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Family Literacy  
Works!

**COMPARATIVE RESEARCH  
ANALYSIS ON FAMILY  
LITERACY PRACTICES  
in  
BULGARIA  
MACEDONIA  
PORTUGAL  
ROMANIA  
SLOVENIA  
WITHIN THE “FAMILY  
LITERACY WORKS!” PROJECT**

**“Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library  
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## Contents

CHAPTER I: Introductory Section.....	2
CHAPTER II: Defining “Family Literacy” Concept.....	4
CHAPTER III: Research methodology .....	18
CHAPTER IV: Survey Results.....	20
1. The profile of the implementing organizations.....	20
2. Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the programs) .....	21
3. Program duration.....	22
4. The funding sources and programs .....	23
5. The context in which the programs were implemented .....	25
6. Goals and objectives of family literacy programs.....	26
7. Target groups of family literacy programs.....	31
8. Types of learning activities .....	33
9. Resources .....	37
10. Location.....	38
11. Language .....	38
12. Family literacy programs facilitators .....	39
13. Results of literacy programs.....	45
14. Monitoring and evaluation .....	48
15. Impact of programs .....	48
16. Conclusions .....	51
CHAPTER V: Findings and Recommendations.....	56
CHAPTER VI: Good Family Literacy Practice Examples.....	65
BULGARIA .....	65
MACEDONIA .....	80
PORTUGAL.....	84
ROMANIA.....	90
SLOVENIA.....	108

1

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## CHAPTER I: Introductory Section

Literacy is considered a factor in the economic competitiveness of a country. People with better literacy are more aware of the world and of themselves, better at understanding new ideas and change, better at judging the value of things; they have better health, higher income, and better participation in civic life than people with lower literacy skills. However, in most of the countries involved in this project (Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Slovenia) the reading literacy rates of children aged 10 and 15 are worrying. A substantial proportion of pupils in Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia (around 35% or higher) are low performing readers, according to PIRLS and PISA reading achievement studies conducted since 2000. At best, these students can read simple texts, retrieve explicit information, or make straightforward inferences, but they are not able to deal with long or complex texts, or interpret beyond what is explicitly stated in the text.

A variable used in the international comparative reading assessments is the number of pupils whose parents have positive attitudes towards reading (like or somewhat like reading), which is also lower in these three countries than the EU average. The importance of parental attitudes to reading is shown by the fact that, for instance, in Bulgaria there are huge differences in reading performance at grade 4 between children whose parents like to read (average score 563) and those who do not (average score 482). As for the other two countries of our project, the reading performance of Portuguese students has improved significantly in the last decade, whereas that of the Slovenian students has decreased, raising concern among educational policy-makers. While low reading literacy rates are not so much a cause for concern in Portugal, where significant relative improvements have been recorded, the early school leaving rate is at a worrying around 19%.

There is a growing body of evidence that family literacy initiatives have long-term, positive impacts on the life chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. “Family literacy” describes the everyday experience of language and literacy within the family, the result of interactions between parent(s) and child, child and siblings. It is also used to describe initiatives, interventions, provision or projects aimed at stimulating, developing or supplementing these interactions, aiming to reduce the early transfer of inequalities. Evaluations of family literacy programs in Turkey and Ireland have demonstrated that these interventions work for disadvantaged groups. Parents from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to lack the confidence and/or skills to become more involved in their children’s education and to believe that education is not their



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domain. Family literacy programs build the confidence of such parents to engage with their child's literacy development and to improve their home learning environment.

Family literacy, nonetheless, is a marginal domain in many respects. The Eurydice report on Teaching Reading in Europe makes very limited reference to family literacy, probably also because research in this field is limited. Prior to 2011 there were no references to the family in EU policy documents that focused on literacy. But now the family – and family literacy – have a rising profile in policy, with the vital role of family literacy within the lifelong learning agenda increasingly recognized. All literacy-related publications and directives now include some focus on the family. The influential 2012 report of the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy mentioned “family literacy” 13 times in 103 pages.

For good quality, effective family literacy programs, well trained Family literacy facilitators (FLF) are necessary. We know from a rich body of research that teachers' (in our case literacy facilitators) skills make the biggest difference – it is widely accepted and well documented by numerous publications of the International Literacy Association that the best approach when it comes to teaching reading is improving the knowledge and skills of all teachers. While we cannot at this time directly influence the initial training of teachers or librarians to become skilled family literacy facilitators, we aim to contribute to excellent family literacy programs by:

- identifying good practice in the field of family literacy in Europe;
- defining the core competences of family literacy facilitators (FLF);
- developing and piloting a coherent FLF training program (curriculum, methodology, learning materials).

This project is best achieved within a transnational partnership as we would like to capitalize on experiences related to family literacy initiatives in a diversity of cultural contexts, and to propose a FLF profile and training program that is functional for a broader area than that of one country.



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## CHAPTER II: Defining “Family Literacy” Concept

### LITERACY - DEFINITION

**Defining literacy** in our changing world is not an easy task as the concept is so complex and dynamic. **Literacy** has been defined as a social and cultural phenomenon that develops and is practiced in the context of social interactions for social purposes across the lifespan. It was once defined as the ability to read and write and use arithmetic,<sup>1</sup> but, over the years, it was proven that the power of literacy lies in a person’s capacity to apply these skills to effectively connect, interpret and discern the intricacies of the world in which they live. The modern term's meaning has been expanded to include the ability to use language, numbers, images, computers, and other basic means to understand, communicate, gain useful knowledge and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture. The concept of literacy is expanding to include skills to access knowledge through technology and ability to assess complex contexts.<sup>2</sup>

Being considered a set of neutral and objective skills independent of the social context or ideology, literacy involves much more than encoding and decoding symbols. Literacy extends beyond the acquisition of reading and writing skills. It entails the ability to use these skills in a socially appropriate context. Now, being literate means being able to read and write at a level to be successful in today's world and also being proficient at math, and knowing how to solve problems and make decisions. The very notion of literacy is also evolving to include the skills required to function in a technological society. For example, literacy has come to be used to refer to a wider domain of activities, from media literacy and computer literacy to citizenship literacy.<sup>3</sup>

#### **The history of the concept and levels of literacy**

Since 1948, when Universal Declaration of Human Rights defined education as a fundamental right, literacy has also been considered something to which every person is entitled, a right primarily understood as a set of technical skills: reading, writing and calculating, therefore promoting literacy was fundamentally a matter of enabling

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<sup>1</sup> Literate." Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 19 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/literate>>.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO. *"Education for All: A Global Monitoring Report"* (PDF). UNESCO. UNESCO. p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-literacy-a-review-of-programs-and-critical-perspectives>



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individuals to acquire these skills, irrespective of the contents and methods of their provision. The first internationally agreed-upon definition of literacy, one which is still often quoted, stems from the UNESCO Recommendation of 1958 concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics. It states that a literate person is one who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life. This is known as **basic or baseline literacy**.

The 1960s and 1970s brought attention to the ways in which literacy is linked with socio-economic development, and the concept of “**functional literacy**” was born. It allied education and especially literacy with social and economic development and expanded the understanding of literacy beyond the imparting of basic technical skills (World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, Teheran, 1965), if only with a view to increased productivity. According to the often-used definition from 1970, stated by UNESCO, a functionally literate person is one who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for the effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community’s development.<sup>4</sup>

However, definitions and understandings of literacy have broadened considerably over the past fifty years. The definition of literacy employed in the Education for All 2000 Assessment is the following: “Literacy is the ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one’s daily life. It involves a continuum of reading and writing skills, and often includes also basic and arithmetic skills (numeracy).” But as this definition was not broad enough to capture the full complexity and diversity of literacy across the spectrum of its acquisition and application, in 2003, was formulated (UNESCO) an operational definition that states: “Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.” This represents the third level of literacy, also known as **multiple literacy**.

In United States of America, the National Literacy Act of 1991 defines literacy as “an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.”

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<sup>4</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001362/136246e.pdf>



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## FAMILY LITERACY - DEFINITION

Drawing on these definitions of literacy and on the work of sociologists and anthropologists who have studied the concept of family, *family literacy* recognizes parents as the child's first teacher and considers the literacy of the parent to be crucial to the development of the literacy of the child. Although there is no single and officially accepted definition of the term *family literacy*, it can be thought of as the set of oral, graphic, and symbolic means by which family members exchange and retain information and meaning. It can also be thought of as the general level at which family members use their writing, reading, computing, communication, and problem-solving skills to accomplish the various tasks of their daily lives.<sup>5</sup>

*Family literacy* is a complex concept with multiple dimensions, which encompasses all literacy activities that take place within the home, not just school-like activities, is an umbrella term often used to describe a wide range of programs involving family members and literacy activities.

While *family literacy* is a relatively recent approach to promoting literacy and a culture of learning, particularly in disadvantaged families; the term *family literacy* was first used by the US educator Denny Taylor in 1983 to describe literacy learning activities involving both children and their parents. Yet *family literacy* is in fact based on the most ancient of educational traditions: intergenerational learning. Intergenerational learning practices are rooted in all cultures, and educational programmes with literacy components involving families are found in all world regions, although these are not always referred to as *family literacy*.<sup>6</sup>

The United States Congress defines *family literacy* as services provided to participants on a voluntary basis that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family (such as eliminating or reducing welfare dependency) and that integrate all of the following activities:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.
- Equipping parents to partner with their children in learning.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- Appropriate instruction for children of parents receiving parent literacy services.

Worldwide, the term family literacy is used in several ways:

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<sup>5</sup> Benjamin, Ann; Lord, Jerome. *Family Literacy – Directions in Research and Implications for Practice*— U.S. Department of Education, 1996

<sup>6</sup> [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1479&context=utk\\_IACE-browseall](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1479&context=utk_IACE-browseall)



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- (1) to describe the study of literacy in the family,
- (2) to describe a set of interventions related to literacy development of young children, and
- (3) to refer to a set of programs designed to enhance the literacy skills of more than one family member<sup>7</sup>.

It is in the third sense of this relatively new concept that we aim to discuss hereinafter. We intend to focus on intergenerational family literacy that combines the effects of early childhood interventions, early parenting strategies, increased adult literacy, and enhanced parental support for children's school related functioning in order to achieve the greatest impact on literacy development.

As a method of education, family literacy is not just about reading and writing. Its purpose is to develop stronger relationships between parents and their children and getting parents involved in their children's education. Parents who are involved in family literacy programs are also improving their own literacy skills and literate parents are better able to support the literacy development of their children, therefore it is beneficial for all family members. It is about building stronger families and healthy communities. It is about increasing parental involvement and students' academic achievement.

Since family literacy has become a catchall phrase for a variety of activities, it is essential that we make a distinction between the concepts of *family literacy* and *family reading* as they are not identical although they are open to the public and are much needed opportunities for families to read together. Examples of family reading activities are: family story hours, book distribution projects, book discussion groups. But the term *family literacy* refers to programs where agencies and organizations partner together to provide coordinated services to both parents and their children through the following four components: adult literacy, early childhood literacy, parent education and intergenerational literacy activities. Family literacy services are offered to families where at least parent and at least one child would benefit from literacy instruction. Therefore, family reading is often a piece of a comprehensive family literacy program.

## **FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS**

Family literacy is also referred to as *intergenerational literacy*, in consequence family literacy programs focus on developing literacy within the family as a whole and

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<sup>7</sup> Britto, Pia Rebello; Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. *Beyond Shared Book Reading: Dimensions of Home Literacy and Low-Income African American Preschoolers' Skills*, 2001



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are driven by holistic approaches to education as they recognize the reciprocal nature of parent-child relationships. Programs provide both parent-initiated and child-initiated activities to support development of those relationships and to increase the motivation to learn for both parent and child.

Comprehensive family literacy services provide a holistic, fully integrated, family-focused approach, providing parents and children most in need of improving their literacy skills with intensive, frequent, and long-term educational and non-educational services. Family literacy services make sustainable changes in a family by integrating **all** of the following activities:

- **Adult Education:** designed to extend basic academic level, think critically and creatively, solve problems, set and achieve goals, and acquire successful workplace and interpersonal skills.
- **Childhood Education:** designed to promote the growth and development of young children and to engage parents in their child's educational program in order to foster meaningful involvement that will be maintained throughout the child's educational career.
- **Parent Education:** provides instruction on how children grow, develop, and learn. It addresses issues critical to family well-being, connects parents with community resources, and provides opportunities for parents to network and develop mutual support systems.
- **Interactive Parent/Child Activities:** provides parents and children the opportunity to share their newly developed literacy experiences. Parents and children interact together, enriching their relationship through reciprocal learning that takes place, enabling them to become true partners in education.<sup>8</sup>

Family literacy programs are organized efforts to improve the literacy levels of educationally disadvantaged parents and children. Since each family literacy program adapts its goals and services to the population it serves as well as to different definitions of family literacy, there are a wide variety of family literacy programs in many different settings.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it is often taken into account the cultural background of the families involved in the program. Although family literacy programs vary in design, most share a philosophy that literacy improvement is best accomplished through a shared social process. What all of these programs have in common is that they combine elements of

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family\\_literacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_literacy)

<sup>9</sup> DeBruin-Parecki, A., Paris, S. G., & Seidenberg, J. (1997). Family literacy: Examining practice and issues of effectiveness. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*



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adult and community education with preschool or primary education to enhance the literacy, numeracy and language skills of both adults and children, and to help teachers and parents prevent school failure and drop-out.

In 1990, R.S. Nickse developed a typology to explain and categorize the various designs of family literacy programs:

- direct adult-direct children (programs that provide broad services directly to parents (mothers and/or fathers) and children, either together or separately).
- indirect adult-indirect children (adults and children participate together in family literacy activities; such as book talks or read-aloud sessions at public libraries. These refer to activities that are developed in the community or other spaces without directly involving the children and adults, but that have an indirect impact on both; for example, an awareness-raising media campaign about domestic violence).
- direct adult- indirect children (focus on improving the literacy abilities of adults with the belief that the adults, in turn, will positively influence their children's literacy acquisition. These programs provide services directly to parents (mothers and/or fathers) with the aim of developing their reading and writing skills and indirectly those of their children).
- indirect adult-direct children (the children are the main focus for literacy instruction with adult involvement encouraged but optional.<sup>10</sup> These programs focus directly on the development of children's reading and writing skills by using the parents (mothers and/or fathers) as 'instruments' and indirect receptors of change).

Even though families, family literacy, and family literacy programs have been defined in different and sometimes conflicting ways, the common thread that runs through all family literacy programs is to strengthen intergenerational literacy and help parents learn that they are their children's first teachers and that they can be successful in this role.

**A detailed research on different family literacy programs around the world showed their extremely wide variety.** Some of them focus on children's academic success with parents seen as agents for promoting their children's success in school, some work with family members to improve their literacy so they can meet their own personal and family goals, some focus on a family member and hope the individual will carry benefits to others in the family, some work with parents and children separately, some focus on parent involvement with the schools as a way for parents to support their

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<sup>10</sup> Nickse, R.S. (1990). *Family and intergenerational literacy programs: An update of "The noises of literacy."* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 327736).



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children's learning and success as well as to improve their own literacy and some focus on the *family as a unit*. It is the last types that interests us the most. **In this work, we refer to intergenerational or multigenerational literacy programs as programs that include more than two members within a single family (typically a parents and a young child) around a set of teaching and learning approaches.**

Many different forms of family literacy programs have been developed among certain language and cultural groups over the years. They were designed to meet the diverse needs of different groups, therefore there is no universal model; a diverse range of policies, strategies and programs based on the intergenerational learning approach exists at the international level. This diversity is due to the different aims and objectives of such programs, to the different contexts, target groups, and institutional settings and capacities. Yet intergenerational and family programs are varied in design on several dimensions, they most share a philosophy, conscious or not, that literacy improvement is best accomplished through a shared social process; this notion is strongly supported by research.

***Since these programs are varied in themes, administration and design, are in the first generation and are sponsored by a variety of different initiatives, they are difficult to identify.***

Despite these differences, we can discuss the common elements (with regard to the aims and objectives, design, target groups, providers and locations, financing) of these programs bearing in mind that they all bring together two components of the education system: early childhood and/or primary education and adult and community education.

High-quality family literacy programs share certain aims and objectives:

- ***building a literate community*** by mobilizing learning resources and tutoring networks consisting of volunteers from schools, families and communities to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of students and prepare adults to succeed as parents and members of the community. These programs aim at encouraging and valuing all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal). Programs that operate with these goals often produce a variety of reading activities, such as reading aloud to children and asking them specific types of questions as they read, or reading in adult groups using books that parents may then read to their children.

- ***enhancing bonds and improving relationships between children, young people and adults*** i.e. breaking down divisions between generations. Some programs aim specifically to reconnect the generations in positive ways. Children and adults are resources for one another. For instance, some projects draw on the resources of children



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for English and computer facility, while tapping the memories, knowledge, and stories of adults. Adults provide the material that children enter onto the computer and illustrate; in this way, literacy is advanced while generations are connected.

• ***strengthening connections between families, schools and community-based institutions***; they seek to break down barriers between learning in different contexts and overcoming artificial barriers between home, school and community. With this as a goal, parents learn about school, but school personnel also learn about families, enabling schools to better respond to the realities of the communities they serve<sup>11</sup>. Another goal for some programs is to enable adults to develop a critical understanding of schooling to "evaluate and rehearse appropriate responses and develop networks for individual or group advocacy"<sup>12</sup>. Such programs aim primarily at encouraging or teaching parents 1) to provide a home environment that supports children's learning needs; 2) to volunteer in the schools as aides or other roles; 3) to monitor children's progress and communicate with school personnel; and 4) to tutor children at home to reinforce work done in school<sup>13</sup>. A successful program ends by vitalizing neighborhood networks, ultimately leading to social cohesion and community development.

The goals of the program will determine the program **design**. The design takes into account the characteristics of the participants targeted as well as appropriate activities for working with these learners. With regard to the **target groups**, intergenerational literacy programs deal with all age groups (children, adults and elders) at the same time, the participants being members of the same family usually in difficulty (illiterate or low literate parents, low income families, immigrants and refugees who need to master the national language, incarcerated parents, ethnic, religious and racial minority families).

The variety of these programs also lies in fact that they are run as partnerships between different institutions and/or organizations with the involvement of governmental or local authorities. Programs can be **initiated by** and can be **located in** kindergartens, schools, prisons, churches, libraries, private agencies, community centers. They are funded by both the public and private sector, through legislation at the federal and state level in some countries, through special projects monies and grants, and from foundation

<sup>11</sup> McCaleb, S. (1994). *Building communities of learners: A collaboration among teachers, students, families, and community*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. (EDRS No. ED 397 001)

<sup>12</sup> Auerbach, E.R. (1992). *Making meaning, making change*. Washington, DC & McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics & Delta Systems. (Available from Delta Systems at 1-800-323-8270), p.35

<sup>13</sup> Simich-Dudgeon, C. (1986). *Parent involvement and the education of limited-English proficient students*. ERIC Digest. Washington, DC: Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics. (EDRS No. ED279 205)



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sources.

## OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATIONS AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS IN USA AND CANADA

In the **United States**, family literacy programs have been supported by federal and national legislation and funded from federal appropriations. Continued federal support for family literacy initiatives has helped to legitimize the concept of family literacy and educational programs aimed at families as units rather than adults as parents or children as literacy learners. Perhaps the best example of this federal support is *Even Start*, first enacted in 1988 as a federal demonstration project that gives families access to training and support to create a literate home environment and enhance the academic achievement of their children. The program aims to help children to reach their full potential as learners (early childhood education), provide literacy training for parents (adult education) and help parents to become full partners in education of their children (parenting education).<sup>14</sup>

According to the legislation in place during the time of the evaluation, the Even Start program was intended to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. The program shall be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services.

If at first, family literacy programs were defined as having only three components (stated above), later on the researchers' stress that a comprehensive program should include a fourth component: intergenerational activities (Interactive Parent/Child Activities - PACT), actually the most important of them. In the United States, the four-component two-generation family literacy model was established in a federal definition in 1998: "*The term 'family literacy services' means services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family* and that integrate all of the following activities:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and children.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/evenstartformula/index.html>



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- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.”

The first to pioneer and test the four-component family literacy model was **NCFL - National Center for Families**. Since its foundation in 1989, this center has helped improve literacy and lives by engaging all family members - parents, children, caregivers, and extended family members - in reciprocal learning in both place-based and digital environments. This effort has resulted in a network of more than 330 sites and 150,000 educators in 39 states helping more than one million vulnerable families learn together. NCFL advances literacy and education by developing, implementing, and documenting innovative and promising two-generation practices, networks, and learning tools.<sup>15</sup> "NCFL's mission is to address United States' literacy challenges by engaging all family members in learning, with a primary focus on parents and children living in poverty. NCFL views education as a family affair, every parent as an asset and every family as a resource. They lead and work with learners, administrators, teachers, librarians, policymakers, philanthropists and advocates.

