

Country Context Report for SERBIA

Literature review/mapping

Extent of stakeholder participation in schools in your country

1. *The state of children in Serbia 2006* – UNICEF report on child poverty and exclusion, and the inter-generational transmission of poverty. Includes basic data about children in Serbia: Roma children and education (pp. 27 – 29); Children with disability and education – problems with inclusion (pp. 30 – 32); Children deprived of parental care (pp. 32) and other potentially excluded groups; Policy options at national and at local levels – importance of education (pp. 42 – 45)

2. Forms of parent and children participation are present. The law prescribes that each primary and secondary school has the following institutes: Parents Council, School Board (3 parents + 3 teachers + 3 municipality representatives) and the School parliaments. They are inefficient, often manipulated and not in function of school democratization

References in Serbian:

Articles:

1. Macura Milovanović, S. (2005): Pedagoški aspekti uključivanja romske dece iz naselja “Deponija” u obrazovni sistem (Pedagogical aspects for inclusion of Roma children from “Deponija” settlement into educational system). *Inovacije u nastavi*, Vol. 18, str. 106 – 119.

Abstract: This paper presents action research of the process of inclusion of Roma children into the system of regular primary school education. This research has been done during 2001/02 and 2002/03 school years during four cycles, and the participants are Roma children, their parents, members of community and local primary school and members of work/research team. The general plan of action consisted of realisation of educational programmes for children, psychosocial programs for Roma parents and the programmes for cooperation with the staff of the local primary school. Research results include data about the level of realisation of physical, educational and social aspect of inclusion. Conclusion of action research includes key obstacles and encouragement of inclusion of Roma children from “Deponija” into the educational system.

2. Polovina, N. (2008): Contributions of school to building up the partnership with parents. *Zbornik Instituta za pedagoška istraživanja*, 40/1, str. 152 – 171

Abstract: This paper studies the way in which headmasters and class masters perceive and estimate the factors, obstacles and incentives to building up a partnership between school and parents. The sample consists of 60 headmasters and 305 class masters from 60 schools (37 urban and 23 rural) in Serbia. Research findings indicate that headmasters and teachers assess the importance of different components in the field cooperation with parents in a similar, but not identical way. Most similarities are found in the perception of obstacles for establishing cooperation (the problems of coordinating time periods for meetings, previous bad experiences of parents regarding cooperation). The majority of differences lie in perceiving the importance cooperation factors (headmasters emphasise the “parent factor”, while teachers do so both for the “parent factor” and “child factor”), as well as in perceiving the necessary incentives for the improvement of cooperation between school and parents headmasters emphasise the spatial-temporal organisation components, and teachers do so for

spatial components and personal initiatives). In the assessments of both the headmasters and teachers we obtained differences marked by gender, the longitude of years of service, size of the settlement where the school is located (town-village). The general conclusion indicates that the topic of cooperation between school and parents is highly and in many ways context sensitive, and that the building of cooperation program must be preceded by the process of systemic and systematic dialogue shaping of the topic on the level of every individual school, in order to purify the existing multiverse meanings and thus provide foundation for clear, locally meaningful and sustainable cooperation programs.

3. Polovina, N., Stanišić, J. (2007) A study on family-school cooperation based on an analysis of school documentation. *Zbornik Instituta za pedagoška istraživanja*, vol.39,br.1,(115-133)

Abstract. Family-school cooperation is a very complex process that can be studied at different levels in a number of different ways. This study has covered only some aspects of cooperation between parents and teachers, based on school documentation of a Belgrade elementary school. The study covered analyses of 60 Attendance Registers pertaining to 60 classes with 1289 students from Grade 1 through Grade 8 during an academic year. The unit of analysis included: parents attendance at PTA meetings and individual meetings between parents and teachers. In addition to the frequency of parents' visits to school, the relationship between such registered parents' visits and overall academic performance, grades in conduct, excused and unexcused absence from classes were also considered. The research findings indicated interference between development factors (attitude change in parent-child relationship and growing-up) and parents' informal "theory of critical grades" i.e. transitional processes in schooling. The findings confirmed that parents' individual visits to school were mainly meant to offer an excuse for the student's absence from school, while attendance at PTA meetings was linked to poor grades in conduct and missed classes (both excused and unexcused). The findings also showed that parents pursued visiting strategies which were pragmatic, less time-consuming and less emotionally draining ones. The closing part refers to discussions on practical use of the study and possible further research.

