

External Review

**Joint Programme for Roma and Marginalised
Groups Inclusion through Education, Phase 1**

Evaluation Report (final)

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External Review of the Joint Programme for Roma and Marginalised Groups Inclusion through Education

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Abbreviations

C/YPWD	Children/Young Persons with Disabilities
CHF	Swiss Franc
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEC	Development Education Centre
DILS	Delivery of Integrated Local Services
DRC	Danish Red Cross
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
JP	Joint Programme
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
LPA	Local Plan of Action
LSG	Local Self Government
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRC	Montenegro Red Cross
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Investment Plan
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPI	National Programme for Integration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OSI/FOSS	Open Society Institute/ Fund for an Open Society Serbia
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PDP	Professional Development Programme
PHV	Promotion of Human Values
PIU	Project (Programme) Implementation Unit
PPP	Pre-school Preparatory Programme
ProDoc	Project Document
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REF	Roma Education Fund
RC	Red Cross
RCS	Red Cross of Serbia
RGSI	Roma Good Start Initiative
RS	Republic of Serbia
RSD	Serbian Dinar
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPR(U)	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (Unit)
SpRC	Spanish Red Cross
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
vRoma	(educational support to) vulnerable Roma (children)
ZUOV	Institute for the Improvement of Education
ZVKOV	Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation

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Harald Meier and Snježana Mrše

Management Summary

Assignment

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), in cooperation with its partners UNICEF, Red Cross Movement, and Pomoć Deci, implements the programme *Support to Education in Serbia, Montenegro – Improving primary school completion rates for marginalised children 2009-2011* (Joint Programme, JP, the programme). The programme aims at putting in place models of education and appropriate institutional frameworks in at least 61 municipalities in Serbia and in Montenegro. The purpose is to effectively and sustainably include marginalised children into mainstream education. The three year programme, implementation of which started in January 2009, is co-funded by the Swiss Government with an amount of CHF 5 million.

SDC commissioned two evaluators to design and carry out an external evaluation of the programme. The purpose of the review is to assess specifically the institutional set-up of the programme and its anchorage in the relevant institutions. Furthermore, it shall appraise to what extent the Joint Programme reached its planned objectives, purposes and results to date. The review shall provide recommendations for the future strategic and/or operational direction of a forthcoming programme phase. Covering the period until March 2011, the evaluation thus contains summative and formative evaluation elements.

Methodology

The evaluation is based on the OECD methodological framework for evaluating development co-operation and the specific evaluation criteria included therein: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. A comprehensive analysis of various documents and sources of information – including the Project Document, Interim Reports and other reports, selected outputs produced by the programme, financial reports – was carried out. In addition, the evaluation team performed semi-structured interviews with representatives of the contracting agency, beneficiaries and government counterparts, the project partners and other donor representatives. To that purpose a mission was fielded to Serbia from 16 – 27 May 2011. One day was spent in Montenegro. Additional interviews, including phone interviews, were performed before and after the field mission. A list of the persons who were interviewed, the field mission schedule and the list of key literature the evaluation team reviewed are annexed to this report.

Findings and Lessons Learned

The key findings and lessons learned of this external evaluation are summarised below:

- Beneficiaries commend the implementing partners for their technical and service quality and commitment in rendering their services; they commonly opined that

project activities had impact on educational attainments of target groups and on attitudes at local levels;

- Programme activities show good progress and the programme is likely to achieve its achievement indicators at programme level; the activities are largely aligned to Government strategies, policies and legal frameworks on education and follow good practice applied in the region;
- Marked differences exist regarding the institutional anchorage of the programme at central and local levels: the collected evidence suggests that at local level the programme achieved i) recognition and in several instances ii) (perspectives of) institutionalisation of its activities; at the same time it needs to be observed that the Joint Programme could not anchor itself in the Ministry of Education; at both levels further efforts are required to achieve full ownership of the programme activities;
- Expected synergies from the joint implementation of the programme could not be (fully) achieved and potentials of the set-up not exploited to a sufficient extent; the investment of resources (human, time) to facilitate the coordination and cooperation of the project were disproportionate to the achievements of the joint implementation;
- Successful cooperation will require a clear vision, interest and commitment to cooperate; unified systems and processes that ensure coordination and communication; flexibility to align activities; managers, who are equipped with authority to take decisions in the context of the programme on behalf of all implementing partners.
- Efforts need to be undertaken to ensure that the programme interventions are fully aligned to the inclusion paradigm and to dispel concerns of continued “segregation” of marginalised children who are involved in the programme activities; furthermore, efforts are required to achieve financial sustainability of programme activities such as the DECAs;
- SDC is recognised and appreciated for its long-term strategies and participatory approach in the design process; it is considered to be a reliable and valuable partner.

Recommendations

The project partners as well as project stakeholders repeatedly expressed their wish that the programme be continued in a second phase with the aim of increasing the outreach to and level of education of children from vulnerable groups, thereby capitalising on the good practices developed at the local/municipal level and accelerating the programme’s anchorage in the Ministry of Education. In the following we summarise our recommendations for the design and the implementation of the forthcoming phase.

- *Design programmes separately for Serbia and for Montenegro:* The evaluators suggest that the forthcoming phase better distinguishes between the programme interventions in Serbia and in Montenegro respectively (e.g. in a separate chapter in the ProDoc).¹ The respective approaches and activities should be designed in a participatory manner involving the relevant Ministry of Education.
- *Full alignment with the MoE inclusion paradigm:* As regards Serbia, the evaluators are of the opinion that special attention should be paid to the programme's full alignment with the inclusion paradigm of the Ministry of Education. This may require analysing the different intervention strategies and approaches jointly with the Ministry of Education.
- *Continue efforts in improving the partners' cooperation and creating synergies:* Bringing several organisations together in a joint programme has the potential to increase the overall programme effectiveness. However, for the synergies to materialise the evaluators recommend to
 - develop a common vision and firm commitment of collaboration that goes beyond mere communication and information sharing;
 - develop the structure, processes and mechanisms that make the collaboration work in practice and not only in theory;
 - *in the absence* of the above, consider fewer or other partners but certainly those partners, who are most committed to the programme and at the same time most likely to develop close cooperation with the MoE. Generally, the question *how* to implement the programme – rather than with *who* – should be prioritised.
- *Improve the involvement of / anchorage in the Ministry of Education:* The evaluators are of the opinion that having the MoE as coordinating project partner will be critical to ensure current and future alignment with the inclusion approach of the MoE and the corresponding reforms it embarked on. The following recommendation should be considered:
 - *Establishing well balanced two-level programme coordination (central and municipal level coordination):* The Ministry of Education should assume an overall coordination role in the forthcoming phase. There is also need to mirror the national coordination body at municipal/local level thus allowing for stronger collaboration of the partners, further improved commitment and

¹ Given that there is no formal bilateral engagement / Country Strategy of SDC in Montenegro it is not possible to produce to design a separate programme for Montenegro.

involvement of local self-governments in the programme, diversity of good practices and problem solving at local level, as well as easier “bottom up” communication.

- *Consider designing the forthcoming phase along the lines of content (vs. along the lines of partner organisations):* Instead of the current set-up, which divides the components among the partner organisations, the evaluators recommend a programme set-up along the lines of content (in the sense of field of intervention or activity), which would demand from the partners to truly collaborate with each other.
- *Consider narrowing down the scope of the programme (vs. little bit of everything, everywhere):* With a view to both minimise the risk of greater overlapping and ensure complementarity with similar ongoing projects the scope of the programme should be geared towards early childhood education of children from vulnerable groups. If accepted, the programme could consist of several components and could involve additional partners depending on activities that are rolled out:
 - providing pre-PPP education for children in the age of 3-5 years from vulnerable groups (DURN has proven to be able to design good quality programmes; Pomoć Deci has proven to be able to design sustainable approaches; RC has proven to be able to design cost efficient models of project roll-out with volunteers);
 - working with Roma communities on increasing parents’ competences;
 - supporting the creation of an inclusive classroom environment in pre-school institutions (e.g. through *Promoting Human Values programme* of RC and/or accredited programmes of other organisations).
- *Consider decreasing, yet not cutting off completely, the financial support to the activities related to PPP, (primary and) secondary education as well as adult education:* These activities are already supported by other ongoing projects funded by the EU (Education for All, Second Chance, IMPRES) or DILS.
- *Allow for a six to twelve months inception phase:* A new framework of collaboration and possible changes to the programme activities will require time to be fully implemented. It is therefore recommended to allow for an inception / pilot phase.
- *Consider establishing a platform for sharing information and good practices:* With a view to enhance its contribution to policy development the programme should establish an information and good practice platform. Such a platform could also include or be linked with other programmes that SDC operates in the education

domain, the PDP and SIPRU programmes in particular, thereby creating a “system-wide” information platform.

- *Consider the programme’s involvement in contributing to continuous monitoring of the progress of vulnerable children in education and protection from discrimination:* With its current partners the programme can rely on a significant local presence and the partners have the capacity to service respective data collection and monitoring systems. The partners should therefore engage in a dialogue with relevant authorities and explore possibilities to contribute to data collection and the functioning of monitoring and assessment systems under the guidance of these institutions. Alternatively, it should invest into data analysis, interpretation and publication of research, thereby contribute to the evidence-base in Serbia and to policy development.
- *Consider to working towards formalising Red Cross services in the education sector:* The evaluators recommend that the Red Cross societies design a strategy towards gradual formalisation of their services in the field of education of marginalised children, particularly with the Ministry of Education.
- *Consider mechanisms to build up on outputs and outcomes of other projects / programmes:* Several similar projects such as the EU funded IMPRES project or the DILS grant scheme project will end during the planned implementation period of the forthcoming phase 2012-2015. At this moment it remains unclear whether and to what extent the projects continue after this period. In the design of the forthcoming phase consideration should be given how to best ensure that the outputs and outcomes of these projects can be continued and eventually further developed and/or scaled up.
- *Consider the Red Cross of Serbia / Montenegro Red Cross as sole implementing partner of the “Red Cross family” in the forthcoming phase:* Both national societies improved their project implementation processes and standards as a response to the Peer Review findings in 2008. The evaluators recommend that, if the Red Cross is involved again, only the two national societies are being contracted for the forthcoming phase. This will reduce cost as well as administrative overhead of contract and financial management.
- *Streamline and harmonise reporting systems:* The evaluators recommend that project and financial reporting procedures and structures are harmonised among the implementing partners. The reporting schedule may have to be aligned to the school rather than the calendar year.
- *Ensure visibility of the programme and of Swiss involvement:* For the forthcoming phase the evaluators recommend to clearly label and promote the programme (e.g.

through a website, stringent branding) so as to ensure that Swiss engagement in the education / social inclusion sector is made more visible.

- *Engage into improved communication, cooperation and eventually collaboration with other actors:* The evaluators recommend that improved dialogue is established with other actors such as the EU (and its relevant project teams), the REF or the DILS programme.
- *Consider capitalising on the Red Cross's network of / experience to work with volunteers:* Capacities and resources across municipalities in Serbia and in Montenegro will continue to be scarce in the short- to mid-run. The Red Cross has proven to attract volunteers and to be able to design cost efficient models of project roll-out with the support of the latter. The programme could seek to build up a network of volunteers to support educational institutions to enable the latter to include marginalised children and children with special needs into the schooling system (e.g. through personal assistance to children with disabilities).

1. Introduction

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation co-funds the programme *Support to Education in Serbia, Montenegro – Improving primary school completion rates for marginalised children 2009-2011* (Joint Programme, JP, the programme). The programme aims at including marginalised children effectively and sustainably into the mainstream education system by implementing different educational models and by supporting institutional and legislative reform. While the programme formally addresses all marginalised children, it practically focuses on children of the Roma minority and on children with disabilities, whose vulnerability was pointed out in various national researches and strategic papers.

In Serbia, as much as in other countries in the region, the Roma continue to be heavily affected by poverty and exclusion. Reportedly, more than 60 % live below the poverty line. The lack of (quality) education has been identified as one of the main reasons that perpetuates their situation and prevents Roma families from bettering their living conditions. Children with disabilities are another vulnerable group. Particularly those with severe disabilities are often placed into institutional care, whereas children with developmental disabilities² have long been placed into special schools or special classes in regular schools. However, the process of including these children into mainstream education is underway and the Joint Programme is one of the many interventions, governmental and non-governmental alike, in Serbia in this regard.

The Joint Programme is a continuation of different projects, the implementation of some of which already dates back for almost ten years. It is the result of a Peer Review and planning process that started in 2008 and to which the implementing partners – Red Cross (including Red Cross of Serbia, Montenegro Red Cross,³ Danish Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), Pomoć Deci, UNICEF and SDC – contributed. Taken together, the Joint Programme covers 80 municipalities across Serbia and Montenegro respectively (cf. Annex 1).

This report presents our evaluation results. The report mainly focuses on Serbia. However, where relevant it also includes information and data on Montenegro and additional details with regard to Joint Programme implementation in Montenegro are contained in an excursus. In the following Chapter 2 we provide a brief overview of the context within which the programme operates. Chapter 3 then presents the main findings of the evaluation on the basis of the desk study and the field mission with its interviews of different stakeholders. We translate our find-

² Developmental disability is a term to describe life-long disabilities attributable to mental and/or physical impairments, manifested prior to age 18 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developmental_disability). A uniform definition of the term does, however, not exist.

³ These two national RC societies are also referred to as “operating national RC societies”, whereas the other two national RC societies are referred to as “participating national RC societies”, in line with their organisational roles.

ings into conclusions and lessons learned in Chapter 4 and formulate our operational recommendations for the forthcoming programme phase in Chapter 5. The final Chapter relates to the evaluation methodology. The Annexes include additional information and documentation regarding the evaluation.

2. Background and Context

2.1. Programme Context

The government of Serbia has increasingly been addressing the needs of marginalised children over the past years. Several factors contributed to the reform efforts, including: i) Serbia is one of the twelve⁴ countries participating in the *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015*. The Decade National Action Plans for Serbia, which also address the education domain, contain a host of measures and delineate tasks and responsibilities across government institutions in Serbia. ii) The EU integration processes requires reform efforts in the field of education and – broadly speaking – in the field of social inclusion. iii) Non-governmental organisations, bi- and multilateral organisations have advocated for social inclusion, respect for child and human rights in the education sector. iv) Finally, the post-2008 elections political environment also contributed to building up a reform oriented environment.

The majority of the Roma population in Serbia continues to live in poverty and continues to face discrimination, in particular as regards access to social protection, health care, adequate housing, education and employment. Their situation is often exacerbated by prejudices that are patent barriers to exercising their rights as well as by residential segregation as a result of which Roma often live in separate settlements (*mahalas*). Children are among the most vulnerable and excluded. The impediment to obtain quality education is a significant factor in the perpetuation of their poverty and exclusion. Their enrolment rates, retention and completion rates are significantly lower than that of the majority population. Including Roma children in the mainstream schooling system and offering quality education to them is therefore instrumental in achieving better life perspectives for Roma in the mid- to long-run.

