Name of the evaluated object:

Formative Evaluation of Government of Croatia and UNICEF's Parenting Support Programmes 'Growing up Together' and 'Growing up Together PLUS'

Locations of the evaluated object: Throughout the Republic of Croatia

Organisation commissioning the evaluation: UNICEF CO Croatia

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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List of abbreviations

CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CwD	Children with Disabilities
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Program
CSO	Civil society organisation
DR	Desk Review
B&H	Bosnia and Hercegovina
ECD	Early Child Development
ET	Evaluation Team
ETM	Evaluation Team Member
ETL	Evaluation Team Leader
ETTA	Education and Teacher Training Agency
EQs	Evaluation Questions
EU	European Union
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
GE	Gender Equality
GIDI	Group In-depth Interview
GNI	Gross National Income
GuT	Growing up Together
GuT PLUS	Growing up Together PLUS
GuTC	Growing up Together Centre
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IR	Inception Report
MoSES	Ministry of Science, Education and Sport
MoSPY	Ministry of Social Policy and Youth
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OG	Official Gazette
PSE	Preschool Education
RC	Rehabilitation Centre
RoC	Republic of Croatia
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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1. Executive summary

The object of this formative evaluation are two parenting support programmes - 'Growing up Together' (GuT) and 'Growing up Together PLUS' (GuT Plus) - implemented in the Republic of Croatia. The programmes were initiated in close cooperation among national ECD experts, UNICEF CO and Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA) representatives in 2008, with the aim to offer support to parents in fulfilling their parental role. The programme is composed of 11 structured workshops and delivered by additionally educated existing professionals and preschool teachers, taking place dominantly in kindergartens, but from 2011 also in county family centres (now social centres). A sub-programme for parents with disabilities (GuT Plus) is also implemented in a limited number of NGOs and Rehabilitation centres (RCs). By 2016, at least one cycle of the programmes, free of charge for parents, was implemented in 124 kindergartens, 18 family centres, 8 rehabilitation centres and 5 NGO-s across the country, offering support to around 4000 parents through 622 educated professional implementers.

The purpose of this external evaluation was to take into account, explore and assess all aspects of GUT and GUT Plus. In line with the best evaluation practice of using OECD's DAC evaluation criteria, also suggested in UNEG evaluation standards, the evaluation examined programmes' relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Reached conclusions should allow for further improvements, adjustments and potential revision of the offered parenting support services, as well as to provide insights in the capacity of their sustainability. The evaluation is particularly relevant to be conducted at this point of time, since the UNICEF CO is finalising current Programme Cycle (2012 – 2016), and the findings and recommendations are expected to be utilised for discussion with the key partners, including the Government, local governments, GuTC and other experts and professionals.

The **methodology used** for this evaluation was based on a mix method approach of data gathering to yield the most reliable and valid answers to the evaluation questions. The approach has been based on combining desk review of existing programme-related and relevant policy documents, as well as analysis of available secondary monitoring data (N=2114 +255). Primary data collection tools that have been used include impact survey questionnaire for involved parents (N=203), as well as face-to-face semi structured interviews and focus group discussions of identified key stakeholders (N=101), sampled based on a mixture of criteria. This approach enabled triangulation of results and thus robustness of the final evaluation findings.

With regard to programme's relevance, it can be concluded that the programme emerged after a mixture of different types of inputs, including responsiveness to the emerging international trends on positive parenting, strategic focus of UNICEF CO in 2007-2013 2011 mandate to the issues of ECD and parental support, needs assessment among both parents and preschool teachers and professionals, coupled with motivation to decrease still high observed prevalence of corporal punishment among parents in Croatia.

UNICEF CO has managed to launch the programme in cooperation with ETTA, which as a state agency has a mandate to offer professional development to professionals within the educational system. At that time, ETTA was opened and focused to offer new structured support to preschool teachers and professionals related to collaboration with parents, enabling in this way exercising mutual interests.

Although grounded in evidence-based needs analysis, programme development lacked a comprehensive logical model, including indicators, time frame for action, responsibilities of all involved

stakeholders and risk analysis. Regardless of this lack of elaboration on the long-term implementation model, the programme can be assessed as highly relevant for both target groups – parents and preschool teachers and professionals. This is based on the observed success to effectively put in place orientation towards 'empowerment model' vs. 'deficiency model', where parents become active partners in workshops, not only subjects of education. It also successfully balanced highly structured content with freedom left to individual implementers to complement it with their expertise. As judged by the implementers themselves, by envisaging a team of implementers delivering the workshops, it provides a feeling of increased security to all implementers, in this way also dividing workload and enabling professional synergies.

Finally, due to the programme developers who were internally motivated to provide a programme of a high quality, the programme has gone through multiple adaptations, which all can be assessed as appropriate and in function of programme's overall relevance towards parents, especially regarding specific needs of fathers, parents at multiple socio-economic risks and health status of their children, thus consequently contributing to its potential for increased effectiveness.