The leading advocate for family literacy in the USA is the **Barbara Bush Foundation** (<http://barbarabush.org>), that, over the past 25 years, has sponsored 1,500 family literacy programs in 50 states. Another example of foundation that supports these kind of programs is **Wish You Well Foundation** ([www.wishyouwellfoundation.org](http://www.wishyouwellfoundation.org)), whose mission is "supporting family literacy in the United States by fostering and promoting the development and expansion of new and existing literacy and educational programs." The Foundation makes donations to programs and projects that aid in this stated mission.

The largest and the most effective family literacy program in America is **READ ALOUD AMERICA – RAR**, an innovative family program that brings parents and children together for six sessions during one school semester and motivates them to read. The program is conducted at host schools which provide meeting space, volunteers, and logistical support and is coordinated by a nonprofit organization also named read Aloud America founded in Hawaii in 1995. Hundreds of volunteers of Read Aloud America have read to audiences totaling over 338,341, 90 Schools, 154 Programs at Hawaii's elementary and middle public schools. (<http://www.readaloudamerica.org/>)

<sup>15</sup> <http://familieslearning.org/>



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After a deep research on what family literacy means in the USA, we can conclude that in the **American** local programs, **the theoretical concept of intergenerational family literacy emerges in practice in techniques that stress interaction:** paired reading, read-along and story hours, peer group discussions of reading with practice, variety of other socially oriented techniques, teaching technical skills for improved writing, nutrition, parenting and child development, computer skills, and encouragement for positive changes in attitudes. Moreover, most family literacy programs are targeted towards families with a lower socio-economic or migrant background (e.g. **Reach Out and Read – ROR** program carried out with the help of volunteering pediatricians and pediatric nurses) or American Indian families (**The Family and Child Education – FACE**, sponsored by the Office of Indian Education Programs; these programs address the literacy needs of Native American Indians and Alaska Native families. Whether offered in the home or in a school, educational and parenting classes reflect the cultural traditions of the families and of the community).

In Alberta, **Canada**, the **Centre for Family Literacy** was founded effectively in 2001, but this Centre assumed all the programs and work of the Prospects Literacy Association, that was established, in February 1980, as the first volunteer tutor program in the region. It had the primary goal of matching tutors with adults who needed help to develop reading, writing and math skills. Prospects piloted its first family literacy program in Edmonton in 1993. Within five years, the organization served more than 2,500 families through hundreds of programs. It also developed strong partnerships for program delivery with local organizations such as health centers, family resource centers, libraries and schools. This growth, along with significant community interest, led to the idea of developing a center that would focus on literacy development in the family context.

Therefore, the Center for Family Literacy was the first of its kind in Alberta and Canada and it is recognized for its innovative programs and services. Its mission is to build, develop, and improve literacy with families and communities. In continuing partnerships with many other organizations, the Centre provides programs for thousands of adults and children each year. ([http://www.familit.ca/programs\\_and\\_projects/](http://www.familit.ca/programs_and_projects/))

This Centre has developed many successful programs like: **Books Offer Our Kids’ Success B.O.O.K.S**, **Classrooms on Wheels C.O.W.**, **Learning Together**, programs that focus on developing literacy within the family as a whole. Their principal aim is to develop stronger relationships between parents and their children and getting parents involved in their children's education. As this Centre also provide professional



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development and training for hundreds of literacy practitioners, all these programs benefit of trained facilitators.

In **Toronto**, there is a network of 78 Parenting and Family Literacy Centers located in elementary schools. They are free, school-based programs for parents and caregivers with children from birth to age six. These fun, play-based programs are designed to support the child's early learning and development and are aligned with the Kindergarten program. They offer a safe, nurturing and stimulating program where children can play and parents can connect. These centers provide opportunities for: development of social, emotional, physical, cognitive and language skills; building positive connections with the local school; participation in a family literacy program that helps children develop and build essential literacy and numeracy skills; discussing parenting concerns and borrowing books from multi-lingual libraries. (<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/earlyyears/preschoolyears/parentingandfamilyliteracy.aspx>)

## OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN EUROPE

Throughout Europe, a wide variety of policies and programs have been developed in recent years with the aim of improving parents' literacy skills and/or their ability to support their own children's literacy development. In order to provide a brief overview of family literacy programs in European countries, we use as a valuable support the final report of the European Commission research project on "Ensuring early acquisition of literacy: a study on parental support"<sup>16</sup>, a study has been undertaken by the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) at the Institute of Education, University of London (IoE) in 2011. Our purpose for this chapter is to provide readers with an indicative sample of national initiatives and environments.

According to this survey, there are some European countries (Turkey, the Netherlands and the UK in particular) where there has been significant family literacy-related policy development.

**Turkey** has one of the most well developed and successful systems of family literacy policy and program integration in the world. This is a result of a number of factors, including: Turkey's early adoption and development of family literacy programs, the large body of methodologically rigorous quantitative and qualitative research conducted on those programs, the positive benefits for children and parents shown by the research, strong leadership and stewardship of programs by governmental and non-

<sup>16</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/policy/school/doc/family-literacy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/school/doc/family-literacy_en.pdf)



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governmental policy actors, and strong partnership working between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

The key family literacy NGO in Turkey is the Mother-Child Education Foundation, which engages in advocacy work and coordinates a number of programs, including the Mother-Child Education Program (MOCEP) and the Father Support program. The former is Turkey's largest family literacy initiative. It was developed in 1982 as part of a longitudinal research project known as the “Turkish Early Enrichment Project” and undertaken by Bogazici University Istanbul. The program works with socio-economically disadvantaged mothers and their children between 5 and 6 years of age who do not have access to pre-school education services and who are “at risk” because of their environmental conditions. The program has an annual target of 25,000 mothers and children. So far 6657 courses have been delivered to 292,076 mothers and children in 78 provinces in Turkey. The completion rate is 80%. The program has also been transferred to Turkish migrant families in other countries.

In the **UK**, the evidence suggests that government-funded family literacy interventions have been successful at improving child literacy amongst children in disadvantaged households. Some countries are characterized by a lack of policy coherence and direction. For example, in **Germany**, with a small number of exceptions, projects tended to come and go, with little coherent policy at national or local level to shape provision. In part this is because the Lander make education policy at a regional level. However, even at that level, only the city-state of Hamburg appears to have developed a fairly coherent family literacy program and policy. In other regions, family literacy interventions exist primarily as short-term projects, not as policy.

In the **Czech Republic**, there are no family literacy policies generated by the Czech government, but there are nationwide, non-governmental reading initiatives receives some financial support from various government departments, including the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. A relevant example would be *The Whole Czech Republic Reads to Children* campaign aimed at raising and maintaining public awareness.

In **Ireland**, family literacy is delivered by region Vocational Education Committees in partnership with adult education centers, community projects, libraries and schools. While not all local areas have family literacy programs, some, such as County Clare, boast well-established initiatives.

**Malta** has a particularly well integrated family literacy policy-program environment. A coherent policy activity began in earnest in 2001, when the government established the Foundation for Educational Services (FES). The FES was conceived as a



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policy mechanism enabling the Ministry of Education to provide, via a third party, a range of educational initiatives focused on literacy support, parental empowerment and lifelong learning. The first program, started in 2001, was called Hilti, which is Maltese for "My ability". The program had two primary objectives: to improve children's literacy skills, and to improve parents' ability to help their children develop those skills.

**Norway** is a country that has strong traditions of adult education, but do not as yet appear to have engaged in extensive family literacy policy and program development. This is supported by legislation: The Act of Primary and Secondary Education places a duty on schools to collaborate with parents, both with regard to curriculum and plans for the school.

Some Member States suffer a near or complete policy vacuum in this field. For example, **Cyprus**, where schools still generally operate a "closed doors" policy.

In **Romania** there are no child literacy education policies regarding families, there is no "coherent educational preoccupation at the national political level". However, there are some small, local family literacy projects in Romania, and the country was one of the participants in PEFaL (Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy) Network of Family Literacy Programs, which were developed as an EU Grundtvig project in 2001. PEFaL programs were developed in small areas in five other countries – England, Flemish-speaking Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, Romania. However, there have been ongoing attempts by non-governmental policy actors to develop family literacy programs. For instance, the Romanian Association for Literacy, started in 2014, the implementing of the "Reading to learn" project (funded by the American Romanian Foundation) in 6 counties from the North-East region.

Literacy policy in Romania is still not connected to the family, nor are family literacy practices seen as relevant to or by the school system. The literacy programs focus on the development of children's learning abilities in a formal context (schools, foster houses, etc.), involving children from disadvantaged social media. Family literacy programs are few and without a visible impact on the society.



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## CHAPTER III: Research methodology

“Family literacy works!” project is developed under Erasmus+, Strategic Partnerships, Key Action 2, Sector: Adult Education, Project number 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392. Its main objectives are: to achieve a comparative analysis of family literacy (FL) practices in the countries participating in the project (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia), to define the occupational profile of family literacy facilitators and to develop a curriculum and to pilot it in the partner countries.

“Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library, as the leader of the first objective stated above, with the contribution of each partner, has conducted a transnational comparative research on family literacy programs. These research objectives were:

- to identify good practice in the field of family literacy in Europe
- to inform the description of the occupational profile of a family literacy facilitator FLF in terms of specific competencies and tasks.

All partner organizations have used the following instruments for collecting data:

- Studying the existing data on family literacy programs available online
- Questionnaire – containing a series of 23 questions asked in order to get a detailed description of the programs
- The European Framework for the identification of good practices in family literacy (e.g. [www.eli-net.eu](http://www.eli-net.eu)).

The study on the existing data on family literacy led to the identification of the target groups for the delivery of the questionnaire, organizations that conduct family literacy programs (using information available on websites, social media, discussion forums or from among collaborators or previous project partners) in each partner country. The questionnaire was delivered to the previously identified organizations: public institutions (schools, libraries), non-governmental organizations, professional associations, educational centers, in order to identify different types of programs. Each partner had to have a certain *number of filled in questionnaires*, according to the size of the country: Bulgaria (7,929,000 inhabitants) – 15 questionnaires, Macedonia (2,062,294 inhabitants) – 10 questionnaires, Portugal (10,329,484 inhabitants) – 15 questionnaires, Romania (21,733,556 inhabitants) – 25 questionnaires, Slovenia (2,060,000 inhabitants) – 10 questionnaires.

The goal of the questionnaire (see Annex 1) was to identify organizations which deliver family literacy programs (highlighting the organizational profile: type, size, scope and areas of work) and their partners with their specific expertise, duration of the

programs and their funding sources, followed by a detailed description of the programs regarding: the context in which it was implemented (targeted community from social, economic, educational point of view, the community needs / problems assessment, the opportunities identified to address these needs), goal and objectives of the program, target groups, types of learning activities, location for the activities (e.g. libraries, schools, community centers, kindergartens, churches, prisons, etc.), resources used (materials, equipment), types of facilitators responsible for the activities (teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers, others), their education and training background and expertise (courses attended, previous activities, their role in previous family literacy programs) and their specific tasks, the qualitative and quantitative results of the programs, monitoring, the evaluation and the impact of the programs.

The best family literacy practices and the conclusions of the national surveys are included in this report and will make the case of the comparative analysis. The national surveys in partner countries have been conducted during December 2016 - March 2017, in Portugal, by Agrupamento de Escolas Trigal Santa Maria, in Romania, by “Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library, in Macedonia, by Training Center CES, in Bulgaria, by “Evrocentar Obuchenie I Partnyorstvo 21 VEK” EOOD, in Slovenia, by Mestna knjiznica Kranj.

Analyzing the national researches, “Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library has tried to draw some conclusions on the similarities and differences regarding the family literacy practices in partner countries, in order to inform a profile for the family literacy facilitator. The results of this analysis are presented below.

## CHAPTER IV: Survey Results

### 1. The profile of the implementing organizations (type, size, scope of work, areas of specific expertise)

As resulting from the **Romanian** national survey, the types of organizations involved in delivering family literacy programs are: public schools, public libraries and other public institutions: school inspectorates, city and county councils, public departments for social assistance and child protection, but also non-governmental organizations, including professional associations. In Romania, there is also a National Association on Literacy.

In **Portugal**, although there are a lot of organizations dealing with these issues, the partner only got answers from public institutions: schools and libraries.

Organizations involved in family literacy programs in **Slovenia** vary quite a lot in size and type, but they do share some common traits as well, such as: all are active in the field of education for children and adults.

In **Macedonia**, the organizations dealing with family literacy are mainly non-governmental organizations whose target groups are mainly children and adults from the Roma population, with a difficult financial, social and educational situation. This is because the literacy of the Roma population in the Republic of Macedonia is at the lowest level, these children and adults being on the edge of their existence. Besides the NGOs, other types of organizations offering literacy programs are public institutions and private businesses. The expertise of these organizations are: social inclusion through training and education of Roma population, education of children from 6 to 15 years old and teachers, daily care and education of children from 0 to 6 years old, psychological support, education for foreign languages and skills development.

The **Bulgarian** institutions conducting family literacy programs, as resulting from the research, are: public schools, other public institutions, non-governmental organizations, libraries and private companies. The schools work with pupils from various ethnic background, including Roma. The NGOs work in the field of improving the relationship between the family and the education system, of lifelong learning, youth activities and training for teachers. The library organizes cultural activities for children, in order to attract more young readers to the library. The public institutions, for example kindergartens and libraries, often work together.



*As resulting from the national researches, the organizations delivering family literacy programs are: public institutions: schools and libraries and non-governmental organizations. Although different in size and areas of expertise, these organizations serve the same goals: improving reading skills and encouraging reading and literacy practices within families.*

*Schools and other educational institutions develop literacy programs in order to support the educational system. These programs address especially the socially-disadvantaged groups in the local community or students with learning difficulties and school problems, but also other students. Often these school programs involve parents and teachers, not only students.*

*Libraries usually offer non-formal literacy programs for children and their families, no matter of their social status and education, in order to create a learning culture in the community and to develop lifelong reading habits in children. Many libraries offer reading hours or family reading programs to young readers and their families and programs which promote reading for all age groups.*

*Non-governmental organizations are involved both in promoting learning and the importance of family literacy and in supporting social groups in need, such as Roma people.*

## **2. Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the programs)**

In most of the analyzed programs, in **Romania**, a cooperation between partners from the public and private sector can be identified. This partnership, bringing together different types of organizations, is of great value and importance as each partner involved in the program brings its own expertise and contribution to the success of the program. Bringing together professionals from various areas of knowledge add great value to the results and is in the benefit of the communities and of the target groups they address to.

All the analyzed projects in **Portugal** have at least one partner from outside the implementing organization. The majority of the projects have as partners public institutions. A large number of projects were supported by the central government, but also by a specific department in the Portuguese educational system, RBE (Rede de Bibliotecas Escolares) which is the national organization that gives support to school libraries in all the public and private schools.

In **Slovenia**, partners included in family literacy programs were generally those who added specific skills to their program or broaden the range of potential users. A strong partner, which was involved in many programs, is the Reading Badge Association, a NGO that promotes and develops literacy programs since 1960. Particularly libraries tend to connect with other partners and include new programs to those already established, which is mostly a reflection of the needs and desires of the local communities.

In **Macedonia**, the implementing organizations had as partners other non-governmental organizations and public schools. Almost every organization cooperates with partner organizations in implementing the projects in order to obtain human and material support that will guarantee the success of the program.

In **Bulgaria**, almost half of the implementing organizations do not work with partners. Still, the majority have partners, either from the same sector, as there is cooperation between non-governmental organizations or between public institutions (municipality-schools, library-university, schools-university), either from different sectors (private and public).

*Most of the family literacy programs develop as a cooperation between partners from different sectors: public, private and non-profit. These partnerships add great value to the projects as they bring together forces of different size and expertise for the benefit of the entire communities.*

### 3. Program duration

In terms of duration, in **Romania**, it ranges from 2 months to permanent programs with weekly activities. The average duration is 20 months and many programs were initiated in 2014-2015.

In **Portugal**, most of the analyzed projects started in 2015 and only 2 of those projects have already finished. The duration of the projects is very different according to the institution that is implementing it. Most of the projects have a duration of 12 or 24 months, because they are developed by schools, for the school year. There are also public schools that develop projects for a longer period of 36 months, because the projects are directed to a specific target audience and the institutions found important to make a comparative analysis on the evolution of the participants.



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In **Slovenia**, the highest number of programs started between 2008 and 2011, when international research PISA showed results in reading literacy of Slovenian pupils below the average. The answer was a number of new programs which are focused on increase of reading literacy and simultaneously promote family literacy. From 23 analyzed programs, 3 of them are already finished, 3 are still in progress and will finish in a near future, the rest of them have become a part of regular activity of organizations and continuously run from one to 19 years.

In **Macedonia**, the analyzed projects were implemented between 2006-2016 and most of them have a duration of maximum 12 months. Nevertheless, there were projects that lasted more than 24 months.

The duration of family literacy programs in **Bulgaria** ranges from 10-12 months (a school year) - the majority of the programs, to programs lasting 24-26-29 to 36 months or permanent programs (in the library, lasting for more than 20 years).

*Although the duration of the programs differs, this survey showed that most of the programs developed in the five countries have the average of 12 months' duration. However, if a program was proved to have positive results, in some cases, it became a regular activity of the implementing organization.*

#### 4. The funding sources and programs

In **Romania**, family literacy projects, depending on their magnitude, are funded by European or national development programs (EEA Grants, AFCN), local government councils, schools and national and international NGOs. In the case of smaller programs, the costs were covered by the participants. Many educational projects, analyzed in this report, targeting socially-disadvantaged groups, have been developed under the program *Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion* financed by EEA Grants and started in 2013, whose objectives were to improve well-being of children and young people at risk and to strengthen social and economic cohesion at national, regional and local levels. The program operator was The Romanian Social Development Fund.

The most common funding, in **Portugal**, is the use of the organization's own funds. The use of public funding is important, but there are only few institutions that use these kind of funding. There are organizations that develop projects with no money at all, only with good ideas and the good will of the facilitators involved. The amount of funds



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used is still important when defining the number of activities which can be developed, as well as the number of persons that can be involved in the project. Projects that are going to be developed for longer periods of time, usually more than 24 months, have a budget of more than 1,000 €, both public and own funds.

In **Slovenia**, most programs are financed by public funds. Among these, more than 75% of all funds cover labor costs. Others represent various forms of material costs. The costs of individual programs range between EUR 150 to EUR 93,576. The study showed that the highest funding belongs to national programs which normally cover a region or the whole country. These types of programs also include a larger number of partners and participants.

In **Macedonia**, almost every source of project financing for these kind of projects comes from international organizations such as foundations, non-governmental organizations and centers financed by the foreign embassies of wealthy countries. So the majority of projects are being financed from foreign sources and less than half from domestic sources, mainly parental financing for any kind of training.

In **Bulgaria**, public institutions (museum, schools, library) use mainly their own public funds and sometimes external funding - as awards from NGOs or as funded projects. Two of the analyzed projects are funded by the ESF Operational Program "Science and education for smart growth" (2014-2020) and one by the Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities. One of the projects is internationally funded by a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department through the "Teaching Excellence and Achievement" program. Projects were also funded by parents or by community donation funds.

*If we refer to the funding sources, they differ greatly from one country to another. Whereas, in Portugal and Bulgaria, many implementing institutions use their own funds, in Macedonia, almost every program is financed by international organizations such as foundations, NGOs and centers. In Slovenia, most programs are financed by public funds, while, in Romania, family literacy programs are funded by European or national development programs, local government councils, schools and national and international NGOs.*

*The bigger the amounts invested in these literacy activities, the bigger the impact of the projects, as the resources used are more varied and numerous, although there are projects that achieved important results with small financial support.*



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## 5. The context in which the programs were implemented (targeted community from social, economic, educational point of view, the community needs / problems assessment, the opportunities identified to address these needs)

The provision of education is a key challenge in **Romania**, with the state-funded system facing financial problems in times of economic crisis. Like in all Eastern European countries, in Romania, many changes occurred with the end of the communist era. However, in almost 27 years, there has been little stability or consensus on how education should be run and the Romanian education system has undergone many transformations through several reforms. A country report on *Literacy in Romania*<sup>17</sup>, published in May 2015, by ELINET, the European Literacy Policy Network, analyses not only the performance data shown by the PIRLS and PISA assessments between 2001-2012, which revealed the fact that Romania performed well below the EU average in both PIRLS and PISA, but also aim at describing the home learning environment of young children using data that are available from international sources (PIRLS). Several indicators were used: parental attitudes to reading, number of children's books in the home, early literacy activities. The results showed that, compared to the European average, fewer pupils in Romania have parents with positive attitudes towards reading, the availability of children's books in the home is rather low in Romania and there are more parents (8%) who never or hardly ever engage in literacy-relevant activities, compared with the EU (2%).