The education needs of children with disabilities are addressed in Serbia's legal framework (e.g. in the constitution, in education laws, in the national and local action plans for children). The new *Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System* stresses, *inter alia*, improved access to education, the principles of antidiscrimination and anti-segregation, and an individualised approach to education. It stipulates that children with disabilities should have

⁴ A thirteenth country, Slovenia, has observer status.

opportunities for education equal to those of other children. The new *Law on Pre-school Education* goes in the same direction and prioritises the enrolment of children from vulnerable groups, enabling execution of specialised and alternative curricula also conducted in foreign language and languages of ethnic minorities. The laws are a reflection of a new paradigm in Serbia's education system, namely that it shall be inclusive, based on legal frameworks in accordance with European standards.

Many of the obligations in the sphere of education are placed on local authorities. While there is much awareness and willingness to take remedial action for marginalised children, many municipalities lack the appropriate funds to finance corresponding actions and reforms.

The most recent Serbia 2010 Progress Report of the European Commission noted “*some progress towards inclusive education...*” and “*affirmative action measures ... in the education sector with the goal of enhancing the status of Roma...*”.⁵ Yet, despite this, much still needs to be done and it is in this context that the Progress Report concludes that “[v]ulnerable groups, such as Roma, persons and children with disabilities ..., remain the most exposed to discrimination.”

It is against this context that there was the unequivocal opinion among the interviewees that interventions that seek to alleviate the situation of Roma are much needed and – against limited financial resources at all levels of government in Serbia – of utmost relevance.

2.2. Programme Content

As stated above, the Joint Programme is the continuation of technical assistance projects that SDC has been supporting for almost ten years. The Joint Programme commenced in January 2009 and will end in December 2011. With a total budget of CHF 10.000.000, 50 % of which are financed by SDC, the programme works in three main directions, namely: delivering services, which support marginalised children to participate fully in the pre-school and primary education system; institutionalising these services at local level; supporting national level reforms in the field of inclusive education. Taken together, the three implementing partners operate in 80 municipalities, i.e. more than a third of all municipalities / cities in Serbia. We refrain here from a detailed description of the Joint Programme since more information will be provided in other parts of this report (cf. 3.2 Project Progress and Effectiveness).

⁵ Serbia 2010 Progress Report, {COM(2010) 660}, Commission of the European Union, 9 November 2010, SEC(2010) 1330.

2.3. Education Portfolio of SDC

The *Cooperation Strategy Serbia 2010 – 2013* constitutes the framework of Switzerland's efforts to support Serbia's integration into Europe by contributing, *inter alia*, to improving social inclusion and reducing poverty. Education is one of the four intervention domains of SDC. Its support aims at enhancing the efficiency, equity and quality of the education system in Serbia, whilst ensuring the inclusion of marginalised children – particularly children of the Roma minority and children with special needs. With its approach of (social) inclusion SDC's interventions are aligned to the Ministry of Education inclusion policy, which was adopted in 2009. Other than the Joint Programme, which we presented above and which is subject of this review, SDC implements the following two closely related programmes in the education domain.

Professional Development Program

The Professional Development Programme (PDP IV) is currently in its fourth implementation phase. Building up on its past achievements the PDP IV supports the improvement of capacities to create, implement and evaluate evidence-based and aligned national education strategies and programmatic measures; the establishment of regulatory and institutional frameworks of the education system; the professional development system. Contrary to the Joint Programme, the Ministry of Education takes – along with other bodies such as the Institute for Education Advancement, eight Regional Centres for Professional Development, the National Education Council, as well as municipalities and schools – a leading role in the implementation of the PDP IV.

Support to Social Inclusion Policy in Serbia

The Social Inclusion Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration (SIPRU) is tasked with the operations of the social inclusion and poverty reduction concept in Serbia, which itself is a critical task in Serbia's EU integration process. SDC's support aims at mainstreaming social inclusion policies into national and sector strategies and at minimising poverty and marginalisation. SIPRU's activities range from capacity building at central government level and line Ministries to improving Serbia's statistical system on monitoring social inclusion indicators, and from intergovernmental cooperation at all across all levels of government to regional cooperation.

The above projects constitute the pillars of SDC's comprehensive education reform support.⁶ While there has been loose cooperation among the programmes in the past, there are potentials of closer collaboration with the Joint Programme.

⁶ Impact of the education reform portfolio in Serbia is measured by utilising a complex impact logic, which includes the Joint Programme.

2.4. Other Interventions

2.4.1. European Union

The EU plays an increasingly important role in the education field, beyond its work on vocational education and training in the past years. While there are several other initiatives and programmes that would merit attention, such as the *Roma Good Start Initiative (RGSi)* on early childhood development or IPA support to improve pre-school education (supplies), two important projects in the education field are briefly summarised below.

Improvement of pre-school education in Serbia

The overall objective of the *Improvement of pre-school education in Serbia (IMPRES)* project is to contribute to social inclusion and poverty reduction by improving pre-school provision and broadening access for children to pre-school services, especially from disadvantaged groups.⁷ IMPRES, funded under the IPA Programme with a budget of € 2mio, is implemented by a consortium led by SOFRECO (France) in association with Early Years – Organisation for Young Children (UK) and IB – Internationaler Bund (Germany). IMPRES will focus its work in 15 municipalities that were selected by the Ministry of Education on the basis of a set of priority criteria and relevant demographic data. The expected results of the project are: a tool kit for local self-governments (LSGs) to systematically organise their pre-school networks, to optimise pre-school capacity and to increase access for vulnerable groups; an improved legislative framework for pre-school education with special attention to vulnerable groups; improved access to pre-school education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups; and improved quality of pre-school programmes to better respond to the needs of children, families and the local communities. At the time of writing this report the project just finished the inception phase, meaning that the actual activities will only commence after the submission of this report.⁸ However, already at this stage it becomes evident that some of the outputs of the project, mostly as regards the planned national framework curricula for pre-schools as well as the quality standards and self-evaluation system, might require changes to the (content of the) activities delivered under the Joint Programme. At the same time, there are ample opportunities for the Joint Programme to share its experiences and best practices.⁹

⁷ The project encompasses all pre-school education forms, from kindergarten to PPP, and seeks to address the needs of all children from the age of six months to the age of elementary schooling.

⁸ IMPRES will also be engaged in a separate project with UNICEF. This project is planned to be implemented in ten municipalities in Serbia starting September 2011. It focuses on developing specific and specialised pre-school curricula for children with special needs, thereby also considering parents' needs. The project budget amounts to € 500.000.

⁹ Such cooperation could be foreseen e.g. in the context of the forth component, which looks at the quality of pre-school programmes by analysing existing models of pre-school education and sharing the latter across municipalities. The Joint Programme has accumulated much experience that merit to be analysed. For such collaboration to happen, the implementing partners need to scale up collaboration with these projects.

Education for All

Also relevant is the project *Education for All – Accessible and Quality Education for Children from Marginalised Groups*. The project, which commenced in February 2010, has a duration of two years and is financed with an amount of three million euro. It is implemented by a consortium composed of the firms WYG (UK) and HCL Consultants (Cyprus). Education for All operations in 179 schools located in 81 municipalities across Serbia and has the objective of increasing the number of children from marginalised groups and children with special needs in the primary education system. Key activities of the project refer to the Pedagogical Assistants (cf. 1.3.4) and their systematic integration into the Serbian education system as well as the design and delivery of programs of training in new pedagogical methods, the development of learning materials as well as a catalogue on innovative ideas for extra-curricular activities.

2.4.2. World Bank

The World Bank funded project *Delivery of Integrated Local Services (DILS)*, implemented in the period 2009-2012, is designed to promote the delivery of local services in social protection, health, education and fiscal management in a decentralised environment. It is a prominent intervention of the Ministry of Education. The loan programme is endowed with a budget of € 32m of which € 12m are earmarked for activities in the education sector. It is further broken down into five components, including components on Roma children and children with disabilities. Within the latter component, DILS will support pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, as well as special schools, to develop inclusive practices. For this purpose loan funds (average € 4.000 per institution) are made available based on grant proposals to at least 320 schools. Within the former component, DILS will support local self-governments and non-governmental service providers to identify new approaches and models for delivering services to vulnerable and excluded groups. For this purpose loan funds (average € 35.000 per municipality) are made available based on grant proposals that were submitted by municipal consortia. As of May 2011 DILS approved 42 grant applications (of a total of 56 received) and implementation of some of them commenced in April 2011; 22 of the granted applications are in municipalities that are also covered by the Joint Programme (five municipalities need to be added, once their applications are approved).

In the relation to pre-school education DILS includes the following activities:

- analysis of the current situation and needs regarding the overall inclusion of children in pre-school education, capacity building at the local level and support to vulnerable children;
- definition of regulations and standards for service delivery and mechanisms for quality improvement monitoring at local level.

2.4.3. Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

From 2007 the OSCE Mission to Serbia has been supporting the Ministry of Education in building up a pool of pedagogical assistances (previously referred to as Roma Assistants). When the OSCE ended its assistance in late 2010, the EU funded Education for All continued with the work of the OSCE by contributing to the standardisation process. In the forthcoming period the OSCE will mainly provide support to the Ministry of Health in standardising the services of health mediators at local level. A project with the Ministry for Human Rights (to be funded by SIDA with a budget of € 2.7 mio) is currently pending approval by the Ministry.

Table 1: Overview of other interventions

Donor	Implementor	Project Title	Budget	Municipalities	Duration	Focus
EU	Sofreco - Early Years - IB Internationaler Bund	Improvement of pre-school education in Serbia (IMPRES)	€ 2'000'000	15	2011-2013	improving pre-school provision and quality; access for children to pre-school services, especially from disadvantaged groups
EU	WYG - HCL Consultants	Education for All - Accessible and Quality Education for Children from Marginalised Groups	€ 3'000'000	81	Feb 2010 - Jan 2012	systematic integration of Pedagogical Assistants into education system (standardisation, training, etc); design and delivery of programs of training in new pedagogical methods
World Bank	Government of Serbia	Delivery of Integrated Local Services (DILS) - Education Component	€ 12'000'000	42 (56)	2009-2012	various grant scheme projects; new approaches and models for delivering services to vulnerable and excluded groups
EU	OSCE / Ministry of Health	Support to professional development of Health Mediators (working title)	n/a	n/a	start 2012 (tbd)	standardisation of qualifications, training etc. of health mediators
SIDA	OSCE / Ministry of Human Rights	Support to Roma communities (working title)	€ 2'700'000	5	n/a	n/a

Serbia receives significant assistance in the education sector and the above snapshot is nowhere near to be exhaustive. It excludes, for instance, the activities of several international and local non-governmental organisations such as OSI/FOSS that are active across the country and whose actions are primarily located at municipal level. The above referred *Education for All* project carried out a mapping exercise to understand, which initiatives are being implemented in the municipalities (the map should be available by early fall 2011). Many of these projects support the official / formal education system, which is not yet apt to service all education needs of children. Hence, there is (factually) a continuous need of non-governmental and donor support for the provision of education services that supplement formal education. The mere fact that there are many interventions makes it a priority for all actors to engage into a meaningful coordination process. In this regard, setting-up a Joint Programme, with the intention of collaboration and coordination, is, generally speaking, a commendable effort.

3. Review of Implementation

The findings featured in this chapter are listed under the headings Relevance and strategic fit, Project progress and effectiveness, Efficiency and resource use, Impact and Sustainability. These headings correspond to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and constitute the framework of the evaluation.

3.1. Relevance and Strategic Fit

The focus of this sub-chapter is to assess to what extent the objectives of the Joint Programme are consistent with the needs of the beneficiary countries and their institutions. Relevance looks at whether the projects are aligned to the policies and interventions of the partner organisations as well as the donor's own policies.

Relevance against requirements of beneficiary state / institutions: Our desk research and document review as well as the interviews with the various programme stakeholders confirm that the programme is highly relevant to the needs of the education sector in Serbia, as was expected. The programme's focus on greater inclusion of children in pre-school institutions, especially children from vulnerable groups, has been recognised in various policy documents, multisectoral and sectoral strategies as well as primary and secondary legislation in Serbia. Enumerating all of these would go beyond the scope of this review, yet some of the most pertinent include:

- *Roma Decade Commitments; Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2003), recommendations from the *Second Report on implementation of the PRSP* (2007), the *National Action Plan for Children* (2005)¹⁰, and the *National Strategy and Action Plan for Roma Education Improvement* (2005) put priority on enhancing the capacities of pre-school institutions with the purpose of increasing the inclusion of children in pre-school education;
- *National Investment Plan (NIP) for the Republic of Serbia*: Article 2 of the Decision on the strategic priorities of the NIP for 2008 focuses specifically on improved access to quality pre-school education for all children;
- *National Programme for Integration with the European Union (NPI)*: requires, *inter alia*, further development of special measures to increase the number of children from vulnerable groups (Roma children, children from socio-economic high risk environments, children with developmental disabilities) by designing quality

¹⁰ A new draft of the National Action Plan for the period 2010-2015 is currently being developed.

preparatory pre-school programmes and inclusive models in education and by strengthening capacities for implementation of inclusive education.

Relevance against European Union strategies and policies: The protection of minorities is an integral part of the EU political criteria for accession. The Joint Programme complements EU strategies and policies in Serbia such as Country Strategy Papers, National Action Plans, Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or Association Agreements, which commonly include reference to education, the situation of marginalised and vulnerable groups, human rights and good governance. It is also in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy on social inclusion.

Relevance against Swiss commitment to supporting Serbia's transitions: In assessing the relevance it is also necessary to refer to the objectives of SDC, which are summarised in the *Strategy of Cooperation with Serbia 2010-2013*. The strategy seeks, *inter alia*, to contribute to enhance the quality of education and to the inclusion of the vulnerable population (minorities and persons with special needs), and to stimulate reforms that enhance the efficiency and relevance of education.

Relevance of the activities of the Joint Programme: The range of activities that the implementing partners offer are following good practices that are applied in many countries facing similar challenges as regards the inclusion of vulnerable children, particularly of the Roma community, into education.

3.2. Project Progress and Effectiveness

Effectiveness measures the extent to which the programme attained the planned outputs, results or specific objectives that are important elements of any project or programme strategy.

3.2.1. Specific Questions

Prior to discussing the achievements of the Joint Programme the evaluators wish to respond to several of the specific questions, which were contained in the assignment Terms of Reference.

Assessment of the institutional anchorage and ownership of the programme: There is significant disparity between the anchorage of the Joint Programme at central and local levels. While the evaluators conclude on the basis of the interviews that the programme receives good *recognition* and *support* by relevant public authorities at local level (certainly in the municipalities that the evaluators had the chance to visit), we are of the opinion that *ownership* of the programme activities has not yet been achieved to sufficient extent. There are, however, good signs of progress with the inclusion of several Joint Programme activities into policies and practices at local level (cf. 3.5. Sustainability). Much of this good cooperation in the municipalities is driven by the “people” and good working relations that were established at local level throughout the past years, rather than the Joint Programme *per se*. In stark contrast is

the anchorage and ownership at central level, which the Joint Programme has not achieved. In fact, on the basis of the interviews with senior and operational staff at the Ministry of Education one can only but conclude that there is only marginal knowledge about the Joint Programme, its activities and achievements to date. At central level the programme clearly suffered from the fact that the Ministry of Education was not formally included in the project set-up.

It is indicative that the programme seems to have only limited visibility – though there have been promotional activities such as joint press conference or the editing of a video series aired by major media stations in Serbia. There is, for instance, no programme website on which the partners and their activities would be presented and on which achievements and outcomes would be made available to a larger audience. Neither does the Joint Programme feature prominently on the partners' websites (nor on the website of the MoE). Also, while all partners are active in advocacy, first and foremost UNICEF, much is done separately and little under the umbrella of the Joint Programme. These and other factors have likely contributed to a situation in which senior staff of the Ministry of Education, but also other actors such as the EU, has only little awareness of the programme – not to speak of knowledge of the concrete activities it focuses on.