In conclusion to programme's effectiveness, there is a robust evidence of programme's effectiveness to both implementers and parents as the main programmes' target groups. Implementers are in high percentages actually starting to implement workshops after the end of a standardized training and they especially value the concept that they operate in teams. They point out to listening skills, facilitation skills and increased professional self-esteem as the main effects of the programme. They also strongly emphasize their changed and intensified relationship with parents due to the programme. Nonetheless, due to the lack of programme's indicators which would suggest the level of anticipated reach of the programme, programmes' national presence can be assessed only in relative terms, suggesting it was a function of given opportunities in terms of the available funds to organize new cycles of trainings, as well as demand from the preschool teachers and professionals. However, regional disparities in coverage of programme across Croatia are evident.

With regard to the programme's effectiveness towards parents, both programmes show significant effect on parental self-assessments in a way that they feel more competent in their parental role after taking part in the workshops. Parents feel empowered and more confident in ways they approach everyday parental obligations. In line with that, programmes effectively change parental inappropriate beliefs about parenting and bring awareness to the need for taking care of themselves. In terms of behavioural changes, programmes show positive effect on self-reported inappropriate parenting behaviours, but not on self-reported appropriate parenting behaviours.

In conclusion to programme's efficiency, although lacking a strong comparative benchmark, the programme can be assessed as cost-efficient, given its rather wide scope and quality standards in relation to the budget spent so far. This is primarily possible as it uses the existing network of preschool teachers and professionals who dominantly implement the programme in their regular working time, or with some additional compensation by their institutions. Monitoring practices can be especially commended, enabling continuous feedback on both programme's outputs and outcomes. As these practices rely heavily on human resources to keep track of them, there is space for further improvement, potentially in a form of a tailor-made online monitoring tool, which would also make monitoring practices more resilient to potential future growth of the programme, in terms of new institutions taking part and parents enrolling.

In conclusion to the programme's impact, parents strongly recognize the effects of their enrolment in the workshops even when providing assessment from today's point of view. Many of the changes are substantial in a way that underlying processes in their relationships with children were altered. This is not affected by the potential loss in acquired facts or information about parenthood provided during the workshops. Most of the encountered changes parents describe as relational changes: they changed the way they think on various aspects regarding parenthood. This kind of insight provides a longer resilience to long-term changes. In addition, changes in parents' relationships with their children consequently can change children's behaviour, as it has been documented by qualitative data in impact survey. It has been also found that there is a great level of need for continuous support, immediately after the workshops as well as in the long term context. Provision of Parent's Clubs met the needs for continuous support for only small number of parents due to their inaccessibility to the majority of parents. Additionally, other forms of support, suggested by parents, such as individual counselling, should be considered when trying to prevent diminishing of long-term positive changes of the programmes.

In conclusion to programme's sustainability, it can be determined that the programme has in 2016 reached a standstill with the changed ETTA's attitude towards further financial support to the programme, seriously jeopardizing overall programme's sustainability. The evaluation team has thus put forward a comprehensive alternative model, placing the financial demand on the preschool founders, namely local self-governments. Recognizing the risk of significant regional disparities in Croatia, two proposals to level up this concern are presented. Encouraging GuT Centre to open towards private-owned kindergartens is also suggested in order to meet the proclaimed value of progressive universalism, based on the idea that parental support is defined as a human right.

Finally, the evaluation formulated some key lessons learnt and provided recommendations, divided in two categories – strategic and operational, as follows.

Key lessons learnt

LL1: Stronger use of result-based frameworks in programme development phase

LL2: More explicit comparative approach in programme development to find the most suitable design and implementation model

LL3: Formalizing collaboration with institutional stakeholders whose commitment is strongly expected

LL4: Maintain the level of sophistication of used monitoring practices in any other similar programme

Strategic recommendations (SR)

SR1: Introducing local self-governments as founders of preschool education to become primary agents of programmes' financial sustainability

SR2: GuTC to open up towards private kindergartens on an income-generating basis and to subsequently level-up the needs of those self-governments wanting to take part in the programme but being at the lowest regional development index

SR3: Maintaining ETTA's role to publicize the programme through their web portal and to offer formal certification to involved implementers

SR4: Securing national verification of the programme

SR5: Further advocating towards clearer acknowledgment of parenting support services as a right of each parent

SR6: Institutionalizing education of new implementers in the social care system

SR7: Monitoring regional presence of the programme and designing focused regional promotion

SR8: Designing a new online monitoring tool to secure sustainability of currently sophisticated but burdensome monitoring practices

SR9: Maintaining good practice of interdisciplinary implementation teams

SR10: Consulting other European practices to learn from comparative examples

Operational recommendations (OR)

OR1: Preparing financial projections on the key implementing aspects

OR2: Encouraging promotion of the programme through parents-to-parents promotion

OR3: Standardized monitoring of the emerging drop-out rates of parents

OR4: Securing baby-sitting services in implementing institutions during the workshops