In **Portugal**, the ELINET (European Literacy Policy Network) Country Report on literacy, in 2016, showed that the proportion of pupils who are considered low-performing readers was somewhat lower than on EU average in PIRLS (16% vs 20%) and very close to it in PISA (18.8% vs 19.7%). These students can read simple texts, retrieve explicit information, or make straightforward inferences, but they are not able to deal with longer or more complex texts, and are unable to interpret beyond what is explicitly stated in the text. The proportion of low-performing readers has decreased since PISA 2000 (by about 8%). The proportion of top-performing readers was exactly the same as on EU average in PIRLS (9%) and slightly lower in PISA (5.8 vs 7% in EU).<sup>18</sup>

The need of implementing family literacy programs in **Slovenia** was the answer to

<sup>17</sup> Literacy in Romania. Country Report. ELINET. March 2016. Available at: [http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user\\_upload/CR\\_Romania\\_18052015.pdf](http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/CR_Romania_18052015.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Literacy in Portugal. Country Report. ELINET. March 2016. Available at: [http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user\\_upload/Portugal\\_Short\\_Report1.pdf](http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Portugal_Short_Report1.pdf)



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the needs of local communities as well as the response to the condition of literacy at national level<sup>19</sup>. The same is reflected when we are comparing the results of international research of other European countries. After 2000, when these comparisons become available, public and other organizations work more systematically to address this problem. The result is a wide variety of programs, at all levels of society as a whole.

In **Macedonia**, many non-governmental organizations offer activities for the Roma population, due to the low level of literacy and difficult social and economic situation of these population. According to the last census of the population in the Republic of Macedonia from 2002, there are a total 2,022,547 people. 53,800 of them or 2.66% are Roma population and according to the data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Work from 2013 and indicator ED 1 – rate of literacy, the rate of literacy of the Roma population was decreasing for Roma children younger than 15 years, decreasing for Roma people between 15 to 44 years, both women and men, but slightly increasing for women aged 25-34 and for men and women aged 45 to 54.

In **Bulgaria**, the literacy programs were developed in the context of the need to close the generation gap, especially between children and parents who are for whatever reason permanently separated in time and space. According to ELINET Country Report on literacy, the proportion of Bulgarian pupils who can be considered as low-performing readers was very high in PISA in comparison with the EU average (nearly 40% vs 20%). In PIRLS, the proportion of low-performing readers was somewhat higher than the EU average (23% vs 20%)<sup>20</sup>.

*No matter of the context in which the family literacy projects were developed in the partner countries, all started from an obvious need to raise the level of literacy. As previous country reports by ELINET show, the literacy level in Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia are well below the EU average, whereas literacy levels in Slovenia and Portugal are slightly below the EU average.*

## 6. Goals and objectives of family literacy programs

In the **Romanian** research, we identified two types of programs: some that aims

<sup>19</sup> Literacy in Slovenia. Country Report. ELINET. March 2016. Available at: [http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user\\_upload/Slovenia\\_Short\\_Report.pdf](http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Slovenia_Short_Report.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Literacy in Bulgaria. Country Report. ELINET. March 2017. Available at: [http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user\\_upload/Bulgarian\\_Short\\_Report.pdf](http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/Bulgarian_Short_Report.pdf)



at supporting personal development of socially-disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and their social inclusion; others that aim at raising awareness of the essential role of family literacy as a tool for improving children's school success and facilitating the development of positive parent-child relationship.

Programs addressing socially-disadvantaged groups usually aim at:

- supporting personal development of socially-disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (institutionalized children, Roma children, migrants) and their social inclusion by satisfying their educational and development needs;
- reducing social disparities in local communities;
- developing local strategies to promote and implement family literacy programs;
- improving the school performance of children with learning difficulties;
- improving school attendance;
- reducing the risk of school drop-out;
- educating parents in understanding the importance of education for their children;
- developing and strengthening parents' literacy and social skills in order to enhance their capacity to effectively support their children's education as co-educators and thus to complement school-based learning processes;
- creating synergies between home and school-based learning;
- enabling parents to participate meaningfully in school activities;
- enabling teachers to better work and understand children at risk.

Programs which promote family literacy and reading for fun usually aim at:

- raising awareness on the essential role of family literacy as a tool for improving children's school success;
- making reading attractive for children by providing their parents as examples and by intergenerational activities;
- enhancing children and parents' literacy skills and competencies;
- promoting children's emotional, social and intellectual development;
- facilitating the development of positive parent-child relationship.

In **Portugal**, all the projects have a common objective: to put families to read together, but this objective was achieved in different ways. Reading is clearly the most relevant reason for the projects of family literacy to take place. The improvement of the relationship between children and their parents was achieved with the help of the reading activities where students and their parents were together, reading together or reading out loud to a larger audience.

Another important objective was to promote books, so that everyone can have access to them in order to acquire better reading habits, especially parents.



Some organizations also felt necessary to improve other types of literacy, such as media literacy or information literacy, because most of the parents do not have access to this kind of literacy.

In **Slovenia**, the analysis was conducted by detecting the various objectives of the organizations involved.

Therefore, most of the *libraries'* goals were to increase: membership in libraries, book borrowing, number of visits, the activity of family reading, knowledge, comprehension and vocabulary, but also to encourage usage of stand-alone libraries, to promote children's emotional, social and intellectual development and to train teachers for project implementation.

Family literacy programs in *schools* upgrade the curricula of schools and their internal programs. Moreover, they support reading and activities related to reading: experience reading as a special event, developing creativity by reading. At the same time, they raise awareness of parents on the importance of reading and reading literacy.

National *public organizations* established their goals with very high expectations. Programs are oriented towards education, usually adult educators, teachers and parents are trained to gain basic knowledge and skills for the development of family literacy/early literacy for the further implementation of the program.

The objectives of *non-governmental organizations* are closely correlated with their basic purpose and support or cooperate with other organizations dealing with the dissemination and the awareness of family literacy. Their primary task aims to raise awareness on the importance of well-developed literacy for individuals and for the entire population.

In **Macedonia**, the objectives of family literacy programs include:

- active participation and reintegration in the society of the Roma population through access to education and additional qualifications;
- assistance in preschool education and knowledge progress for a more successful start in the first grade for the Roma pupils, by direct home education of children;
- training the Roma parents on how to bring up and educate their children at home in order to prepare them for elementary school;
- counselling the Roma parents on how to communicate with the teaching staff;
- pedagogical and psychological counselling for children;
- training the teaching staff;
- building self-confidence, self-control and strong family relations;
- gaining a variety of certified skills for better competitiveness on the labor market for adults;



- increasing children's school success;
  - easier accomplishment of the school subjects (Macedonian language, mathematics, physics, chemistry, languages etc.).
- In **Bulgaria**, the family literacy programs had as main objectives:
- promoting the model of positive parenting in the Bulgarian society;
  - building trust and improving the partnership between school and family through active participation of parents in the lives of their children in the learning process and in extracurricular activities;
    - creating conditions for increasing the potential of students and their ability to successfully complete secondary education by developing their knowledge, skills and competences;
    - creating effective mechanisms for participation of the community and the parents / relatives of the students in the educational process;
    - changing attitudes and relationships between teachers, parents and children to create a better climate for work, motivation for learning and increasing success;
    - promoting meaningful communication between parents and children;
    - involving and assisting children and parents from ethnic minorities in the social life of the community;
    - encouraging love for books and reading from a very early age;
    - developing creative thinking and skills of children by setting unconventional homework;
    - offering parents didactic tools in order to support both the development of basic competencies of their own children and to master the Bulgarian language.

*Depending on the specific characteristics of the national communities and on the level of social and economic development of the country, the analyzed family literacy programs have a set of similar, but also different types of objectives.*

*In all partner countries, we identified a set of similar objectives of the family literacy programs, which aim at:*

- *raising awareness of the importance of well-developed literacy for individuals and for the entire population;*
- *raising awareness on the role of family literacy as a tool for improving children's school success;*
- *bringing families together in intergenerational activities;*
- *enhancing children and parents' literacy skills and competences, including media and information literacy;*



- *promoting children's emotional, social and intellectual development;*
- *facilitating the development of positive parent-child relationship and communication;*
- *promoting love for books and encouraging reading;*
- *building trust and improving the partnership between school and family through active participation of parents in the lives of their children in the learning process and in extracurricular activities;*
- *changing attitudes and relationships of teachers, parents and children in order to create a better climate for work, motivation for learning and increasing success.*

*Many family literacy programs in Romania and Macedonia, and only a few in Slovenia and Bulgaria, also address vulnerable groups, having the following specific objectives:*

- *supporting personal development of socially-disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (institutionalized children, Roma children, migrants) and their social inclusion by satisfying their educational and development needs and by giving them access to additional qualifications;*
- *reducing social disparities in local communities;*
- *developing local strategies to promote and implement family literacy programs;*
- *improving the school performance of children with learning difficulties;*
- *improving school attendance, through pedagogical and psychological counselling;*
- *encouraging and supporting families of preschool children and reducing the risk of school drop-out;*
- *educating parents in understanding the importance of education for their children and building strong family relations;*
- *developing and strengthening parents' literacy and social skills in order to enhance their capacity to effectively support their children's education as co-educators and thus to complement school-based learning processes;*
- *giving parents the opportunity to gain a variety of certified skills for better competitiveness on the labor market;*
- *creating synergies between home and school-based learning;*
- *enabling parents to participate meaningfully in school activities and to communicate with the teaching staff;*
- *training teachers to better work and understand children at risk.*



## 7. Target groups of family literacy programs

Despite **Romania**'s progressive integration into the knowledge-based European Union social system, illiteracy and lack of access to education and training opportunities create barriers to the socio-economic integration and inclusion of *socially-disadvantaged groups* into mainstream society. Among these socially-disadvantaged vulnerable groups we can identify:

- *Roma children* who face additional barriers to accessing education as they often live in deprived communities, with poverty levels far higher than the national average. A high number of children and youth from Roma communities are at risk of social exclusion, with minimal chances of integration in society. They are considered at high risk of leaving school due to poverty, family issues and isolation.
- *Institutionalized children* from orphanages or foster houses have special needs that have to be satisfied not only within the institution but also by the society itself.
- *Migrant children*, i.e. children coming back to Romania after a period spent in another country. In recent years, over 20,000 children have returned to Romania, with or without their parents, most of them being currently in school.
- *Communities living in poverty*; for children, poverty often leads to family problems, social isolation and school drop-out, risking future social and economic exclusion because of their low level of education.
- *Children with learning disabilities*
- *Children at high risk of leaving school (school drop-out)* mostly because poverty.

In order to facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable groups into the society, the organizations providing literacy programs not only work with children and teenagers, but also with their *parents* and *teachers*. Some of the programs offer a *parenting program*, which is set to raise the awareness on the positive role and impact of parents in their children's education and their school success. Some of the literacy programs have a special focus on the *teachers`* training. Some of the themes of these trainings were: conflict and time management, emotional intelligence, communication, leadership, strategic planning and aimed at developing new and efficient teaching methods and instruments.

Family literacy programs that promote *reading for fun* have the following main target groups:

*Children* of all ages at all levels of education from kindergarten to high-school students. Some programs targeted children in their formal educational framework, some



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in their home environment fostering relations among children, parents and grandparents. However, all of them had positive benefits on children.

*Parents* who are willing to learn how to make reading a pleasurable interactive activity, how to become better readers, how to actually involve their children in reading activities as parents should be partners in the education of their children.

*Educators* (whether they are teachers, school mediators, school counsellors, social workers, librarians, volunteers etc.) who, in order to be able to work or supply services for children and parents, have attended special training courses. These courses were mostly on how to teach reading or how to organize intergenerational learning workshops.

In **Portugal**, the survey has helped identify different types of target groups. Most of the projects have as target groups children from primary school and their families. This is because organizations think that is important to start the literacy training at a young age. If the children are involved in reading, parents have to go along with them in order to help their children understand what they are reading. The majority of the people involved in the projects come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and need more support and encouragement to get involved in reading activities, because many times they don't have access to cultural activities or cultural resources, such as a book, because of the price they have to pay. One of the projects that is part of this report had as target group students with disabilities.

In **Slovenia**, the survey showed that organizations are turning to **target groups** that are directly linked to the topic of family literacy. These are primarily children and their parents or tutors, various vulnerable groups in society (Roma, foster families, disabled) and also professionals who in one way or another deal with the issue of literacy in society.

In most cases education is intergenerational (both children and parents), only in two cases, family literacy programs educate adults only.

Finally, family literacy and the resulting other literacies, touch the whole Slovenian society.

In **Macedonia**, the target groups of the family literacy programs were either members of the Roma population or children and parents in need.

The majority of the literacy programs targeted socially-disadvantaged groups, such as: Roma families on financial social help, single parent families from the Roma population, small children, school pupils, young adults aged 18 to 29, from Roma families with different social, economic and educational background and their family members.

There were also programs which supported families in need, such as: small



children and their parents; pupils with unsatisfactory school results and their parents, not enough prepared for helping their children; school children (6 – 18 years old) with different social and economic status and their parents, with not enough finances for learning foreign languages.

In **Bulgaria**, the target group included mostly kindergarten children and their parents, primary school pupils (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade) and their families (parents, grandparents), but also teachers, families of children with specific educational needs, single-parent families, children and parents from different ethnic groups.

***In most of the analyzed family literacy programs the target groups are children and parents from vulnerable groups.***

*Among these vulnerable groups we can identify: Roma children, institutionalized children from orphanages or foster houses, children living in foster families, Roma children from single-parent families, migrant children (children coming back to their native country), communities living in poverty, children at high risk of leaving school (school drop-out) mostly because poverty, students with disabilities or with special educational needs, students with unsatisfactory school results.*

*Additionally, the programs organize trainings for parents and teachers in order to help attain the objectives of the family literacy initiatives, as both of them are key elements for the success of these children.*

*There are also programs that have as target groups children and parents with no specific social background. These programs encourage reading and offer activities for children and parents together. These activities are organized mostly in schools and libraries.*

## **8. Types of learning activities**

The research proved that family literacy programs developed in **Romania** in the last few years implied the following educational activities for the targeted groups stated above:

**Children** were involved in:

- **educational / reading activities** suitable to their educational requirements (interactive workshops on reading art or story-making, viewing educational shows and films, support in doing homework etc.). These activities employ participatory and



interactive teaching-learning approaches and strategies such as: learn-by-play (games), group discussions, story-telling, simulations / drama (shadow theatre), role play, creative illustration, exploring and making comics, fun puzzles, playing with writing and drawing letters and words, making family story bags. These strategies endeavor to stimulate learning through self-discovery, creativity, reflection and critical thinking.

In some programs, learners were also actively involved in developing teaching-learning materials (resources) including story bags, games and puzzles. Involving learners in developing teaching-learning aids is instrumental not only in sustaining the learners' motivation to continue participating in the program, but also facilitates the internalization of literacy skills by stimulating their creativity.

- **extracurricular / leisure activities** (group games, sports, drawing/painting, trips, visits to museums, to the movie theatre, to the libraries).

Children with learning disabilities were supported by teachers or school counselors, or even by their own classmates. School tutoring activities were also provided.

*Parents* were engaged in:

- **informative sessions** on the importance of reading for their children's school progress and physical, emotional and mental development. Some of these sessions will also address topics such as: hygiene, nutrition, health, family planning, social assistance to obtain social benefits, reference for legal counselling, depending on individual needs, especially sessions targeting at Roma parents;

- **parental education activities** that promote "parenting through reading" concept such as: predictive lecture, active reading, role play, usage of different reading materials (printed books and digital books);

- **project's promoting activities** such as: writing on blogs, taking part in TV or radio programs, social network;

*Educators* (teachers, school counselors, librarians, volunteers):

- **organized and participated at courses, trainings, conferences, workshops, informative sessions** on literacy, family literacy, leadership, management, etc. Some attended courses on how to coordinate and supervise the activity of multipurpose workshops, on how to become trainers in the field of independent living skills and courses on methods and techniques of action and intervention in cases of children with behavioral disorders;

- **engaged in research activities and promoted their findings and the best practice examples** by writing articles in printed or online media.

There have been some other common activities, for instance: visits to the



neighborhood library, where children and parents registered as readers.

In **Portugal**, the majority of the projects use reading as the main activity to help achieve the expected results. It is important to notice that all reading activities involved both children and their parents simultaneously. It is interesting to see that the projects gave also a very important role to the collaboration between students as a way to get them involved in the activities. In the activities of role playing and voice recording, there are also other people involved, not only the students and their parents. This gives an extra importance to the projects because they can bring their ideas into the project and make it even better.

The **Slovenian** research led to the conclusion that most of the surveyed organizations strongly link family literacy with reading literacy. Most programs deal with activities in promoting and developing reading, reading skills, strategies and different kinds of reading.

Identified activities **related to reading** are: different forms of storytelling (story hours, the playing time with the book, the narrative fairytales using puppets or telling local fairy tales), modeled reading, listening and reading comprehension workshops or reading aloud workshop, organized preparation of the list of literature (books) for various camps, talking about books and learning about different types of texts.

**Other types of activities** are: physical games, guided tours in the natural environment, learning about cultural heritage, traditions or specifics of the local environment, painting and drawing, creative workshops, crafts and book illustrating for children, visits to the public libraries, events in the library or specific forms of activity that are adapted to current needs, such as physiotherapy work, therapy meetings, working with social workers, special educators, speech therapists.

In **Macedonia**, the activities which came **to the support of the Roma population** included: creative workshops for Roma children and parents; daycare and educational activities for children 3 to 5 years old; vocational training (for baker, hairdresser) and additional qualification for parents: computer training, foreign languages courses, business education; training workshops for parents on how to bring up their children and help educate them; lessons for some school subjects for both children and parents (e.g. Macedonian language, Math).

**Other types of activities** included: creative workshops for children, for parents or for both; creative thematic workshops for children: drawing, exercises, narrating, leisure activities; parental counselling and education; lessons for some school subjects; mutual motivation workshops and also group lessons for monitoring the success; English lessons – conversation, grammar, acting; innovative, creative workshops on a variety of topics



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connected with the English native countries; workshops for stimulating conversation in English.

The activities identified in the **Bulgarian** research range from parents` visits in classrooms, telling children about their professions (e.g. computer scientist, engineer, railway worker, fireman, musician) to having educational trips or gaming competitions with their fathers or family literacy activities at home.

Some activities were related to reading, such as: activities for enriching the vocabulary of children from ethnic minorities with words in the official language; storytelling, role and dramatization of stories; music stories; meeting with authors of children's books, poets, musicians, artists, actors; art workshops for children and adults; intergenerational reading hours. Other interesting identified extracurricular educational activities were: visits to museums, churches, monasteries and libraries; training and team building - parents, teachers and children involved in educational workshops; preparing a family album (pictures and short stories-related to these photos); meetings on traditions, traditional recipes and organizing a culinary exhibition of traditional dishes in ethnographic museums; sports games; outdoor sports for creating and improving healthy habits.

*Although various in type and form, the educational / reading activities for children predominate in the literacy programs in all five countries. These activities employ participatory and interactive teaching-learning approaches and strategies such as: lessons for some school subjects, family literacy activities at home; learn-by-play (games); group discussions; simulations / drama (shadow theatre); role play; creative illustration; playing with writing and drawing letters and words; stimulate learning through self-discovery, creativity, reflection and critical thinking; different forms of storytelling (story hours, intergenerational reading hours, playing time with the book, narrative fairytales using puppets or telling local fairy tales); modeled reading; listening and reading comprehension workshops or reading aloud workshop; talking about books and learning about different types of texts; meeting with authors of children's books, poets, musicians, artists, actors.*

*The programs also comprise extracurricular / leisure activities in which children are involved: group games, sports, drawing/painting, trips, visits to museums, movie theatres and libraries; guided tours in the natural environment, learning about cultural heritage, traditions or specifics of the local environment; creative workshops, crafts and book illustrating for children; art workshops for children and adults.*

*Parents usually take part in their children's activities, but there are also*



*programs which train parents separately, such as: informative sessions on the importance of reading for their children’s school progress and physical, emotional and mental development, but also on health, family planning, social assistance to obtain social benefits, depending on individual needs, especially sessions targeting at Roma parents; parental education activities that promote “parenting through reading” concept such as: predictive lecture, active reading, role play, usage of different reading materials (printed books and digital books); vocational training (for baker, hairdresser) providing additional qualifications.*

*Educators (teachers, school counselors, librarians, volunteers) also participated in training activities on literacy, family literacy, especially when working with specific target groups.*

## 9. Resources

In **Romania**, books, games and educational toys were used in the activities, either from the collections of the organizations involved in the programs or bought for a specific program. Other materials used were: working sheets, emoticons, flipchart sheets, post-its, markers, glue, scissors, crayons, etc. The equipment used for the activities included computers, video-projectors, printers, photocopying machine, speakers, tablets. In some activities, there were used musical instruments or theatre props.

In **Portugal**, in all the projects the use of books was mandatory, because without books it is difficult to promote reading. Schools are also investing in other types of reading support such as eBooks, tablets, in order to get the young people more involved and to motivate parents to work with the new technologies.

In **Macedonia**, for delivering the activities of the projects, the facilitators used all sorts of materials and equipment: books, computers, didactic educational materials, toys, projectors.

The organizations in **Bulgaria** used all kind of resources in their activities: didactic materials, multimedia equipment, flipcharts, worksheets, song sheets, role-play script and other printed materials, materials for practical activities (decors, costumes, masks, models, picture frames, homemade traditional Bulgarian dishes, materials for the art workshops), educational materials for parents; children books, sports equipment, waste and recycled materials, online resources.