Assessment of the technical and financial contribution of the programme toward the relevant national reform activities/achievements: The implementation of the Joint Programme started at a time when many legislative acts were (in the course of being) adopted and when policies were newly introduced. Furthermore, given the vast number of stakeholders in the education domain, it is very difficult to gauge to what extent the Joint Programme contributed towards national reform achievements.¹¹ The forerunner phases of the Joint Programme built capacity, devised models and implemented activities that contributed to reform. The inclusion of Pedagogical Assistants (previously also Roma Assistants) into the education system is a case in point. Several organisations such as the OSI/FOSS or the OSCE but also Pomoć Deci advocated for the inclusion of Roma Assistants. Other examples would include the work of Roma representatives, who contributed in the development of local plans of action, or the involvement of UNICEF and Pomoć Deci as members of the working group on Roma education in the Ministry of Education. It is safe to conclude that the Joint Programme (and the precursor projects) invested its (their) resources into the right direction. On the other hand, feedback of senior staff of the Ministry of Education suggests that the Joint Programme is not known to have contributed with a specific, concrete policy or reform issue. There is a vague notion that “the programme is doing a lot in the field”.

¹¹ It is equally difficult to distinguish between the implementing partners' contributions vs. the Joint Programme contributions.

Estimating – let alone calculating – the financial contribution of the Joint Programme towards the national reform is a daunting task and would require resources far beyond the ones made available for this external review. Municipal representatives themselves estimated that implementing programmes such as the PHV (cf. 3.2.2) would cost the municipality 3-4 times more than what the Red Cross on average spends for the activity.

Assessment of direct participation and involvement of the national/public structures in programme realisation: In general, as referred to above, there is notable disparity between the involvement of national structures at local and at central level. The impression that the evaluators obtained during the discussions with LSG representatives indicate that there was, at local level, good cooperation.

Assessment of the risk of long-term substituting public responsibilities: The Red Cross national societies are recognised by their respective governments “as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field”. During our interviews some interlocutors suggested this “auxiliary role” would have the effect that public authorities become complacent to assume more responsibility since the Red Cross would substitute for the lack of public action – particularly as regards vulnerable groups. This warrants taking a closer look at the status and approach of the Red Cross as regards the Joint Programme. The question is whether the Red Cross societies supplement or substitute public services. The *Law on the Red Cross of Serbia (2005)* does not feature education as a specific field of intervention of the Red Cross, neither is this regulated by a memorandum of understanding or a service level agreement between the Red Cross and the government (such as for the emergency and disaster service). As a result, it does not receive any financial support by the government for its work in the education sector (contrary to other activities it renders, e.g. the soup kitchens). Article 9 (4) of the Law does stipulates that the Red Cross carries out projects in support of, *inter alia*, children and persons with disabilities in cooperation with relevant public authorities and local self-governments. Senior staff of the Red Cross is aware that a formal working relation, with the Ministry of Education in particular, would be beneficial to clarify the role of the Red Cross in the education field (and at the same time to receive more recognition of the quality and value of its activities). The Red Cross has taken first steps by concluding MoUs at local levels or by seeking accreditation of the PHV programme (though unsuccessfully, for the moment).¹² Moreover, senior staff of the Red Cross stated their intention to undertake efforts to improve its position vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education and to eventually enter into discussions on a service level agreement with the Ministry.

¹² It is interesting to note in this context that the PHV programme activities that are implemented in other than the 12 municipalities covered by the Joint Programme, is partially financed by the proceeds of the annual selling of commemorative stamps by the Serbian Post.

The evaluators opine that in light of the political environment in Serbia and the commitments to live up to reform pledges to achieve education for all marginalised children there is only a small risk that the Red Cross would *substitute* public responsibilities in the long-run. Quite to the contrary: considering the budgetary constraints that Serbia faces, the country will require third party support in the short to mid-term in order to fully implement the reforms that were initiated. At the same time we reiterate that in a forthcoming phase measures need to be taken that formalise and strengthen the role of the Red Cross and that contribute to underpinning the commitment of the MoE (cf. 5 Recommendations).

Concerns about a “segregating approach” that is no longer in line with the “inclusion paradigm”: Some interviewed stakeholders expressed concern about the approach of providing support classes to Roma children separate from other children. This is, for example, the case in the preparatory pre-school programme organised within the elementary school in Bujanovac (within the Pomoć Deci/OFER programme), in which only Roma children are enrolled. Critics argue that this approach would perpetuate segregation of Roma children. Without entering into the debate about what constitutes segregation or not, the evaluators observe that the implementing partners are far from having any intention to cement segregation, a policy that has been identified as one of the major causes for the lack of social inclusion of Roma. It must be seen as a “transitory measure” with the evident aim to best prepare children with specific educational needs for their entry into mandatory pre-school education. Keeping Roma children apart from their peers (in Roma majority groups/classes) can be justified in a view of their specific needs to learn the majority language or the lack of local pre-school capacities.

Partnership within the Joint Programme: As it was mentioned above, the Joint Programme is the extension of three separate projects with the same goal of inclusion of marginalised children into the education system. The programme is a continuation of these efforts and the result of a joint design. The partners decided to launch a single programme in order to “*improve coordination and harmonisation of activities and efforts of all partners*” and to bring about synergies, thereby contributing to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency compared to running the projects separately. However, it appears that the partners neither had a clear vision, which synergies the collaboration should bring about nor of *how* the programme should be implemented jointly. Several interviewees stated in this context that this three-year phase would be a mere “pilot phase” of the collaboration, whereas the ProDoc defines the first year of the programme as inception phase. At the same time it emanates from the interviews that the expectations of the partners were high. Inevitably, the fact that the programme could not accomplish the perceived / wished synergies created certain frustrations during the implementation of the programme and some of the “zeal” for the Joint Programme evaded over time. Our document review and the interviews we conducted point towards the following causes that lead to a situation in which the potential of the collaboration was not fully exploited:

- the roles and responsibilities regarding the management of the programme remained unclear; whereas SDC wished that the partners would cooperate among themselves, the partners tacitly sought that SDC would assume a firmer management role;
- the systems and processes of collaboration (e.g. regarding management, communication lines and reporting, information sharing) were insufficiently designed and agreed upon;¹³ the idea of signing a memorandum of understanding that would have served as a framework for the collaboration among the implementing partners needed to be abandoned for statutory reasons; the fact that there are significant differences among the partner organisations in terms of management, makes the lack of unified systems and processes of collaboration more acute;
- each partner could build up on and resort to established networks and relations at local levels, which appears to have been a deterrent factor for the planned collaboration; only few examples of partner collaboration are found in the reports;
- living up to existing commitments and strategies of the respective partners appears to have had priority over the Joint Programme;
- there are differences in the approaches among the partners that are perceived as being not entirely compatible.

Generally speaking, joining the previously separate projects into one programme did certainly not harm, yet it is the opinion of both evaluators that the potentials of the collaboration were not exploited.

3.2.2. Achievement of Project Objectives

This section provides an assessment of the extent to which the Joint Programme achieved its outputs and purposes through the implementation of different activities. Our approach to this assessment is that we discuss the activities and achievements in the three Components. Given the broad scope of the activities both as regards content and geographical coverage, we are unable to deliver an in-depth assessment of all the activities and achievements. We will therefore undertake to make plausible the extent of output and purpose achievement of the partners' main activities. A detailed analysis, including against the achievement of baseline¹⁴

¹³ The lack of systems and processes must not be confounded with the plan of joint activities (September 2010). This plan foresees partner cooperation in eight areas (e.g. project coordination; service delivery and cooperation at local level; quality and standardisation of services; capacity building and other).

¹⁴ The baseline was set on the basis of data collected at the end of 2010; their achievement can be tested at the end of 2011.

vs. target indicators in the logical framework, would have to follow at the end of the implementation of the programme.

The evidence that we collected during the desk research and the interviews suggests that the programme enjoys first and foremost (very) good recognition at the local level, i.e. in the municipalities where activities of the Joint Programme are being implemented. LSG representatives, school directors, teachers, pedagogues as well as civil society representatives and parents repeatedly stressed the technical quality of the services and the valuable support by the implementing partners, their sub-contractors and collaborators. Stakeholders also commonly opined that the programme activities had impact on educational attainments of the target groups and on attitudes at local levels. There is no doubt that the partners have managed to deliver an impressive amount of work.

Component 1 (Responsible implementing partner: Pomoć Deci)

Component Objective	Assessment of the Component
The Component's objective is to develop and test models of best practice in education, which enable sustainable integration of Roma children into education and society in Serbia, documented and shared for wider adoption in at least 15 municipalities.	At this stage we can conclude that the models of integration of Roma children into education are successfully implemented in seven municipalities (Bujanovac, Vranje, Vladičin Han, Vlasotince, Preševo, Surdulica and Lebane): of 1.825 children who participated in the programme in 2009/2010 the passing rate in elementary schools stands at around 84 % (i.e. similar to the passing rate level of all children) (cf. Annex 2); the enrolment rate at 80 % (close to the national enrolment rate of 84 %) according to latest available data from the reports; nine Roma Assistants from Pomoć Deci programme were employed as Pedagogical Assistants by the Ministry of Education, which are now officially recognised in the Law on the Foundations of Education (2009). In 2009, this component received the <i>Erste Group Social Innovation Award</i> for one of the best social inclusion programmes in South East Europe. Based on the evident commitment of the MoE as well as the involved LSG and educational institutions, there is a high probability that the activities and

measures introduced by Pomoć Deci would continue to be implemented following the programme's closure.

In a forthcoming phase more should be done in sharing the programme successes.

Pomoć Deci operates in 15 municipalities and delivers its services through locally based implementing partners. The evaluators had the possibility to hold interviews with two of them – OFER and the Association for Roma Education (DER), two Roma associations operating in Bujanovac and Surdulica respectively. Altogether, Pomoć Deci operates with approximately 40 staff. Pomoć Deci's approach to integration of Roma children into education rests on three pillars: firstly, it aims to include all vulnerable Roma (from pre-school age children and young people to their parents and siblings) in a given municipality into its educational activities; secondly, it provides support for continuous education / to retain children/youth in education (e.g. by preparing pupils for their entrance exams into a higher school grade or into university, by providing employment support, by affirmative action); and thirdly, it seeks to empower the local Roma communities and NGOs through their direct involvement and roll-out of the activities. This community based approach builds upon the local expertise in the Roma community, increases genuine motivation of its members and contributes to further empowerment. In addition, involving Roma, who have direct access to community members, as coordinators in the project roll-out, makes it possible to early detect problems and to seek remedial action.

The key activities under this Component have been: the selection and training of 25 teaching assistants (also referred to as Roma Assistant, now Pedagogical Assistants) together with pre-school and school teachers to be engaged in the preparatory pre-school programme; the implementation of pre-preparatory pre-school programme for children in the age group of 4.5 – 5.5 years in the municipalities Bujanovac and Surdulica; homework support and tutoring classes for children enrolled in the I-IV and V-VIII grades of elementary school were delivered in cooperation with 13 respective schools in six municipalities; support and tutoring classes for parents' completion of elementary education; support in providing documents. A baseline research on and mapping of the psycho-social status of pre-school age children and prejudices of partners and teachers is underway. The research outcomes are planned to be available towards the end of 2011.

In total, Pomoć Deci reports having worked with approximately 4.000 direct beneficiaries, including 2.300 children (educational component), 1.300 parents (home visits, workshops and meetings), 130 teachers and assistants (training and monitoring), 185 children and parents (registration and document support) and 12 partner organisations. Considering the budgetary resources that were allocated to Pomoć Deci, these are notable achievements.

There is a continuous challenge, however, to dispel all concerns of that Pomoć Deci's activities would "segregate Roma children" from their peers. The evaluators suggest that special attention be paid to strengthen the inclusiveness of the approach by designing extra-curricular activities with peers and preparing ground for having inclusive pre-PPP groups/classes in a near future.

Component 2 (Responsible implementing partner: Red Cross)

Component Objective	Assessment of the Component
Widespread delivery (in 61 municipalities in Serbia and Montenegro), testing, and further development of sustainable models of community mobilisation, which are proven to improve educational opportunities for Roma children and children with disabilities.	This Component is on track and expected outputs and results will be achieved. Programmes were being adapted to fit municipal contexts and RC branch offices have shown flexibility to services their clients. The Red Cross national societies achieved to implement a system and process overhaul (e.g. standardised monthly reporting) that was critical for their ability to run the programme independently. Given its specific role the challenge for the Red Cross is to achieve full recognition of its work in the education sector and to present the Red Cross, its human and other resources as an asset to become a strategic partner for the Ministry of Education.

Within the framework of the Joint Programme, the Red Cross operates in 52 municipalities in Serbia, as well as eight municipalities and the Konik Camps in Montenegro, delivering its services through local RC branches. Altogether, the Red Cross operates with approximately 460 volunteers, 230 Red Cross employees and staff on loan (in Serbia: 400 volunteers and 200 Red Cross employees). The evaluators had the possibility to hold interviews in eight RC branches – six in Serbia and two in Montenegro. The Red Cross approach is based on providing additional educational support (within the RC branches' premises) for identified vulnerable Roma children and children with disabilities as well as on creating an inclusive classroom environment in elementary schools through its „peer-to-peer“ training program. The key activities under this Component are briefly described below.

Providing educational support for vulnerable Roma children (vRoma) (data as per the fourth interim report; cumulative figures cf. Table 4): mentor classes support to pre-school children aged 3-6 (presently delivered by 25 RC branches in Serbia and by three RC branches and in

Konik Camps in Montenegro); pre-school preparatory programme, where the existing capacities and accessibility for Roma children are limited (presently delivered by six RC branches upon formal request of, formalised cooperation with and under close supervision of municipal public authorities to 120 children in Serbia¹⁵ and by three RC branches and in Konik Camps in Montenegro); homework support classes for Roma pupils in elementary schools (presently delivered by 22 RC branches in Serbia and by three RC branches and Konik Camps in Montenegro); material support (meals, clothes, school supplies). These activities are co-financed by DRK.

In order to exemplify the progression of the beneficiary inclusion in the vRoma component over the past three years, we provide a brief table of data from selected municipalities, which the evaluators visited during the field mission. Data for 2011 will be available after the end of the school year.

Table 2: Number of children supported/retained in education system in selected municipalities

Municipality(ies)	Activity	Estimate number of Roma children in the municipalities ^a	School Year					
			2009		2010		2011	
			Nb of children supported by RC	Nb of children still in formal education system	Nb of children supported by RC	Nb of children still in formal education system	Nb of children supported by RC	Nb of children still in formal education system
Kragujevac, Novi Pazar, Kovin	Mentor classes	1'690	43	25	50	34	61	n/a
Novi Pazar, Kovin	Homework support	690	67	67	66	52	86	n/a

^a Unconfirmed estimate of Roma children aged 0-18 in the selected municipalities. Includes approximately 100 Roma IDP children in Novi Pazar.

Note: In comparing "No of children supported by RC" and "No of children still in formal education system" in a given year it should be recalled that children, who attend mentor classes, are 3-5 years of age. Depending on the age they join the activities, children may attend the programme up to 3 years before they enrol into formal education system.

