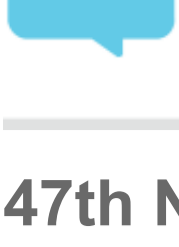


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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION UNIT

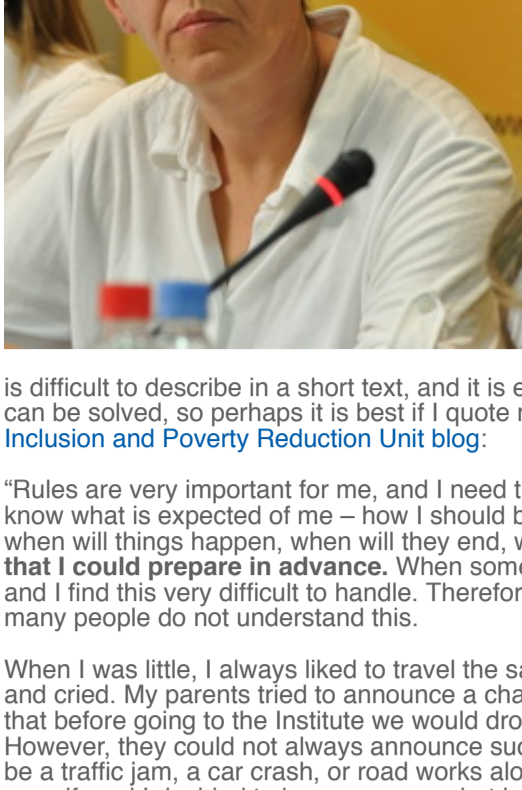


47th NEWSLETTER

ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Journey towards Inclusion



Written by: Snežana Lazarević, associate of multiple organizations working in advocacy of the rights of persons with disabilities and children with development disabilities

There were many newspaper articles and TV reports in August about what happened at the Belgrade airport, when a boy with autism was prohibited from boarding his flight due to being distressed. I would not analyse the statements made by the airline, the Civil Aviation Directorate, or the parents, because the issue is not about who was right, whether charges would be filed, whether the parents are to blame – the issue is that a crying boy did not get to go to the seaside and that, I firmly believe, this situation could have been resolved in another manner.

As a mother of a young man with autism, I thought a lot about this event, recalling similar situations we found ourselves in. I'd like to say, right off the bat, children and persons with disabilities, and if you would have it, particularly children and persons with autism, are constantly facing a lack of understanding, fear, obstacles, not just in transport, but whenever they leave their house – in health centres, shops, cinemas, hospitals, or schools. One reason is their unusual behaviour, and often the fact that they can become agitated. Why and how this occurs

is difficult to describe in a short text, and it is even more difficult to provide a "recipe" on how the problem can be solved, so perhaps it is best if I quote my son Stefan, who is also [publishing articles on the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit blog](#).

"Rules are very important for me, and I need them in order to function more easily. It is important for me to know what is expected of me – how I should behave in different places, under certain circumstances, when will things happen, when will they end, what will come afterwards. I would like to know all this so that I could prepare in advance. When something unexpected happens, I do not know how to behave, and I find this very difficult to handle. Therefore, people should keep this in mind, but it would seem that many people do not understand this.

When I was little, I always liked to travel the same road... When dad would change the route, I got upset and cried. My parents tried to announce a change of route in advance, for example, they would tell me that before going to the Institute we would drop by at Grandpa's, or a shop, so I found it easier to bear. However, they could not always announce such changes, because they could not foresee that there would be a traffic jam, a car crash, or road works along the route. I thought about ways to make things easier for myself, and I decided to keep my eyes shut in the car if we were not going the way I expected. I also found it important to return the way we went, so my parents respected this. When I started using a mobile phone with a camera, I came up with another way to make things easier for myself – I recorded the road I like to take, so in case of changes I would watch the video instead...

When I started using public transportation on my own, my parents explained to me how I should behave, where to wait for the bus, what to do if there is a jam somewhere, where and when I should cross the street, not to stand in the door so that people could get in and out, etc. However, no one ever told me that I should get up for older people, pregnant women and those with little children. Once I was coming home from my training, I was a bit tired, and so I sat down in the bus. Suddenly, an older man addressed me, raising his voice, asking me to get up and telling me I was a disgrace to youth. I felt really uncomfortable, because I did not know I was supposed to get up for older people. I was upset for a few days because of this, but I learned the rule, and ever since I have been asking older people whether I should let them have my place. Recently, a lady commended me for being well mannered and thanked me for getting up for her." (Blog post: ["Why Rules and Schedules Are Important for Me, and Why Change is Hard"](#))