*The resources used for the activities vary from books and didactic material, to other materials and equipment, depending on the specific of the activities.*

## 10. Location

Most family literacy activities in **Romania** took place in schools and libraries, but some of them were conducted in kindergartens, educational centers, centers for local activities or community centers, some being located in marginalized communities.

In **Portugal**, the locations for the family literacy programs are mainly schools, but also public libraries.

In **Slovenia**, most of the literacy activities (15 out of 23) are carried out in public or school libraries. Other programs run in schools, kindergartens, shelters, primary education institutions, museums and other cultural institutions and outdoors.

In **Macedonia**, the location where the trainings are held depends on the organization profile: private company, state institution or non-governmental organization. Mainly, every organization uses their own offices.

In **Bulgaria**, in delivering their activities, most of the organizations used their own spaces. Most often the activities took place in public institutions (schools, kindergartens, theaters, museums, community centers, libraries, churches and monasteries, sports halls), but also in NGOs, bookstores, children's shops, galleries. Some of the activities even took place in students' homes.

*As a general rule, each implementing organization used its own spaces, but there are also projects that use their partners' logistics for organizing the activities. The favorite place for delivering such activities are schools and libraries, but also other cultural institutions like theatres, museums, art galleries or community centers. Some of the literacy activities were carried in the homes of the participating families.*

## 11. Language

In **Romania**, the language used during the activities of the projects was Romanian. Some of the activities addressing the Roma community used the native language of this ethnicity.

In **Portugal**, the language of all the analyzed projects was Portuguese, as there is



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not yet a big number of communities from other countries that need to be treated in a particular way in order to get them integrated in the national literacy programs.

In **Slovenia**, as many programs promoting literacy and the awareness of its importance were implemented as PISA 2009 and PISA 2012 reading literacy showed weaker field of knowledge and skills of Slovenian pupils, the national analysis suggests that all programs were held in Slovenian.

In **Macedonia**, all projects use the Macedonian language, but the projects carried out by NGOs for Roma people were bilingual (activities held in Macedonian and Roma language). One of the projects that includes learning English also implements the projects in two languages: Macedonian and English.

In **Bulgaria**, all identified projects used Bulgarian language.

*In all partner countries the analyzed activities were held in the national language. However, in some programs dedicated to Roma people, some activities were conducted in their native language.*

## **12. Types of family literacy programs facilitators (e.g. teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers etc.), their education, training background and expertise (courses attended, previous activities, their role in previous family literacy programs) and tasks**

In **Romania**, the types of facilitators identified within this research are: public school teachers, public librarians and volunteers. These facilitators either worked alone or in cooperation with each other.

### **Teachers**

Teachers involved in this type of programs already have pedagogical **competences** from their basic training and are able to conduct literacy programs. According to PIRLS 2011 country report on literacy, Romania doesn't have a national curriculum specifically for reading (literacy); reading is usually taught as part of the national language curriculum that also includes writing and other communication skills. Yet, according to an analysis of guidelines for Initial Teacher Education institutions, generic skills or methodology for teaching reading is a topic in ITE. It takes 3 years for lower secondary teachers to get their Bachelor of Arts - BA degree, and 5 years for upper secondary teachers to get their Master of Arts - MA degree. "Content area literacy" is not a compulsory constituent of initial teacher training for all teachers. It is only part of the



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training of language teachers or primary school teachers, so it depends on the subject specialization whether prospective teachers come in contact with literacy issues. In Romania, about 5% of lower secondary education teachers report that “Reading, writing and literature” was included in a subject specialization as part of their teacher training, but they do not currently teach this subject.

However, some of the Romanian language and literature teachers and primary school teachers act as *reading counsellors*, organizing and leading reading circles, transferring successful activities to classrooms and engaging other interested parties and further developing the program to promote reading within the school and the community. They also participate in training courses, liaise with other counsellors and are involved in research activities. Some of them act as *reading specialists* who serve on the board of the programs and on the editorial boards of the journals, provide feedback, ensure the scientific soundness of methodologies, recommend future program developments, hold lectures in annual conferences and moderate debates.

The role of teachers in this school literacy programs consists in developing competencies and integrating children with learning problems in the community, improving school performance and learning abilities. These goals are achieved by involving parents in the educational process and developing a strong relationship between parents and schools. So, the tasks of educators include both activities with children, with their parents and family activities. In order to get the expected results, teachers had to identify the best communication channels with the parents, to know the parents` educational background and culture and even advise parents - in group or individual meetings.

### **Librarians**

Librarians in public libraries often act as facilitators of family literacy programs. Their skills and competences vary because they come from various backgrounds (teachers, educators, historians, writers), despite their general training in librarianship. No matter of their educational background, librarians have the opportunity to enlarge their knowledge by taking part in different courses and workshops, organized by the professional associations or by other public or private training providers. In county libraries, librarians usually get professional training and participate in workshops and activities for the age group they work with, so there are librarians specialized on working with children, with teenagers or with seniors. There have also been training workshops held especially for the intergenerational literacy programs facilitators in libraries. This workshops accustomed library facilitators to the psychological traits of the age generation involved: primary school children and adults, to the importance of intergenerational



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learning and they helped librarians prepare the intergenerational workshops.

The main tasks of the librarians working in literacy programs are to plan, prepare, develop and monitor the reading programs. Using different working methods, librarians encourage reading aloud, intergenerational reading and reading for fun. In delivering their activities, librarians often cooperate with kindergarten educators, teachers, artists, writers and other professionals. Volunteers are also important facilitators of literacy programs in libraries.

### **Volunteers**

In most of the cases, volunteers facilitate literacy programs as members of a non-governmental organization. Due to their various educational background and training, they have different skills and competencies. Some volunteers are parenting experts, family psychologists, educational counsellors, writers, artists, non-formal education specialists. The main characteristics of the volunteers are their willingness to work with children, their patience, commitment and pedagogical skills, their communication, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills.

In conclusion, the Romanian facilitators are employees in different public organizations (schools, libraries), but also volunteers. Their educational background is various and their competences differ, but they all have the same goal: creating a reading culture, stimulating reading and learning in families.

In **Portugal**, due to the fact that most of the projects take place in schools, the person responsible for the development of the project is the **librarian teacher** of the school. It is also important to mention that the contribution of the retired teachers in this kind of projects is substantial because they are probably the most qualified persons to do it as they encouraged and motivated students to read during their teaching activities. Public librarians also act as facilitators, showing the importance given by public libraries to the promotion of books and reading, both for children and their parents.

Regarding the facilitators' expertise, in Portugal, all the librarian teachers have to have a MA degree in an area related to literacy or library science, same as the public librarians. That's why having a MA degree gives them a solid background of expertise in the field they are working on. As for the retired teachers, they have a BA degree which is the mandatory degree of expertise in order to be a teacher in Portugal.

The **Slovenian** report makes some specifications on the terminology: the person who runs the family literacy program is called *facilitator*; the one that educates others to facilitate family literacy programs, such as families or school teachers, is called *multiplier*. In most cases, facilitators have diverse knowledge and experience in the field of family literacy, but only a part of them is specially trained for this purpose.



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In libraries, facilitators are **librarians**. Their basic education is not only librarianship, in many cases they also come to libraries from other professional fields (teachers, educators, cultural sociologists, linguists etc.). In case libraries employ people with non-librarianship education, they have to pass professional librarianship exams.

In the system of vocational and permanent education, librarians have the opportunity to gain or deepen their knowledge in various fields. Courses are designed with different content sets in the form of workshops, seminars and lectures. They are organized by the Library Association, Public Libraries Association, National and University Library and other external organizations.

The research has shown that librarians have gained additional skills in the field of family literacy and pedagogy. As they often work in partnerships with kindergartens and schools, teachers and educators also act as facilitators. Libraries often work with volunteers in the family literacy programs. There is no particular training for volunteers who are involved in family literacy programs.

**Teachers** and **professors** already have pedagogical skills which are a part of their basic education. In the educational system, they can also be additionally qualified and trained in various fields, including education in librarianship or in the field of reading strategies.

Teachers in schools also act as facilitators in literacy programs, where the activities include parents and tutors. Their tasks are: the promotion and further motivation of pupils to read, which is also supported by curricula in schools.

High education institutions in Slovenia have their own programs, designed with scientific research approach, involving highly educated and competent people. Their programs include activities focused on transfer of knowledge and skills from facilitators to the target users. These programs include trained facilitators who attended a training program.

NGO's programs include **volunteers** mostly. This type of organization does not allow large financial contributions necessary to finance professional staff, so they make use of their own resources and volunteers.

A special position among them is held by the Reading Badge Association, which has been active for many years and has attracted a large number of professional and competent staff. It is a partner in the biggest Slovenian family literacy project at the moment, "Embracing the words", carried out by the Faculty of Education in Maribor, which has systematically tackled the topics of family literacy. During the project they will design the training program for multipliers of family literacy.

In conclusions, the Slovenian facilitators are employees in organizations mostly,



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but they also include numerous volunteers. They have basic education in various areas and also the possibility for additional education.

In **Macedonia**, the facilitators were: **skilled professional trainers, teachers, pedagogues, social workers, psychologists**. Every organization has university degree facilitators, experts in their field of their work, all with similar tasks of contributing to children's and adults' education.

The tasks of the facilitators involved in the activities targeting Roma people were: individual education of Roma children; educating, counseling and assisting parents; delivering professional training for Roma adults and helping them obtain additional qualifications; educational inclusion and learning assistance for the Roma children; developing a methodology for identifying the needs; creating a training program.

Some other tasks, when working with different target groups, were: rising consciousness for bullying; encouraging self-confidence in children; transferring knowledge and skills to children and parents; daily care and education of children; rising awareness on the importance of the family and the family values; supporting the educational process; helping participants obtain better learning skills; educating parents; increasing awareness of school duties; increasing the participants' interest in learning languages.

In **Bulgaria**, family literacy facilitators are: **teachers, librarians, educators, scientists, volunteers**, journalists, PR experts, museum curators, visiting lecturers and methodologists, information specialists and travel guides, psychologists, representative of the parents' council, artists, actors, coaches, parents with various professions, writers, musicians, students of arts.

Most facilitators have experience in working with children and family audience; they also have a specialized teacher training. Some of them are trained to work with people with different disabilities. Some educators are skilled in working with professionals in the field of education, with rich experience in trainings.

Most common tasks of the facilitators are: to prepare, organize and implement the project events; to make the children and their families want to express themselves and to think creatively, to discover their own innovative solutions to some assigned tasks; to train participants, to set discussion themes, to teach and entertain the project participants.

***Based on the analysis made in each partner country, we can identify similar types of facilitators. They are mainly teachers, librarians, professional trainers and volunteers.***

***Teachers involved in family literacy programs have pedagogical skills and***



*training which is a part of their basic education and are able to conduct literacy programs. They can also be additionally qualified and trained in various fields, including education in librarianship and reading strategies.*

*The role of teachers in the literacy programs consists in developing competences and integrating children with learning problems in the community, improving school performance and learning abilities. They can better achieve these goals by involving parents in the educational process and helping create a strong relationship between parents and schools. Their main tasks are promoting reading and learning, further motivating students to read and to learn.*

#### *Librarians / Librarian teachers*

*Librarians often act as facilitators of family literacy programs, in schools or libraries. In some countries, they need to have a MA degree in an area related to literacy or library science, but in others they have different qualifications (teachers, educators, cultural sociologists, linguists etc.), which is later supported by an additional mandatory training in librarianship, generally organized by the national professional associations. The librarians can also later attend courses and workshops held by public or private training providers. There are also libraries which held workshops specially to train intergenerational literacy programs facilitators.*

*Their major tasks are to plan, prepare, develop and monitor the literacy programs. Using different working methods, librarians encourage reading aloud, intergenerational reading, reading for fun and other family literacy activities. In delivering their activities, they often cooperate with kindergarten educators, teachers, artists, writers and other professionals.*

#### *Professional trainers*

*Some of the analyzed literacy programs were held with the help of highly educated and competent trainers, who previously attended a training program.*

#### *Volunteers*

*Volunteers are also important facilitators of literacy programs, both in libraries and in non-governmental organizations. NGO's programs include volunteers mostly. This type of organization does not allow large financial contributions necessary to finance professional staff, so they make use of their own resources and volunteers.*

*They have various educational backgrounds and training, and different skills and competencies. Some volunteers were parenting experts, family psychologists, social workers, educational counselors, writers, artists, non-formal education specialists. The main characteristics of the volunteers are their willingness to work with children, their patience, commitment and pedagogical skills, their communication, interpersonal and*



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*conflict resolution skills.*

*The family literacy facilitators often work together, in libraries or schools. Their tasks differ, being influenced by the activities they have to deliver to their target groups. Their job is not easy, as they often have to work with socially-disadvantaged groups in the communities, to which they must give special attention and focus. Although with various educational backgrounds and competences, all the facilitators have the same goal: creating a reading culture, stimulating reading and learning in families, supporting school success.*

### **13. Results of literacy programs**

When analyzing literacy programs in **Romania**, a set of common results can be identified. These results are different though when it comes to literacy programs with social impact and leisure literacy programs.

The programs developed for disadvantaged social categories had as general results:

- development of literacy skills (Roma primary school children and adult family members);
- a high number of parents, most of whom barely literate when they joined the program, enrolled for advanced studies such as English, ICT and vocational training courses;
- enabled parents and children to become well acquainted with each other and therefore to improve their communication and social relationships;
- parents received counselling on the importance of education and were supported to acquire knowledge and methods to motivate their children to learn;
- empowered teachers to use various non-formal and informal teaching methodologies as well as to support effectively learners with different learning needs;
- improved behavior and discipline of school children;
- improved the school attendance and school results of children;
- social and scholar reintegration of migrant children and parents;
- reducing the risk of school dropout.

The programs developed for promoting reading for pleasure had as general results:

- increased self-esteem and confidence of children and adults;
- improving reading skills and vocabulary, both for children and parents;



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- parents have learned new reading methods for children, new methods of inter-generational communication and participated in family reading hours;
- raised awareness on the importance of joint learning activities for children and parents, with a positive effect on the parent-child relationship.

In one of the projects, *Reading to Learn*, a research has been made on the level of pupils' reading competencies, the first training program on literacy was accredited, the first book on literacy was translated, a guide on literacy was developed.

In **Portugal**, the improvement of parents reading skills is one of the most important qualitative results pursued by the organizations. Other important results were: promoting reading habits and books, increasing media and information literacy, ensuring school success, social inclusion, all aimed at improving overall knowledge of the families.

The most common results of the analyzed programs in **Slovenia** are:

- the positive effects on children's learning activities in schools;
- relaxed and expressive reading aloud;
- parents have gained new knowledge for their children's education;
- development of critical thinking;
- stimulation of creativity;
- pleasant experience of reading;
- improvement of reading techniques and skills necessary for writing and speaking;
- awareness of educators, parents and professional public that national project *Reading Badge* is crucial in the development of a child's literacy skills;
- becoming a regular library user, even after the project ends;
- acquisition of vocabulary.

In **Macedonia**, the literacy projects had as results:

- progress in knowledge;
- positive attitudes towards education;
- better mutual understanding and discipline during classes;
- growing self-confidence;
- advised and trained parents;
- certified trainings, more educated Roma children and parents;
- aroused consciousness about family and family values;
- easier socialization and progress in the educational system;
- improved school results and success;
- children and parents involved together in language learning activities.

In **Bulgaria**, the positive results are those specific to the results of family literacy



programs worldwide:

- increased self-esteem of the students involved;
- establishment of an informal environment that stimulates relationships among children, parents and teachers;
- increased motivation for forming skills and habits in parents to support their children for successful adaptation in preschool groups;
- involvement of parents in activities with children;
- increased motivation for learning;
- experiencing the intergenerational literacy while being involved in common activities beyond traditional school settings, constantly growing interest not only in reading, but also in the creative expression of the children and their parents;
- increasing interest of parents towards formal education and educational process.

*Common results that can be identified when analyzing literacy programs are different when it comes to literacy programs with social impact and leisure literacy programs.*

*The general results of the programs developed for vulnerable categories are:*

- *improved behavior and discipline of school children;*
- *improved school attendance and school results of children;*
- *reducing the risk of school drop-out;*
- *social and scholar reintegration of migrant children and parents;*
- *development of literacy skills (Roma primary school children and adult family members);*
- *parents received counselling on the importance of education and were supported to acquire knowledge and methods to motivate their children to learn;*
- *empowered teachers to use various non-formal and informal teaching methodologies as well as to support effectively learners with different learning needs;*

*The general results of the programs developed for promoting reading for pleasure:*

- *increased self-esteem and self-confidence, progress in knowledge, positive attitudes towards education, better mutual understanding and also discipline during classes of the students involved;*
- *the improvement of parents reading in order to stimulate reading to their children, increased motivation for forming skills and habits in parents to support their children for successful adaptation in preschool groups, involvement of parents in activities with children. Parents have learned new reading methods for children, new*



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*methods of inter-generational communication and participated in family reading hours;*

- *raised awareness on the importance of joint learning activities for children and parents, with a positive effect on the parent-child relationship, improving reading skills and vocabulary, both for children and parents;*
- *establishment of an informal environment that stimulates relationships among children, parents and teachers, increased motivation for learning, experiencing the intergenerational literacy while being involved in common activities beyond.*

#### **14. Monitoring and evaluation**

*Most of the activities were monitored by the implementing organizations through direct observation of the participants, monitoring visits and interviews. Some projects were monitored by external evaluators.*

*The evaluation of the programs was made by filling-in observation charts or tables on the participants` behavior during activities, by filling-in evaluation forms and questionnaires by teachers, pupils and parents to identify their interests and learning difficulties, by interviewing participants and partners, by individual and group discussions or by organizing focus groups.*

*Some organizations that responded to the survey didn't do systematic monitoring and evaluation, partly because some programs are not finished yet.*

#### **15. Impact of programs**

These literacy programs in **Romania** had a positive impact on their direct and indirect beneficiaries:

- **children** by: promoting reading, developing relations among children, parents and grandparents; improving school children` and adults` literacy skills by attending literacy workshop activities; improving attendance and school results and preventing school dropout; enhancing access to one upper level education cycle and of the educational degree for children who abandoned school or never went to school; increasing the motivation of beneficiaries and their willingness to take part in such activities; preventing the occurrence of deviant behaviors with (school) children in residential care, and



informing them about the negative consequences of these behaviors; children with learning disabilities gained self-confidence and became more sociable;

- **parents** by: better parents' active involvement in the educational activity of their children; improving the relationship with their sons or daughters (improving communication, behaving in difficult situations, getting to better know their own children); positive interaction among children, parents and educators, thus optimizing not only the relations within the family, but also the family-school relations;
- **educators** by: attending professional development courses; improving their level of information on the child's right to education; training professionals involved in the activities dedicated to children at risk or targeting social inclusion;
- **organizations involved** by: developing family literacy projects that have proven to be successful; founding reading clubs; identifying and referring vulnerable groups to corresponding services;
- **communities** by: raising awareness on the importance of formal and non-formal education; improving access and participation in education and access to suitable / integrated services meant for children at risk (setting up multipurpose workshops for the development of personal skills); establishing new structures (e.g. Centre of intervention, counselling and support for children at risk) that provide specialized services in order to prevent and reduce all forms of exploitation and abuse;
- **stakeholders** by: raising awareness among the wide audience and experts on the legal applicable provisions related to education and the responsibilities of the family and educational and social institutions arising from this legislation; developing local strategies to encourage reading at all levels.

At the same time, many of these projects encourage volunteer work (e.g. students from local universities provided school tutoring activities).

In **Portugal**, only two of the analyzed projects have finished, so it not yet possible to have a clear image of the final impact of the projects, but still the expected impact of the projects has been taken into account. Family literacy projects have as expected impact: better family literacy, better school results, bringing families together, improve literacy levels, social inclusion.

Analyzing the results and evaluations of individual programs in **Slovenia**, there was evidence of their positive impact, such as: better cooperation among children, parents, teachers and educators; the involvement and acceptance of differences and socio-economically disadvantaged families; progress in speech and cognitive development as well as in the field of literacy (Step Center - for people with acquired brain injury); development and offering of high-quality film production and film education for children



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and adults (teachers, parents, ...).

In **Macedonia**, because most of the analyzed projects regarded Roma people, the biggest impact of these projects was the successful entrance and performance of the Roma children in schools, but there were also others: better parenting for better success of the Roma children in school, by overcoming the language barrier and establishing a successful communication between the children, educator and psychologist; prevention of violence between generations - bullying, by rising consciousness about it among children, parents and teachers; development of children's emotional intelligence for successful adaptation in elementary school, by increasing children's self-confidence and making them aware of their own emotions as well as of the others'; better future for the young Roma achieved through qualifications and additional qualifications of not enough educated Roma youngsters with given opportunity for better competitiveness on the labor market; social inclusion of the Roma population, by individual home visits and trainings, giving parents the needed assurance and knowledge for raising their children; tutelary support for Roma pupils, promoting family and family values; higher school success; rising interest in learning foreign languages and understanding the need of them for better competitiveness on the labor market and improving the whole economic situation.