Source: Red Cross of Serbia

Providing additional educational support for children and young people with disabilities (C/YPWD): under this activity, homework support classes are provided to C/YPWD attending regular schools (currently 91 pupils in Serbia and 25 pupils in Montenegro) as well as to C/YPWD attending special schools for pupils with disabilities (currently 360 pupils in Serbia and 125 pupils in Montenegro); support to C/YPWD outside the education system in acquiring

¹⁵ With the exception of these six municipalities the Red Cross of Serbia has, in line with the recommendations of the peer-review of 2008, gradually withdrawn from implementing the PPP as of 2009.

compensatory education and life skills (currently 200 in Serbia and 53 in Montenegro); support to YPWD on the job market to acquire job seeking skills (40 in Serbia).

Providing educational workshops to facilitate inclusion of vulnerable Roma pupils and children with disabilities into the education system: The Promotion of Human Values programme (PHV), which is co-sponsored by the Spanish Red Cross, aims to promote the recognition and respect of diversity and to prevent prejudices and discrimination among pupils through various interactive learning activities, e.g. role plays, case studies and discussions. In the context of the Joint Programme, the PHV programme is implemented in 12 municipalities, where educational support for the children of the Roma minority and C/YPWD (1 municipality) is being provided. The Red Cross of Serbia delivers the programme in another 42 municipalities with its own funds, bringing the total coverage to 54 municipalities in Serbia. It is delivered by young volunteers of the Red Cross („peer-to-peer“) and held in regular classes of the participating schools. Up until writing this report, 155 trained volunteers facilitated some 1.130 workshops that included close to 1.150 pupils from 27 schools (cf. Table 3). The effort of the Red Cross to further develop the programme is exemplified by the PHV pilot programme in Ivanjica, where the PHV aims at bringing together children in the third grade of elementary school with children with disabilities.

Table 3: PHV statistical data (June 2009-March 2011)

PHV programme: Data June 2009 - March 2011						
No	RC branch	A No. of Schools	B No of finished WS	C Total No. of pupils	D No. of youth volunteers	E No. of teachers
1	Paraćin	2	72	49	11	5
2	Vrbas	4	88	42	12	3
3	Ivanjica	2	213	251	6	12
4	Čičevac	2	150	119	23	9
5	Zaječar	2	56	62	10	3
6	Trstenik	2	44	100	20	4
7	Gornji Milanovac	2	80	43	4	4
8	Šabac	2	140	115	8	4
9	Požega	2	104	107	6	8
10	Ruma	2	42	160	25	12
11	Mladenovac	4	79	45	24	4
12	Kragujevac	1	64	53	6	2
Total:		27	1132	1146	155	70
Total number of beneficiaries (C+D+E):				1371		

WS = Workshop

Source: Red Cross Serbia

One of the main activity lines of the Joint Programme is the introduction of best practices into the regular curricula. The municipality of Šabac is an example in this regard: the PHV programme gradually expanded and it is now delivered regularly in four schools in the municipality. On the other hand it needs to be observed that two attempts to have the PHV programme accredited by the Institute for the Improvement of Education (*Zavod za*

unapredjenje obrazovanja i vaspitanja, ZUOV) were unsuccessful.¹⁶ There is no tangible proof of the impact of the PHV programme but feedback from the interviewees and anecdotal evidence suggests that pupils benefit from the programme's contents in terms of awareness, tolerance, or self-esteem.

Altogether the Red Cross reports the following estimated numbers of children and parents who were included in the three component activities.

Table 4: Number of beneficiaries supported by RCS in Serbia in 2009 and 2010

		Children	Parents	Total
2009	vRoma	1'305	433	1'738
	C/YPWD	763	285	1'048
	PHV	n/a	n/a	n/a
2010	vRoma	1'367	639	2'006
	C/YPWD	761	519	1'280
	PHV	1'280	n/a	1'280

Source: IFRC Belgrade.

Of note are the achievements regarding the capacities of the Red Cross and its branches to improve service quality and effectiveness (cf. Output 2.4 in the Logical Framework). The management processes and standards related to the programme implementation underwent a gradual, yet comprehensive, overhaul by the Red Cross project team and have been accompanied with respective training and coaching of Red Cross field staff. This internal change process came in response to the findings of a Peer Review in late 2008, to which SDC, UNICEF and Pomoć Deci participated among other stakeholders, and corresponding recommendations that were developed by external consultants.

Examples of the reporting and monitoring system are shown in Annex 3. A Cooperation Agreement between the operating and participating Red Cross societies as well as the International Federation clearly defines the roles and responsibilities, the delineation of tasks, and service standards for the implementation of the Joint Programme. The feedback we received during the interviews suggests that the standards are being applied across the organisations.¹⁷

¹⁶ In the most recent application one of 19 criteria was considered not to be fulfilled. As a consequence, the application was rejected.

¹⁷ In this context the evaluators remark that the preparation of relevant background documents by the Red Cross was exemplary – though we are unable to review all documentation in much detail.

Component 3 (Responsible implementing partner: UNICEF)

Component Objective	Assessment of the Component
Effective models and methodologies for inclusion of marginalised children in the education system are incorporated into responsibilities and processes of municipal institutions, including planning, budgeting and monitoring effectiveness, and national level institutions will have taken appropriate steps to ensure sustainability.	The programme achieved the adoption of Local Plans of Action for Children in 21 municipalities in Serbia and intersectoral teams are continuing implementation of the LPAs. Eleven Development Education Centres (DEC) provide educational support to Roma children in eight municipalities in South Serbia. At the same time, doubts exist as far as the sustainability of DECs are concerned; two centres ceased their operations as municipalities were no longer in a position to co-fund the DEC, average cost per child increased while municipal co-funding grew relatively lower compared to UNICEF's contribution (cf. 3.3 Efficiency of Resource Use).

Within the framework of the Joint Programme, UNICEF operates in 22 municipalities in Serbia delivering its services through implementing partners. The evaluators had the possibility to hold interviews with one of them – DURN – and visited three sites in which UNICEF operates (Prokuplje, Vladičin Han and Surdulica). Starting from the Millennium Development Goal 2 (universal primary education), the main focus of UNICEF's activities relates to providing educational support to vulnerable Roma children and to institutionalising programmes within the system of self-government by building inter-sectoral municipal structures for supporting social inclusion (through Local Plans of Action for Children).

The Development Education Centres (DEC) programme operates since 2002. It is coordinated by UNICEF's implementing partner DURN. Currently, eleven Development Education Centres provide educational support to Roma children in eight municipalities in South Serbia;¹⁸ in 2010 more than 800 children benefitting from DEC support. Development Education Centres are community based centres that are co-funded by municipalities. Their services¹⁹ are recognised by the MoE as a model for a non-formal education programme in support of education

¹⁸ Bela Palanka, Bojnik, Kruševac, Lebane, Pirot, Prokuplje, Surdilica and Vladičin Han.

¹⁹ DECs provide different types of services, namely: pre-school preparation of Roma children prior to entering primary school ("K0 group"); support to Roma children in grades 1-4 ("K1 group") and children in grades 5-8 ("K2 group") of primary school with homework support and supplementary activities to support their social integration; second chance programme for children who dropped out from the education system; provision of material assistance and snacks and meals for marginalised children.

inclusion. DEC's expanded their activities beyond education over time and now also include legal counselling and parental education. Following a self-evaluation exercise in April 2011 (cf. Annex 4) UNICEF is presently re-orienting the programme towards an “*institutional model of municipal outreach service for supporting inclusion*”. In terms of activities DEC shall work more towards early childhood development (children of 3-5 years of age) and with mothers on increasing their capacities to provide adequate developmental support to their children. This is done with a view to enhance the sustainability of DEC's. At the same time, UNICEF will gradually withdraw from providing services which have become part of the formal education system, such as PPP or complementary classes. At the time of the evaluators' field visit the DEC's were operating at reduced capacity. This is due to contractual and financial reasons between UNICEF and its partner municipalities as well as the above mentioned programme re-orientation. According to information from municipal representatives the operations would restart once new funding would be secured (whereas UNICEF confirms that the programmes will restart once programme re-orientation is finalised). Moreover, the activities in two centres in Vranje were discontinued due to lack of municipal assistance. Taken together, this raises some concern about the financial sustainability of the DEC programme. The planned expansion of services will therefore have to go hand in hand with measures to ensure financial sustainability of DEC's.

UNICEF is the leading agency as regards the development and implementation of Local Plans of Action for Children (LPA). There are currently 21 municipalities in which LPAs were established. As reported by UNICEF, the LPA became the forum for promotion of inclusive policies. The LPA teams worked on gathering information and maintaining databases on children, and especially on socially deprived children, children in need of special assistance, children who have no access to services, and marginalised Roma children. Continuous monitoring of school enrolment, attendance and achievements of Roma children was established in all LPA municipalities. The LPA teams facilitated the provision of learning support, free books, cash benefits, school meals, hygiene supplies and necessary documentation. In UNICEF's view the scaling up of LPAs through the Red Cross branches, is seen as a great potential for future work. In the eyes of the evaluators such a scaling up would, however, presuppose a careful analysis of the costs of the DEC's – see also further below (cf. 3.3 Efficiency of Resource Use).

3.2.3. Excursus: Joint Programme implementation by Montenegro Red Cross

Background

The Montenegro Red Cross (MRC) is one of the implementing partners of the Joint Programme and responsible for the implementation of programme activities in eight of the 21 municipalities in Montenegro, as well as in the refugee camps Konik I and Konik II, the management of which

it took over in 2003. In the context of the Joint Programme, MRC has been providing educational support to Roma children and children with disabilities. It received technical and financial support from the DRC and the IFRC and, as regards the implementation of the PHV programme starting June 2011, of the SpRC.

Relations with the government are regulated in the *Law on the Red Cross Montenegro (2006)*. Other than in Serbia, the Law features “education of [the] population” among the activities performed by the Red Cross (Article 4). Government funding of MRC’s annual operations, which is not earmarked for any particular project or programme, amounts to € 315.000 (excluding support that branch offices receive from their respective LSGs). Discussions are ongoing regarding and eventual shift towards programme funding for MRC’s work in support of the Roma minority as of 2012. The role of the MRC is recognised by the government; certainly also a result of the close cooperation between the Red Cross and the government related to finding a permanent solution for the Konik camps.

Project progress

The Joint Programme is responding to actual needs in Montenegro. In its Opinion on Montenegro’s application for membership of the European Union^a the European Commission states that “legislation ensuring inclusive education of vulnerable groups and children with special needs remain to be enforced more vigorously” and that the right to education of Roma children is not properly safeguarded.^b With regard to children with disabilities the Opinion notes that they “face considerable discrimination...; [a]lternatives to institutionalisation need to be developed, including for preventing segregation of children with special educational needs...; the right to education for children with disabilities needs to be respected, including by means of proper implementation of the strategy for inclusive education.”

The programme contributes to Montenegro’s efforts in meeting its obligations stemming from e.g. its *National Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Montenegro*, the *National Action Plan for Children* (2004), or commitments associated with Montenegro’s EU accession process.

MRC delivers its services through local branches providing educational support for vulnerable Roma children: mentor classes (kindergarten) for children from 3-5 years; pre-school (pre-school preparatory programme) for children from 5-6 years; and homework support for pupils in the first four grades of elementary school. Additional educational support is provided for children and young people with disabilities (C/YPWD) such as homework support to attending regular schools as well as to C/YPWD attending special schools and support to C/YPWD outside the education system. The implementation of the PHV programme started in June 2011; for this purpose, MRC staff and volunteers were trained in PHV delivery, primarily by colleagues of the RC of Serbia.

The following table provides an overview of the direct beneficiaries of the programme in the years 2009 and 2010.

Table 5: Number of beneficiaries supported by MRC in Montenegro in 2009 and 2010

		Children	Parents	Total
2009	vRoma	305	136	441
	C/YPWD	205	85	290
	PHV	-	-	-
2010	vRoma	306	131	437
	C/YPWD	210	90	300
	PHV	-	-	-

Source: IFRC Belgrade; estimate figures.

The evaluators had the possibility to visit two sites, namely Camp Konik (near Podgorica) and Bar. Education of refugee Roma children from Konik camps is taking place in the elementary school built within the camp and in the Božidar Vuković Podgoričanin Elementary School (in Podgorica) for which MoE provides transportation of Roma pupils. The latest figures reported by MRC show that in 2010 the programme included 112 children of Camp Konik in the preparatory pre-school programme, 121 children in mentor classes and 22 children received homework support. Furthermore, 41 children were enrolled in town school. Interviews with parents suggest, in general, that they are satisfied with the educational support provided by RC; those who have their children enrolled together with their peers in the ‘town school’ expressed particular satisfaction.

MRC was fully integrated into the systems overhaul and standardisation process that was implemented during the Joint Programme. Also here the evaluators are of the opinion that the management of a forthcoming project phase could rest solely on the MRC, i.e. without supervisory role of an international delegate.

From the interviews held during the one-day field mission to Montenegro it emanates that – even though the MRC participated in the design process of the Joint Programme – there is a feeling that the activities in Montenegro “*got lost*” and “*received very limited visibility*” in the roll out of the Joint Programme. It was suggested that rather than being “*squeezed into a programme*” there should be a separate project approach for Montenegro. At the same time, despite their “*isolated*” role, MRC has featured the Joint Programme regularly, for instance, in its information bulletins, a flyer on Camp Konik or MRC’s official website (www.ckcg.co.me).

Recommendations

In the following we present selected recommendations, complementary to those in Chapter 5.

- *Design programmes separately for Serbia and for Montenegro:* There are marked differences in the political environment, the legal frameworks and the status-quo in

the education system are different in the two countries. The evaluators therefore suggest that the interventions and activities are better distinguished in the next programme design / programme document. The evaluators also recommend that mechanisms are set in place that ensure that MRC benefits from the approaches, lessons learned, capacities etc. of all programme partners.

- *Continue to provide education support to children in Camp Konik (in particular):* Resolving the status of Camp Konik is the one of the seven priorities that Montenegro needs to fulfil in order to have a positive EC recommendation on opening of access negotiations with the European Union. The evaluators recommend that efforts to support children in the camp in obtaining education be continued.
- *Involve the Ministry of Education in the programme design:* The approaches and activities of a forthcoming programme phase should be designed in a participatory manner involving the Ministry of Education.
- *Consider the programme's involvement in contributing to continuous monitoring of the progress of vulnerable children in education and protection from discrimination:* We recommend that the MRC engage in a dialogue with relevant authorities in Montenegro (Ministry of Education, Statistical Office etc.) to explore possibilities to contribute to data collection and the functioning of monitoring and assessment systems under the guidance of these institutions. Alternatively / additionally, we recommend that MRC explores possibilities to contribute to the evidence-base in Montenegro.
- *Ensure full alignment of the programme to the forthcoming Montenegrin Roma Strategy 2012-2016:* The implementation period of Montenegro's current *Strategy to improve the status of Roma 2008-2012* comes to an end; a new strategy is currently in preparation. Measures should be set up to ensure continued and full alignment of the intervention approaches and activities with the content of the strategy.

^a Analytical Report, COM(2010) 670}, SEC(2010) 1334, 9 November 2010.

