

Educational Policies that Address Social Inequality

Czech Republic case study report 1 All-day School Programme in a Socio-cultural Mixed Area

This report was written the Czech Republic Country Team:
Daniela Vrabcová, Pavel Vacek, Jan Lašek



UNIVERZITA HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ

Pedagogická fakulta Univerzita Hradec Králové, Czech Republic
Faculty of Education, Hradec Králové University, Czech Republic

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The project was carried out at a Prague school, ZŠ Havlíčkovo square 10/300. The choice of school was not incidental, as the school has created and is currently running an information and communication centre for parents from socio-economically disadvantaged background. The school is a school with a majority of pupils from different socio-cultural surroundings. The Basic School Havlíčkovo square, while considering the project, took into account not only the structure of pupils but also the fact that among the staff there were enough specialists trained for work with the target group, which may have also influenced the Ministry of Education decision to support the project and grant appropriate financial resources. There were two main objectives: 1/ to attract and develop pupil's interests and skills which could influence their future and attitudes for life-long learning, 2/ to motivate both the pupils and their families for participation in education provided in natural and dangerous-free atmosphere, respecting the cultural specifics of the socio-economic group.

The project lasted from 2003 to 2005 and its impact might be divided into several categories:

1. **key skills and competencies** (eg intensive study preparation for pupils entering secondary education, SEN intervention in cooperation with their parents)
2. **leisure time activities** (various school clubs and leisure time activities/events)
3. **activities to extend children's knowledge, skills and (cultural) awareness, social experience** (eg trips, sports matches, training camps etc.)
4. **thematically oriented general educational programmes for pupils and their parents** (eg focusing healthy lifestyle, classroom social climate, communication problems and labour issues)
5. **social pathological phenomena prevention** (lectures and workshops on different topics)

There were three types of leisure time activities organised for the pupils in the course of the project from 2003 to 2005:

- a) **activities focused on topics: people and their health, art and culture** (eg sports games, table tennis, football club, dance club, young musicians' club and aerobics lessons)
- b) **activities focused on topics: people and their society, art and culture, people and the world of work** (eg pottery club, history club, Prague tourist club, art club, handcrafts club and family education club)
- c) **activities focused on topics: language and linguistic communication, mathematics and its applications, information and communication technologies, people and the environment, people and the society, people and the world of work** (eg extra lessons for the first class pupils, Czech extra lessons, mathematics, English, German and Czech language clubs, computer club, global education club, foreign language clubs, SEN club etc)

The structure of leisure time activities reflects the current school curricular reform in the Czech Republic and relevant curricular documents, particularly so called *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání, RVP (Framework Educational Programme, FEP)*.

The project objectives:

- to provide educational community needs oriented activities,
- to improve pupils' school achievement,
- to reduce truancy among pupils from the socio-economic groups,
- to prevent social pathological phenomena,
- to encourage individual personal development,
- to develop pupils' social skills and competencies,
- to motivate for further education and occupational preparation,
- to establish active cooperation with the pupils' parents.

The leisure time activities and clubs took place in the afternoons throughout the whole week, mostly after the school lessons. They took place in classrooms and in rooms with suitable equipment (eg

computer laboratory, pottery workshop, SEN room, art room, kitchenette etc.). Children from all school classes took part in the leisure time activities, including the preparatory class pupils and pupils' parents.

The target group was divided into four sub-groups: pre-school children (preparatory class), pupils of *první stupeň ZŠ* (primary education pupils), pupils of *druhý stupeň ZŠ* (lower secondary pupils) and pupils' parents.

