Good practice

BULGARIA
2018

Kindergarten for all: Creating a welcoming environment for ethnic minority families

The Sliven Municipality, located in Southeastern Bulgaria, established a new **kindergarten and nursery** in the predominantly Roma neighbourhood of Nadezhda, addressing a pressing need for early childhood education among **vulnerable groups**. Between 2011 and 2014, over 1,200 children were born in this area, but due to insufficient childcare places, many had to attend facilities in neighbouring districts. The new institution increases **access to local, high-quality early education**.

Ethnic minorities in Sliven often face discrimination and social exclusion, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and employment. This initiative fosters **social inclusion** by welcoming diverse ethnic groups and providing opportunities to learn Bulgarian, helping children from non-Bulgarian-speaking families develop language skills critical for their educational success.

The kindergarten is fully equipped and staffed with trained professionals, offering **early education, healthcare, and cultural activities**. A large number of children from target communities are enrolled, with consistent attendance and growing cooperation between parents and staff.

More good practices:

Success factors

- **Strong partnership** between the municipality, government, and local businesses.
- Active **involvement of parents**.
- Innovative **early childhood education approach** with adapted language development and inclusive learning.
- **Efficient use of funding** for building and equipping the kindergarten and nursery.
- Effective **monitoring**.
- **Alignment** with national and local policies.

Challenges and limitations

- While external funding successfully supported the construction and equipping of the kindergarten, ongoing **financial planning** is needed to ensure the initiative's sustainability.
- The initiative benefits from strong collaboration, but could be **further strengthened by engaging additional stakeholders** such as local businesses, NGOs, and community groups.

Proven benefits

- The initiative fosters a **multicultural, inclusive environment** where disadvantaged children develop key skills like language proficiency, boosting their future **education and job prospects**.
- The kindergarten promotes **cultural exchange** and supports language development for children with different native languages, creating a welcoming space for diverse ethnic backgrounds.