^b According to the REF, for instance, 25 % of Roma children enrol in primary schools compared with close to 97 % of the general population; 18 % complete primary education as opposed to 98 % of all children in Montenegro.

3.3. Efficiency of Resource Use

In general efficiency measures the outputs and results of a project in relation to the inputs that were invested. It assesses the extent to which the least costly resources possible were used in order to achieve the planned results.

Typically, efficiency is measured using economic and financial measures of cost effectiveness. Yet, the implementation and reporting structure of the Joint Programme make it virtually impossible to e.g. calculate a robust input-output ratio (by calculating per capita cost, for example) and to compare the three components with each other. The financial reporting sheets, which the evaluators received from SDC, allow providing a breakdown of the Swiss contribution of CHF 5.000.000 to the implementing partners. A thorough assessment of e.g. how economical the programme was or which intervention approach was most economical would, primarily, require that the financial reporting of the implementing partners is – to the extent possible – unified; this is not the case. The budgets and financial reports are differently structured and the budget lines contain different costs (cf. Table 6). Also, the financial reporting to SDC does neither include the co-funding of the partners, nor the human resource and in-kind support that is utilised in delivering the entire programme.

Table 6: Swiss contribution per Component / implementing partner

Component 1		Component 2		Component 3	
Pomoč Deci		Red Cross		UNICEF	
Total Contribution SDC	800'000.00	Total Contribution SDC	2'999'999.96	Total Contribution SDC	1'174'704.00
Human Resources	140'000.00	Branch Support	1'460'530.18	Local Plan of Action	381'124.00
Preschool Teaching Space (3 total)	64'287.00	Advocacy	17'604.41	Roma Education Inclusion	525'580.00
Activities / Training	314'059.00	Partnering	61'823.46	Community Mobilisation	0.00
Elementary and Secondary School Materials and Consultants	189'112.00	YPWD redesign	518.10	Monitoring and Evaluation	50'000.00
Travel	37'000.00	Knowledge Management	10'622.62	Project development, coordination, management and technical assistance in project implementation	120'000.00
Visibility	10'500.00	Management (S&MN)	727'932.07	Project support costs	98'000.00
Programme Operational Costs	29'000.00	Programme Management	56'089.82		
Survey, Evaluation, Audit	0.00	Capacity Building	78'916.05		
Overhead	16'042.00	Travel	61'267.68		
		Field Support (project support)	524'695.57		

Despite these deficiencies we undertake to provide some data that may shed some light onto the costs of selected Joint Programme interventions, namely of the Development Education Centres and of the most important Red Cross activities. The data cannot be compared directly with each other, i.e. they do not allow making statement regarding which approach is costlier or cheaper.

Only with a view to *exemplify* average intervention costs, we provide in Table 7 an overview of the annual costs of the Development Education Centres per municipality as well as the number of children who were benefiting from DEC services during a given year. The calculation does

only include direct transfers for the DEC; it does not include programme and other overhead cost. This means that average cost will, factually, be higher than displayed below.

Table 7: Average cost per child benefiting from DEC services (net of overhead and other costs of UNICEF as per programme budget)

#	Municipality	2009				2010				Total per municipality	Increase of average cost per child
		UNICEF	Municipality	no. of children	av. cost per child per municipality	UNICEF	Municipality	no. of children	av. cost per child per municipality		
1	Prokuplje (3 centers)	23'120	22'330	205	222	31'280	17'595	213	229	94'325	3.5%
2	Pirot	11'050	11'135	103	215	15'810	12'665	126	226	50'660	4.9%
3	Bojnik (2 centers)	19'550	10'455	134	224	21'760	11'730	139	241	63'495	7.6%
4	Lebane	11'050	7'735	72	261	13'005	10'115	75	308	41'905	18.2%
5	Krusevac	11'050	9'860	70	299	13'430	12'665	82	318	47'005	6.5%
6	Bela Palanka	11'050	7'650	74	253	13'260	7'225	76	270	39'185	6.7%
7	Vladičin Han	8'585	6'375	55	272	14'365	8'415	75	304	37'740	11.7%
8	Surdulica	10'455	6'630	70	244	11'985	8'415	75	272	37'485	11.4%
Total		105'910	82'170	783	-	134'895	88'825	861	-		
Total contribution per year		188'080		average cost per child in 2009 = CHF 240		223'720		average cost per child in 2010 = CHF 260		411'800	
UNICEF contribution per year		105'910	not considered	average cost per child in 2009 (UNICEF contribution only) = CHF 135		134'895	not considered	average cost per child in 2010 (UNICEF contribution only) = CHF 157			

Source: UNCHR (Serbia); converted from US\$ to CHF by the evaluators.
Note: Conversion calculated on the basis of US\$/CHF 0.85 exchange rate.

The increase of the number of children from 780 to 860 within one year was associated with an increase of the average cost per child from CHF 240 to CHF 260. In the same period, total co-funding by all municipalities increased relatively lower than that of UNICEF. Lebane, Vladičin Han and Surdulica experienced the highest increase of average per capita costs within one year. Comparing the municipalities with each other, one can observe that the relative costs differ in the range of CHF 215/226 (Pirot) to CHF 299/318 (Kruševac) in 2009 and 2010 respectively. The evaluators could not establish the causes for these differences; exploring and analysing the reasons that allow Pirot to deliver the programme at lowest average costs among all municipalities could possibly help decreasing average per capita costs in other municipalities.

Another example of per capita cost is provided in Table 8 and it relates to key activities implemented by the Red Cross. The costs have been calculated against the *total* Swiss contribution to the programme only for the years 2009 and 2010 (*nota bene*: the contribution has not only been used for the activities shown in the table but also for activities of advocacy, standardisation, performance improvement etc. It is, however, not viable – with reasonable effort – to single out the cost for the activities with children/parents from the total budget allocation).

Table 8: Per capita cost per activities of the Red Cross

Programme cost per beneficiary				
Serbia				
		Children	Parents	Total
2009	vRoma	1'305	433	1'738
	C/YPWD	763	285	1'048
	PHV	n/a	n/a	n/a
2010	vRoma	1'367	639	2'006
	C/YPWD	761	519	1'280
	PHV	1'280	n/a	1'280

Source: IFRC Belgrade.

Programme Costs 2009: 980'742.72

Programme Costs 2010: 776'426.62

	Children	Children+Parents
Only children		
Per capita Cost 2009	474.25	352.03
Per capita Cost 2010	227.82	170.05
Average per capita cost 2009-2010	351.04	261.04

Note: The marked differences between 2009 and 2010 are due to the start of the PHV programme in late 2009 as well as the different programme costs.

Source: IFRC. Fourth Interim report - Budget control sheet.

The two-year average per capita cost since the Joint Programme commenced amounts to CHF 351 on the basis of children and CHF 260 if all beneficiaries are included in the calculation. Considering that this figure is calculated on the basis of the entire programme costs, one can assume that the actual per capita cost is lower.

It is important to note, however, that the above costing does not reveal or take into consideration information such as the frequency with which a child participates in the activities, nor the duration a child is involved in the programme. Furthermore, the costing falls short of considering in which municipalities, villages or communities activities are being rendered (e.g. supporting children in more remote areas results in higher transportation costs that increase *per capita* cost). Separate research would be required to itemise the above (*per capita*) costs or to compare these costs with those of a child in a formal kindergarten.

In light of the impediments to appraise efficiency more profoundly the evaluators suggested to assess efficiency by identifying processes and actions that illustrate the extent to which the partners undertook to achieving the desired results at minimised costs and the least costly resources possible; SDC accepted this approach. The assessment of the efficiency of resource use is therefore largely based on the document review and information that was obtained from the interview partners. The following processes and actions could be identified:

Timely delivery of programme activities: The Joint Programme suffered no delays and if implementation has strayed from the initial planning (such as the shifting of the baseline study in Component 1), the reasons have been duly justified and transparently agreed upon. It certainly played in favour of the programme that the partners were able to merely “roll over” the implementation of the activities when the Joint Programme commenced.

Local experts and network partners provide a significant part in the roll-out of the projects: All partners almost exclusively collaborate with local experts and local partners. Making use of local expertise – rather than international consultants – is an appropriate means to reduce costs. The interviewees assessed the quality of the local experts and the services they rendered commonly as high.

Volunteers and Roma community members are key contributors to the project’s efficiency: For instance: the average monthly cost (incl. compensation, out of pocket expenses, mandatory social security contributions) of a PHV coordinator²⁰, amounts to approximately RSD 8’000 (gross), which is equivalent to approximately CHF 100. Youth volunteers, who facilitate the workshops and who are not being compensated for their work, have contributed with more than 850 hours of *pro bono* work (*nota bene*: this excludes time for necessary preparations, travel, meetings etc.; adding this time would likely triple the amount of *pro bono* working hours). The deployment of more than 400 volunteers in all activities therefore brings about noteworthy savings compared to the deployment of regular staff.

Cost considerations have often played a role in the project management: Discussions with project staff of the sub-contracted partners reveal that these organisations have been guided by cost considerations in their project management. Routinely they sought to procure best value-for-money services and were quick-witted to fix problems at low cost.

At the same time there is room for increasing efficiency by other measures, which we outline in the following:

Supervision / monitoring by participating organisations of the Red Cross national societies: The contribution of SDC for the deployment of SpRC and DRC international representatives, for instance, amounts to approximately CHF 180.000²¹. Much could be done with this amount of money in the field. Given the progressive improvements of the operating societies a gradual withdrawal of the staff of the participating societies would have been feasible in the course of the ongoing phase; it should be put in effect in the forthcoming phase.

²⁰ There is one coordinator per municipality. Coordinators are experienced youth RC volunteers, who are hired temporarily on a part-time basis for the purpose of the PHV programme.

²¹ Data stem from the latest revised budget that includes the sum of actual costs for 2009 and 2010 and the planned budget for 2011.

Significant resources – human, time and financial – were invested into making the Joint Programme “joint”: Interviews with programme stakeholders reveal that the investment of time and effort to facilitate the coordination and cooperation of the project were disproportionate to the actual achievements in terms of joint implementation. The fact that the implementing partners have e.g. different project reports and financial reports adds to bureaucracy and associated costs.

Other processes and actions that would improve the programme’s efficiency include: sharing more widely and proactively programme outputs, knowledge and best practices; the implementing partners basically continued their activities where they were carried out for many years; a mapping of which organisation and which approach is best suited for which municipality, followed by decisions to change approach or shift responsibilities to another implementing partner, might lead to increased efficiency.

Summing up and in light of the above indicators it can be concluded that overall, resources were generally utilised strategically with a view to achieve the expected results and outputs.

3.4. Impact (Prospects)

Impact measures the success of a programme in realising its overall objective, i.e. whether and to what extent a project has brought about overall long-term changes. Although it is common to ask for impact assessments in external evaluations, one cannot expect impact to become perceptible until much later, at which time it might be measured with an *ex post* evaluation. This is also true in the areas of the Joint Programme, namely educational reform, social inclusion, human and minority rights. Change and reform in these fields require time to be achieved and a long-term perspective to implementation.

While it is not possible to make a conclusive impact assessment, the evaluators highlight selected issues that are likely to contribute to the impact prospects:

- More than 5.000 vulnerable children – and their families – have benefitted from education and other support services rendered by the Joint Programme, enhancing their potential prospects to escape from the poverty trap.
- The evidence we collected in the desk research and the interviews suggests that there are concrete examples (and further perspectives) of institutionalisation of several Joint Programme activities. The examples in which activities and actions developed in the context of the programme have found entry into local level policy documents and actions include:
 - in 21 municipalities local authorities and NGOs continue implementation of Local Plans of Action for Children; associated budget lines are included in municipal budgets.

- in, for instance, Prokuplje, the DEC is explicitly mentioned in the LPA for Children and in Vladičin Han also in the LPA for Roma Education and the LPA for Youth.
- in Ivanjica, the PHV programme was integrated into the annual teaching programme of the partner school; other schools have sought to be included in the programme too.
- municipalities co-finance programme activities such as in Kruševac, where a budget of CHF 12.600 per annum is earmarked for its DEC, whereas the municipality of Prokuplje finances 36 % (CHF 17.600) of the 2010 operating costs of its three DEC; average municipal contributions in the eight municipalities increased by 8 % within one year.
- For the school year 2010-2011 more 31.400 children enrolled into the first grade, including 2.130 Roma children (7.41 %). The percentage of Roma children in the first grade of primary school increased by close to 10 % relative to the previous school year (1st National Report on SIPR). It is reasonable to assume that Joint Programme contributed to this positive development.
- Accredited programmes are in place such as *Training of pre-school teachers, teachers and Roma Assistants for work with Roma children* (ZUOV / Catalogue no. 782) by Pomoć Deci and available for in-service teacher training upon the request of educational institutions and practitioners (funded either by donors or municipalities). More than 120 pre-school and elementary school teachers and assistants participated in the training, with additional 100 participants scheduled to participate in the training programme.

Even though the impact of these successes cannot be measured at this stage, they have the potential to bring about change in the mid- and long-term. Impact will to a large extent depend on the will of Serbia to live up to its commitments and to continue to implement reforms.

3.5. Sustainability

Sustainability relates to whether and how the outcomes at the project objective level will continue over time after the end of project support. It also refers as to whether the long-term impact will be maintained in a wider context.

In general, the financial resources that are at the disposal of municipalities and schools are reportedly inadequate to cover for all education reforms. This general resource problem needs to be addressed by the respective governments as it is beyond the scope of the Joint Programme. It must be noted positively that the Joint Programme largely undertakes to design activities and programs that are principally “affordable”.

As implied in the sub-chapter above, there are several factors that suggest that the Joint Programme has already brought about change. With regard to sustainability the evaluators believe that the following factors are relevant:

- Serbia and Montenegro embarked on a thorough education reform effort, which is also driven by their bid towards EU accession and other international commitments; the political environment that is conducive for further education reform is likely to sustain; there will be significant inflow of EU support in the years to come enabling both countries to maintain the reform momentum.
- Participation and support of stakeholders at the local level has been assured; all participating municipalities or schools the evaluators visited are committed to contribute to the programme's success; regrettably, the Joint Programme did not fully exploit its potential to achieve similar type anchorage at the central level, in the Ministry of Education in particular.
- Municipalities have earmarked budgets specifically for purposes of vulnerable children in the context of e.g. the adoption of Local Plans of Action.
- (Roma) NGOs are utilising the programme results and deliverables for their advocacy work, thereby enhancing capacities of the local Roma communities.
- Pedagogical (Roma) Assistants previously trained and involved in the Joint Programme, and who were recently employed by the Ministry of Education, will continue utilising project results and deliverables for their work in educational institutions.
- Implementing partners such as the Red Cross are committed to invest efforts into keeping the Joint Programme activities sustained.
- A cadre of enthusiastic, committed and trained Serbian youth has been built up through their voluntary work with the Red Cross; dozens of pupils have enjoyed to socialise with peers who have long been experiencing discrimination and exclusion; mindsets, perceptions, and opinions of many politicians, schools directors and teachers, parents and pupils have changed – many of them are likely to carry forward notions of respect, tolerance, anti-discrimination, social inclusion and act as agents of change.

Achieving sustainability will generally depend on several interrelated conditions, including a suitable mechanism for follow-up support, the availability of continued financial resources, a long-term approach to project implementation, political commitment and will to reform in Serbia and in Montenegro – to name but a few.

4. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The evaluation team considers that the programme achieved remarkable results. In the course of this external review the evaluators formulate the following, general, lessons learned:

- Serbia and Montenegro need pragmatic and cost efficient approaches, not least in light of the budget constraints that local self-governments face in both countries. It is of critical importance to invest into approaches which are low-cost without losing on quality and effectiveness.
- Pooling the resources and strengths of organisations in a joint programme has the potential to increase effectiveness and efficiency. However, successful cooperation will require a clear vision, interest and commitment to cooperate; unified systems and processes that ensure coordination and communication; flexibility to align activities; managers, who are equipped with authority to take decisions in the context of the programme on behalf of all implementing partners.
- The long-term engagement of SDC in supporting reform of Serbia's education system, building capacities and strengthening institutions, is a critical success factor.

5. Recommendations

The project partners as well as project stakeholders repeatedly expressed their wish that the programme be continued in a second phase (2012-2015) with the aim of increasing the outreach to and level of education of children from vulnerable groups (Roma children, poor children and children with disabilities in particular), thereby capitalising on the good practices developed at the local/municipal level and accelerating the programme's anchorage in the Ministry of Education.

The following recommendations, most of which come as a result of our intense dialogue with project stakeholders, suggest action that the evaluators believe should be taken into consideration in the forthcoming project phase to address the challenges in the field of education with specific focus on the inclusion of marginalised children. Some of the recommendations include a summary of selected feedback received from the interviewees; they may thus not directly stem from / relate to the body of the report in the above chapters.

In line with the Terms of Reference for this evaluation assignment as well as briefing discussions with SDC senior staff, we focus on recommendations that relate to the institutional set-up of the programme.

Recommendations regarding the project design:

- *Design programmes separately for Serbia and for Montenegro:* Though many of the challenges in terms of supporting inclusion of marginalised children in Serbia and in Montenegro are similar, the political environment, the legal frameworks and the status-quo in the education system are different in the two countries. The evaluators thus suggest that the forthcoming phase should better distinguish between the programme interventions in Serbia and in Montenegro respectively (e.g. in a separate chapter in the ProDoc)²². The respective approaches and activities should be designed in a participatory manner involving the respective Ministry of Education. The evaluators also recommend that mechanisms are set in place that ensure that MRC benefits from the approaches, lessons learned, capacities etc. of all programme partners.
- *Full alignment with the MoE inclusion paradigm:* As regards Serbia, the evaluators are of the opinion that special attention should be paid to the programme's full alignment with the inclusion paradigm to which the Ministry of Education shifted in the recent past, thereby contributing to the inclusion of children from vulnerable groups into the education system. This will require analysing the different intervention strategies and approaches jointly with the Ministry of Education.

Recommendations regarding the programme institutional set-up / programme design:

- *Continue efforts in improving the partners' cooperation and creating synergies:* Bringing several organisations (and their complementary capacities) together in a joint programme has the potential to increase the overall programme effectiveness. However, for the synergies to materialise the evaluators recommend to
 - develop a common vision and firm commitment of collaboration that goes beyond mere communication and information sharing;
 - develop the structure, processes and mechanisms that make the collaboration work in practice and not only in theory. The evaluators believe that in the forthcoming planning workshop sufficient time should be reserved to allow the participants to (also) focus on matters of programme organisation and management – apart from working on the intervention areas and content of the activities. After the planning workshop the partners should have at minimum a

²² Given that there is no formal bilateral engagement / Country Strategy of SDC in Montenegro, it is not possible to produce / to design a separate programme for Montenegro.

“collaboration framework” in place. This would have to be further developed into a “collaboration agreement” to which all partners are able to commit fully.

- o *In the absence* of the above an alternative scenario could be to continue the second phase with (the) partner(s), who is (are) most committed to the programme and at the same time most likely to develop close cooperation with the MoE.²³
- *Improve the involvement of / anchorage in the Ministry of Education:* Generally, there is a necessity to improve the programme’s anchorage in the Ministry of Education. In the past years of programme implementation the institutional set-up has not been exploited fully, thus limiting the expected national level institutionalisation of the JP activities and its good practices. The evaluators are of the opinion that having the MoE as coordinating project partner will be critical to ensure current and future alignment with the inclusion approach of the MoE and the corresponding reforms it embarked on. A stronger role of the MoE does also entail closer collaboration with services such as the Institute for the Improvement of Education or the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation (*Zavod za vrednovanje kvaliteta obrazovanja i vaspitanja, ZVKOV*). The following recommendations should be considered:
 - o *Establishing well balanced two-level programme coordination (central and municipal level coordination):* While the Ministry of Education should assume an overall coordination role in the forthcoming phase (e.g. through jointly staffed project implementation unit²⁴ and complementary bodies such as Steering and or Component Committee(s)), there is also need to mirror the national coordination body at municipal/local level (e.g., through a co-staffed project coordination team²⁵) thus allowing for stronger collaboration of the partners, further improved commitment and involvement of local self-governments in the programme, diversity of good practices and problem solving at local level, as well as easier “bottom up” communication. This may require to involving e.g. the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities

²³ Comment evaluator Harald Meier: in light of, for instance, the geographical reach (in Serbia and in Montenegro), the existing infrastructure as well as the potentials for more intensified partnership with the MoE the Red Cross emerges as one viable programme partner – though reservations and conditions as explained further above (cf. 3.2.1) need to be taken into consideration. SDC should at any event engage in a close dialogue with the prospective partner(s) prior to the planning and design process and carefully consider its priorities and options. The evaluator Snježana Mrše believes that the question *how* to implement the programme in the forthcoming phase should be prioritised – rather than the question with *whom*.

²⁴ A PIU should be staffed with an executive manager, a programme board and technical/logistic staff; the implementing partners should “second” staff to the PIU within the MoE.

²⁵ The local coordination teams may consist of a local coordinator, other team members of the implementing partners as well as self-government and educational institutions) in each of the municipalities in which the Joint Programme operates.

in promoting and facilitating the local level institutional set-up, cooperation and horizontal experience sharing (within and beyond the municipalities covered by the forthcoming programme phase).

- *Allow for a six to twelve months inception phase:* Achieving joint implementation on the basis of a new framework of collaboration – with either the same and/or other partners – will be a challenging process calling for gradual establishment of managerial bodies (such as a PIU, for example) and procedures. Moreover, the programme's alignment with the current MoE inclusion approach and reform agenda may necessitate adjustments and/or improvements of the existing programme activities. It is therefore recommended to allow for an inception / pilot phase with a view to test the new implementation structure.

Recommendations as regards the programme content:

- *Consider designing the forthcoming phase along the lines of content (vs. along the lines of partner organisations):* The current programme set-up divides the components among the partner organisations, even though their target groups and services are largely similar. This seems to have prevented better cooperation between the partners. Instead of the current set-up, the evaluators recommend a programme set-up along the lines of content (in the sense of field of intervention or activity), which would demand from the partners to truly collaborate with each other. Ideally, the partners also analyse jointly which approach best responds to the specific needs in a given municipality and build upon each others experiences and capacities to develop a joint intervention. Consequently, this may require reshuffling the municipalities in which the partners will operate or will have a lead role (based on a mutual agreement how to divide responsibilities among them so as to best fit the needs of both a given municipality²⁶ and capacities of the partners).
- *Consider narrowing down the scope of the programme (vs. little bit of everything, everywhere):* With a view to both minimise the risk of greater overlapping and ensure complementarity with similar ongoing projects the scope of the programme should be geared towards:
 - *Early childhood education of children from vulnerable groups (for which there are several arguments):* Available data suggests that children who enjoyed pre-school support experience better school achievements and fewer (early) drop-outs (note: cited most often by interview partners). In Serbia, only a mere 8 %

²⁶ It emanates from the interviews and desk research that e.g. there are differences in the needs and availability of resources of municipalities that are located in the Vojvodina and others in south Serbia.

of Roma children attend pre-school institutions compared to 43.8 % of Serbian children (UNICEF MICS 2010, unpublished).²⁷ The 1st National Report on SIPR also stresses the necessity of “*measures for improving the quality and conditions for including as many children as possible into early development programs*”.²⁸ However, the report also highlights that Serbia lags behind EU member states with regard to pre-school education coverage (46.9 % vs. 85 % of 4-year old children participate in various forms of pre-schools education).

In spite of an increased number of pre-school institutions, capacities to care for all children will remain insufficient in the years to come. While pre-school education is an obligation of local self-governments, many of them have neither the capacity nor the necessary resources to fully live up to their obligations, including prioritising the enrolment of children from vulnerable groups as stipulated by the *Law on Pre-school Education*. Some municipal representatives voiced concerns that the new way of financing education according to a per capita formula may bring about additional financial strain to municipalities.

If accepted, the programme could consist of several components and could involve additional partners depending on activities that are rolled out:

- providing pre-PPP education for children in the age of 3-5 years from vulnerable groups (DURN has proven to be able to design good quality programmes; Pomoć Deci has proven to be able to design sustainable approaches; RC has proven to be able to design cost efficient models of project roll-out with volunteers);
- working with Roma communities on increasing parents’ competences;
- supporting the creation of an inclusive classroom environment in pre-school institutions (e.g., through *Promoting Human Values programme* of RC and/or other programmes that are accredited).

A focus on pre-school programmes might require including new and reputed partners such as the International Step by Step Association, Center for Interactive Pedagogy, the Comenius Foundation, or the OSI – to name but a few.

²⁷ In comparison: UNICEF MICS 2005 (May 2008) states 4 % vs. 33 %.

²⁸ 1st National Report on SIPR, Lines of Action, pp 168.

- *Consider decreasing, yet not cutting off completely, the financial support to the activities related to PPP, primary and secondary education as well as adult education:* These activities are already supported by other ongoing projects funded by the EU (Education for All, Second Chance, IMPRES) or DILS. Yet, it is likely to expect that some of municipalities and their educational institutions will fail in inclusion of children from vulnerable groups into education (such has been the case of Paraćin, where the Red Cross had to provide PPP for Roma children).
- *Consider establishing a platform for sharing information and good practices:* The Joint Programme established and observed many good practices of its work at municipal level which merit to be shared with other relevant actors and eventually to be scaled up. With a view to enhance the programme's contribution to policy development such a platform could also include or be linked with other programmes that SDC operates in the education domain, the PDP and SIPRU programmes in particular, thereby creating a "system-wide" information sharing platform (e.g. by further developing/upgrading the MoE Resource Centre at <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/resursi/>, funded by SDC).
- *Consider the programme's involvement in contributing to continuous monitoring of the progress of vulnerable children in education and protection from discrimination:* Data collection has proved to be a challenge for authorities in the past. With its current partners the programme can rely on a significant local presence and the partners have the capacity to service respective data collection and monitoring systems. The partners should therefore engage in a dialogue with the SIPRU and/or the Ministry of Education (or the Statistical Office) and explore possibilities to contribute to data collection and the functioning of monitoring and assessment systems under the guidance of these institutions.

Should such collaboration turn out to be unfeasible, the partners should anyway move from mere monitoring towards data analysis and interpretation. With the publication of researches (e.g. on learning achievements on the basis of learning outcomes and related instruments developed by the Red Cross with external expertise; on *per capita* costs of formal kindergarten vs. solutions by the programme) the Joint Programme could contribute to the evidence-base in Serbia and to policy development.

- *Consider to working towards formalising Red Cross services in the education sector:* The auxiliary role of the Red Cross societies has led to concerns about substituting obligations and responsibilities of public authorities. The evaluators thus recommend that the Red Cross societies design a strategy towards gradual formalisation of their services in the field of education of marginalised children. It should be a long-term goal to entering into a service level agreement with the relevant authorities that

regulates mutual obligations and benefits with regard to the Red Cross work in the education sector.

The following recommendation is guided by considerations of how to best intertwine forthcoming programme with ongoing relevant projects in Serbia.

- *Consider mechanisms to build up on outputs and outcomes of other projects / programmes:* Several similar projects such as the EU funded IMPRES project or the DILS grant scheme project will end during the planned implementation period of the forthcoming phase 2012-2015. For instance: DILS is presently covering 42 municipalities (grants applications of fourteen more municipalities are pending acceptance in May 2011) with projects, most of which will end towards the end of 2012. At this moment it remains unclear whether and to what extent the projects continue after this period, which may open a window of opportunity to capitalising on the outputs and outcomes of these projects and eventually further developing and/or scaling up the latter.²⁹ It is also likely that the Education for All project, which ends in early 2012, will leave opportunities and activities that could be “picked up” by the forthcoming programme. This may require a “phased” implementation approach and to reserve funds for the second and third year of the forthcoming programme. Though such a phased intervention may be too complicated to design and/or approve it can provide food for thought of how to best integrate mechanisms into the forthcoming phase that ensure that the programme complements or builds up on experiences and lessons learned of other ongoing reform projects (and within the Joint Programme).

Recommendations to the contracting agency(ies):

The following recommendations are addressed to the contracting agency(ies) and relate to contract and project management as well as promotion and visibility:

- *Consider the Red Cross of Serbia / Montenegro Red Cross as sole implementing partner of the “Red Cross family” in the forthcoming phase:* Both national societies improved their project implementation processes and standards as a response to the Peer Review findings in 2008. Both senior and operational staff appears to be committed to continue performance improvement and eager to assume more responsibility. The costs of deploying staff of the SpRC, the DRC as well as the IFRC respectively to coach and monitor the two national Red Cross societies are not commensurate with the risk associated with their withdrawal. Moreover, contracting

²⁹ It is noteworthy that in some municipalities the sub-contractors of the Joint Programme implementing partners are also members of the consortia that implement the DILS projects – a circumstance, which should facilitate the continuation of a DILS funded project.

only two organisations will decrease the administrative overhead of contract and financial management. Whether the “international” societies wish to continue to provide support by other means (e.g. remote support, deployment of short term expertise) and financed by their own resources remains, however, a Red Cross internal matter. The evaluators therefore recommend that, if the Red Cross is involved again, only the two national societies are being contracted.

- *Engage into improved communication, cooperation and eventually collaboration with other actors:* The evaluators recommend that improved dialogue is established with other actors such as the EU (and its relevant project teams), the REF or the DILS programme.
- *Streamline and harmonise reporting systems:* The implementing partners have been producing reports that were informative and also rich in detail. However, it became apparent during the drafting of this report that the reporting structures do not allow, for instance, to easily calculate the number of beneficiaries (children, parents C/YPWD etc.) who participated in / benefited from the programme’s activities. The evaluators recommend that e.g. the reporting periods are governed by the school year (Aug-Sep) rather than the calendar year. Particularly in the event that the institutional set-up remains unchanged, it should be ensured that the financial reporting structures / budget lines be harmonised so as to allow for easier budget / cost comparison among the partners.
- *Ensure visibility of the programme and of Swiss involvement:* In several instances our interview partners, including sub-contractors of the implementing partners, were unaware of the term “Joint Programme” or that the Joint Programme focuses on the education domain and more specifically on the inclusion of marginalised children into education. There were also instances in which interviewees were not aware of the fact that the project is implemented with Swiss contributions. For the forthcoming phase the evaluators recommend to clearly label and promote the programme (e.g. through a website, stringent branding) so as to ensure that Swiss engagement in the education / social inclusion sector is made more visible.