The events described show that it is very important to prepare the child for what lies ahead. If we take the example of an airport, for a child with autism it is not enough to just tell them that, for example, they will have to wait in line to turn their luggage in, and that after that they will board the plane. They need to hear as precisely as possible how long they will wait – if they can tell the time, they can be told at what time the waiting in line will end (this is, you'll admit, hard to know in advance). Another way can be to tell a child how many people there are in line before him or her – we used such strategies in waiting rooms at the doctor's. This helped in situations when nothing unforeseen happened, for example, someone cutting in front of the line, when it would be very difficult to calm him down. That is why we always took books and newspapers to waiting rooms, or I would wait in line and my husband would walk outside the building with Stefan, and when I would see that our turn is coming up, I would call them to come back. All of this requires a lot of energy and engagement by the parents, and it is not always possible, either – what can one do when both parents cannot be present?

Parents can prepare the child to an extent, but what should be done by staff providing a service? I do not mean only respecting regulations and laws, I mean the professionalism that involves providing the opportunity for everyone to use, in this case, the services of the airline. Thus, a professional should think about how to reach the goal, and not just to eliminate anyone who does not fit the mould, thus calming the situation. I believe that in the case of the boy from the beginning of this text, it was more a case of fear based on prejudice, than bad intentions. However, there is no justification for such treatment, because simple solutions were not tried first – offer the child a candy he loves, take him to a quiet room and give him the opportunity to calm down, check him into the plane out of line, comfort him. Energy should be invested into solving a problem, not in seeking an excuse for why one acted in a certain way, or quoting articles of the law and rulebooks. A child with autism has the same right to cry as any other, and there is no reason to call it aggressive because of that, nor can its crying endanger anyone's safety.

NEWS

Economic Development and Employment

- [Unemployment Rate at 14.6% during Q1](#)
- [Representatives of Western Balkan Public Employment Services discuss qualitative benchmarking](#)
- [Six and a Half Million Euros for Training Difficult-to-Employ Persons](#)
- [Government: IT Sector Can Be a Base for Economic Growth](#)
- [GIS: Support Programme for Companies with Positive Impact on Youth](#)

Social Welfare and Healthcare

- [Helpline for Victims of Violence Coming Soon](#)
- [General Comment no. 21 on Children in Street Situations Adopted](#)
- [Improving Cooperation with Finland in the Domain of Social Welfare](#)
- [UNICEF Notes Serbia as an Example of Humanity and Positive Practice](#)
- [Public Event "Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence, Abuse and Neglect"](#)

Education

- [UNICEF and UNHCR Assistance for the Education of Children of Migrants in Serbia](#)
- [Government to Additionally Support Higher Education and Science](#)
- [National Internships for All Students](#)
- [eProsveta Project and esDnevnik Service Presented](#)
- [Free Textbooks for 86,000 Primary School Students](#)

Vulnerable Groups and Human Rights

- [Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs Forms Sector for Anti-Discrimination Policy and Improvement of Gender Equality](#)
- [Contracts Awarded to Organizations to Implement Women's Requalification Programmes in ICT](#)
- [Funds Awarded for Monitoring and Documenting the Discrimination Cases in Serbia](#)
- [Urban culture against hate speech](#)

EU Integration

- [DA-SPACE: innovative laboratories for advancing entrepreneurial skills in the Danube region](#)
- [Eurofund is Donating Equipment to Humanitarian Organisations](#)
- ["Europe to me" Call for Project Proposals \(Deadline: 15/09/2017\)](#)

EU News

- [Commission launches public consultation on Health and Care in the Digital Single Market](#)
- [Markets in Vienna Helping Socially Vulnerable Groups](#)
- [Do Europeans feel lonely?](#)

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT

The "Poverty in the Republic of Serbia for the Period 2006 – 2016" Report Published

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia is publishing, in line with its mandate, the data on the movement of the absolute poverty and inequality in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2006 – 2016. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, as the competent institution, has performed the data analysis.

Poverty remained significant throughout the observed period and there is no positive downward trend. About half a million inhabitants are unable to meet minimum existential needs, and the most vulnerable are the ones living outside urban centres, especially in the region of South and East Serbia, households where the head of the family has a low level or has no education, or he/she is unemployed or inactive. Households with a large number of members and households with children are particularly vulnerable.

In 2016, the Poverty Line was RSD 11,694 a month per a consumer unit, while 7.3% of the population in Serbia consumed less than this amount. Given the extent of the absolute poverty, it is crucial that this is regularly monitored and reported on, as well as that appropriate policies are being established.