OR5: Promoting at least some type of compensation for involved implementers

OR6: Clarifying conditions for compensation to implementers by formal advancement

OR7: Extending the collection of pre/post/after questionnaires beyond the first implementing cycle for each new implementer

OR8: Securing more stable implementation of Parents' Clubs to interested parents

OR9: Where possible, offering also individual counselling to parents, with priority to GuT Plus parents

OR10: Stronger promotion of joint attendance by both parents

OR11: Enhancing group dynamics with attendance of more than one father

OR12: In any future impact survey, including measurements of benefits of the programme to children as final beneficiaries

2. Evaluated object and context

2.1. Evaluated object - Description of the programmes

The object of this formative evaluation are two parenting support programmes - 'Growing up Together' (GuT) and 'Growing up Together PLUS' (GuT Plus) - implemented in the Republic of Croatia. **'Growing up Together' programme was initiated in close cooperation among national ECD experts, UNICEF CO and Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA) representatives in 2008, in order to offer support to parents in fulfilling their parental role.** It represents a continuation of UNICEF's public campaign - 'First three are the most important!' - offered to the Croatian public in late 2006 after numerous discussions with parents and experts, as well as research on attitudes of the general public about the care and needs of families with children in the early years.

The programme is composed of **a set of 11 structured workshops** for a group of **8 – 12 parents** of **children aged between 1 and 4 years,** implemented by ECD professionals in public institutions, in their regular working hours and as a part of their regular work assignments. The programme was **piloted in 2008 and 2009 in 24 selected kindergartens from all regions of Croatia**, selected in cooperation with the ETTA. Based on the results of a **comprehensive pre/post internal evaluation**, the programme has **proved to be beneficial for parents**. Internal evaluation demonstrated that after completing the programme parents (N=200) reported higher parenting competences, lower parenting stress, less hitting and yelling on the child, and less authoritarian beliefs than before the programme. After the programme, parents also were more likely to encourage child's emotional expression and problem-solving and less likely to minimise child's distress, react punitively or react to child's 'difficult' emotions with own distress than before the programme.

The workshops **take place dominantly in kindergartens**, however in 2011 in order to make the programme available also to the parents whose children do not attend kindergartens, the cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity (today Ministry of Social Policy and Youth) has been established and **the workshop package was introduced to all Croatian county family centres** by educating selected staff for its further implementation. GuT PLUS was also implemented **in a limited number of NGOs and Rehabilitation centres (RCs)**. Upon completion of the 11-workshop programme, parents are invited to proceed with their involvement through attending **Parent's Clubs**, organized at the level of implementing institution.

The set of weekly, 2-hours-long workshops for GuT programme consists of the following themes:

1.'Parents of the 21st century'
2.'The four pillars of parenting'
3.'Child's psychological needs and parental goals'
4.'All of our children and how we love them'
5.'Listening - an important parenting skill'
6.'How does the child learn about the world?'
7.'Limits: why and how?'
8.'Choosing and creating solutions',
9.'Parental responsibilities and other questions',
10.'Being a parent: influences and choices',
11.'The ending and a new beginning'.

The workshops are **led by interdisciplinary teams with two to three members (psychologists, pedagogues, kindergarten-teachers),** who are provided with a structured training and support programme to enable them to conduct workshops and to raise their competence in interaction with parents. **Specialized educational package was also developed for other professionals working in kindergartens but not directly involved in the programmes**, in order to provide them with knowledge on the concept of positive parenting (i.e., parenting in the best interest of the child) and support their every-day communication with parents. The aim is to secure the consistency in approach towards parents between professionals directly involved in the programme implementation and those working in the same institutions but not directly involved in the programme implementation, supporting in this way the overall effectiveness of the programme.

As it was noted during implementation of the program that parents of children with disabilities would benefit from being offered a separate programme, **in 2013 the programme was redesigned to better address specific needs of this subgroup of parents. The new sub-programme was entitled 'Growing up Together PLUS', reflecting the belief that parents of children with disabilities have the same needs and interests as parents of other children, but also some additional ("plus") needs and interests.**

This sub-programme has also extended the target group of parents, including parents with children until they enrol in the elementary school (usually up to the age of 8).

By 2016, at least one cycle of the programmes, free of charge for parents, was implemented **in 124 kindergartens, 18 family centres[1], 8 rehabilitation centres and 5 NGO-s across the country, offering support to around 4000 parents through 622 educated professional implementers[2]**.

During 2011, the Programme was transferred for **implementation in Bosnia & Herzegovina**, through the engagement of the local NGO 'In foundation', established by the Co-operating Netherlands

[1] Only in Family Centres Karlovac and Čakovec initial education of implementers took place but not at least one cycle of workshops for parents has been implemented.
[2] Data is generated on June 10, 2016 from the internal monitoring database kept and updated by GuTC.