4. Polovina, N. (2007). Family-school cooperation in the context of traumatic transitions in Serbian society. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, Vol.1, No. 0, 230-236

Polovina's analysis starts from examining the wider context of socio-political change and transition processes within the Serbian society setting a scene for better understanding of the relations of school and the family. A study on these relations was conducted in 2001, when 85 round tables were organized on the issues of democratization of education, so there were around 9000 respondents. The results had shown that there was an agreement between school employees, students and their parents that the parental involvement and presence in schools needs to be more significant. Still, parents ranked it as priority number one, while for teacher's it was on 5th place and for students on the 10th. Most of the parents lack the information and school assistance on how to support learning of their children. The other study Polovina mentions consisted of school documentation analysis. It was concluded that the parents visited the school and contacted the teachers concerned about the issues of grades, school absenteeism, and discipline problems, while the number of visits decreased with the students' age. The absenteeism and lower achievement were correlated with lower frequency of meetings with teachers. In an action study

conducted also by Polovina and her associates it proved that the parent-teacher relations were burdened by dissatisfaction, frustrations and “readiness to quit and disengage”, while the expectations of the other side were very high (teacher expected a lot from parents and vice versa). It is obvious that some parallels can be drawn between this study and the results from the Cyprus study – the dominant model of school-family relations is traditional.

5. Polovina, N. & Bogunović, B. (Ed.) (2007). *Saradnja škole i porodice*, Institut za pedagoška istraživanja, Beograd

This is a collection of papers edited by Polovina and Bogunović which provides probably the best review of the problems and issues related to family-school cooperation. This cooperation is analyzed from three key aspects: problems and chances for cooperation, theoretical analysis and practical experiences of authors. Second chapter of this book consists of papers presenting the findings related to parents' participation in school life. Main findings of these studies point that there is a serious incongruence between parental, children and school staffs' perceptions of cooperation. This lack of cooperation is coupled with parents' not considering the school as a part of their social network. Special attention is also paid to discussing the problems of schooling the children from refugee families which are most often not perceived as an especially vulnerable group where parents need to be a part of the system of school support. A separate chapter of the book is dedicated to discussing parental roles and possibilities of their involvement in education of gifted children.

8. Lazarević, E., Kopas-Vukašinić, E. (2007). Cooperation between school and parents of SLI children. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, Vol.1, No. 0, 151 – 155

The article examines the cooperation between the parents of children with speech-linguistic impairments (SLI) and teachers. Authors stress the significance of active teacher approach towards including and integrating the parents into school environment, at the same time suggesting some of the strategies for achieving this goal. The authors stress the importance of regular meetings and talking with parents, informing them on all relevant school activities and the child's progress which are necessary for building trust and developing a partnership.

Books:

1. Polovina, N. i Bogunovic, B. (2007): *Saradnja škole i porodice: teskoce, izazovi i mogucnosti* (Cooperation between the school and family: obstacles, challenges and opportunities). Beograd: Institut za pedagoska istrazivanja

2. *Jednaka dostupnost kvalitetnog obrazovanja za Rome u Srbiji (Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma)*. Open Society Institute, 2007.

References in English:

1. Polovina, N. (2007) Family-school cooperation in the context of traumatic transitions in Serbian society. In: Phtiaka H., Symeonidou S. (Eds.) *Schools and families in partnership: looking into the future*, Cyprus: University of Cyprus, 292-300

- **Mapping existing initiatives seeking to improve stakeholder participation in schools in your country**

1. Roma Education Initiative (REI), - supported equitable access to quality education for Roma children, desegregation and participation of Roma children, Roma parents and Roma teaching assistants in schools.

OSI Project: www.osi.hu/esp/rei

2. Inclusive education – from practice to policy - supports creation of conditions ensuring social and civic cohesion, that is, equal access to quality education for all. Supports also development of a system of education toward democratization and quality of education. Parents participation is one of the basic principles on which the initiative is based.

