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SOCIAL SERVICE INTERNATIONAL
SWISS SECTION

Impuls

CENTER FOR EARLY DEVELOPMENT “IMPULS”

Daily treatment center for children with severe developmental difficulties at early age and their families

“[FICE Srbija](http://www.ficesrbija.rs)” is an active section and member of “FICE International” and “FICE Europa” and “umbrella” organization devoted to the concept of Children rights, equality, inclusion, improvement of quality of life of children who are growing up at different types of risk, and in out of family settings. It is committed also to the improvement of professional knowledge and the skills of experts who are engaged in direct work with children and youth in institutions, but also in local communities. Therefore “FICE Srbija” creates, develops, implements and transfers new and innovative methodologies, programs and services which are aimed to enable children, youth and their families to get best possible care and support in order to cope with the challenges in their everyday lives.

“FICE Srbija” and its members are constantly working and creating partnerships at national, regional and international level, and putting a lot of efforts to activate different organizations who can contribute to development of quality program and who are motivated to exchange the examples of good practice with all organizations who have in focus children, including children with disabilities, developmental

difficulties, psychiatric, behavioral and combined disorders...

The main approach to the challenges implies respecting children's rights, equal chances, best interest of children, highly trained and skilled professionals, open to new methodologies and devoted to the wellbeing of the children they are taking care of.

Among many programs "FICE Srbija" is "responsible" for "bringing" in Serbia PRIDE program, Family Group Conference model, Life Book for youth methodology... The experts of FICE Srbija created several significant training programs for professionals and staff members who work in institutions and contributed to the process of reform in the social care system in Serbia. In the past several years the focus of the organization is the creation and implementation of missing and innovative practices at local level.

The example of, according to our opinion, excellent practice, which we would like to share, is a program for work with children with severe developmental disorders at early age (between 0 and 7 years). It is implemented in "FICE Srbija" greatest member – Center for protection of infants, children and youth Zvecanska 7 (CZODO) in Belgrade, and during its pilot phase it was financed by the Social Service International / Swiss section.

This, in Serbia, innovative practice was settled in existing but completely renewed space in (CZODO) which was equipped according to specific service standards.

The main idea was prevention of institutionalization and separation children with severe difficulties from their parents. In order to provide conditions to help to the families and children the new comprehensive program of work was developed, by our experts who went through several international trainings and courses. The basic idea is to focus on whole family, child and social environment, providing daily care and appropriate activities adjusted to the individual (special and complex) needs of each child and its network. The other important aspect was providing availability of other complementary services which already exists in local communities, as well as to create a network of stakeholders who are interested in helping this extremely vulnerable population of youngsters.

The main goal was to find a sustainable solution for each family

with all its specifics and to help them through providing intensive and individualized daily care for their children, advocating for children's rights, providing personal assistance, including children in preschool facilities and schools.

The concept of the program (service) implies active involvement of parents in treatment, individual and group work with children, rich set of different activities (physiotherapy, speech therapy, psychological support, counseling, group work for parents, creative workshops, learning basic skills, encouraging independence, learning social rules, development of habits, medical treatment, legal advising of parents about their rights...) aimed to satisfy wide spectrum of individual and complex needs of population. The issues of safety of children and their wellbeing were specially treated.

Large number of professionals and volunteers were engaged in "IMPULS" activities, which were carefully planned, discussed at team meetings, focus groups and changed according to priorities... This flexibility was necessary because IMPULS welcomed children with different difficulties, disorders, diagnosis, previous experiences, capacities, age and potentials... The healing process was imagined as informal, frank relationship between children and their families and care givers. But also, the process of professional planning and intervening was led and designed according to highly set standards, with appropriate documentation, defined ways of communication, specified roles and tasks of staff member and project management team etc. Also, time table of activities was adjusted to the population.

For each child was done assessment, created plan and performed a set of adjusted activities. The personality of young clients and their families was respected, and all of them were treated with maximum care. The team members (nurses, social worker, speech therapist, physiotherapist, special educators, creative workshop leaders...) worked synchronized and coordinated, under continuous supervision.

It is important to say that FICE Srbija and Center for protection of infants, children and youth in Belgrade, managed with significant support of Swiss donor during the first year of service implementation and after that leaning on own resources and with some support of Ministry for labor, employment, veterans and social affairs, to carry out

all activities and to preserve and improve the service.

The goal at this moment is to provide condition to standardize the service, to spread knowledge in other local communities and to advocate for including this service in standard set of social services aimed to children and family support in our social care system.

At the moment the service is in process of licensing by legal authorities – Ministry for social affairs.