[Click here to download the publication "Poverty in the Republic of Serbia for the Period 2006 – 2016 – Revised and New Data".](#)

The "Profile of Workers Employed through Temporary Employment Agencies" Paper Published

A paper was published presenting the results of the survey "Profile of Workers Employed through Temporary Employment Agencies". The survey was conducted by the Centre for Democracy and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

The aim of this survey was to analyse the profile of workers who were employed through temporary employment agencies from the perspective of the degree of vocational education, age, gender, regional representation, profession, the field in which they work, and other relevant factors. The survey included only the workers employed through registered temporary employment agencies. The survey did not include workers engaged through business entities whose core business is not employee placement.

[Click here to download the "Profile of Workers Employed through Temporary Employment Agencies" Publication.](#)

OPEN CALLS

- [UN Women Serbia – Open Calls for Project Proposals for Women Civil Society Organisations \(Deadline: 15/09/2017\)](#)

- [Open Call for Local Self-Government Units for the Participation in the ReLOaD Project \(Deadline: 22/09/2017\)](#)

- [Demo Environment Programme – Grants for the Exchange of Knowledge and Innovative Technologies \(Deadline: 29/09/2017\)](#)

- [COSME Open Call for Providing Support to the Parents Industry and Tourism \(Deadline: 19/10/2017\)](#)

You may follow the news on open calls regularly at: socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/tenders

READ MORE...

- [Collaborative Work on Protecting Citizens from Discrimination](#)
- [The "Let's Stop Hate Speech" Training Held](#)
- [Results of the "Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups through Acquiring IT Skills" Project](#)
- [The World Economic Forum Published the Results of the Millennials Survey](#)
- [SCTM: Open Call for the Direct Technical Support in the Process of Local Planning and Programme Budgeting \(Deadline: 15/09/2017\)](#)

- [Open Call for CSOs, Academic Institutions, and Individuals for Membership in the Advisory Board within the ReLOaD Project in Serbia \(Deadline: 16/09/2017\)](#)

- [KOMs: Open Call for Participation in the Capacity Building Programme for Member Organisations \(Deadline: 24/09/2017\)](#)

- [International Fellowships for Advancement of Women and Girls through Civic and Local Community Activism, and Professional Work \(Deadline: 01/12/2017\)](#)

You may follow the news on social inclusion and poverty reduction regularly at:

socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/

SOCIAL INCLUSION BLOG

TANJA JAKOBI: Are the Practices of Foreign Companies Opening New Paths for the More Efficient Employment of Roma Returnees?



In November of last year the Public Policy Research Centre and the Roma Forum of Serbia started to seek answers to the question of whether there are new, as yet unexplored options for the employment of returnees of Roma origin based on the Readmission Agreement.

During project implementation we recorded sixteen human stories of returnees and their families arriving to Serbia after a year-long, and often months-decades-long absence from the country, we talked to representatives of institutions and the non-government sector in the field, in Novi Sad and Subotica, and a large number of representatives of national institutions and organizations, including mixed chambers of commerce and foreign investors doing business in Serbia.

Of the 16 survey respondents, 9 did not attend school, have incomplete primary or completed primary school, while one respondent stated they have 10 grades of primary school. Although their education level places them in the category of difficult to employ persons, some of them have skills that could, it would seem, open doors for them in a regular job: one is a flower-shop salesperson, the other a tinsmith, another can play an instrument, yet another worked on simple construction, while another two have licences to drive a dredge or hold a driver's licence. Six respondents have secondary vocational education (construction, mechanical engineering, wood processing, food and catering and trade schools), while one has higher education (administration and banking), with four of them acquiring their diplomas in EU countries. Six of the ten respondents (whether with primary or secondary school) worked abroad, either within social empowerment measures or holding regular jobs. Only one of them found work in Serbia, another is working as a musician, while ten of them are receiving social assistance, child allowance, or help from their parents, whereas the remaining ones are working illegally or in occasional informal jobs.

What do these results tell us? Is this low level of employability the result of a randomized sample or does it tell us something more?

Since 2009, when the [Strategy of Reintegration of Returnees based on the Readmission Agreement](#) was adopted, to date, as a state we have been equally unsuccessfully guessing how many returnees arrive to, or leave Serbia each year, we have no solid quantitative data on the number of returnees on the records of the National Employment Service (NES) and the skills and know-how they have. (...) If we ask ourselves what could be done to improve the educational process and thus affect the higher changes of employment of child returnees, we will also face a number of unknowns: what schools are the children of returnees coming from? What curricula was used for teaching there? How many of them manage to become integrated into the educational system and complete primary school? What secondary schools did these children attend and are there complementary schools in Serbia where they could continue their education (...) What foreign languages do these children and their parents speak and how well? (...)