The positive impact of family literacy programs in **Bulgaria** is shown by the fact that most projects are sustainable and with growing popularity, continuing after their formal ending. They offered models for positive communication between children and their parents, established practice of active involvement of parents in selecting, organizing and conducting the extracurricular activities of their children, improved the working mechanism through interactive learning activities involving the children and their families, parents committing themselves to forming a learning habits of their children.

These projects also offered good practice examples of collaborations among teachers, students, parents that lead to positive results. Particularly, they contribute to the reduction of school drop-out or to introducing a model of working with children from ethnic minorities and their parents through which family receives complex support in child development.

*Strongly related to their goals and objectives, family literacy programs identified and described in the five countries had, undoubtedly, a positive impact not only on their direct participants, but also on the participants' families and on their community in general.*

*This common positive impact is proven by better school children' and adults' literacy skills, better parents' active involvement in the educational activity of their children, positive interaction among children, parents and educators, reduction of*



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*school drop-out.*

*Most of these programs affected not only participating families, but they had a strong positive impact at the community level as well, raising awareness on the importance of formal and non-formal education. Better yet, some of them succeeded in developing local or even national strategies to encourage learning at all levels (e.g. national reading or awareness campaigns).*

*Roma people and especially Roma children were the main target group of many literacy projects in Macedonia and Romania and of fewer programs in Bulgaria and Slovenia. All these projects reported a higher level of social inclusion among the target group. Programs targeting socially-disadvantaged people took place in all five countries also reporting improved social behavior, acceptance of differences, thus reducing social disparities in local communities.*

*The sustainability of the analyzed programs is the best proof of their success, many of them continuing after their formal ending. The best example, in this case, is Slovenia, where from 23 analyzed programs, 17 of them have become a part of regular activity of the implementing organizations and continuously run from one to 19 years.*

## 16. Conclusions

### ROMANIA

Funded by European or national development programs (EEA Grants, AFCN), local government councils, schools and national and international NGOs, literacy programs in **Romania** are delivered by: public schools, public libraries and other public institutions: school inspectorates, city and county councils, public departments for social assistance and child protection, but also non-governmental organizations, including professional associations.

In most of the analyzed programs, a cooperation between partners from the public and private sectors can be identified. Bringing together professionals from various areas of knowledge add great value to the results and is in the benefit of the communities and target groups they address.

This kind of programs aim at supporting personal development of socially-disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and their social inclusion by satisfying their educational and development needs, but also at raising awareness of the essential role of family literacy as a tool for improving children's school success and facilitating the development of positive parent-child relationship.

There are various programs that support parenting skills (e.g. programs for future



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parents, pregnant mothers, families with low income, families from various ethno-cultural backgrounds, families in rural areas, urban areas, families with children with disabilities), but few family literacy programs with a focus on supporting parents and careers in understanding and fostering the literacy development of their children.

There are not national initiatives for adults/parents who struggle with literacy, but there are however some initiatives coming from nongovernmental organizations. (E.g. Literacy Cubed – Focus on Roma Families). Different adult literacy elements can be found incorporated in some initiatives, such as the Second Chance Program or the Community Centers for Lifelong Learning (not yet implemented) that are supposed to provide remedial educational programs in subjects such as literacy. However, it should be noted that the SCP addresses only those adults who have not completed compulsory education (whether they dropped school or never enrolled), meaning that there are no learning opportunities for adults who have experienced compulsory education but still lack literacy skills.

Targeting not only socially-disadvantaged groups, but also families with no specific social background, family literacy programs involve children, parents, teachers, volunteers, other public workers and other professionals in a variety of activities: *educational / reading activities* suitable to the children's educational requirements (interactive workshops on reading art or story-making, viewing educational shows and films, support in doing homework etc.); *extracurricular / leisure activities* (group games, sports, drawing/painting, trips, visits to museums, to the movie theatre, to the libraries); *informative sessions* for parents on the importance of reading for their children's school progress and physical, emotional and mental development; *parental education activities* that promote "parenting through reading" concept; *courses, trainings, conferences, workshops, informative sessions, research activities* for educators on literacy, family literacy, leadership, management, etc.

Most family literacy activities in Romania took place in schools and libraries, but some of them were conducted in kindergartens, educational centers, centers for local activities or community centers, some being were located in marginalized communities.

The types of facilitators identified within this research are: public school teachers, public librarians and volunteers. These facilitators either worked alone or in cooperation with each other. The role of teachers in this school literacy programs consists in developing competencies and integrating children with learning problems in the community, improving school performance and learning abilities. These goals are achieved by involving parents in the educational process and developing a strong relationship between parents and schools. Librarians in public libraries often act as



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facilitators of family literacy programs. Their skills and competences vary because they come from various backgrounds (teachers, educators, historians, writers), despite their general training in librarianship. Using different working methods, librarians encourage reading aloud, intergenerational reading and reading for fun. In delivering their activities, librarians often cooperate with kindergarten educators, teachers, artists, writers and other professionals. Volunteers also facilitate literacy programs as members of a non-governmental organization. Due to their various educational background and training, they have different skills and competencies. The main characteristics of the volunteers are their willingness to work with children, their patience, commitment and pedagogical skills, their communication, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills. Although the educational background is various and their competences differ, all the facilitators have the same goal: creating a reading culture, stimulating reading and learning in families.

All literacy programs had a positive impact on *children* by improving attendance and school results and preventing school dropout, by improving their literacy skills; on *parents*, who received counseling on the importance of education, were supported to acquire knowledge and methods to motivate their children to learn and were encouraged to actively involve in the educational activity of their children; on *teachers*, who attended professional development courses. All the results of these programs have later had a positive impact on the entire local community by raising awareness on the importance of formal and non-formal education.

### **PORTUGAL**

In **Portugal**, there have been identified very similar practices in all the organizations that answered the questionnaire. Since 2008, there is a national plan that guides the career of a librarian teacher in public schools. Since then, all schools have been developing several projects in order to promote the pleasure of reading to students and, in the last few years, to families. This is a much more difficult task because usually parents are away from the school environment because of their jobs, which makes this initiative very difficult to implement.

The organizations that have implemented this kind of family literacy projects are mainly public schools or public libraries. In Portugal, these kind of projects are of strategic importance, so they are a mandatory task of the public institutions.

The analyzed projects are very good and they can bring very good results in the near future. These projects can also be replicated by other organizations (schools or libraries), with greater impact in the future, by creating better citizens, with a wider knowledge of the several types of literacy.

### **SLOVENIA**



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In **Slovenia**, there were identified a large number of family literacy programs at all levels, from kindergartens, schools, libraries, universities, municipalities and non-governmental organizations. In most of the programs, there is a cross-sectorial integration at the local or national level.

There is enough accurate information about those who moderate family reading programs, but very little information on the skills, competencies and/or additional knowledge of facilitators.

It should be highlighted the existence of the project ('Embracing the words') in which partners developed a training program for facilitators (multipliers) of family reading, focusing primarily on training teachers and parents in kindergartens.

The aims and objectives of family literacy programs in Slovenia correspond to the needs of local communities and the state of literacy at the national level. National institutions, as well as other non-governmental organizations, are oriented on accelerated development of reading and other forms of literacy in society throughout the country. These programs are partly included in their regular and ongoing research processes and partly respond to the needs of OECD research in countries (one of them is also PISA).

The majority of organizations in Slovenia strongly links family literacy with reading literacy, which was reflected in reviewing all kinds of activities on a representative sample. When naming family literacy providers, they use two terms: facilitator and multiplier. The facilitator is the person who runs family literacy programs. Multiplier transmits acquired knowledge forward and educates the target group (parents, teachers etc.).

### **MACEDONIA**

In the Republic of **Macedonia**, family literacy projects have been implemented for 7-8 years and they are very much needed for children under age of 18 years and their families, with different social, economic and educational background. These are mainly elementary and high school pupils, as well and children in preschool. Nevertheless, the research helped us see the wide outspreading of this kind of projects for the Roma population in Macedonia.

The implementing organizations of family literacy projects are mainly non-governmental organizations, public institutions and private educational centers.

The objectives of the projects are: improving the children's education from early age from elementary to high school, as well as educating parents for appropriate care and education of their children. Besides Macedonian population (mostly children), many of the projects targeted Roma population. Future "family literacy" projects should also aim the same target groups because all analyzed projects showed a positive impact on

54

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improving the whole economic, social and educational situation in the Republic of Macedonia.

Beside the ongoing need for similar family literacy projects for Roma population (similar to the ones included in the Macedonian National Analysis), there is also a need for projects that encourage reading for all the children, not only the ones from vulnerable groups (in their case Roma), and also for their parents. The need is obvious as they don't even have such a project included in the analysis.

## **BULGARIA**

The **Bulgarian** institutions organizing family literacy programs, as resulting from this research, are: public schools, other public institutions, non-governmental organizations, libraries and private companies. The public institutions, for example kindergartens and libraries, often work together. Almost half of the implementing organizations do not work with partners. Still, the majority have partners, either from the same sector, as cooperation between different non-governmental organizations or between different public institutions, either from different sectors.

The target group included mostly kindergarten children and their parents, primary school pupils (1st-4<sup>th</sup> grade) and their families (parents, grandparents), but also teachers, families of children with specific educational needs, single-parent families, children and parents from different ethnic groups.

The activities identified in the Bulgarian research range from: parents' visits in class; family literacy activities at home; extracurricular activities to compensate for learning disabilities; visits to museums, churches and monasteries, libraries; training and team building - parents, teachers and children involved in educational workshops, forging cooperative relations; lectures, sports games, workshops, outdoor sports on creating and improving healthy habits; reading, storytelling, role and dramatization of stories; music stories; meeting with authors of children's books, poets, musicians, artists, actors; art workshops for children and adults; intergenerational reading hours.

The positive results are those specific to the results of family literacy programs worldwide: increased self-esteem of the students involved, establishment of an informal environment that stimulates relationships among children, parents and teachers, increased motivation for forming skills and habits in parents to support their children for successful adaptation in preschool groups, involvement of parents in activities with children, increased motivation for learning, experiencing the intergenerational literacy while being involved in common activities beyond traditional school settings, constantly growing interest not only in reading, but also in the creative expression of the children and their



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parents, increasing interest of parents towards formal education and educational process.

The positive impact of family literacy programs in Bulgaria is shown by the fact that most projects are sustainable and with growing popularity, continuing after their formal ending. They offered models for positive communication between children and their parents, established practice of active involvement of parents in selecting, organizing and conducting the extracurricular activities of their children, improved the working mechanism through interactive learning activities involving the children and their families, parents committing themselves to forming a learning habits of their children.

These projects also offered good practice examples of collaborations among teachers, students, parents that lead to positive results. Particularly, they contribute to the reduction of school drop-out or to introducing a model of working with children from ethnic minorities and their parents through which family receives complex support in child development.

## **CHAPTER V: Findings and Recommendations**

### **FINDINGS**

As resulting from the national researches, the organizations delivering family literacy programs are: public institutions: schools and libraries and non-governmental organizations. Although different in size and areas of expertise, these organizations serve the same goals: improving reading skills and encouraging reading and literacy practices within families.

Schools and other educational institutions develop literacy programs in order to support the educational system. These programs address especially the socially-disadvantaged groups in the local community or students with learning difficulties and school problems, but also other students. Often these school programs involve parents and teachers, not only students.

Libraries usually offer non-formal literacy programs for children and their families, no matter of their social status and education, in order to create a learning culture in the community and to develop lifelong reading habits in children. Many libraries offer reading hours or family reading programs to young readers and their families and programs which promote reading for all age groups.

Non-governmental organizations are involved both in promoting learning and the



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importance of family literacy and in supporting social groups in need, such as Roma people.

Most of the family literacy programs develop as a cooperation between partners from different sectors: public, private and non-profit. These partnerships add great value to the projects as they bring together forces of different size and expertise for the benefit of the entire communities.

Although the duration of the programs differs, this survey showed that most of the programs developed in the five countries have the average of 12 months' duration. However, if a program was proved to have positive results, in some cases, it became a regular activity of the implementing organization.

If we refer to the funding sources, they differ greatly from one country to another. Whereas, in Portugal and Bulgaria, many implementing institutions use their own funds, in Macedonia, almost every program is financed by international organizations such as foundations, NGOs and centers. In Slovenia, most programs are financed by public funds, while, in Romania, family literacy programs are funded by European or national development programs, local government councils, schools and national and international NGOs.

The bigger the amounts invested in these literacy activities, the bigger the impact of the projects, as the resources used are more varied and numerous, although there are projects that achieved important results with small financial support.

No matter of the context in which the family literacy projects were developed in the partner countries, all started from an obvious need to raise the level of literacy. As previous country reports by ELINET show, the literacy level in Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia are well below the EU average, whereas literacy levels in Slovenia and Portugal are slightly below the EU average.

Depending on the specific characteristics of the national communities and on the level of social and economic development of the country, the analyzed family literacy programs have a set of similar, but also different types of objectives.

In all partner countries, we identified a set of similar objectives of the family literacy programs, which aim at:

- raising awareness of the importance of well-developed literacy for individuals and for the entire population;
- raising awareness on the role of family literacy as a tool for improving children's school success;
- bringing families together in intergenerational activities;
- enhancing children and parents' literacy skills and competences, including media



and information literacy;

- promoting children's emotional, social and intellectual development;
- facilitating the development of positive parent-child relationship and communication;
- promoting love for books and encouraging reading;
- building trust and improving the partnership between school and family through active participation of parents in the lives of their children in the learning process and in extracurricular activities;
- changing attitudes and relationships of teachers, parents and children in order to create a better climate for work, motivation for learning and increasing success.

Many family literacy programs in Romania and Macedonia, and only a few in Slovenia and Bulgaria, also address vulnerable groups, having the following specific objectives:

- supporting personal development of socially-disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (institutionalized children, Roma children, migrants) and their social inclusion by satisfying their educational and development needs and by giving them access to additional qualifications;
- reducing social disparities in local communities;
- developing local strategies to promote and implement family literacy programs;
- improving the school performance of children with learning difficulties;
- improving school attendance, through pedagogical and psychological counselling;
- encouraging and supporting families of preschool children and reducing the risk of school drop-out;
- educating parents in understanding the importance of education for their children and building strong family relations;
- developing and strengthening parents' literacy and social skills in order to enhance their capacity to effectively support their children's education as co-educators and thus to complement school-based learning processes;
- giving parents the opportunity to gain a variety of certified skills for better competitiveness on the labor market;
- creating synergies between home and school-based learning;
- enabling parents to participate meaningfully in school activities and to communicate with the teaching staff;
- training teachers to better work and understand children at risk.

In most of the analyzed family literacy programs the target groups are children and parents from vulnerable groups.



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Among these vulnerable groups we can identify: Roma children, institutionalized children from orphanages or foster houses, children living in foster families, Roma children from single-parent families, migrant children (children coming back to their native country), communities living in poverty, children at high risk of leaving school (school drop-out) mostly because poverty, students with disabilities or with special educational needs, students with unsatisfactory school results.

Additionally, the programs organize trainings for parents and teachers in order to help attain the objectives of the family literacy initiatives, as both of them are key elements for the success of these children.

There are also programs that have as target groups children and parents with no specific social background. These programs encourage reading and offer activities for children and parents together. These activities are organized mostly in schools and libraries.

Although various in type and form, the educational / reading activities for children predominate in the literacy programs in all five countries. These activities employ participatory and interactive teaching-learning approaches and strategies such as: lessons for some school subjects, family literacy activities at home; learn-by-play (games); group discussions; simulations / drama (shadow theatre); role play; creative illustration; playing with writing and drawing letters and words; stimulate learning through self-discovery, creativity, reflection and critical thinking; different forms of storytelling (story hours, intergenerational reading hours, playing time with the book, narrative fairytales using puppets or telling local fairy tales); modeled reading; listening and reading comprehension workshops or reading aloud workshop; talking about books and learning about different types of texts; meeting with authors of children's books, poets, musicians, artists, actors.

The programs also comprise extracurricular / leisure activities in which children are involved: group games, sports, drawing/painting, trips, visits to museums, movie theatres and libraries; guided tours in the natural environment, learning about cultural heritage, traditions or specifics of the local environment; creative workshops, crafts and book illustrating for children; art workshops for children and adults.

Parents usually take part in their children's activities, but there are also programs which train parents separately, such as: informative sessions on the importance of reading for their children's school progress and physical, emotional and mental development, but also on health, family planning, social assistance to obtain social benefits, depending on individual needs, especially sessions targeting at Roma parents; parental education activities that promote "parenting through reading" concept such as: predictive lecture,

59

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active reading, role play, usage of different reading materials (printed books and digital books); vocational training (for baker, hairdresser) providing additional qualifications.

Educators (teachers, school counselors, librarians, volunteers) also participated in training activities on literacy, family literacy, especially when working with specific target groups.

The resources used for the activities vary from books and didactic material, to other materials and equipment, depending on the specific of the activities.

As a general rule, each implementing organization used its own spaces, but there are also projects that use their partners` logistics for organizing the activities. The favorite place for delivering such activities are schools and libraries, but also other cultural institutions like theatres, museums, art galleries or community centers. Some of the literacy activities were carried in the homes of the participating families.

In all partner countries the analyzed activities were held in the national language. However, in some programs dedicated to Roma people, some activities were conducted in their native language.

Based on the analysis made in each partner country, we can identify similar types of facilitators. They are mainly teachers, librarians, professional trainers and volunteers.

Teachers involved in family literacy programs have pedagogical skills and training which is a part of their basic education and are able to conduct literacy programs. They can also be additionally qualified and trained in various fields, including education in librarianship and reading strategies.

The role of teachers in the literacy programs consists in developing competences and integrating children with learning problems in the community, improving school performance and learning abilities. They can better achieve these goals by involving parents in the educational process and helping create a strong relationship between parents and schools. Their main tasks are promoting reading and learning, further motivating students to read and to learn.

#### Librarians / Librarian teachers

Librarians often act as facilitators of family literacy programs, in schools or libraries. In some countries, they need to have a MA degree in an area related to literacy or library science, but in others they have different qualifications (teachers, educators, cultural sociologists, linguists etc.), which is later supported by an additional mandatory training in librarianship, generally organized by the national professional associations. The librarians can also later attend courses and workshops held by public or private training providers. There are also libraries which held workshops specially to train intergenerational literacy programs facilitators.



Their major tasks are to plan, prepare, develop and monitor the literacy programs. Using different working methods, librarians encourage reading aloud, intergenerational reading, reading for fun and other family literacy activities. In delivering their activities, they often cooperate with kindergarten educators, teachers, artists, writers and other professionals.

#### Professional trainers

Some of the analyzed literacy programs were held with the help of highly educated and competent trainers, who previously attended a training program.

#### Volunteers

Volunteers are also important facilitators of literacy programs, both in libraries and in non-governmental organizations. NGO's programs include volunteers mostly. This type of organization does not allow large financial contributions necessary to finance professional staff, so they make use of their own resources and volunteers.

They have various educational backgrounds and training, and different skills and competencies. Some volunteers were parenting experts, family psychologists, social workers, educational counselors, writers, artists, non-formal education specialists. The main characteristics of the volunteers are their willingness to work with children, their patience, commitment and pedagogical skills, their communication, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills.

The family literacy facilitators often work together, in libraries or schools. Their tasks differ, being influenced by the activities they have to deliver to their target groups. Their job is not easy, as they often have to work with socially-disadvantaged groups in the communities, to which they must give special attention and focus. Although with various educational backgrounds and competences, all the facilitators have the same goal: creating a reading culture, stimulating reading and learning in families, supporting school success.

Common results that can be identified when analyzing literacy programs are different when it comes to literacy programs with social impact and leisure literacy programs.

The general results of the programs developed for vulnerable categories are:

- improved behavior and discipline of school children;
- improved school attendance and school results of children;
- reducing the risk of school drop-out;
- social and scholar reintegration of migrant children and parents;
- development of literacy skills (Roma primary school children and adult family members);



- parents received counselling on the importance of education and were supported to acquire knowledge and methods to motivate their children to learn;
- empowered teachers to use various non-formal and informal teaching methodologies as well as to support effectively learners with different learning needs;

The general results of the programs developed for promoting reading for pleasure:

- increased self-esteem and self-confidence, progress in knowledge, positive attitudes towards education, better mutual understanding and also discipline during classes of the students involved;
- the improvement of parents reading in order to stimulate reading to their children, increased motivation for forming skills and habits in parents to support their children for successful adaptation in preschool groups, involvement of parents in activities with children. Parents have learned new reading methods for children, new methods of inter-generational communication and participated in family reading hours;
- raised awareness on the importance of joint learning activities for children and parents, with a positive effect on the parent-child relationship, improving reading skills and vocabulary, both for children and parents;
- establishment of an informal environment that stimulates relationships among children, parents and teachers, increased motivation for learning, experiencing the intergenerational literacy while being involved in common activities beyond.

Most of the activities were monitored by the implementing organizations through direct observation of the participants, monitoring visits and interviews. Some projects were monitored by external evaluators.

The evaluation of the programs was made by filling-in observation charts or tables on the participants` behavior during activities, by filling-in evaluation forms and questionnaires by teachers, pupils and parents to identify their interests and learning difficulties, by interviewing participants and partners, by individual and group discussions or by organizing focus groups.