Foundations for Central and Eastern Europe (CNF), and **in 2012 it was transferred to Bulgaria, in cooperation with the Bulgarian UNICEF CO.**

2.2. Current implementation status

At the moment, after eight years of implementation, the programmes are **still being widely accepted for implementation in numerous institutions**. However, since 2011, when the peak was reached, a **significant decline has been noticed in the number of newly educated implementers and institutions taking part.** Newest developments include **withdrawal of financial support by ETTA,** which has financed new cycles of education for implementers, regional meetings, supervision and annual conferences since the programme's beginning. Through activities of the GuT Centre, as an NGO established to provide continuous support to all implementing organisations/institutions and secure quality control, in recent years the programme has also evolved in two new extensions aiming to better suit two different target groups: GuT for fathers ('**Father's club**s') and '**Growing Up Together and Us'** for beneficiaries of social assistance, usually at multiple socio-economic risks.

2.3. Evaluation context

As presented in ToR, Croatia is a **high-income country** (GNI per capita in 2014 was $13,020 which is slightly above the line for high income countries of $12,736) with a **strong policy framework for the protection and fulfilment of child rights** and became **a member of the European Union in July 2013**.

In 1991, Croatia has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition to the highly developed strategic frameworks and legislation, since 2003 Croatia has institutionalised an important mechanism for monitoring and promoting child rights in the form of the **Ombudsperson for Children** (The Law on the Ombudsman for Children, 2003).

Important progress for children was noted by the **Committee on the Rights of the Child** in its recent **Concluding Observations** on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Croatia, adopted in September 2014. The Committee, whilst welcoming the progress achieved, also identified a number of areas that require improvement and expressed its concern, inter alia, over the situation of disadvantaged groups of children in Croatia. In spite of Croatia's child rights orientation and the effort invested so far, the Committee also noted a discrepancy between the established policy framework and its implementation in practice.

One of the key challenges that Croatia continues to face is the **long-term economic and financial crisis**, which has strongly affected the country consecutively over the last six years. The crisis has had a negative impact on the well-being of children and family and continues to widen the equity gap (Šućur, Kletečki Radović, Družić Ljubotina, & Babić, 2015).

The **provision of parenting support services is a recent and welcomed element in the Croatian policy arena**. In the past, **family policy was oriented towards ending socially unacceptable ways of parenting, so the concept of supporting parents[3] to improve their parenting skills and provide positive parenting has been only introduced recently**. Regional differences are evident in the

[3] Due to practicality, term parents will be used further on in the report. It refers to parents and caregivers as well as male and female.

availability of such services with considerably fewer services available in the rural areas. Parents of the youngest children with low socioeconomic status most often (70%) do not use any parenting support services (compared to 51% of the general population of parents) (UNICEF, 2013).

Preschool education services are important part of Croatian family policy, providing care and education for children from the age of six months to around seven years, i.e., to beginning of primary school. Most kindergartens are founded by the local governments (state kindergartens), but there are also private kindergartens and kindergartens of religious communities. At the beginning of school year 2015/2016, there were in total **1602 kindergartens and other legal entities implementing preschool education** programmes in Croatia[4], with every second preschool-aged child enrolled, amounting to a total of **134 573 enrolled children** (18% younger than three years, 36% between 3 and 5 years, and 46% older than 5 years) (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Reports 2016). Croatian kindergartens provide high quality child care and education, carried out by university educated kindergarten teachers and other child specialists. At the beginning of school year 2015/2016, **10.941 kindergarten teachers and 949 professionals** were employed in Croatian kindergartens (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Reports, 2016).

With regard to **social care system in Croatia**, **in 2006 19 Family centres** (FCs) were founded by the Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity with the main objective to empower families and raise awareness on issues connected to family values. Family centres provided counselling services and support related to marriage, parenting, family and partner relationships, and development of socialization skills among children and youth. Among these activities, experts in family centres were also intended to encourage and support community work, volunteer work and work of civil society organisations (CSOs) oriented toward parental support, family support and socially marginalised groups. At the beginning of **2014**, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth as a legal successor of the Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational solidarity, made significant changes in both organisation and legal status of Family centres which **ceased to exist as separate public institutions** and their services were partially **incorporated in the work of previously existing Centres for Social Welfare**, but in some locations also terminated.

The evaluation is particularly relevant to be conducted at this point of time, since the UNICEF CO is finalising current Programme Cycle (2012 – 2016), and the findings and recommendations are expected to be utilised for discussion with the key partners - Government, local governments, GuTC, experts and professionals on further joint priority actions, including adjustments of the current approach/activities.