Additional Recommendation:

- *Consider capitalising on the Red Cross’s network of / experience to work with volunteers:* Capacities and resources across municipalities in Serbia and Montenegro will continue to be scarce in the short- to mid-run. The Red Cross has proven to attract volunteers and to be able to design cost efficient models of project roll-out with the support of the latter. The programme could seek to build up a network of volunteers to support educational institutions to enable the latter to include marginalised children

and children with special needs into the schooling system (e.g. through personal assistance to children with disabilities).

6. Evaluation Methodology and Challenges in the Evaluation Process

SDC commissioned two evaluators, Harald Meier and Snjezana Mrše, to conduct an external review of the Joint Programme in light of the forthcoming design of a new programme phase that is planned to commence in January 2012.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR), the objectives of the external review were to

- assess the effectiveness of the project taking into consideration the relevant national strategic documents and orientation priorities;
- evaluate the results achieved, the efficiency of the institutional set-up (resources, inputs, time) and the lessons learnt;
- provide recommendations for the future strategic and institutional orientation of the project and its specific objectives.

Given that the implementation of the programme is still underway and given the forthcoming new programme phase, SDC advised the evaluators to focus mainly on the implementation structures and the institutional anchorage of the programme rather than on a detailed analysis of the achievements of the indicators as per the logical framework. Furthermore, the content and quality of the activities and curricula that are delivered in e.g. the “kindergartens” were not subject of this review.

The evaluation, which follows the OECD-DAC evaluation framework with its evaluation criteria Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability, was carried out in Switzerland, Serbia and Montenegro. The evaluation process started in April 2011 and was finalised in June 2011. A mission to Serbia and Montenegro respectively was fielded from 16 – 27 May 2011; one day was spent in Montenegro.

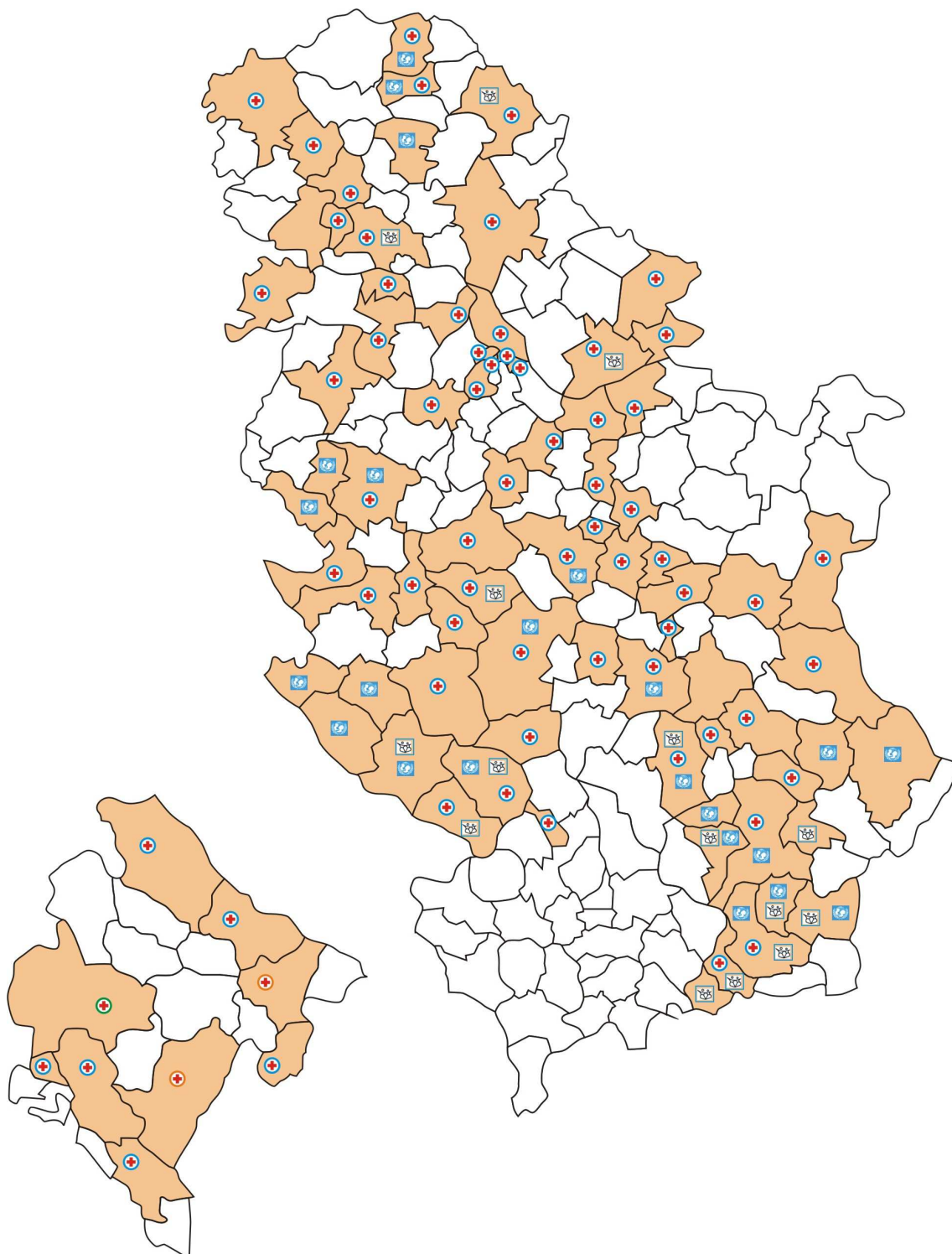
Several techniques have been applied while performing the evaluation such as document review, desk research, semi-structured and focus group interviews, phone interviews, as well as analysis and interpretation. The evaluators undertook to perform interviews with different stakeholders in order to eliminating bias that may result from specific vantage points.

The programme set-up demanded from the evaluators to respond to specific challenges: the programme is implemented by three diverse partners, in two countries and in more than eighty municipalities, each of which has its specific characteristics. The amount of documentation that required review was considerable. It is moreover difficult to evaluate the current project phase

(2009-2011) entirely separated from its roots in the past and the activities that were started several years before the implementation period of the Joint Programme. Lastly, during some of the field missions a host of persons, who were at times not aware of the Joint Programme *per se*, were invited to participate in the interviews and this did not always allow to following the planned semi-structured interview approach.

Annex 1: Geographical Coverage of Joint Programme

Municipalities / cities covered by Joint Programme partners in Serbia and in Montenegro:



Annex 2: Pomoć Deci Enrolment / Completion Data 2009/2010

Municipality	Enrolled 2009/2010	Completed June 2010	Failed June 2010	Not graded June 2010	Additional Summer exams	Passed additional exams August 2010	Failed additional exams August 2010	Total passed school year 2009/2010	Total failed school year 2009/2010
Bujanovac	853	581	78	122	72	66	6	647	206
	100.00%	68.11%	9.14%	14.30%	8.44%				
Vlasotince	108	98	3	6	1	2	5	100	8
	100.00%	90.74%	2.78%	5.56%	0.93%				
Surdulica	450	381	19	39	16	44	6	425	25
	100.00%	84.67%	4.22%	8.67%	3.56%				
Vladičin Han	78	60	8	2	8	6	4	66	12
	100.00%	76.92%	10.26%	2.56%	10.26%				
Lebane	68	50	3	7	8	3	12	53	15
	100.00%	73.53%	4.41%	10.29%	11.76%				
Vranje	209	164	16	12	17	26	3	190	19
	100.00%	78.47%	7.66%	5.74%	8.13%				
Preševo	59	53	0	2	4	6	0	59	0
	100.00%	89.83%	0.00%	3.39%	6.78%				
TOTAL	1825	1387	127	190	126	153	36	1540	285
	100.00%	76.00%	6.96%	10.41%	6.90%	78.86%*	18.55%*	84.38%	15.62%

Annex 3: Monitoring and Reporting System Samples

Samples / templates of reporting tools used by the Red Cross in the context of the Joint Programme:

Monthly report of statistical data; sample of March 2011, municipality of Paraćin, vRoma component (Serbian)	 Microsoft Office Excel-Arbeitsblatt
Monthly narrative report; sample of March 2011, municipality of Paraćin, vRoma component (Serbian)	 Microsoft Word-Dokument
Monthly narrative report; template; C/YPWD component (English)	 Microsoft Word-Dokument
RC Outline of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools, December 2009	 Adobe Acrobat Document

Templates of reporting tools used by Pomoć Deci in the context of the Joint Programme:

Monthly narrative report; template	 Microsoft Word-Dokument
Quarterly report; template	 Microsoft Word-Dokument

Annex 4: UNICEF / DURN Development Education Centres

Below is an excerpt of a report that was prepared following a self-evaluation / planning workshops in April 2011. The report contains a chapter on the most important results of the DEC's.

At the planning workshop organized in Pirot (April 2011) the eight local municipality and DEC representatives listed some of the most important **results** achieved:

- 1 full coverage of children by PPP and 0% drop out in some municipalities (Pirot), very high percentage of children continuing their schooling after the 4th grade of primary school and large percentage of children continuing to go to secondary schools, reduced number of Roma pupils in special schools, better results and better socialisation of children in schools and even increased number of Roma enrolling in universities
- 2 increased awareness of the Roma community of their rights and ways to their realization, increased participation of parents in schools
- 3 wider population sensitized for the problems of Roma community
- 4 competence of institutions to recognize cultural and social specificities of working with Roma population,
- 5 increased responsibility of the local authorities when it comes to Roma rights, which is reflected in the allocation of funds from the municipal budget to maintain these programmes and DEC included in the LPA for children.
- 6 developed capacities, good teams, governance and management structures, DEC network, programmes and continuity of work of Development Education Centres through well established cooperation with other local actors – DEC recognised as important resource and partner in education and social care at local and national level (participate in preparation of local policies, provides data on vulnerable groups
- 7 DEC managed to remain independent from party politics and political changes
- 8 Many of the DEC coordinators are now pedagogical assistants – recognition of their value
- 9 Parents from non-vulnerable groups show interested to enroll their children in some of the DEC activities

UNICEF's support to Development Education Centres has enabled the development and delivery of good practice in education. It has provided teachers with the knowledge and skills to apply inclusive teaching and learning methods, and contributed to improved educational achievements and the survival of Roma children within the primary education system, all of which is in accordance with the Child Friendly School concept.

Greater public demand for good education and access to education for all children is key to the sustainability of increased education expenditure; there is a need for local politicians to be aware of the public demand, and they will therefore be accountable for this through the electoral process.

Annex 5: Interview Guidelines

Basel, May 2011

External Review of the Joint Programme for Roma and Marginalised Groups through Education, Phase 1 (Joint Programme)

Interview Guidelines

Dear Madam or Sir,

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) commissioned us to perform an external review of the Joint Programme.

The Joint Programme, implemented by the three organisations Pomoć Deci, Red Cross Movement, and UNICEF, aims to put in place models of education and appropriate institutional frameworks, which effectively include marginalised children (particularly children of the Roma minority and children with disabilities) into the public education system. The project commenced in 2009 and was designed for a period of three years. The project's activities are implemented in selected municipalities throughout Serbia and selected municipalities in Montenegro.

The purpose of the review is to assess and appraise to what extent the Joint Programme reached its planned objectives, purposes and results to date. Moreover, the review shall provide recommendations for the future strategic and/or operational direction of a forthcoming programme phase.

The review is based on an examination of project documents as well as information and data that will be collected through a series of semi-structured interviews. The interviews will include a set of pre-formulated questions but also new questions will be brought up during the interview as a result of your responses.

The interviews will look at different evaluation themes, key points of which are mentioned below:

- *Effectiveness*: We will seek to measure the extent to which the activities in the project attained their objectives and ask questions such as: Are the project objectives consistent with and supportive of the Governments policies and relevant sector programmes? Are

coordination or management arrangements clear and do they support institutional strengthening and local ownership?

- *Efficiency:* Our evaluation will look at the qualitative and quantitative outputs in relation to the inputs that were invested. We will seek to assess whether the joint implementation brought about synergies, whether the institutional set-up enhanced efficiency or whether there are alternative ways to provide the various Joint Programme services.
- *Impact:* The overall aim is to evaluate whether SDC's project work produced positive (or negative) changes, directly or indirectly, planned or unplanned.
- *Sustainability:* Sustainability shall measure whether the benefits of the Joint Programme or the processes it instituted are likely to continue after the project has been completed.

We have approximately 45 to 60 minutes at our disposal for the interview; we will undertake best efforts to maximise the use of the (limited) time.

We do appreciate receiving written documents (e.g. a bullet point listing of your thoughts on the Joint Programme and its performance, including your ideas on pertinent recommendations for a forthcoming phase; also presentations of the activities and outputs are very welcome).

Finally, we confirm that all data, information and/or (critical) comments we receive from you will only be used for the purposes of this evaluation and will not be shared with third parties.

We thank you already at this stage for your readiness to participate in the interviews. Looking forward to meeting and to discussing your opinion and ideas with you we remain,

With best regards,

Harald Meier and Snježana Mrše

Annex 6: Interview Partners

Name	Position	Organisation / Institution
Richard Kohli	Programme Manager Serbia	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
Lidia Vujičić	National Programme Officer	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
Ljiljana Vasić	Director	Pomoć Deci
Leslie Miller	Deputy Country Representative	UNICEF Belgrade
Svetlana Marojević	Programme Specialist	UNICEF Belgrade
Slobodan Vapa	Programme Assistant	UNICEF Belgrade
Vesna Milenović	Secretary General	Red Cross of Serbia
Sanja Drezgić-Ostojić	Programme Manager	Red Cross of Serbia
Biljana Cvetković	Project Manager	Red Cross of Serbia
Bojana Samardžić	Project Manager	Red Cross of Serbia
Ivana Zubović	Assistant Project Manager	Red Cross of Serbia
Maja Rosić	Assistant Project Manager	Red Cross of Serbia
Jelena Dubak	Secretary General	Montenegro Red Cross
Marta Sjekloca	Project Manager	Montenegro Red Cross
Marija Dedić	Project Manager	Montenegro Red Cross
Momcilo Martinović	Project Manager	Montenegro Red Cross
Mensut Krpuljević	Manager Camp Konik	Montenegro Red Cross
Zorica Crnčević	Secretary	Red Cross branch Bar
Valentina Nikezić	Staff- / Programme Coordinator	Red Cross branch Bar
Aleksanadra Kovacević	Staff	Red Cross branch Bar
Dusanka Dabović	Teacher	Red Cross branch Bar
Božo Šljivančanin	Social Affairs Department	Municipality of Bar
Amparo Moreno	Country Delegate	Spanish Red Cross - Delegation in Serbia