Some organizations that responded to the survey didn't do systematic monitoring and evaluation, partly because some programs are not finished yet.

Strongly related to their goals and objectives, family literacy programs identified and described in the five countries had, undoubtedly, a positive impact not only on their direct participants, but also on the participants` families and on their community in general.

This common positive impact is proven by better school children` and adults` literacy skills, better parents` active involvement in the educational activity of their children, positive interaction among children, parents and educators, reduction of school



drop-out.

Most of these programs affected not only participating families, but they had a strong positive impact at the community level as well, raising awareness on the importance of formal and non-formal education. Better yet, some of them succeeded in developing local or even national strategies to encourage learning at all levels (e.g. national reading or awareness campaigns).

Roma people and especially Roma children were the main target group of many literacy projects in Macedonia and Romania and of fewer programs in Bulgaria and Slovenia. All these projects reported a higher level of social inclusion among the target group. Programs targeting socially-disadvantaged people took place in all five countries also reporting improved social behavior, acceptance of differences, thus reducing social disparities in local communities.

The sustainability of the analyzed programs is the best proof of their success, many of them continuing after their formal ending. The best example, in this case, is Slovenia, where from 23 analyzed programs, 17 of them have become a part of regular activity of the implementing organizations and continuously run from one to 19 years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

❖ It is recommended that family literacy projects should be implemented by **organizations coming from different sectors of activity**, with different expertise and professionals. When drafting literacy projects, it is important to have in mind the role of the positive cooperation and partnerships between public, non-governmental and private organizations. Coming from different sectors, these organizations can contribute to the success of the activities and can have a greater impact on the results of the projects.

❖ Educational institutions dealing with literacy should look for any **funding sources** whether public or private. They should write and send applications to various financing organs, carefully seeking for European, national or local development programs on educational sector.

❖ Any literacy programs should be initiated after a careful **analysis of the community needs**. On this basis, after identifying the stringent need, the implementing organization should think of the best way to solve the problem.

❖ The goals and **objectives** should be **realistic** and **tangible**, and the activities designed to achieve these objectives.



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- ❖ The cooperation among organizations and partners should involve not only expertise and common activities, but also the **joint use of** any kind of **resources**.
- ❖ It may be necessary to use a **location** different from those of the implementing organization or its partners, e.g. people's homes, shelters, care houses, in order to reach more people in need.
- ❖ Activities should be conducted in the participants' native **language** or the responsible for the activities should be sure that all the participants understand the language in which the activity is conducted.
- ❖ **Joint literacy activities** for children, parents and grandparents are highly recommended for their positive impact not only on each individual, but on the family as a whole.
- ❖ **Facilitators** should have minimum pedagogical competences, planning and management competences, team work skills, communication skills with both children and adults, positive attitude towards learning and towards the participants.
- ❖ All activities in the programs should be **monitored and evaluated** using specific tools in order to check the degree of fulfillment and to later optimize the process of the project implementation.
- ❖ If a program is proved to be **sustainable**, having a positive impact on its direct or indirect beneficiaries, it should become part of the regular activity of the implementing organization. Moreover, it should be used as a good practice example and should be implemented in similar organizations.



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## CHAPTER VI: Good Family Literacy Practice Examples

In order to achieve the Objective 1 of the Erasmus + “Family Literacy Works” project each partner had to identify at least one good or promising family literacy practices, developed in their countries. The programs described below have been identified by each project partner as good practice examples with high positive impact on their beneficiaries.

### BULGARIA

#### FAMILY SATURDAY AT THE MUSEUM

##### **The implementing organization’s profile:**

National Polytechnic Museum (NPTM) is not only a museum, but also a kind of educational institution that encourages educational advancement of different generations, while integrating them into the search for personal expression in science and technology. In order to fulfill this mission, over the last decade, the museum had focused its efforts in creating not only a modern and powerful exposition, but also in offering a number of programs to attract audiences, giving them opportunities to explore the history of scientific and technological development and reveal their hidden interests and potential.

##### **Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the program):**

"Fun Mathematics" Centre, "My Museum" Foundation, visiting lecturers: prof. Dimitar Dimitrov, assoc. prof. Tanya Ivanova, eng. Stoyan Vladimirov, Vanya Vezirov and others.

##### **Program duration:**

36 months (so far), began on February 2014

##### **The language in which the activities were conducted in:**

Bulgarian

##### **The funding:**

The *funding organization* was mainly NPTM, as in mid-2016 an external funding was received in the form of small donation - an award by a foundation. *The funding*



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*sources* were public, mainly own funds of the museum. The *amount funded* was five thousand levs, 98% representing the financial contribution of the implementing organization.

### **The context in which the program was implemented:**

The context of the program is the overall policy of NPTM to work with audiences, in particular with families and children - as the main target group. The program "Family Saturday" is part of the socio-cultural program of the institution, which aims to get to know and attract audiences, to learn their needs and offer them befitting initiatives. The museum is located near the center of Sofia, but in a neighborhood where mainly workers' families lived twenty years ago, now populated by elderly people caring for their grandchildren. This fact was taken into account and the museum creates its programs according to the profile of permanent residents in the neighborhood. In terms of tourists, school visits and visits of people with special needs - the programs are also adapted and provide the infrastructure and methodology.

Previous experience of the museum in work with institutions for children deprived of parental care and work with elderly people (for which the museum has won a prize from the Ministry of Education) supports the effectiveness of the current family programs. Modern interactive methods are used in order to attract the young generations with current and more direct approach, but the emphasis is in the museum specifics, in authentic examples and practical activities and visualization to preserve the diversity of informal museum education compared with the classical school one. It is this specificity and unconventional approach that attracts a family audience in NPTM. Parents remember the educational process from the period of their youth, and children are fascinated to understand how their parents studied. So it is interesting and pleasant for all in the museum.

The "Family Saturday" project is not available currently in other museums in the country. What is different and creative is the fact that representatives of at least two and sometimes three generations participate together. The classes are educational, emotional and recreational, motivational, social, and also support positive communication impacts.

### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

*The basic cognitive and educational purpose* of the program is that families with children understand that the museum is an endless and benevolent source of knowledge acquired in an unconventional way. The museum helps families to communicate through unique common experiences in a different environment, to build a tolerant attitude



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towards nature, society and the family in particular.

*Another leading objective* of the program is that a part of the children's free time is spent usefully in the company of their parents, siblings, grandparents and / or friends - as opposed to the dominant virtual communication.

*A specific objective* of the family Saturday in NPTM is that children and families acquire their new knowledge and skills through practical activities and live games.

*In social aspect* - the objective of the program is closing the generation gap, especially among children and parents who for whatever reason are permanently separated in time and space.

*In terms of the theme* of NPTM - the objective is families together to discover how fun and useful can be the phenomena of nature, science and the world around us, which otherwise are difficult to explain.

*In emotional terms* - the goal is for children to connect the museum with opportunities for personal expression, with pleasant memories, psychological comfort and a positive attitude towards cultural heritage and in particular to NPTM.

*The socio-economic goal* is - the pleasant and helpful hours which are spent at the museum to be affordable for families, because their price is greatly reduced.

**Target groups (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):**

Families with children (6-13 years old) / Parents, grandparents and / or relatives / friends - together

Families of children with specific educational needs

Single - parent families



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### Types of learning activities:

Interactive talk;

Attractive experiments;

Questions and answers with humorous elements or analogies and personal interpretations and stories, memories, so on;

Racing games for logical thinking, observation and other skills;

Cognitive dialogue, games, discussions, brainstorming, practical activities (children, parents, museum educators - together) the aim is to acquire skills for orientation in the surrounding world and dealing with life situations by understanding the laws of nature and the society.

Topics of some of the activities: *The secret of the inventor, Mathematics for all, Holography, Christmas wonders with chemistry, Elements of Music, Mathematics and music, Rose and rose oil - liquid gold of Bulgaria, Humanpolis, The polar regions of the planet, Bulgarian space biotechnology, Tile maker mathematician, Water issues, The machinery at home in the past and today, Bulgarian discoveries and inventions that changed the world somehow* and others.



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#### **Location of activities:**

Exposition of NPTM and specially equipped demonstration room in the museum.

#### **Resources used (materials, equipment):**

Museum objects, didactic materials, multimedia projector, computer, screen, materials for practical activities (small tools and other equipment for visualization and interaction).

#### **Types of facilitators:**

The facilitators responsible for the activities are **teachers** - museum educators and curators, **trainers** - visiting lecturers and methodologists, **volunteers** and also guides from NPTM.

#### **Education, training background and expertise of the facilitators:**

Most museum experts / teachers / facilitators have experience in working with children and family audience, they also have a specialized teacher training; others are trained in working with visitors with different disabilities. All have long-term participation in the preparation of children's museum programs or those for mixed / family audience.

#### **The facilitators' tasks**

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Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

69

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Their tasks were to gain the trust of the participants, to attract them in a museum environment; to increase their motivation for acquiring new knowledge and more free time - spent together nicely in the museum environment; to provoke in children / families desire for personal expression and creative thinking and discover their own innovative solutions to some assigned tasks and to be able to build their vision of the museum - as favorite place and a friend of the family.

### **Qualitative and quantitative results:**

Many participants had positive reviews for the program.

An award was received from a contest held by "America for Bulgaria" Foundation in the category "Best work with families".

Total number of family Saturdays - 31.

The total number of visitors is 1440 of which 828 children and 612 parents. 350 visitors have been included additionally - children with special needs and deviant behavior. Some have attended more than 3 topics.

### **Monitoring and evaluation methods:**

The management of the museum and members of the Public Council; partners of the museum, volunteers, professionals from colleges and universities and NGOs; organizations that have established awards for family programs; participants, visitors in the museum and more.

### **Impact of the program:**

The project is sustainable and with growing popularity. The audience declares that it learns new things and spends meaningful and enjoyable Saturday hours in the museum. The various themes accompanied by practical exercises and demonstrations convey the emotional and cognitive satisfaction and create new friendships. The "Family Saturday" has a perspective and a high degree of utility. It is held in an atmosphere of goodwill, creative spirit and dialogue between generations. Immediate feedback to the media and social networks is entirely positive. The audience is interested and often gives ideas which the museum tries to satisfy in subsequent editions. Interest is constant and attendance is growing. The program is especially useful is for improving the relationship between children and their fathers.

### **Contact details of the implementing organization and the project manager:**

National Polytechnic Museum

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70

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Phone: 6602/931 80 18  
e-mail: polytechnic.pr@abv.bg

**Photos** from classes carried out under the program are posted at the following link:  
<http://dox.bg/files/dw?a=5406ce81e2>

## **BULGARIA**

### **“BEING A FATHER” NATIONAL CAMPAIGN**

#### **The implementing organization’s profile:**

Founders of the Public Council of the National Campaign “Being a Father”: Parents Association (coordinator); “Lale” Foundation, “Gender Education, Research and Technologies” Foundation, Institute for Social Activities and Practices, “Animus” Foundation, Bulgarian Gender Research; National Network for Children; “For our children” Foundation; “Center for Research and Women Policies” Foundation, “Applied Research and Technology” Foundation.

Parents Association was established on June 19, 2001 as an association for public benefit. Their main objectives are: development and establishment of the idea of parenthood as a core spiritual value in society and the family as the natural environment for the upbringing of children.

They achieve their goals through the development, implementation and distribution of regional and national policies for:

- Promoting family values among children, formation of attitude towards volunteering and charity;
- Environmental education of children and development of a sense of respect for the natural environment;
- Encouraging sport for children and art activities;
- Contributing to the improvement of children's healthcare, protection of children's rights as a patient, prevention of child diseases;
- Prevention of all forms of violence against children;
- Fight pornography, gambling and antisocial behavior in children;
- Support for gifted children;
- Protecting children's rights regulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



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Parents Association is working very actively in the field of improving the relationship between the family and the education system, covering all levels aimed at building a school community: professional educators, parents, children, institutions who are involved in child care.

Parents Association is the coordinator of the National Campaign “Being a father” - an initiative on a macro (information campaign) and micro levels (field work) that promotes the active participation of fathers in children's lives and care for them. The team of Parents Association currently consists of 9 people.

### **Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the program):**

Since the campaign has more than 300 organizations - collaborators nationwide (under “collaborator” we understand an organization that at least once had joined initiatives of “Being a father” and had contributed a lot, we will mention here only founding organizations (members of the Public Council of “Being a father”) and 12 Ambassadors of “Being a father”).

#### ***Members of the Public Council***

*All members of the Public council are part of the drafting of the strategy and practical implementation of activities under “Being a father”, each contributing actively to the work in their field of expertise, contacts and opportunities. All organizations are actively involved in the development of campaign messages, and in the development of the survey “Attitudes, practices and barriers to active male inclusion in child care”.*

#### **“Lale” Foundation**

The team of “Lale” Foundation actively supports public “Being a father” initiatives, while mobilizing a large number of partners in the country, and successfully attracts partners inside and outside the NGO sector (e.g. institutions, businesses, cultural organizations). Thanks to its excellent long partnership and work with different organizations across the country, “Lale” Foundation supports the introduction of values and good practice of “Being a father” in the everyday work of partner organizations.

#### **“Gender Education, Research and Technologies” Foundation**

Thanks to the sensitivity and attention of our colleagues from the GERT Foundation in the field work, 4 of 12 Ambassadors of the campaign joined “Being a father” - active schools that involve their students' fathers. GERT Foundation actively supports the campaign ambassadors, and has built excellent relations with them. GERT is actively involved not only in the internal project work, but also in the public campaign.

**Institute for Social Activities and Practices** conducts trainings among social workers and kindergarten teachers about the importance of male involvement in



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children's lives, spreads campaign messages and activates its partners in the country to participate in public initiatives.

**“Animus Association” Foundation** carries out training among social workers for the opportunities provided by the inclusion of men in social work, promotes the values of the campaign.

**Bulgarian Gender Research Centre** develops materials that promote the values of “Being a father”, activates partners in the country to participate in public activities of campaign.

**National Network for Children** spreads the values of the campaign; assists in public events in the campaign.

**“For our children” Foundation** promotes the integration of the work with men in social centers, assists public events in the campaign.

**“Center for Research and Policies” Foundation** supported actively the development of research tools for the study *Attitudes, practices and barriers to active male involvement in child care*, works for a successful partnership between “Being a father” and “Erasmus” university in Rotterdam.

**“Applied Research and Communications” Foundation** actively supported the online positioning of “Being a father”, developed the mobile version of the site of the campaign [mencare.bg](http://mencare.bg), contributed to the successful integration of its experience in the “active fatherhood” project.

*Ambassadors of “Being a father”* are organizations that spread actively long-term messages and values of this national campaign and provide opportunities for children and the most important men in their lives to feel closer and happier together. “Being a father” currently has 11 Ambassadors (schools and community centers).

**In addition to these organizations, the campaign has more than 270 associates.** Supporters of “Being a father” are organizations that have been involved at least once in initiatives which promote the relationship between children and their fathers, for example. in celebration of the "Week of the father" or "Father's Day" or they have conducted independent initiative.

Outside Bulgaria, "Being a father" actively works in partnership with Promundo, the organization which coordinates the international campaign for paternal care MenCare. “Being a father” is a part of it, and the network MenEngage Europe, as the coordinator of the campaign, is a member of Management Committee of the network.

### **Program duration:**

36 months, beginning December, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013

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Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

73

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**The language in which the activities were conducted in:**

Bulgarian

**The funding:**

The funding organization was the Oak Foundation, so the funding sources were private. Amount funded: 300,158 USD + 50% financing from organizations in the Public Council of the campaign + different amounts in the form of donations for services carried out in the preparation of communication materials or advertising campaigns.

**The context in which the program was implemented:**

Gradually the traditional patriarchal family model in Bulgaria undergoes big changes. They are most visible in the case of young and educated parents who allow greater involvement of men in housework and childcare, thereby breaking the stereotypes for female and male roles in the household. At the same time, international studies show that women are 2 to 10 times more involved in childcare than men. It is interesting to note that it is easier for women to find a job outside the home environment than men to engage in housework and childcare. On the other hand, numerous studies have shown that the involvement of fathers reflects very positively on the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children. It turns out that children who have active and involved men figures in their lives build better protection against physical and sexual violence, have a healthy attitude towards sex, sexuality, and social interactions. Therefore, positive paternal model can help children to grow up confident and interested citizens, partners and parents. Similar observations are also valid for Bulgaria. According to NSI, 1300 men have used the possibility of paternity leave in 2011, which is 30% more than in 2009.

Studies in the country still show some serious negative results:

- Health care for children as well as their educational development are still considered as a major responsibility of the mothers.
- Fathers are seen as involved in the traditional roles of breadwinners and protectors of the children.

The main reasons why fathers are not actively involved in children's lives are the high degree of embarrassment and discomfort in men that they do not comply with patriarchal “male” norms of behavior, and the lack of support in social circle about being an active father.

In conclusion, there is sufficient evidence that active fatherhood and positive



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parenting are key factors in reducing child abuse and violence. Although the positive public opinion, in Bulgaria there are multiple practices and behaviors which prevent active involvement of men in their children's lives.

#### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

- Promoting the model of positive parenting in Bulgarian society;
- Encouraging of active fatherhood with the involvement of men in kindergartens and primary education and the development of educational tools for involvement of male teachers, social workers and local authorities;
- Building a sustainable network of local and national organizations and institutions supported by the Public Council, that work for a stronger involvement of men in the lives of children and lobby for policies for child protection to be adopted by private and public organizations and professionals.

#### **Target groups (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):**

Parents, children, students, social workers, non-governmental institution, educational institutions (schools and kindergartens), local authorities, media and others.

#### **Types of learning activities:**

Trainings for involving men in education (kindergarten, school) and in social work.



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Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

75

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### **Location of activities:**

The activities were carried out in more than 18 types of organizations, including: the schools, kindergartens, theaters, museums, community centers, libraries, NGOs, bookstores, children's shops, galleries and more.

### **Resources used (materials, equipment):**

Multimedia equipment, flip charts, markers and more were used for the training. Mainly print materials were used for the rest of the activities in the campaign (posters, interactive visual materials, etc.). The organizations which took actions locally have used all possible resources: boards, balloons, ribbons, printed materials and others.

### **Types of facilitators (e.g. teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers etc.):**

The facilitators responsible for the activities were teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers, but also journalists, PR experts, school principals, museum curators and others.



### **Education, training background and expertise of the facilitators:**

“Being a father” covered a broad range of activities implemented in more than 90 locations in Bulgaria, so it is not possible to describe the education and experience of all facilitators.



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The educators in Parents Association were educated psychologists skilled in working with professionals in the field of education, with rich experience in trainings.

### **The facilitators' tasks:**

For educators in Parents Association, it was important to convey successfully the importance of men for the successful development of children as well to address stereotypes and prejudices of teachers to work with men.

### **Qualitative and quantitative results:**

- It was conducted the first ever national representative survey among parents of children up to 17 years on *Attitudes, practices and barriers to active male involvement in child care*.

- Organization of national initiatives “Father's Day” (June 2014, 2015, 2016) and the “Week of the Father” (November 2014, 2015, 2016). It was developed a set of materials useful in organizing events for the “Week of the Father”.

- **Basic quantitative indicators:**

- Number of involved organizations in Bulgaria: 315 (identified to date)

- Places where the activities took place in the campaign: 92

- Publications, reports, interviews and reviews about the campaign: 320 (identified to date)

- **Produced methodological tools:**

- KINDERGARTEN INVITES THE FATHER: How to organize events aimed specifically at fathers - practical steps using the expertise of four kindergartens (for professionals)*

- DAD STARTS SCHOOL TOO: How kids, teachers and parents adapt in first grade, how can our father be useful as a resource and tools for working with parents (for professionals)*

- IN ORDER TO FLOURISH ... OR HOW TO CREATE FOR OUR CHILDREN SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT: 9 areas in which we can support children from 0 to 7 years, with the active participation of dads.*

- **Basic quality results and conclusions:**

- Men respond when invited;

- When practice is established for the involvement of fathers, they themselves look for ways to be included;

- The involvement of fathers leads to better outcomes for children - such as behavior, self-esteem and academic success;

- Teachers change their attitude towards fathers: believe they are more actively



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involved in the upbringing and emotional bond with the child, as well as supporting their educational development; fathers understand their importance to children and are willing to deal with them;

- Social workers are beginning to recognize the importance of the male figure;
- Parents assess the events as useful and interesting, would participate again, and said that they learned new things in the initiatives;
- The campaign continues after the formal ending of the project.

### **Monitoring and evaluation methods:**

In the summer of 2015, there was an evaluation of the work of the Public Council by Ms. Desislava Ilieva, elected by the Public council as an external evaluator. During the period November 2015 - December 2015, a final external evaluation of the project was made by Ms. Hermina Emiryan, who was chosen by the Public council after a competition.

An external evaluation of the work of the Public council was based on in-depth interviews with members of the Public council and examination of documents.

The external evaluation of the entire project was based on more than 30 in-depth interviews with representatives of the Public council, the media, ambassadors and other partners in the campaign, online survey among people who participated in the campaign (about 120 parents and 65 professionals), attending trainings and events, research of documents and others.