3. Theory of change

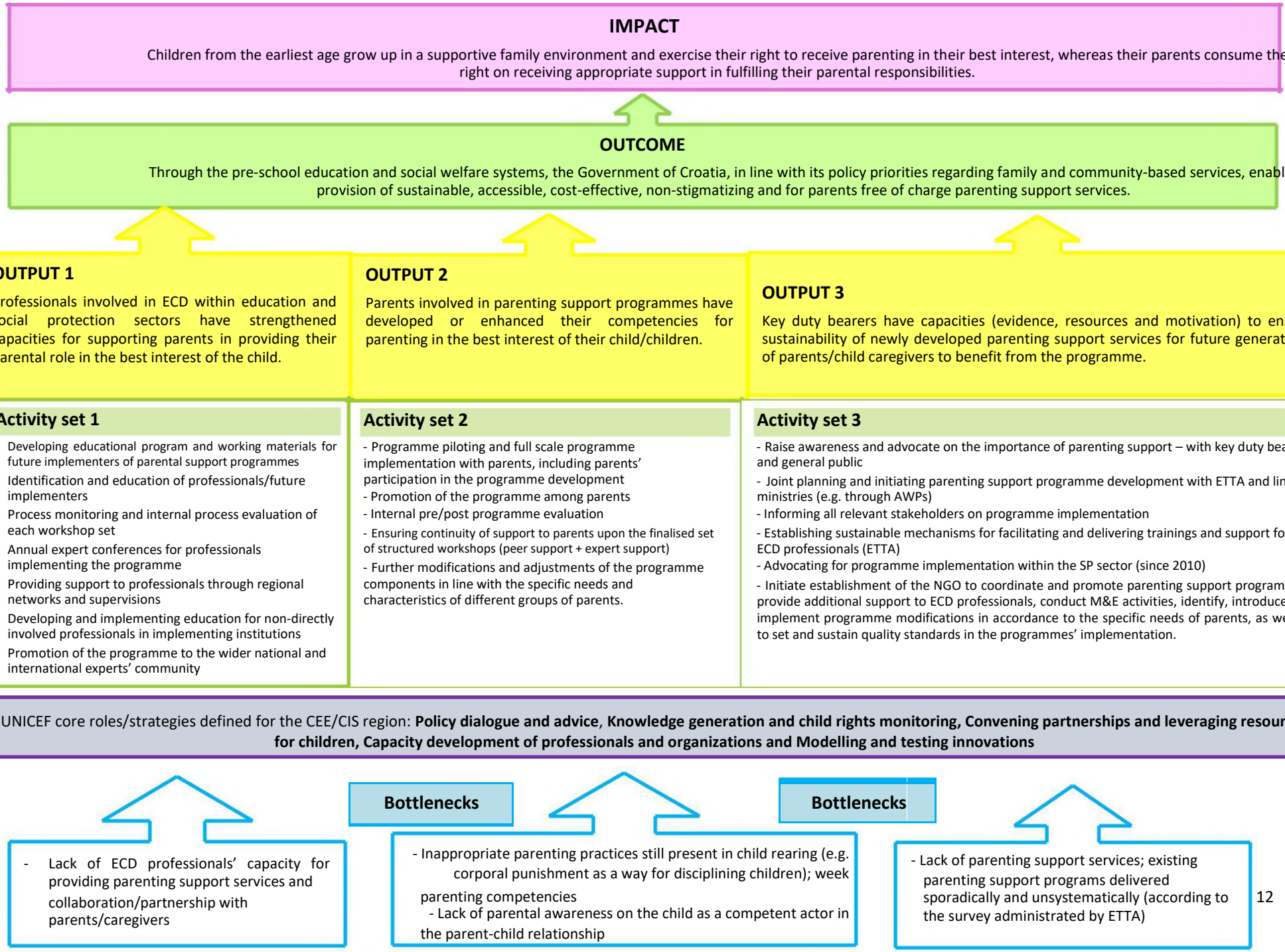
During the Inception phase, it was observed there was **no initial programme concept paper presenting the entire intervention based on either some form of Logical Framework (LF) or Theory of Change (ToC) model.** Having that in mind, together with the UNICEF CO staff, the evaluation team has **retroactively developed an implicit ToC** based on both review of all programme-related documents collected during the Inception phase, as well as additional inputs by the UNICEF CO and GuTC.

[4] Out of that, 1432 are kindergartens and 170 other legal entities.

The presented ToC **captures the evaluators' understanding of how the programme has conceptualized the change it aimed to trigger**, starting from the bottlenecks as identified initial problems, through designing different sets of activities, aiming at achieving certain corresponding outputs, to finally securing change on the level of outcomes and impact.

The ToC model is both presented **visually** (see Figure 1 below) **and narratively**. The narrative analysis also identifies inputs required for the intervention, as well as identified **risks, both between the level of outputs ↔ outcome and between the level of outcome ↔ impact.** This reconstructed ToC has served as the main framework for the evaluation, both in designing suitable methodology and presenting gathered findings.

