



INTERNATIONAL EVENT



**Community Based
Early Childhood Education
and Care (ECEC)
for Roma Children
and Families**

**Monday 19th, November 2018
from 10,00 to 16,30**

**Vredehuis, Sint-Margrietstraat 9
Ghent (BE)**

High quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is an essential foundation for children's wellbeing, lifelong learning, social integration, personal development. However, research suggests that the considerable and growing disparities in access to quality education and increasing segregation in European schools start at a very young age. Children between zero to six years of age with a migrant, minority or marginalized background often suffer segregation and exclusion from ECEC services, or they are placed in lower-quality services. This has a detrimental effect on young children (and their families) in terms of their wellbeing, rights, development, and it impacts on their future.

In the last two years, the European project **TOY for Inclusion** tried to find innovative solutions to these challenges by developing community-based ECEC services for/with Roma and non-Roma children and families in eight European countries (Belgium, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary and Slovakia). The aim of the project, coordinated by ICDI (International Child Development Initiatives) and financially supported by the European Union and the Open Society Foundation, is to improve social inclusion of Romani young children and families, enhance social cohesion and ease the transition to primary school. VBJK is the Belgian partner in this project.

In each country TOY for Inclusion has developed contextualized toy libraries, called ECEC Play Hubs. These are designed and run by multi-sectoral teams composed by representatives of communities, school and preschool teachers, health services, parents, local authorities and

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other organisations. The Play Hubs mobilize local communities around young children and families and organise intergenerational inclusive activities involving older adults with and without Roma background. Activities can take place in the Hubs but also in other settings, such as community centres, libraries, parks, squares, preschools, health centres. The Play Hubs are also spaces where children and their families are welcomed to play games with each other, meet with other families and take part in creative and social activities. At the Play Hubs, information about childrearing, health, early learning and development can be passed-on informally to (grand)parents.

In Belgium, in particular, the focus was put on involving Roma and non Roma children and families in inclusive activities as well as on building a network of organizations and local authorities willing to work on social inclusion in Ghent.

This international event will present the experiences of all countries involved and promote a critical-constructive discussion amongst participants, on how to concretely invest on inclusive ECEC and social cohesion through community based initiatives.

To know more about TOY for Inclusion, please visit: www.toy4inclusion.eu

Programme

Morning 10:00 – 12:30

10:00 – 10:30 welcome and coffee

10:30 – 12:30 Plenary Session	Welcome word	Nima Sharmahd, VBJK (Center of Innovation in the Early Years), Belgium
	The TOY project: aims, method, process, results	Giulia Cortellesi, ICDI (International Child Development Initiatives), The Netherlands
	Possible impacts of Play Hubs on social inclusion: the experience of Italy	Francesca Petrucci and Melania Spanò, Associazione 21 Luglio, Italy
	Short movie about 'Toy for Inclusion'	Introduction of Federico Lanzo, ISSA (International Step by Step Association), the Netherlands
	Strategies about social inclusion in the City of Ghent	Maike Buyst, Department of Integration, City of Ghent
	Connecting families and services/schools: the experience of the 'bridge figures' (<i>brugfiguren</i>) in Ghent	Samira Wymeersch, Coordinator of Bridge figures, Parental involvement and Educational Support, Department of Education, City of Ghent, and

		Erika Mikova, Bridge figure, City of Ghent
	Inclusive neighbourhoods: 'Buurtstewards' in Ghent	Marieke Lamaire, coordinator 'Buurtstewards team', and Tibor Moco, 'Buurtsteward', City of Ghent
	Questions and discussion with the audience	

Coordination plenary session: Giulia Cortellesi (ICDI) and Nima Sharmahd (VBJK)

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch, Live Music, Visit to the TOY for Inclusion Exhibition.

Afternoon 13:30 – 16:30

Four Thematic Tables are foreseen.

Participants are invited to take part to two workshops. Each workshop will last one hour and will comprehend: 1) a presentation of the organization/s partner/s of TOY for Inclusion about the topic of the workshop and how it was experienced in their Play Hubs; 2) a discussion and exchange about the topic with the participants.

	THEME	ORGANIZATION/S THAT COORDINATE/S THE TABLE
13:30 – 15:30 Thematic Tables	<p><i>1) Transition to school: how to facilitate and create a soft transition to school for children and families with vulnerable background</i></p> <p>With this workshop the organizations from Croatia and Hungary will focus on how their Play Hubs supported transition to school for children and families with vulnerable background. A discussion with participants will follow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanja Brajković, Refika Omerćehaić, Step by Step, Croatia • Rézműves Szilvia, Wágner János, Partners Hungary Foundation, Hungary
	<p><i>2) Investing in social inclusion through networking and inter-sectoral work</i></p> <p>With this workshop the organizations from Belgium (FL) will focus on how they are working on social inclusion by investing in a network of organizations. There will be a presentation about the Belgian pilot (which is a collaboration between VBJK and VZW JONG) and a presentation about REYN Belgium, a learning network for professionals that work with Roma families and children in Belgium. A discussion with participants will follow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diana Scamburova, Nima Sharmahd, VBJK (Center for Innovation in the Early Years), Belgium • Christine Devreker, Gwen Pannecoucke, VZW Jong, Belgium • Liesbeth Lambert, BE-REYN – VBJK (Center for Innovation in the Early Years)
	<p><i>3) Working outreaching: from hard to reach families to easy to reach services</i></p> <p>One of the key elements of inclusion when working with families and children with vulnerable background (and especially Roma), is the capability of 'working outreaching' and in a bottom-up way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Strazik, Wide Open School, Slovakia • Mateja Mlinar, Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

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	<p>This will be the focus of the workshop coordinated by the organizations in Slovakia and Slovenia, who will present their pilots by focusing on what it means to create more 'reachable services' for all families. A discussion with participants will follow.</p>	
	<p>4) <i>Creating and managing toy libraries: strategies for inclusion, organization, approaches</i></p> <p>With this workshop the organizations from Italy and Latvia will present their pilots by focusing on strategies that can make toy libraries more inclusive: which ideas, approaches, instruments, and what kind of organization are required to include all families and children, with specific attention to the ones with vulnerable background.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francesca Petrucci, Melania Spanò, Associazione 21 luglio, Italy • Dana Didzus, Kristine Liepina, Center for Educational Initiatives, Latvia

15:30 – 15:45 Coffee break, visit to the TOY for Inclusion Exhibition

<p>15:45 – 16:30 Plenary Session</p>	<p>What came out from the workshops: exchange and discussion</p>
	<p>Open conclusions</p>

Coordination plenary session: Stanislav Daniel, International Step by Step Association (ISSA), The Netherlands

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Free entrance ➤ Lunch included ➤ Registration required on: https://vbjk.be/en/events/2018/11/toy-for-inclusion-project-final-event-community-based-early-childhood-education-and-care-ecec-for-roma-children-families ➤ Deadline to register: 5th November 2018 ➤ The conference will be held in English, but informal translation will be foreseen in the workshops if needed
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Project Partners



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