pre-school children (preparatory class) pupils)	The activities were aimed at pre-school stimulation and linguistic skills development in cooperation with parents in order to prepare children well for entering the first class.
<i>první stupeň ZŠ</i> pupils (primary education)	The leisure time activities focused topics, such as people and their health, art and culture, people and the society, language and linguistic skills, mathematics and its applications, people and the nature, and communication and social competencies. Pupils' interest and participation in the offered activities was considered as a positive feedback.
<i>druhý stupeň ZŠ</i> pupils (lower secondary education)	The leisure time activities focusing the topics: people and their health, art and culture, people and the society, language and the linguistic communication, mathematics and its applications, information and communication technologies, people and the nature, people and the world of work. The positive feedback here was the pupils' interest in the offered leisure time activities and their successful enrolment in secondary schools.
pupils' parents	Parents became involved in the school life. The school invited the parents' participation in preparing various events and activities. The parents joined school performances. They were instructed how to help their children get ready for school lessons and also how to create a motivating environment for their children studying at secondary schools.

The total cost of the project was 1,137,000 CZK (2003: 297,000 CZK, 2004: 450,000 CZK, 2005: 390,000 CZK). The project was granted by the Ministry of Education. There were 16 leisure time activity instructors participating in the project in 2003 (the wages expenditure: 134,000 CZK, 45 percent of the year 2003 budget). The remaining amount was used for other expenses, such as materials or equipment (sports equipment, audio, materials for pottery classes, study devices for extra lessons etc.). In 2004, there were 33 leisure time activity instructors (their wages cost 280,000 CZK, 62 percent of the 2004 budget). One part of the budget was used for the material supplies, the remaining part for other activities. In 2005 there were 24 leisure time activity instructors and their wages cost 250,000 CZK (64 percent of the 2005 budget).¹ The course and schedule of leisure time activities has been recorded in the class register for leisure activities. The following table gives some detailed description of the leisure time activities/events.

Leisure Time Activities/Events Organised for Pupils and Teachers: Overview, Part 1

Activities/Events	Dates	Brief description
Dance group training camp in Chřibská	September 2004	- improving children's musical and dance skills, knowledge and skills in the areas of art, culture and people and their health - creating a leisure time activity framework
Teacher course in lecturing skills	October 2004	- acquiring essential competencies for independent instructing, improving classroom management skills Participants: teachers, instructors
<i>Communication with children from different socio-economic groups</i> – a series of workshops for teachers and instructors	November 2004	- building and developing the key communication skills for work with children from socio-economic minorities Participants: teachers and instructors

¹ The increased ratio of the cost for wages between the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 is caused by a combination of factors: on one side by higher number of lecturers as well as activities organised by them, on the other side by different higher yearly budgets.

<i>Information Technology for Teachers</i> – a workshop for teachers and instructors	November 2004	- obtaining more advanced knowledge and skills, including pedagogical presentation skills, in the area of computers and information technology Participants: teachers and instructors
Open-air museum excursion in Christmas time to the town Přerov nad Labem for pupils	December 2004	- applying cultural knowledge and skills
Sports training camp for 35 pupils in the tlen Deštné v Orlických horách	December 2004	- improving sports and social skills, extending and applying knowledge in the topics: people and their health, people and the nature
Trip to the castle of Točnick's Prehistoric Days for pupils	April 2005	- extending and applying culture-oriented knowledge and skills
Excursion to the military battlefield	June 2005	- extending and applying knowledge and skills focusing people and the society, people and their health, information and communication technology

Leisure Time Activities/Events Organised for Pupils and Teachers: Overview, Part 2

Activities/Events	Dates	Brief description
Football and floorball junior championship in the town Ústí nad Labem	June 2005	- improving sports and social skills - extending and applying knowledge focusing people and their health, people and the nature
<i>Occupational preparation for pupils</i> – a series of lectures and workshops	October and November 2005	- extending knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to the issues of people and the world of work
Healthy Diet and Lifestyle Workshop	November 2005	- extending knowledge and skills and acquiring competencies in the areas: people and their health, people and the society, art and culture
One-day sports trip to the Orlicke mountains for pupils and teachers	December 2005	- improving sports skills
Advanced foreign language teaching skills course for foreign language instructors	December 2005	- improving linguistic knowledge, teaching skills and communication skills used for communication with pupils from socio-economic minorities. Participants: teachers, instructors
Excursion to the Nižbor glass works	December 2005	- extending and applying knowledge and skills in the cultural area, focusing people and the world of work.