Figure 1: Visualization of Theory of Change



In the phase of programme development, the logic of intervention was conceived around recognized **lack of support in parenting skills expressed by parents themselves**, noted in various research conducted in Croatia (e.g., Pećnik & Raboteg-Šarić, 2005), as well as **recorded frequencies of their parental behaviours not always being in the best interest of the child** (e.g., Delale & Pećnik, 2010). On the other hand, based on the data collected through a survey among kindergartens in cooperation with ETTA during the process of planning the initiative, professionals **from kindergartens have also expressed interest in training that would enable them better collaboration with parents in facilitating their competencies in positive parenting**. Since both parents and professionals clearly expressed the lack of interventions, services and programmes in the area of parenting support, this represented the main ground and trigger for initiating the development of a model that will build capacities of both parents and professionals, that will be cost-effective to implement within the existing system and at the same time easily available and free of charge to parents. The ultimate goal was to develop and provide a model of quality parenting support programme that will be systematically implemented throughout Croatia, contributing to the overall development of community based services in support to the youngest children and their families.

Framing of problems in this way has led to **designing and implementing three strands of programme activities in order to achieve three corresponding outputs. Firstly,** through training professionals in kindergartens, family and rehabilitation centres, as well as NGOs, alongside sensitization of other non-directly involved professionals in their working environment and wider expert community, the programme was set to build new and strengthen existing competencies of these professionals in order to be able to offer collaborative assistance to parents in their parental role to serve the best interest of the child. This way, the **supply component** will be strengthened, contributing to more available and high quality service. **Secondly,** through designing, piloting and implementing structured workshops for parents, with continuous feedback through conducting internal pre/post evaluations, the programme was set to build new competencies of parents to meet their parental responsibilities, and to promote and support parenting in the best interest of the child. It was assumed that this building of the **demand component** would further contribute to building accountability and awareness of the key duty bearers of the importance of developing and investing in parenting support services. **Finally,** by promoting and advocating on the importance of the parenting support, involving all relevant duty bearers (relevant line ministries and ETTA), the programmes were aiming to contribute to **enabling environment** for continuous and sustainable provision of new quality services to future generations of parents of the youngest children in Croatia.

It was assumed that combination of these three sets of outputs would deliver an **outcome** on the level of preparing the Government of Croatia to enable, consistent with its policy priorities regarding family and community-based services, **provision of sustainable, accessible, cost-effective, non-stigmatizing and for parents free of charge support service** supporting their parental competencies and parenting in the best interest of the child, by utilising both the system of pre-school education and social welfare.

Having in mind the final beneficiaries, at the level of **impact** the intervention was ultimately aiming to contribute to the possibility that children from the earliest age grow up in a supportive family environment and exercise their right to receiving parenting in their best interest, while at the same time their parents/child caregivers would consume their right on receiving appropriate assistance in fulfilling their parental responsibilities.

The intervention has built both on direct **financial inputs** by UNICEF and relevant central level institutions, but as well on **human resources** in these institutions, including kindergarten and other implementing institutions which provided their **premises and logistics** for implementation of the programme. Financial support to the programme was in limited cases also secured by **local governments** as founders of kindergartens. Inputs were also secured in a form of **expertise, both in-house human resources of employees of all involved institutions, as well as contracted UNICEF consultants** in the area of ECD and positive parenting and programme evaluation such as this one.

Alongside envisaged process of securing desired positive change, potential corresponding risks were identified, on the level of programme strategies ↔ programme outputs, outputs ↔ outcome, as well as outcome ↔ impact. These identified risks are presented and elaborated in the Table 2 below.

Table 1: Risks and assumptions associated with the intervention

	Strategies ↔ outputs	**Outputs ↔ outcome**	**Outcome ↔ impact**
Risks	Lack of motivation of professionals to learn and apply new skills and methodology and/or lack of interest by kindergartens and other implementing institutions to join the training and the programme Poor support (logistics, operational and organisational support) of the kindergartens' and organisations' management in enabling engagement of employees in training and implementation. Lack of support by other professionals in the working environment within implementing institutions and/or lack of support by head of institutions to implement the programme. Poor interest and attendance by parents. The universal programme does not fully respond to the needs and/or observed feedbacks of all parents, regarding their gender, cultural/ethnical, regional, economic /social or other needs and characteristics.	Lack of political will or motivation of involved individuals in the relevant line ministries and ETTA, as well as their potential fluctuation with poor transmission of responsibilities. Systematic lack of available funds on the level of relevant line ministries and ETTA.	Social norms regarding – reluctance in seeking professional support in parenting. Lack of continuous support to involved parents to reinforce their changed behaviours over longer periods of time. Unsupportive immediate family environment (though potential differences in upbringing approach by mother / father / grandparents or other family members), as well as unsupportive wider environment for implementing concepts of parenting in the best interest of the child.
Mitigation measures	Promote the importance of parenting support in the professional community, especially in the early years of child's life. Create participative environment for the programme development and implementation. In cooperation with ETTA ensure validation for participating in the training.	Initiate and organise joint discussions and exchange of information among all relevant stakeholders related to the parenting support programme development and implementation.	Positive promotion of the parents' right to support, focus on strengths and capacities of parents vs. weaknesses and mistakes in parenting. Encouraging professionals in continuous provision of parenting support, through informal types of

