents to each of the participants and instruct them to read it carefully and mark it using the I.N.S.E.R.T. method.
4. After everyone is done reading, the facilitator instructs all to write down important pieces of information for each mark in the table.

✓ (I knew this)	⊕ (This is new to me)	— (This is contradictory to what I know)	? (I would like to know more)	! (Exclamation point means an Aha! or Eureka moment, a sudden realization)

5. The participants share the content of their tables. They then discuss suitable methods for supporting children's learning together with the facilitator.

Session 4

Learning types

Outcomes:

- Explore the similarities and differences between children and adult learners.
- Increase ability of Roma parents to learn with their children through discovering learning types of them and their children.

Materials required:

Worksheet “How to recognize different learning types – test diagnosis
Tables: How to recognize learning types and How to work with learning types
PC, projector

Description of implementation:

1. The facilitator asks:

- How does your child learn? How does he behave while learning? Is he/she calm or likes to move around?
- When did you learn something (for example: driving lessons, courses, university etc.)
- What do you prefer while learning? What helps you learn?

The facilitator explains that our way of learning differs depending on our learning type. He then does a diagnosis of the group, in which the participants place themselves on a line in the classroom depending on how much they agree with the given characteristics. They can either:

Completely agree – Partially agree – Rather disagree – Completely disagree

Based on the answers, the facilitator then divides the group into three learning types: **visual** – **auditory** – **kinaesthetic**. The three groups can then share their ideas on why they answered to the test in such a way, what helps them learn etc.

The facilitator then gives a lecture on learning types and on the different channels of reception that various types of people prefer. He/she will show a table “**How to recognize learning types**”.

He/she will then ask the participants:

- How can we recognize each learning type?
- What are your children’s’ learning styles? Have you noticed them?
- How can you learn with children of a specific learning type?

The facilitator then shows recommendations for how to learn with children of specific learning types and gives a lecture.

The lesson will be closed by a group discussion.

Final reflection:

Main messages from the second day.

Main messages from the whole training.

The facilitator invites each participants to share the most important information they take from the training. The participants are also invited to state their discomfort, or their disagreement with the content, if there are any.