In this almost full quantitative darkness, surveys, including ours, send out a, it would seem, unified signal. Although they are significantly more oriented towards employment than receiving social assistance and are readily for various forms of support in employment, and particularly self-employment, Roma returnees frequently remain unemployed and forced to turn to the grey economy. Although they recognize employment as the best way to break the circle of poverty and increase their changes of employment, and tend to involve their children in the educational system, due to the lack of psychological support and adequate additional instruction fund their children sometimes "fall off" of the peer train and fail to obtain a diploma that would/could lead to employment.

How do we find a "link" that would make it possible for the potential of Roma returnees, created during their stay in the EU, to be more efficiently utilized in Serbia?

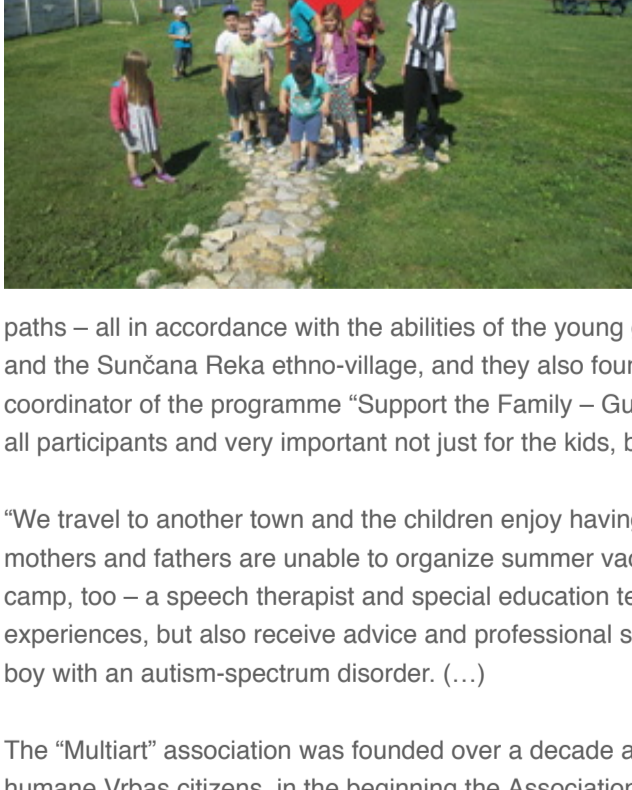
(...)

The text in its entirety can be found on the [Social Inclusion Blog](#).

Other texts by our bloggers can be found at: www.socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/blog/

SUCCESS STORY

When Parents Organize Well



Parents of children with disabilities in Vrbas organized the "Multiart" association to facilitate the organization of free time for their children, exchange experiences, take a break from everyday chores and be more visible in the community.

For the third year in a row, fifteen kids from Vrbas with various forms of disabilities, along with their parents as guardians, stayed at a mini camp in Gučevo, near Loznica. Every day was full of dance, drawing lessons (art therapy), visits to the pool, walks along forest paths

– all in accordance with the abilities of the young guests. Camp participants visited the Petkovica and the Sunčana Reka ethno-village, and they also found time to visit a playground. Boris Bjelović, the coordinator of the programme "Support the Family – Gučevo 2017", stated that this programme is free for all participants and very important not just for the kids, but also their parents.

"We travel to another town and the children enjoy having activities while they are on vacation. Many mothers and fathers are unable to organize summer vacations by themselves. There are experts at the camp, too – a speech therapist and special education teacher – so not only can the parents exchange experiences, but also receive advice and professional support", explains Bjelović, himself the father of a boy with an autism-spectrum disorder. (...)

The "Multiart" association was founded over a decade ago, i.e. in 2006. Due to the efforts of a group of humane Vrbas citizens, in the beginning the Association organized activities such as concerts to collect money for the treatment of children with rare diseases and the procurement of aids and tools. (...) Recently, however, they have been focused on content contributing to the improvement of the daily lives of their kids, and therefore the families. Thus, every Saturday they gather at the Association office in the old municipality building, while the kids are in the club. Before or after the meetings they can take them to use some of the free slots for "kid sports" at the karate park hall or at the pool.

The members of the "Multiart" association are also proud that over three years ago, in cooperation with another organization, they initiated and implemented the first survey on the number of families with children with disabilities in the municipality of Vrbas. Majka Kuć, a pedagogue, says that they have been diligently collecting data from the field for four months, from the city and seven surrounding settlement. A sizable overview of 218 kids with some form of disability became part of the municipal documentation and one of the arguments in favour of the need to establish a daycare. A decision was adopted at the local level on reconstructing an old house for these needs, with project implementation entrusted to the Centre for Social Work. They are impatient to see the daycare open as soon as possible, and hope it will happen as early as next year.

As of a month ago, "Multiart" volunteers are also participating in a regional informal movement entitled "Drimers with a Good Heart". As part of this free-of-charge drive workers in Croatia and Montenegro.

More success stories can be found at socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs

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