	Involve directors in programme activities (e.g. through initial meeting, invite to the evaluation seminars and events etc.) Positive promotion of the parents' right to support, focus on strengths and capacities of parents vs. weaknesses and mistakes in parenting. Develop specialised models to be suited to the specific needs and characteristics of different groups of parents, with special focus on the most vulnerable families.	Advocate for the improvements in ECD service provision including parenting support, with focus on positive impact on a society as a whole. Develop a programme in such a manner to be applicable within the existing kindergartens' and other organisations' programmes and staff job descriptions.	support, upon finalising participation in the regular structured programmes.
Assumptions	Professionals working with the youngest children recognise the importance of providing support to parents. Professionals are willing to improve their own skills and knowledge. Parents recognise the importance of building parental skills and are willing to participate in programmes.	Implementation of community-based services, including parenting support, remain among key national priorities. Government supports and continues to increase budget allocations for ECD and parenting support.	Parents have information on the available support services and programmes, they are using them in building their parental strengths and capacities and they apply new skills in their parental role.

4. Stakeholders analysis

Development of the two respective programmes, as well as their implementation and monitoring is a result of **cooperation between individual experts with different professional background, as well as multiple involved institutions**, all focused towards **the direct target groups – parents and professionals working with parents in the implementing institutions**. They are supported by other **indirectly involved stakeholders**, all to serve the **final beneficiaries** – **children of involved parents**.

Actors directly responsible for programme development, implementation and monitoring/evaluation

Initial collaboration was established with the **Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA)** as the national agency responsible for providing professional and advisory assistance in education, which conducted **a survey among kindergartens** aimed at identifying existing practices in their professional work with parents and interest in participating in this new parenting support programme. **External national experts in positive parenting and ECD** were then commissioned to develop the programme concept and working materials, alongside **UNICEF CO staff**. UNICEF CO provided financial means for implementation of the programme, including its creation and piloting, as well as technical support for

developing programme materials and platform for communication and synergy among involved stakeholders.

Collaboration with ETTA was also seen as necessary in order to stimulate sustainability of the programme by offering training for professionals who will be implementing the programme within the existing pre-school educational system. ETTA has also financed the annual conferences which gather professional implementers across the country and supervision of implementers. Logistically, ETTA is operating through its **four regional offices** – in Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka and Split, each covering three to nine Croatian counties.

Cooperation with two relevant ministries – Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (MoSPY) and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoSES) - has been established since the programme's early stages. They enable that the programme is implemented in both educational and social welfare system through kindergarten, rehabilitation and family centres. Their representatives are also members of the so-called 'Sustainability council', which gathers two members form MoSPY, one member from MoSES, one member from UNICEF CO, two members from GuTC and two members from ETTA.

In 2013, on the initiative of the UNICEF CO, '**Growing up Together Centre'** was formed as an NGO, currently run by the original programme developers, as well as other professionals with long-term experience in providing programmes to parents in Croatia. It represents the **continuation of the other body – the so-called 'Quality Control Council' - established in 2010**. The Centre was designed with a goal to provide continuous support for implementation of GuT and GuT PLUS programmes to all implementing organisations/institutions throughout Croatia, including provision of information to both interested and involved parents and programme implementers, ensuring at the same time quality standards, as well as promotion of the programmes at national and international level. GuTC also operates the main programmes' web-site, available at http://www.rastimozajedno.hr/.

Programme is being implemented in kindergartens, family centres, rehabilitation centres and NGOs by the **interdisciplinary teams (psychologists, pedagogues and kindergarten teachers).** These professionals are provided with a specialized training held by programme developers, in cooperation with the so-called **'regional coordinators'. Regional coordinators** were selected as the most active and experienced programme implementers, who have successfully finished at least three cycles of workshops, and who now train and coordinate other programme implementers in their region, acting also as a link in exchanging monitoring/evaluation data between institutions implementing the programme and GuTC which gathers and processes all collected data (such as number of workshop cycles finished, number of involved parents, number of trained implementers, number of operating Parent's Clubs, as well as results from pre/post internal evaluations).

Other indirectly involved actors

Each kindergarten, family or rehabilitation centre in which the programme is implemented becomes a stakeholder, as the activities and attitudes of their principles and other professionals can be seen as either enabling or disabling to the overall success of the programmes. Their importance was acknowledged in the programme and specialized educational package was developed for these professionals working in the implementing institutions outside the programme, in order to provide them with knowledge on the concept of positive parenting and skills for every-day communication with parents, seen as a way to increase the overall effectiveness of the programme.