### **Impact of the program:**

The overall impact of the work on the campaign was difficult to measure because work was on many levels. As for the information campaign, the external evaluation recommended more active work and constant presence in the media, and active promotion of information materials prepared for the campaign. Despite the need for more active promotion, the campaign achieved its aim to intensify the debate on active fatherhood and help break the traditional “male” stereotypes.

The field work led to the development of successful practices.

It started the successful involvement of men in educational institutions. Given that Bulgarian children generally grow in feminized environment (kindergarten, school), the project provided an excellent starting point for more in-depth activities in working with men in education and social systems.

**Contact details** of the implementing organization and the project manager:

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Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

78

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Parents Association

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telephone: 0879 509 548

**Photos** from the public events in the campaign on the following website:

<http://mencare.bg/biblioteka>

Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership  
Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

79

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## MACEDONIA

### “SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ROMA POPULATION”

#### **The implementing organization’s profile:**

“DROM“ Roma community center - a non-governmental organization, with expertise in working with Roma children and adults, social work, legal assistance and additional qualifications for the Roma population.

There were no **partners** involved in the program.

#### **Program duration:**

The project began in 2006 and lasted more than 24 months.

#### **The language in which the activities were conducted in:**

Macedonian

**The funding** sources were the IOM (International Organizations for Migrations) and the Norwegian embassy. The amount funded was 50,000 Euros per year and the financial contribution of the implementing organization was 10%.

#### **The context in which the program was implemented:**

The project is made especially for the needs of the Roma mothers/parents as they become parents at early age completely unprepared for the new family. They are also unemployed, even more illiterate, living on the edge of the economic and social environment. That is the reason why UNICEF trained trainers went door to door in the homes of these families to explain to the parents: the infant needs at a certain age (0 to 6 years), the education and growth level the child is supposed to have, to advise and educate the parents and to educate the child of 3 – 5 years of age.

#### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

- parent education adapted to the age of their children with the objective of their better bringing up and suitable education;
- bringing up Roma children in an appropriate way;



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- educated children according to their age;
- monitoring children's growth.



**Target groups (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):**

- Roma families with 0 to 6 years old children;
- the whole Roma population of the local community.

**Types of learning activities:**

- counselling and educating families, in their own homes, on how to take care of their children, how to bring them up and educate them

**Location of activities:**

In the families' homes

**Resources used (materials, equipment):**

Professional literature on the growth of children aged 0 to 6 years old, toys, didactic materials.

**Types of facilitators:**

Trainers running constant successive training by UNICEF.

**Education, training background and expertise of the facilitators:**

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Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392



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- UNICEF training on observing children`s growth and on the special approach needed;
- trained for educating and approaching children and parents;
- have a high school degree or a university degree.



#### **The facilitators' tasks:**

Assisting the parents, observing the child and dealing with the problems incurred.

#### **Qualitative and quantitative results:**

- 100 Roma families with 0 to 6 years old children;
- educated parents;
- educated children.

#### **Monitoring and evaluation methods:**

Monthly reports, meetings with the funder organization coordinator

#### **Impact of the program:**

Due to the large number of people included in this project and its specific circumstances (individual visits and trainings from home to home), the project had a positive impact on the whole Roma community in Kumanovo on bringing up and

educating children from early age. With the help of the activities within the projects, the parents were given the so-needed support and knowledge for raising their children.



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## PORTUGAL

### READING MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

#### **The implementing organization's profile:**

Agrupamento de Escolas de Ermesinde - a public school with 2,457 students.

#### **Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the program):**

National Lecture Plan (PNL) is an initiative of the Portuguese Government, which provides the national guidelines for the project.

Municipality of Ermesinde - which gives technical support for the development of the project.

Senior University of Ermesinde - an active partner in the development of the project.

#### **Program duration:**

36 months

#### **The language in which the activities were conducted in:**

Portuguese

#### **The funding sources:**

Public funding, including the funds of the school

#### **Amount funded / Financial contribution of the implementing organization:**

The project has a financing of 1,500 € each year, coming from public funds. The rest of the necessary funds come from the school's own funds.

#### **Eligible costs:**

The money is used for: books, ICT equipment (PCs and tablets) and materials to help the development of the project (paper, posters, so on).

#### **The context in which the program was implemented:**

The project started from the need to raise the literacy levels of parents.

#### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership  
Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

84

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The main goal is to improve the literacy levels of parents.

Covering the various levels of education, involving the different elements of the school and educational community, highlighting reading in various curriculum areas and making it a source of pleasure for leisure time, several activities are suggested in this project that aim to convert the reading in a fundamental activity in the daily life of students, teachers, technical / operational assistants and families.

#### **Target groups (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):**

The main target groups are the middle class school students and their parents, coming from disadvantaged groups, from ethnic minorities (Gipsy minority).

#### **Types of learning activities:**

- Students from The Senior University of Ermesinde hold sessions with parents and children in order to make them understand the importance of reading.
- Dissemination by teachers and class directors of texts provided by the School Library Service (SBE) with the aim of promoting joint reading in the family and the written reflection on the message conveyed.
- Exposition of the texts / illustrations created by the students and their families, or their reading suggestions on the blog and Facebook page of the School Library Service.
- Promotion of reading by teachers of different curriculum areas.
- An annual poetry and reading show involving various elements of the school community.

#### **Location of activities:**

The activities take place in the school, in the Senior University and in other different places where the municipality allows these activities to happen.

#### **Resources used (materials, equipment):**

Books, a computer and a screen projector, other materials needed for the activities.

#### **Types of facilitators (e.g. teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers etc.):**

(Retired) librarian teachers, school director, teachers of different curriculum areas, parents, writers and students from Senior University.

#### **Education, training background and expertise of the facilitators:**

Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership  
Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

85

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The librarian teacher has a MA degree in School librarianship. Some of them are retired. Teachers are motivated to promote reading and literacy through school educational project. The students from Senior University have different backgrounds and jobs, but they all love to read a lot.

#### **The facilitators' tasks:**

The facilitators read a book to the audience, followed by a discussion on what was read.

#### **Qualitative and quantitative results:**

Some of the parents started reading books from the school library.

In the year 2015/16, 175 written reflections were received in the libraries from 1st and 2nd cycle students and their families.

In the two annual shows dedicated to reading (2015/16 and 2016/17) there were around 400 people in each one (students, parents, guests).

#### **Monitoring and evaluation methods:**

The project was evaluated by the number of books read by the parents and by applying questionnaires on the parents' motivation for future activities.

#### **Impact of the program:**

The program is still undergoing so there is not yet possible to estimate its impact.

**Project information:** <http://beaafg.blogspot.ro/search?q=ler+faz+a+diferen>

## **PORTUGAL**

### **THE VOICE OF THE BOOKS**

#### **The implementing organization's profile:**

Escola Básica Frei Caetano Brandão is a public school in the city of Braga, with 10 to 16 years old students, the only school in the city which is working with visually impaired children.

#### **Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the program):**

Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership  
Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

86

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National Lecture Plan (PNL) - an initiative of the Portuguese Government, which provides the national guidelines for the project.

Public Library Lúcio Craveiro da Silva - which provides support for the books in Braille used.

BAI (Inclusion Support Library) - a national organization that provides audio books for the visually impaired.

Antena Minho (Local Radio) - which gives support for the recording of the audiobooks.

University of Minho - which gives scientific support for the books recorded as audio books.

**Program duration:**

23 months

**The language in which the activities were conducted in:**

Portuguese

**The funding sources:**

Public funding

**Amount funded / Financial contribution of the implementing organization:**

2,500 € coming from public funds. The rest of the necessary funds come from the budget of the school.

**Eligible costs:**

The money is used for books and eBooks, ICT equipment (Portable PCs and tablets) and other materials (paper, posters, so on).

**The context in which the program was implemented:**

The main target are the visually impaired students from school and their parents. The community involved comes mostly from disadvantaged groups, with few opportunities of access to books in Braille or audio books. The parents are mainly from the middle class, but also from disadvantaged groups. The project started from the need to put these students and their families on the path of reading.



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### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

The main goal is to get the parents of the visually impaired children involved in the reading of books, in order to transform them into audio books for their children and other visually impaired children.

### **Target groups (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):**

Visually impaired students and their parents.

### **Types of learning activities:**

The parents make recordings of the books in order to transform them into audiobooks.

The visually impaired students learn how to use a tablet in order to read an eBook.

### **Location of activities:**

In school, for the students who learn how to use the tablets.

In the students' houses, where parents practice reading.

In the Antena Minho Radio - for the recording of the audiobooks.

### **Resources used (materials, equipment):**

Books, eBooks, computer, tablets, recording studio.



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### **Types of facilitators (e.g. teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers etc.):**

Librarian teacher



### **Education, training background and expertise of the facilitators:**

The librarian teacher has a MA degree in school librarianship and has attended several training courses on the best way to work with visually impaired students.

### **The facilitators' tasks:**

The facilitators provide parents with books to read at home and listen how they read. The facilitator teaches students how to use an eBook or an audiobook.

### **Qualitative and quantitative results:**

Parents improved their reading ratio because they were forced to shape up their pronunciation for a clear recording.

### **Monitoring and evaluation methods:**

The project was evaluated by the number of books read or recorded by parents, by the number of eBooks read by the visually impaired students and by the questionnaires filled in by the parents.

### **Impact of the program:**

Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership  
Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392



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The program is still undergoing so there is not yet possible to estimate its impact.  
**Project information:** <http://cgandra05.wixsite.com/avozdoslivros>

## ROMANIA

### LITERACY CUBED - FOCUS ON ROMA FAMILIES (LIT3)



#### The implementing organization's profile:

The project was implemented by the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association - RWCT; Learn & Vision Association was a partner.

The Romanian RWCT Association is a membership-based professional organization, including teachers and teacher trainers. Though the association itself was only set up in 2002, its history and the members' RWCT related activities go back to the late 1990s, when – within the RWCT network program of the Open Society Institute New York – a group of dedicated teachers from major cities of the country (Bucharest, Cluj, Brasov, so on) attended an over 100-hour training course delivered by volunteers of the International Reading Association (IRA). This was followed by mentoring and certification of the trainers according to a clearly defined procedure.

The Romanian RWCT Association's mission is to contribute to the development of a democratic society, by promoting critical thinking skills, cooperation, autonomy, creativity and responsibility in all forms of education, and supporting the pre-service and in-service training of various socio-professional categories<sup>21</sup>.

Learn & Vision Association (ALV) is a professional association of educators established in 2010. It is composed of 46 active members from all around Romania. The goal of ALV is to promote, through advocacy and other forms of support and actions, the value of the learning process from childhood throughout old age.

ALV is a founding member of the CALIEDU Coalition, consisting of 12 NGOs and institutions who have experience in the field of education. The Coalition aims to

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.rwctic.org/romania>

develop educational public policies based on the results of scientific research.

The strategic objective of the organization is to ensure its gradual development in both quantitative terms (number of members) and qualitative terms (quality of initiatives and actions; expertise and know-how of membership); recognition in the community of educators and the broader community gained through the constant promotion of learning activities and initiatives promoted by ALV.

The fundamental values of the organization are: efficient learning, a passion for knowledge, the thirst for new ideas, exploration and thorough documentation, creativity and professionalism.

The thematic fields of ALV's activities are:

- Inter-generational learning and Family literacy;
- School management and quality assurance;
- Key and transversal competences in lifelong learning;
- Non-formal education;
- Inclusive education and intercultural education;
- Reflexing;
- Thinking and innovation.

In order to achieve its specific aims derived from its strategic objective, the association develops and implements programs, projects and other activities which promote lifelong learning, in different contexts (lectures, conferences, public debates, workshops, seminars, round table meetings, information campaigns and awareness campaigns, advocacy, publications, resources).

#### **Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the program):**

The project benefited from a diverse partnership of a research institution, an international umbrella organization, and three national NGOs, as well as six associated partners (5 Roma organizations and 1 bureau of education). Including stakeholders in two European-level partnership meetings provided added value to this European cooperation project.

The partnership included:

- Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Association, Romania
- Learn & Vision Association, Romania
- Institute of Education, UK
- Pedagogski Centar Crne Gore, Montenegro
- Orava Association for Democratic Education, Slovakia



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- Six associate partners in Romania, Montenegro and Slovakia.

**Program duration:**

24 months, December 2013 - November 2015

**The language** in which the activities were conducted in:

Romanian, Slovakian, Montenegro language in workshops and publications;  
English in international meetings and research.

**The funding sources:**

The project was financed by the European Commission through Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

**Amount funded / Financial contribution of the implementing organization:**

Total amount founded by the European Commission: 290.400 EUR

The financial contribution of the implementing organization: 35.976 EUR.

Volunteer works: 264 hours (in Romania), 1,550 total hours (in projects).

**Eligible costs:**

Personnel costs – travel, accommodation and subsistence costs, equipment bought for the project, catering services during workshops, consumables and supplies, publication and/or other materials.

**The context in which the program was implemented (targeted community from social, economic, educational point of view, the community needs / problems assessment, the opportunities identified to address these needs):**

Families with an extremely precarious economic situation do not have the habit of keeping books in the house, setting a place for them, having discussions with their children about reading or writing or health matters. The program helped parents become the *first teachers* of children and partners in child education (parental and educational support).

There is much evidence that parents suffering socio-economic disadvantage are less likely to provide adequate educational support for their children. Families in precarious economic situation sometimes have a negative attitude towards education. Members of these families may have negative memories of the school environment, or



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they may have gone to school for only a short time. Even though they perceive themselves as the first person who teach the child, they are not sufficiently aware of their role as a model for children in their process of developing their love for learning: ensuring a safe and stable climate at home, setting rules, talking and interacting with children, stimulating the child's intellect through games (even games invented with basic resources (stones, leaves, etc.)). The program provided opportunities for organizing interactive literacy activities between parents and children.

Any conversation between parent and child on an appropriate subject helps, and any reading and response activity taking place in the family can contribute to education.

### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

LIT3 aimed at developing and advocating for effective policies that promote family literacy (reading and health literacy) for and in Roma communities with a view to raising Roma children's attainment level in general education and improving Roma adults' literacy skills.

More specifically, its aims were to:

1. Provide the evidence-base for generating effective policies that promote family literacy by developing and piloting a Roma family literacy program;
2. Develop local strategies to promote and implement family literacy programs in Roma communities in three locations (Cluj-Napoca, Romania; Podgorica, Montenegro; Dolny Kubin, Slovakia);
3. Engage key local stakeholders in promoting and implementing effective policies for Roma family literacy, and in the valorization of the project results;
4. Design curriculum and a delivery model for a Family Literacy Program (reading literacy and health literacy) which focuses on primary school children and their parents and grandparents;
5. Provide health literacy promotion materials for healthcare units/surgeries in disadvantaged communities;
6. Raise awareness of the essential role of family literacy as a tool for improving children's school success;
7. Disseminate and valorize the project results.

The basic principles for the curriculum were:

- Involvement of three generations (primary school children, parents / guardians of these children and their grandparents);
- Use of special approaches for each age group: I- children in preparatory and first grade



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group II-children in grades II-IV);

- Opportunities for adults to develop literacy skills for themselves and parenting skills to develop literacy / writing skills among their children;
- Inclusion of basic skills needed to encourage Roma children in risk to attend school and to improve their chances of academic success;
- Awareness the importance of health as a way to improve the living and education conditions of Roma children in the primary cycle;
- Raising motivation through the use of models - Roma children from secondary level, who have reached a certain level of academic success, become reading partners for children in the primary cycle;
- Promoting family literacy (literacy and health education) in Roma communities as a tool for increasing the school frequency in the general education system among Roma children.

The program's activities and objectives could be understood in terms of four interrelated stages:

- Stage 1: Development. This first stage was centered on the creation of an appropriate curriculum and learning materials, and also involved the engagement of key local stakeholders in each community.
- Stage 2: Recruitment. This stage involved recruitment of families, and of the volunteers who supported program implementation.
- Stage 3: Implementation. As part of the implementation stage, Literacy Cubed sought to achieve a number of objectives related to participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices.
- Stage 4: Long-term objectives. The completion of Stage 3 marked the end of the activities on the FL pilot. However, those activities sought to have longer term impacts (Stage 4) on the skills, attitudes and practices focused on in Stage 3. These longer term impacts included improving Roma adults' educational support strategies, thereby improving Roma children's opportunities and attainment.

#### **Target groups (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):**

The direct beneficiaries in the pilot countries - Romania, Montenegro, Slovakia - were:

- 120 children, parents and grandparents;
- 48 secondary school students - reading buddies for the Roma children;
- 3 local working groups of stakeholders to develop the local strategies;
- 170 doctor's surgeries to promote health literacy in Roma communities.



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The target group in the piloting stage was composed of Roma families, including:

- primary school pupils
- adults (parents, grandparents, other relatives)

They worked with the extended family, including: grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, older cousins, legal guardians, even family friends who spend enough time with the child and are willing to help them write and read.

Two family literacy workshops were implemented in Cluj-Napoca. One workshop was held in "Traian Dârjan" School and the other one was held in "Nicolae Iorga" School. In each workshop, there were two groups of learners:

- 1st group: primary school children (aged 6-8), their parents/ caregivers and their grandparents;
- 2nd group: primary school children (aged 9-11), their parents/ caregivers and their grandparents.

The groups were formed based on the reading level of the child.

The number of participants per group was decided taking into account the number of existing trainers. If there were 2 trainers working simultaneously with the same group, the number of participants was between 12 and 18 - 6 students and 6 to 12 adults (grandparents, parents, and other relatives), meaning 6 families. To include three generations, at least one grandfather was included in each group. If there was only one trainer / facilitator per group, then the number of participants was around 9 (3 families), with 1-2 reading partners and a volunteer.

Child profile: primary school pupils (including the preparatory group) from poor Roma communities with low or medium reading capacities, according to their teachers' assessment.

Adult profile: family members of children with low literacy skills, but not altogether illiterate, with a positive attitude towards their children's participation in school education. This program worked very well with those who wanted a better future for themselves and their children and who regretted not having access to education.

Family profile: It was neither possible nor necessary to establish a profile of the Roma families in the program. When this program was designed and piloted, a needs analysis was conducted for poor, low-educated, low-reading Roma families, with houses which lack learning space.

### **Types of learning activities:**

*Reading* - The trainer read text copies using predictive reading methods.

95

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*Cooperative reading* - participants read (chain reading, paired reading, etc.). Reading with *reading friends (reading buddies)* was included here.

*Interaction with text* - participants discussed using reflective questions, drew, used role play and collage.

*Family word bank – method for learning* - each family had a box of boxes (one for each member of the family) in which they collected and stored the words they learnt to use independently during the program.

*Reading games / parent as a first teacher* - parallel activities: children played games with reading partners under the supervision of volunteers, and parents had conversations with the trainer about issues related to parenting and ways to become a good first teacher for their children.

*Health education* - learning activities (reading, discussion, etc.) on key concepts in health education.



### **Location of activities:**

In Romania: two schools in Cluj-Napoca (“Nicolae Iorga” School and “Traian Dârjan” School).

In Dolný Kubín, Slovakia and Podgorica, Montenegro - Konik camp refugee.



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### **Resources used (materials, equipment):**

Program staff from each location developed and/or procured their own teaching materials. These materials could not be developed centrally and shared across the three locations.

Learning materials: Families received books as gifts (5 books/family) and copies of the materials used in the workshops, so they were able to create a small library at home. Each of the 48 children received at least two children's books. The donation of books was the result of a community book collection. The donation was accompanied by explanations about the importance of keeping books in the house in good condition.

At the pilot stage of the LIT3 project - "Family literacy program" (FLP), at least 16 different reading materials were selected for each workshop. Some reading materials related to health education were developed by the Learn & Vision Association (ALV). Trainers and facilitators could use their own texts, drawn from existing literature and adapted to specific groups.

### **Types of facilitators (e.g. teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers etc.):**

Volunteers: *Reading friends (reading buddies)* were Roma students who already enjoyed academic success, especially with regard to reading and could serve as a model for the youngest. Other volunteers were high school students or professionals who wanted to spend time helping students read and learn. They were trained in literacy games and outdoor games.

Volunteer profile: teachers, trainers, students in Philology / Psychology / Social Assistance, psychologists.

### **Education and training background and expertise (courses attended, previous activities, their role in previous family literacy programs) of the facilitators:**

Competencies necessary for tutors / trainers to facilitate workshops for the literacy (reading and health) were: knowledge of the methodology of adult education and experience in working with disadvantaged groups. This FLP gave the trainer the freedom to plan the details of each workshop and an example of good practice. The main challenge for a trainer was to find the materials: stimulating texts / stories, adapted to the level and age, interesting for three generations. Some texts might require re-reading in a language that was simple enough for a particular group at different levels of text complexity. This was a program that was based on the professional experience of



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trainers, so it was supported by specialists or people prepared for this purpose.

Characteristics of a successful family literacy facilitator:

- Communication / relational skills (with adults and children)
- Adaptability / flexibility
- Availability of time and resources
- Creativity
- Sense of humor
- Encouraging, optimistic, enthusiastic
- Tolerant (to frustration), patient
- Epistemic curiosity / self-improvement
- Literacy skills
- Valorization of education
- Proactive (preventative and supportive)
- At least average studies
- Knowledge of parenting and andragogy.