Svetlana Radojević	Liaison Officer/Program Coordinator	Spanish Red Cross – Delegation in Serbia
Nelima Lassen	Regional Programme Delegate	Danish Red Cross – Delegation in Serbia
Igor Radmanović	Health and Care Manager	IFRC Federation Representation for Serbia and Montenegro
Aleksandra Mitrović	President	DURN
Mirjana Čorlija	Administration	DURN
Tünde Kovač-Cerović	State Secretary	Ministry of Education (phone interview)
Angelina Skarep	Adviser for Education	Ministry of Education
Zdenka Milivojević	Grant Coordinator	DILS Team / Ministry of Education
Borislava Maksimović	Grant Coordinator	DILS Team / Ministry of Education
Tanja Ranković	Senior Advisor on Education and Social Welfare	SIPRU
Anne-Maria Čuković	Programme Manager	Ministry of Human and Minority Rights Office for Implementation of National Roma Strategy
Jadranka Stojanović	Programme Manager	OSI/FOSS
Jasmina Tanasić	Social Inclusion Manager	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities
Tatjana Strahinić	Programme Manager	UNDP Peacebuilding and Inclusive Local Development Project
Milijana Merdović	Project Co-ordinator for Migration	UNDP Peacebuilding and Inclusive Local Development Project
Zora Mijaljević	Coordinator LPA for Children	Municipality of Novi Pazar
Ljiljana Kostić	Secretary	Red Cross branch Novi Pazar
Andrijana Lazović	Teacher	Elementary school Aleksandar Stojanović Lešo, Novi Pazar
Vesna Živanović	Principal	Elementary school Nikolaj Velimirović, Šabac
Vesna Mitrić	Assistant Principal	Elementary school Nikolaj Velimirović, Šabac
Olivera Milutinović	Pedagogue	Elementary school Nikolaj Velimirović, Šabac
Snežana Petrović	Project manager	Red Cross branch Šabac
Ankica Mojsilović	Secretary	Red Cross branch Ivanjica

Svetlana Jelić	Director	Social Welfare Centre Ivanjica
Zoran Mutavdžić	Deputy Principal	Elementary school Milinko Kušić, Ivanjica
Svetlana Glavinić	President	Association for child and paralysis, Ivanjica
Dubravka Ivković	Pedagogue	Elementary school Milinko Kušić, Ivanjica
Nevenka Milošević	Teacher	Elementary school Kirilo Savić, Ivanjica
Silvana Janković	Teacher	Elementary school Milinko Kušić, Ivanjica
Marko Andrejević	PHV Coordinator	Red Cross branch Ivanjica
Zorana Parezanović	PHV Volunteer	Red Cross branch Ivanjica
Aleksandra Marjanović	Teacher	Elementary school, Montenegro
Azarić Milovan	Teacher	Elementary school, Montenegro
Jadranka Gavranović	Teacher	Elementary school, Montenegro
Ramadan Alijaj	President/Special Education Teacher	Elementary school, Montenegro
Tijana Lukoviv	Pedagogue	Elementary school, Montenegro
Milojka Jovović	Literacy training teacher	Elementary school, Montenegro
Korak Ljubinka	Clerk	Kovin Municipality
Novakov Vesna	Roma Coordinator	Roma NGO Kovin
Petrović Maja	School President	Partner school Kovin
Marija Stanić	Project Manager	Red Cross branch Kovin
Nikola Dobrić	Project Manager	Red Cross branch Kovin
Boris Živkov	PHV Coordinator	Red Cross branch Kovin
Velinka Fara	Secretary	Red Cross branch Kovin
Vojislav Mihailović	Director	Branko Radicevic elementary school Bujanovac
Novica Manojlović	Director	Sveti Sava secondary school Bujanovac
Snežana Manić	Educational inspector	Bujanovac Municipality
Tanja Jočić	Psychologist	Branko Radicevic elementary school Bujanovac

Milena Cuković	Teacher	Branko Radicevic elementary school Bujanovac
Danijela Stosić	Pre-school teacher	Pre-preparatory group Bujanovac
Hamide Emini	Pre-school teacher	Branko Radicevic pre-school Bujanovac
Kenan Rašitović	Local coordinator	Pomoć Deci Bujanovac
Dejan Živković	DEC Coordinator Prokuplje	DURN
Dejan Kostadinović	Coordinator LPA for Children	Municipality of Prokuplje
Miodrag Gubijan	Head of Project Implementation	Municipality of Prokuplje
Ivana Arandjelović	Coordinator LPA for Youth	Municipality of Prokuplje
Slobodanka Andrejević	DEC Coordinator Vladičin Han	DURN
Branka Milosavljević	Head of Department of Finance	Municipality of Vladičin Han
Sladjan Djordjević	Coordinator LPA for Children	Municipality of Vladičin Han
Novica Toncev	President	Municipality of Surdulica
Snezana Kitanović	DEC Coordinator Surdulica	DURN
Vesna Georgijev	Teacher (Library Director)	Municipality of Surdulica
Dejan Raimović	Pedagogue Assistant	Municipality of Surdulica
Margarita Yanakieva-Yordanova	SEE Programme Manager	Save the Children UK
Jelica Colić	Programme Manager	Delegation of the EU to Serbia (phone interview)
Michel Crepon	Team Leader	IMPRES Project (phone interview)
Matthew Griffiths	Consultant	Education for All Project (phone interview)
Nikola Duvnjak	National Project Officer	OSCE Mission to Serbia, Democratisation Department

Annex 7: Field Mission Plan

Joint Programme External Review
Harald Meier (HM), Snježana Mrše (SM)
May 16- 27, 2011
Serbia and Montenegro

Date	Program	Who
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Sunday, May 15

Arrival HM, Vienna the Austrian Flight at the Belgrade Airport Taxi drive Check in Hotel Prag	HM
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Date	Program	Who
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Monday, May 16

07:45	Pick up HM by the SCO driver in front of the Hotel and walk to the SDC office	SCO Driver
08:00 – 10:30	SCO (Swiss Cooperation Office) Briefing with Lidia Vujicic (LV), National Program Officer	Evaluators, LV
11:00 -12:30	IFRC – Simina 19-21 Meeting with Igor Radmanovic, Programme Manager	Evaluators
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break – Time out Caffee, Čika Ljubina	Evaluators, LV
13.45 – 14.30	Red Cross Serbia- Simina 19-21 Meeting Vesna Milenović, Secretary General, and Sanja Drezgic, Programme Manager	Evaluators
15.00 – 16.00	SIPRU – Government of Serbia, Mihajla Pupina 2 Meeting Tanja Rankovic, Senior Adviser On Education/Social Welfare	Evaluators, driver
16.30	Transfer HM to Hotel Prag by SCO driver Overnight in Belgrade	HM/SCO driver

Date	Program	Who
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Tuesday, May 17

09:00 – 10:30	Pomoc Deci – Kolarčeva 7 Meeting with Ljilja Vasic, Director and the team	Evaluators
10.45 – 13.00	Ministry of Education Zdenka Milivojevic, Borislava Maksimovic DILS team Zahumska 14 (room 408)	Evaluators, driver

13:00 - 13:45	Lunch break	Evaluators
14:00 – 15:00	UNICEF – Svetozara Markovića Meeting with Leslie Muller, Deputy Country Representative	Evaluators, driver
15.30 – 16.30	UNICEF Implementing partner DURN 22 oktobra 7(II floor) Meeting with Aleksandra Mitrovic, Director	Evaluators, driver
17:45 – 18:30	Save the Children Margarita Yanakieva-Yordanova, SEE Programme Manager	HM
18.30	Transfer HM to Hotel Prag Overnight in Belgrade	HM

Date	Program	Who
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Wednesday, May 18

09:00 – 10:00	Fund for Open Society, Knjeginje Ljubice 14 Meeting Jadranka Stojanovic, Programme Manager	Evaluators
12.00 – 13.00	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – Jasmina Tanasic, Social Inclusion Manager Makedonska 22	Evaluators
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14.30 – 15:30	Ministry of Minorities/Human Rights – Mihajla Pupina 2 , SIV, V floor, room 561 Meeting with Ana Maria Ćuković, Programme Manager/others	Evaluators, driver
16.00 – 17.00	UNDP – PBILD – Tatjana Strahinjc and team Programme Manager SDC office	Evaluators
17.15 – 18.30	Ministry of Education Nina Skarep, Coordinator of Education for All Project; Working Group on Improvement of Roma Education SDC office	Evaluators
18:15	Transfer HM Hotel Prag Overnight in Belgrade	Evaluators

Date	Program	Who
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Thursday, May 19

07.00	Pick up HM/SM – travel Paraćin	Evaluators, driver
09.00 – 11.00	Red Cross branch Paraćin (vRoma) Meeting Secretary General and the team Beneficiaries/others Travel to Kragujevac	Evaluators, driver
12.00 – 14.00	Red Cross branch Kragujevac (vRoma + C/YPWD) Meeting Secretary General and the team Beneficiaries/others	Evaluators, driver
14.30- 15.30	Travel to Novi Pazar and overnight in Hotel Tadž, Novi Pazar Lunch on the way	Evaluators, driver

Date	Program	Who
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Friday, May 20

08.20	Pick up and transport to Red Cross branch Novi Pazar	Evaluators, driver
08.30 – 10.30	Red Cross branch Novi Pazar (vRoma) Meeting Secretary General in Novi Pazar Beneficiaries/others Travel to Ivanjica with lunch on the way	Evaluators, driver
13.30 – 15.30	Red Cross branch Ivanjica (PHV with C/YPWD) Meeting Secretary General /team Beneficiaries/others Travel to Belgrade Overnight Hotel Prag	Evaluators, driver

Date	Program	Who
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Saturday/Sunday, May 21-22

HM travel CH - SER, pick up from/to by taxi
Overnight Sunday Hotel Prag

Date	Program	Who
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Monday, May 23

08:00	Pick up and travel to Kovin	Evaluators, driver
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09.00 – 11.00	Red Cross branch Kovin (vRoma, C/YPWD, PHV) Meeting Secretary General/team Beneficiaries/others Travel to Šabac with lunch on the way	Evaluators, driver
14:00 – 16:00	Red Cross branch Šabac (PHV) Meeting Secretary General/team Beneficiaries/others Travel back to Belgrade Overnight in hotel Prag	Evaluators, driver

Date	Program	Who
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Tuesday, May 24

06:30	Pick up and travel to Prokuplje	Evaluators, driver
10.30 – 12.30	UNICEF DEC (Developmental Educational Center) Prokuplje Meeting Dejan Živković, DEC Coordinator Municipality authorities – Dejan Kostadinović, LPA Coordinator, Miodrag Gubijan, Head of Municipal Office for Project Development	
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch Travel to Vladičin Han	
15.00 – 17.00	UNICEF DEC Vladičin Han Meeting Slobodanka Jović, DEC Coordinator Municipality authorities – Branka Milosavljević, Head of Office for Economy and Finances Travel to Vranje/Vranjska Banja and overnight in Hotel Železničar	

Date	Program	Who
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Wednesday, May 25

07.30	Pick up and travel to Bujanovac	Evaluators, driver
08.15 – 10.00	Pomoc Deci/OFER programme in Bujanovac Meeting Kenan Rašitović, OFER Director School/kindergarden, beneficiaries/municipality Travel to Surdulica	
11.00 – 13.00	Pomoc deci project in Surdulica/UNICEF DEC in Surdulica Meeting Zoran Zejnic, coordinator Pomoc Deci and Snežana Kitanović, UNICEF DEC Coordinator Preschool/school, beneficiaries/municipality	

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch and travel to Belgrade
Overnight in hotel Prag, Belgrade

Date	Program	Who
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Thursday, May 26

06:00	Pick up and transport to airport Flight Bel-Podgorica, Montenegro Transport Podgorica airport to Red Cross (RC) of Montenegro office	Evaluators Montenegro RC driver
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10.00 – 18.00	RC Montenegro office Meeting Secretary General/team Visit Kamp Konik (vRoma) - Municipality of Podgorica Transport to Bar Lunch Visit to RC branch in Bar (vRoma) Meeting Secretary general/team Beneficiaries/others Transport to Podgorica airport Flight to Belgrade Transport, overnight in Hotel Prag	
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Date	Program	Who
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Friday, May 27

09.30 – 11.30	Review Summary/Recommendations presentation Participants: SDC, Joint programme partners, MoE	Evaluators
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12.30 – 13.00	OSCE Mission to Serbia	HM
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13.30	Transport HM to Belgrade airport Flight Bel – Vienna 15.15H	HM, Driver
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Locations:

SCO (Swiss Cooperation Office) – Kneza Mihaila 10/IV
Red Cross of Serbia – Simina 19-21
IFRC – Simina 19-21
UNICEF – Svetozara Markovica 58
Pomoc Deci – Kolarceva 7
Ministry of Education and Science – Nemanjina 22-24
DILS - Ministry of Education and Science – Nemanjina 22-24
SIPRU – Deputy Prime Ministers Cabinet for European Integration – SIV, Mihajla Pupina 2
Ministry of Minorities/Human Rights – SIV, Mihajla Pupina 2
Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – Makedonska 22
The World Bank Office Serbia – Blvd. Kralja Aleksandra 86
Fund for Open Society – Knjeginje Ljubice 14
Ministry of Finance – Kneza Milosa 20
Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia – Vladimira Popovica 40, GTZ Avenue 19a

Annex 8: Literature (selected)

Project Document (including Annexes and revised Annexes): Support to Education in Serbia, Montenegro. Improving primary school completion rates for marginalised children 2009-2011, SDC, October 2008

Joint Programme Interim Reports (first to fourth report, where applicable) of Pomoć Deci, Red Cross societies, UNICEF

Joint Programme Agreements and Contracts, financial reports, and selected technical outputs; laws related to education system in Serbia and in Montenegro; Laws on the Red Cross (Serbia, Montenegro)

Strategy of Cooperation with Serbia 2010-2013, SDC-SECO

Project Document: Support to Professional Development in Education and European Initiatives. Improving Quality and Standards in Teaching 2010-2013, SDC, October 2009

Project Proposal: Support to Improve Social Inclusion in Serbia, Government of the Republic of Serbia, March 2009

Draft Concept Paper: Serbian-Swiss Education Programme PDP IV, Government of the Republic of Serbia and SDC

Serbia 2010 Progress Report, European Commission, 9 November 2009

Discussion Paper: Preventing Social Inclusion through the Europe 2020 Strategy. Early Childhood Development and the Inclusion of Roma Families, UNICEF, European Social Observatory, Belgian Federal Planning Service (Ministry) for Social Integration, 2010

Analytical Report: Opinion on Montenegro's application for membership of the European Union the European Commission, COM(2010) 670}, SEC(2010) 1334, 9 November 2010

1st National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia, Government of the Republic of Serbia, March 2011

Monitoring Social Inclusion in Serbia. Overview and Current Status of Social Inclusion in Serbia Based on Monitoring European and National Indicators, Government of the Republic of Serbia, July 2010

Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2010

Plan of Action for Children, Government of the Republic of Serbia, February 2004

Progress of the Realisation of Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Serbia, Government of the Republic of Serbia and United Nations, December 2009

7th Newsletter on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, Government of the Republic of Serbia, May 2011

Towards Roma Inclusion. A Review of Roma Education Initiatives in Central and South-Eastern Europe, UNICEF, February 2010

Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma – Serbia, Monitoring Report, OSI, 2007

Roma Children in “Special Education” in Serbia: overrepresentation, underachievement, and impact on life, OSI, 2010

Education of Roma children in Europe, Final Report Expert Meeting, UNESCO and Council of Europe, September 2007

Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund’s Strategic Directions “Advancing Education of Roma in Montenegro”, Roma Education Fund, 2009, available at: http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/documents/montenegro_report_english.pdf

Websites (selected):

<http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/serbia/en/Home>

www.obrazovanjezasve.eu

<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P096823>

<http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/?lang=en>

<http://www.mpn.gov.rs/resursi/>

<http://www.mpn.gov.rs/index.php?page=1>

<http://www.osce.org/serbia/35884>

<http://www.fosserbia.org/pages/article.php?id=56>