The project was evaluated at half-term intervals and continuously (as the main techniques there were used mainly: analyses of the direct feedback, interviews, attendance records and school reports analyses). There was an annual SWOT analysis too. Within the three years of the project existence, there were 73 clubs with various times of duration, four sports events and training camps, four educational events for the pupils, two series of educational workshops for the pupils and four educational events for the teachers and instructors. There were 43 people, altogether employed in the project. According to the school records, 256 people, including children and parents, benefited from the project directly (95 percent of them were of the Roma origin)².

One of the criteria that served as the basis for the project evaluation was the number of participants in the activities/events of the project. A positive outcome was undisputedly the parents' interest too. The parents appreciated the given possibility to see their children at school performances at Christmas and Easter etc. organised by Městská část Praha 3 (Town District Prague 3) and by Magistrát hlavního města Prahy (Magistrate of the Capital City of Prague). Městská část Praha 3 not

² The final evaluation report of the project does not specify these numbers in any other details. The 95 percent of the Roma people is based in the structure of the school pupils (see the project title).

only offered the financial resources for renting and running leisure time activity rooms, but provided assistance for the activities public presentation as well.

The Magistrate of Prague allowed the children to show their skills by organising cultural events in *Staroměstské náměstí* (Old Town Square), at *Křížikova fontána* (*Křížik Fountain*) and in *Kongresové centrum* (The Congress Centre) in the *Děti dětem* (Children to Children) project.

The presentation of the activities for both the public and experts increased the Roma community trust in the school environment. 95 percent of the final year pupils leaving the school were interested in the activities related to occupational preparation.

Another important criterion for evaluating the project's success was the pupils' school achievement rate. The following table shows percentages of Roma pupils with excellent/very good average classification – school achievement (Czech school classification is a 5–grade one: 1 means excellent, 2 means very good, 3 good, 4 satisfactory, 5 stands for unsatisfactory).

School Year	Roma Pupils in %	Average Grade Classification
2000/ 01	55	1,87
2004/ 05	87	1,91

The table results show a significant increase (by 32 percent) in the percentage of Roma pupils with excellent/very good average classification – school achievement, if the school years 2000/01 and 2004/05 compared.

The school achievement rate of the project and the attained objectives have been confirmed by the Czech School Inspection too. The Inspection 2004/05 final report appraised the positive changes and the education of excellent quality, appreciating that there are almost no pupil transfers to special schools. Further the Inspection final report says:

- Pupils acquired the key competencies and the motivation for the further education, and occupational preparation.
- Pupils' personalities were reinforced while improving some of the competencies, social competency, in particular.
- Negative social phenomena decreased, including problems related to the drug abuse.
- Number of the school attendance absence has decreased as well. Comparing the school years 2004/2005 and 2000/01, the number of the lessons unattended without an appropriate permission (truancy) has gone down by 12 percent.
- Mutual cooperation between the school, pupils and their families has improved. This means a major step forward, as many Roma families do not regard education as their priority.

The final project report was made available to the wide public via an article published in the local *Radniční noviny* (Townhall Bulletin) and on the official school website.

The project kept its originally intended framework and there was not any notable shift in the strategy. However, ZŠ Havlíkovo focuses that if the project is to yield the expected results, it is important to ensure that it is well-coordinated, fully-realised in practice and equipped with open links for the future stages. Unfortunately, financing turned out to be the most serious problem. Although the project as such with all its stages and the financial resources had been approved by the Ministry of Education by the April of each relevant year, the financial sources for covering the project's expenses have been transferred to the school account as late as December of relevant years, and it caused quite a lot of difficulties.

The school feels that cooperation with the pupils' parents, including their involvement, is of crucial importance. It is a kind of priority issue.