#### **The facilitators' tasks:**

- Defining the objectives of the meeting and the resulting products
- Directing the discussions
- Summarizing key points
- Guiding collaborators
- Establishing a work plan
- Being responsible for the people they worked with
- Finding solutions

They facilitated literacy and relaxation games for children and helped with other logistics issues. They organized volunteer activities, starting with recruiting volunteers and preparing the agenda. The coordinator ensured that there was a volunteer present at the workshops.

Volunteers were involved in each workshop, although not necessarily the same.

#### **Qualitative and quantitative results:**

- 16 workshops sessions (48 learning hours in 16 workshops of 3 hours). After attending these workshops, the adult participants were able to: explain at least 12 of the 16 key concepts in developing literacy and health literacy skills; use independently more

words than at the beginning of the program, measurable by counting words in the word bank; demonstrate that they have had a positive change in their attitudes towards learning and education, including their perception of the role of "*first teacher*" for their children.

- The participating children were able to explain at least 12 of the 16 key concepts used in reading and health education; use independently more words than at the beginning of the program, measurable by counting words in the *word bank*; demonstrate that they have more confidence as readers and motivation for reading and learning.

### **Monitoring and evaluation methods:**

Data collection forms were developed by the evaluation team and distributed to program staff. Data collection took place during the family workshops, using observers who were not involved in the teaching or production of the family literacy program. Each piloting partner collected relevant data and sent this to the IOE evaluators. Quantitative data were then transferred into an SPSS 22 for analysis.

For workshops, program managers used varied forms of formative and summative assessment of the participants' progress, taking into account FLP goals and program implementation (participants' satisfaction, trainers / facilitators performance, etc.), for instance (*word bank* - counted the words and made lists with them after each workshop for each family member; *emotions calendar* - a table with all participants symbolizing the emotional state through emoticons).

### **Impact of the program:**

- The principals and primary teachers had contact with Curriculum of the Family Literacy Program and became more aware of the literate environment, Home Learning Environment and new methods (e.g. word bank);
- Children became more included in school groups because of reading buddies from the project;
- Research methodology - Collection of tools for the needs analysis & testing Family Literacy Program;
- Local strategies with clear action plans for Family Literacy & agreements with stakeholders;
- Improved Roma students' reading skills;
- The Roma students' attitude to reading has significantly improved;
- Improvement in parents' and grandparents' confidence with regard to helping



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their children learn;

- Three local strategies for implementing the family literacy policy (Ro, MN, SK);
- Health flyer used in school medical offices.

[http://www.lit3-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Literacy-Cubed-Evaluation-Report\\_FINAL\\_June-2015\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.lit3-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Literacy-Cubed-Evaluation-Report_FINAL_June-2015_FINAL.pdf)

**Project information:** [www.lit3-project.eu](http://www.lit3-project.eu)



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## ROMANIA

### “I WANT YOU TO READ TO ME!”



#### **The implementing organization’s profile:**

“Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library aims to help increase spiritual and material prosperity to members of the local community by creating and promoting access to a broad range of ideas and information, through specialized assistance, by promoting the interest for reading and lifelong learning.

#### **Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the program):**

“Learn & Vision” Association was responsible for the training of librarians on intergenerational learning.

#### **Program duration:**

6 months: January-June 2013

#### **The language in which the activities were conducted in:**

Romanian

#### **The funding sources:**

IREX Romania / *Biblionet – the World in My Library* Program

#### **Amount funded / Financial contribution of the implementing organization:**

The amount funded was 17410 RON, out of which 28,38% was the contribution of Cluj County Library.

#### **The context in which the program was implemented:**

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Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

101

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The project aimed at the community of Cluj-Napoca and of 4 rural communities from Cluj county.

In Cluj-Napoca lives 43% of the county's population, Romanian, Hungarian, German, Roma and others nationalities. "Babes-Bolyai" University, which functions in Cluj-Napoca, is the largest university in the country with over 45,500 students. The city also hosts other eight universities as well as a large number of colleges and schools. The cultural life of the city is sustained by theatres, operas, philharmonic, museums, libraries, museums and cultural centers.

Rural communities are generally composed of people with low income, low education, leading to a weak interest in cultural and educational activities. The population of these communities is aged, most of young families being attracted to the big urban centers. Local education establishments face a low number of students attending courses, with the phenomenon of dropout caused by the low level of living, poor infrastructure and ignorance of the families.

Through a study of the local communities in which the project was implemented were identified the following issues:

- disinterest toward reading showed both in urban and in rural communities, reflected in attraction index reading with a low level of Cluj county - 11% (9% at the national level) in comparison with the Nordic countries about 70% or 66% of the US
- absenteeism and dropout of school and preschool
- the precarious financial situation of some families in the rural areas, leading to inequality in access to training and education of children
- the lack of cultural, educational and recreation activities in countryside.

Prioritizing these issues, the disinterest toward reading was the problem that this project aimed to solve. By attracting children towards reading, many of the other issues referred to above were reducing or there was a chance that some even disappear.

Opportunities at local community level:

- facilities of participating public libraries for organizing project activities
- the involvement of educational institutions at the local level in cultural and educational activities of the project
- the existence of an obvious need from the local community for cultural and educational activities involving low costs.

### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

The goal of the program was: increasing the attractiveness of reading by developing interrelationships between parents, grandparents and children.



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The objectives of the program were:

- to train librarians in intergenerational learning;
- to organize intergenerational reading workshops in participating libraries;
- to develop librarians' digital literacy skills.



Mai multe informații poți găsi la adresa:  
<http://vreausamicitesti.blogspot.ro/>

Înscrierile se fac la sediul bibliotecilor participante în proiect:

Biblioteca Județeană "Octavian Știrbu" Cluj  
Calea Dorobanților nr.104, Cluj Napoca, Telefon: 0264 420333

Biblioteca Municipală „Tineri Muncitori”  
Str. Republicii nr. 92, Turda, Telefon: 0264 313337

Biblioteca Municipală  
Piata Lipsei nr. 3, Secl, Telefant: 0264 211030

Biblioteca Comunală  
Santul spirit, nr. 164, Târnăveni, 0264 280449

Biblioteca Comunală „Ioan Plăcariu”  
Str. Pridopena nr. 408, Făcș, Telefon: 0264 282 433

Proiectul este finanțat de Fundația IREX  
în cadrul programului IRL de 15.000+ lei.



**VREAU  
SĂ-MI CITEȘTI!**

*Haideți să pornim împreună  
într-o aventură minunată  
în lumea poveștilor!*





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Copii, părinți, bunici,  
biblioteca publică vă invită  
să participați împreună  
la o serie de ateliere de lectură  
inter-generațională  
organizate în cadrul proiectului  
**Vreau să-mi citești!**

Participând la acest proiect veți petrece timp de calitate alături de cei dragi, deprinzând tehnici speciale de lectură, care să-i ajute pe cei mici să perceapă cititul ca pe o activitate atractivă.  
În plus, veți afla ce atitudini manifestă un părinte al unui cititor de succes:

- dorește reușita copilului,
- transmite copilului sentimentul importanței educației,
- împărtășesc cu copiii dragul de a citi
- îl respectă pe copil și se bucură alături de acesta,
- cred că ei sunt primii profesori ai copiilor lor,
- știu despre viața școlară și de lectură a copiilor,
- sunt conștienți că pot avea un impact asupra dezvoltării capacității de lectură a copiilor lor și știu exact care este acel impact.

E valoros să fii astfel de părinți pentru astfel de copii, pentru că de la lectura de plăcere se ajunge ușor la învățarea de plăcere, apoi la succesul școlar și, mai târziu, la succesul în viață.



„Noi ne împrietenim cu conținutul textului și el devine subiect de discuție. Dacă, să zicem, subiectul este despre jucării, gândiți-vă, ce pretext minunat să discutați trei generații despre cum arătau jucăriile pe vremea lor?”

Simona Bernat,  
expert educațional Asociația Learn4Vision



**VREAU SĂ-MI CITEȘTI!**

**Target groups** (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):

The three generations of a family: children, parents, grandparents.

**Types of learning activities:**

Intergenerational reading workshops



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Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

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### **Location of activities:**

Cluj County Library and other four urban and rural libraries involved in the project.

### **Resources used (materials, equipment):**

Material resources: books, worksheets, white/colored paper, crepe paper, colored pencils, markers, scissors, glue, flipchart sheets.

Equipment: computer, speakers, iPads, projector.

### **Types of facilitators (e.g. teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers etc.):**

Librarians



### **Education, training background and expertise of the facilitators:**

Facilitators had experience in working with children. They attended courses on intergenerational reading techniques and digital literacy, held by a literacy expert from the “Learn & Vision” Association, divided into 2 training sessions:

1st session on:

- what intergenerational learning for the family means;
- psychological characteristics of generations involved in the project (primary school children, adults);

Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership  
Project No: 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392

105

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- how to motivate different generations to learn together;
- predictive reading and formulating good questions.

2nd session on:

- activating reading techniques;
- managing intergenerational workshops;
- preparing training activities for 3 generations.

### **The facilitators' tasks:**

Librarians were involved in recruiting workshop participants and were responsible for preparing and organizing 5 reading intergenerational workshops.

### **Qualitative and quantitative results:**

#### *Qualitative results*

Librarians and the participating families learned: new methods of reading for/to children, intergenerational communication methods, the importance of teamwork, the importance of creativity.

#### *Quantitative results*

17 trained librarians

8 libraries and branches involved

40 intergenerational workshops

60 family reading hours

117 participants (grandparents, parents, children)

1 project blog

1 Facebook site

5 broadcasts on the online radio of the library

5 videos posted on YouTube

2 press releases

2 press conferences

### **Monitoring and evaluation methods:**

Each librarian filled up a project file for each workshop and records were analyzed by the literacy expert from the "Learn & Vision" Association.

Association representatives conducted monitoring visits to the five communities involved, interviewing participants and librarians, analyzing the implementation process.

Rating from participants:

*"This complex activity has proved to be useful and challenging, we feel certain that little*



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*participants will become passionate readers.” (Petean Family)*

*“I didn’t like that it ended too soon.” (Ioana Crețiu)*

*“The project has enabled both the kids and parents and grandparents, to deepen their relationship using certain activities through they learned to listen and to discover their children and grandchildren.” (Florea Family)*

### **Impact of the program:**

The project was expanded in Cluj county, in 2014 other 14 librarians benefiting by training and organizing intergenerational workshops with 805 participants in other libraries of our county.

The successful project “I want you to read for me!” became a program that takes place annually in participating libraries, even if the libraries do not receive any funding:

- 2015: 225 participants
- 2016: 103 participants

The project was disseminated in Chișinău, Republic of Moldavia, two librarians from “Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library being trainers for the librarians of „B.P. Hașdeu” Public Library.

**Contact details** of the implementing organization and the project manager:

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Project manager: Anca Docolin

Project’s blog: <http://vreausamicitesti.blogspot.ro/>

Project’s facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/Proiectul-Vreau-s%C4%83-mi-cite%C5%9Fti-282510691875944/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/Proiectul-Vreau-s%C4%83-mi-cite%C5%9Fti-282510691875944/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)



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## SLOVENIA

### FAMILY READING

#### The implementing organization's profile:

Kranj City library is a public library founded in 1960 by the unification of Study Library (founded in 1950) and Public Library (founded in 1947). In 1962 the Children and Youth Department joined as well. Today Kranj City Library also covers the local libraries in Stražišče, Naklo, Preddvor, Šenčur, Cerklje, Jezersko, and Mobile Library.

In 2001, Kranj City Library also became one of the ten *regional libraries* for the Gorenjska region.

In 2016 the library had: 44 employees, 489,241 library documents, 10,482 new acquisitions, 27,012 active members, 374,712 visitors, 991,253 library material units borrowed and 968 organized events.

#### Partners involved (their specific expertise brought to the program):

In the project's second season (October 2015) Škofja Loka Public Library joined the project and a year later, another library, Tržič Public Library, did.

#### Program duration:

The project officially started on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Earlier, in 2013, we began promoting the project by a series of lectures under the title *Education and Reading*. The lectures were intended for parents and extended family members. Until now, two seasons were already completed, the third season (from 7.7.2016) being still in progress. The project is about to be upgraded in the autumn of 2017.

#### The language in which the activities were conducted in:

The Family Reading Project was conducted in Slovenian.

#### The funding sources:

The project was funded by Kranj City Library itself. It was created as a brand with corporate identity. In the first season, the total budget included corporate logo design and added up to 11,000 €. In the second season, the budget decreased to 5,400 €. This included booklet design, stickers with Family Reading logo, printed flyers and posters, separated shelves and reward material (pillows and table cloths) and the costs for



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the concluding ceremony.

### **The context in which the program was implemented:**

The project covered the area of Municipality of Kranj and neighboring municipalities. This area has around 80,500 inhabitants.

### **Goal and objectives of the program:**

The idea behind this project was to promote, develop and strengthen literacy and general reading culture among all ages. This project was intended for families that wanted to spend quality time together by reading to each other and transferring their knowledge to the younger generation. The main purpose from the start was to present reading as a joyful and pleasant activity, promote creativity and more efficient spending of free time.

The project had as objectives:

- the development of reading literacy through quality fiction and educational literature;
- promoting reading among extended family members;
- encouraging creativity and socializing;
- quality spending of free time;
- intergenerational solidarity;
- extending the number of active library members.

### **Target groups (persons who directly benefited from the program's activities):**

The target population for the project was represented by all possible forms of families, from extended family to single-parent family. In order to participate, children had to be between 2 and 8 years old. At least one child had to be registered as a library user.

### **Types of learning activities:**

**Selecting the book titles (200 + 200).** We used different criteria for the selection and were deciding between Slovenian and foreign classics, awarded book titles and titles from different reference lists (e.g. Zlata hruška). The most important was the quality of texts and illustrations.

**Preparing the brochure (the so-called *Family Reading Booklet*).** Families filled in the coupons with book titles they had already read, rated them and answered questions about their content. In the brochure they could also find an article on the importance of



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reading by dr. Livija Knafljič, the list of all titles and the conditions for participating in the project.

**Labelling books on the list with the Family Reading logo stickers.**

**Promoting the project.** The project was advertised on social media (Facebook, Twitter), local radio, Kranj City Library and *Modri pes* web pages, as well as in local newspapers and through flyers, posters and badges with Family Reading logo.

**Organizing different lectures in the field of reading literacy and culture, under the title *Education and reading*:**

- o *Slovenia – the land of legends* (lecture by Dušica Kunaver, 20. 11. 2013)
- o *Your children deserve quality reading material* (by Ida Mlakar, 23. 12. 2013)
- o *How to read to children* (by Irena Matko – Lukan, 20. 1. 2014)
- o *A puppet and a book* (by Jelena Sitar, 3. 2. 2014)
- o *From games to literacy* (by dr. Livija Knafljič, 24. 3. 2014)
- o *Your children deserve quality reading material* (by Ida Mlakar, 14.4.2014)
- o *Television announces: Reading is a challenge!* (by mag. Martina Peštaj, 12.5.2014)
- o *Voice up!* (by Barbara Camille Tanze, 20. 10. 2014)
- o *Family reading* (by Tilka Jamnik, 17. 11. 2014)
- o *Dyslexia or ‘oh, damn reading and writing!’* (by Alenka Zupančič Danko, 15. 12. 2014)

**The activity of the participants included:**

- Choosing books from the recommended list of titles (from the brochure);
- Reading together with family members (elders to youngsters and vice versa);
- Answering to the questions posted in the brochure;
- Handing in filled-in coupons and getting rewards;
- Participating in the lectures listed above.

**Location of activities:**

All activities took place in the library (selection of books, lectures on education and reading literacy, etc.), as well as at home, where the participants read books and filled in the coupons.



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#### **Resources used (materials, equipment):**

- The *Family Reading Booklet*
- Recommended list of children's fiction and nonfiction book titles (Season 2014/15: 200 + 150 titles; Season 2015/16: added 100 titles of books (collectively 450 titles); Season 2016/17: 250 new titles)
- Stickers for labelling the books
- Separated shelves
- Promotional material (flyers, badges, posters)
- Rewards for family members (Season 2014/15: pillows, Season 2015/16: table cloths, Season 2016/17: cups).

#### **Types of facilitators (e.g. teachers, librarians, trainers, volunteers etc.):**

Librarians and lecturers were the facilitators that guide and assisted families in their activities. Parents and other family members were the multipliers.

#### **Education, training background and expertise of the facilitators:**

The lecturers had professional skills and knowledge on most family literacy fields: pedagogy, literature, library science, special pedagogy. On the other hand, librarians contributed with the knowledge and skills in the field of children and young adult literature by selecting quality book titles. Also, parents and other family members contributed to the act of reading according to their own feelings and experiences.



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### The facilitators' tasks:

- Selecting quality book list
- Promoting the project in the library and broader
- Collecting coupons and in the end preparing statistics' data
- Organising lectures from the field of reading literacy and culture under the title *Education and reading*

### Qualitative and quantitative results:

**Season 2014/15:** Collected quantitative data for the main library in Kranj and all neighboring branches around (Stražišče, Naklo, Šenčur, Cerklje, Preddvor and Jezersko): 356 families, 1,556 family members and approximately 4,500 books read: (2.8 books per family member).



**Season 2015/16:** Collected qualitative and quantitative data:

In this season, less families participated, but they read more books: 214 families, 1,049 family members, 734 coupons, 7,340 books read (6.7 books per family member). Moreover, the data obtained from the Public Library of Škofja Loka show that in the season 2015/2016 they registered 434 children, with 219 families which participated until the end of the season and gave 760 rewards (tablecloths) to them. In this season, there was also carried out a qualitative analysis for all book titles on the list. The ratings that users assigned through the scale *excellent/good/not interesting* were used as a basis for the analysis. A list of the favorite book titles was made.



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**Season 2016/17:** This season is still in progress; therefore, the results are not available yet.

**Impact of the program:**

In three years the *Family reading* project became a trend mark for a good practice of working with families. The project has extended in area of Kranj City Library and neighbouring municipalities with around 80.500 inhabitants. Public Library Škofja Loka and Public Library Tržič joined the project later and they still cooperate.

Participants in the project:

- 10 to 15 librarians
- About 10 professional lecturers
- app. 500 families
- More than 1.500 family members

The project was introduced at 11<sup>th</sup> Professional Conference of Reading Association Slovenia in 2015 and at the professional librarian meeting under the title “*Families in the Library: reading and creating activities for families*” in January 2017.

The project will be upgraded and will continue in autumn 2017.

**Contact details** of the implementing organization:

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## ANNEX 1

### Survey on family literacy practices

This survey is part of the “**Family literacy works!**” project, developed under Erasmus+, Strategic Partnerships, Key Action 2, Sector: Adult Education, Project number 2016-1-RO01-KA204-024392. The objectives of the project are to achieve a comparative analysis of the practices in family literacy (FL) in the countries participating in the project (Romania, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Portugal), to develop the occupational profile for facilitators in family literacy practices and to develop a curriculum and to pilot it in the participating countries.

The best family literacy practices will be included in a report, which will be available online. The organizations involved in completing this survey will benefit from the wide scale promotion of their activities and will have the opportunity to take part in the training activities organized in each partner country.

**What is the program’s title?\***

**Who was the implementing organization? Please briefly describe the organization profile (type, size, scope of work, areas of specific expertise).\***

**Were there any partners involved? If yes, please state their names and their specific expertise brought to the program.\***

**How long did the project last in months?\***

**What was the date of inception?**

**What language(s) were the activities of the programs conducted in?**

**What was the funding organization / program?\***

**Which were the funding sources? (please check)\***

- private
- public

**What was the amount funded?**

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114

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**What was the financial contribution of the implementing organization (in percent)?**

**Please describe the context in which the program was implemented (targeted community from social, economic, educational point of view, the community needs / problems assessment, the opportunities identified to address these needs).\***

Which were the **goal and the objectives** of the program?\*

Who were the **target groups** (the persons who directly benefited from the program's activities)?\*

What **types of learning activities** did the program have?\*

**Where did the activities take place** (e.g. libraries, schools, community centers, kindergartens, churches, prisons, etc.)?\*

What **resources** (materials, equipment) did the program use?\*

**What types of facilitators were responsible for the activities?\***

- **teachers**
- **librarians**
- **trainers**
- **volunteers**
- **others. Please specify:**

**What was their education and training background and expertise** (courses attended, previous activities, their role in previous family literacy programs)?\*

**What were their specific tasks?\***

**What were the qualitative and quantitative results?\***

How were the activities **monitored and evaluated?**

What was the **impact** of the program?\* (\* - **mandatory answer**)

Please include **contact details** of the implementing organization and the project manager, especially the e-mail. Please attach relevant **photos** from your activities.

We recommend you use Google Forms for administering the questionnaires :

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13CISmmSuclbpB77rW6hAJNBgUinASZ5pZ7ADE\\_6v8Rk/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13CISmmSuclbpB77rW6hAJNBgUinASZ5pZ7ADE_6v8Rk/edit)