Fund for an Open Society Serbia: www.fosserbia.org

<http://www.inkluzija.org/biblioteka/flajerink07.pdf?dddf8f08acead9168f83641701641d01=2c457dc3372415a1b75d166672aedc9a>

3. Advancement of Civic Education and Pupils' Parliamentarism - Advancement of participation of pupils in discussing school issues and making decisions affecting pupils; designing local actions that Parents Council and School Board approves in school and local community

Fund for an Open Society Serbia: www.fosserbia.org

- **Legal, regulatory, policy, financial obstacles/incentives to improving stakeholder participation in your country**

References in Serbian:

1. Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja (Law on foundations of the education system)

www.mps.sr.gov.yu

-Nondiscrimination (article 4)

-Parents Councils in preschool and school institutions and their competencies (article 57)

-Preschool and School principal: criteria for election (article 58), competencies and responsibilities of the school principal (article 61)

2. Zakon o srednjoj skoli (Law on secondary school)

www.mps.sr.gov.yu

Law prescribes foundation of Parents' Council, composition of the Council and its competencies (article 90). Parents' Council elects one third of members of School Board (governing body in the school) (article 1). School Board competencies are defined in Article 2. Representatives of students' organizations can participate in School Board, but without possibility of making decisions.

4. Strategija razvoja stručnog obrazovanja u Republici Srbiji (Strategy for development of vocational education in Republic of Serbia)

www.mps.sr.gov.yu

a) Two basic principles that are used as foundation of modernization and development of vocational education are: **participation** of social partners (pp. 4-5: *Principles of development vocational education and training*), meaning different stakeholders (like students and parents) and **equality**, e.g. equal access to the process of education no matter of religious, ethnic, national background, class, gender, age, political orientation, culture, and physical and psychological disability (pp. 5)

b) System of provision and evaluation of quality in education in Republic of Serbia includes active involvement of stakeholders (students, parents) in creation standards for quality (pp 18 – Insurance of Quality: National level)

5. Strategija obrazovanja odraslih (Strategy for adult education) and Law on Adult Education (announced)

www.mps.sr.gov.yu

Improvement of adult education, qualification structure and employment; quality assurance of adult informal education; better participation in decision making;

6. Nacionalna strategija za mlade (National Strategy for Youth)

Promoting youth activism and youth participation in general; increasing the level of youth participation in the processes of deciding about education-monitoring, standards etc.

[/www.mos.sr.gov.yu/](http://www.mos.sr.gov.yu/)

References in Serbian:

2. *DX Magazin (DX Magazine)*, Br 9, April, 2005

<http://www.karaburma.info/akcija/biblioteka/index.php>

3. *Izveštaj o aktivnostima realizovanim u cilju stvaranja neformalne mreže koje imaju za cilj podršku i razvoj učeničkih parlamenata (Report on activities done with the aim to create non formal network of organizations that support development of school parliaments)*. Beograd: GTZ, 2005

4. *Izveštaj: Prava deteta u Srbiji (Child Rights in Serbia)*. Beograd: Centar za prava deteta, 2006

5. Pešić, M., Branković, B., Tomanović-Mihajlović, S. i Dejanović, V. (1999): *Participacija mladih pod lupom (Youth participation under the magnifying glass)*. Beograd: Jugoslovenski centar za prava deteta

6. Macura Milovanović, S. (2005): Pedagoški aspekti uključivanja romske dece iz naselja “Deponija” u obrazovni sistem (Pedagogical aspects for inclusion of Roma children from “Deponija” settlement into educational system). *Inovacije u nastavi*, Vol. 18, str. 106 – 119.

7. *Jednaka dostupnost kvalitetnog obrazovanja za Rome u Srbiji (Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma)*. Open Society Institute, 2007.

8. Polovina, N. (2007). Family-school cooperation in the context of traumatic transitions in Serbian society. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, Vol.1, No. 0, 230-236

9. Polovina, N. & Bogunović, B. (Ed.) (2007). *Saradnja škole i porodice*, Institut za pedagoška istraživanja, Beograd
10. Lazarević, E., Kopas-Vukašinović, E. (2007). Cooperation between school and parents of SLI children. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, Vol..1, No. 0, 151 - 155