Local self-government is in the most cases the founder of kindergartens and in that regard is an indirect stakeholder. Through preliminary inception meetings with GuTC, more direct engagement has been identified in the case of the **City of Koprivnica**, which has become a co-financier of the programme.

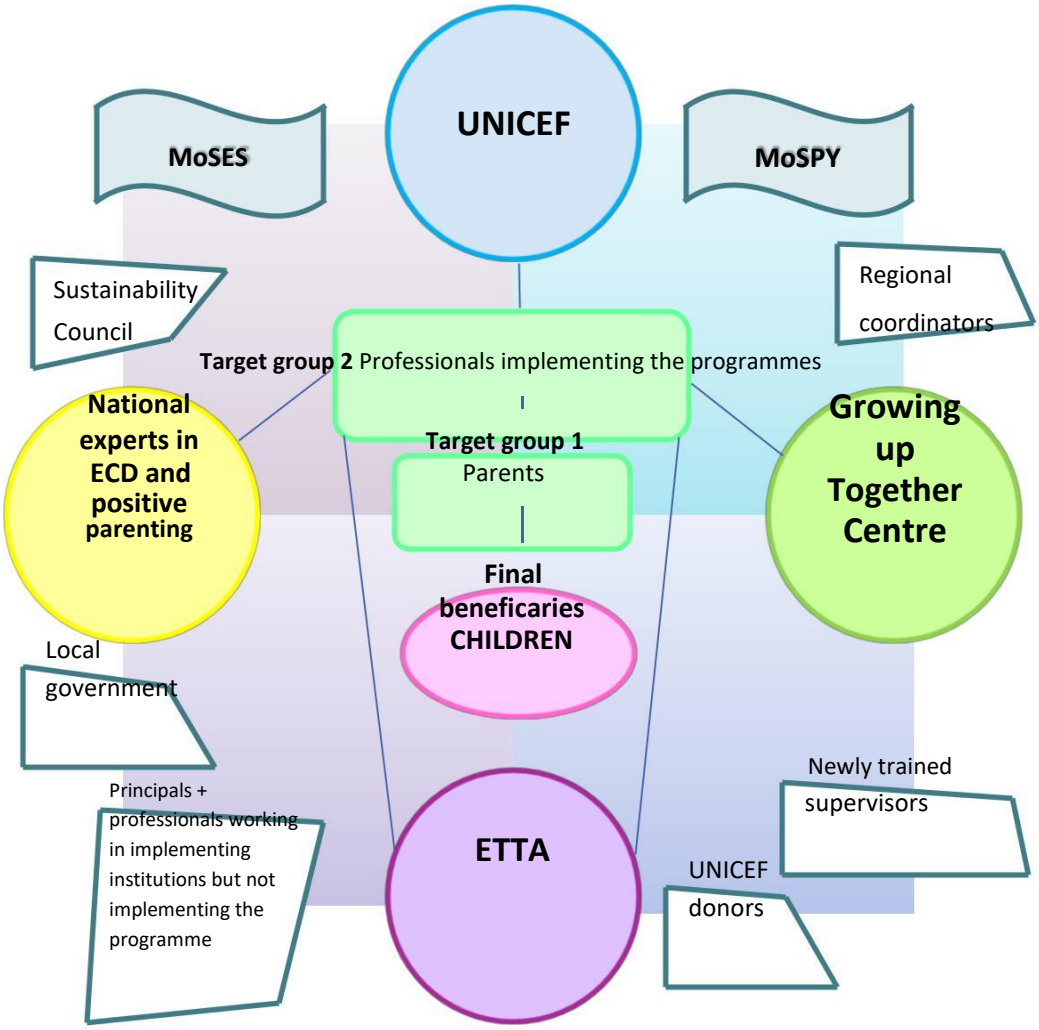
As a result of a joint EU-funded programme, GuTC in partnership with NGO Portić from Rijeka has secured funding for **educating supervisors**, recruited among more experienced implementers from kindergartens, two family centres and NGOs taking part in the programme.

Main target groups and final beneficiaries

The central target group of the programmes are **parents**, and while the programmes were designed for parents in general, it was noted during implementation that **mothers were those who mainly attend the workshops (around 90%)**, which resulted in fathers becoming a special subgroup targeted with later designed Fathers' Clubs Other subgroups of parents included parents with children with disabilities and parents who are beneficiaries of social assistance, usually at multiple socio-economic risks. Other target group are **professionals in the implementing institutions** who through the programme gain new competencies to support parents. They thus have a twofold role - being both programme direct implementers and its target group which receive training and capacity building. Other professionals working within the implementing institutions, but do not directly implementing it, have also been perceived as a target group. All activities are directed towards the **final beneficiaries** – children, who should benefit from the changed behaviours and attitudes, as well as new knowledge of their involved parents in order to grow up in a supporting environment and receive parenting in their best interest. **Table 2:** Summary of identified relevant stakeholders

Type of stakeholder	Name of the stakeholder
Actors directly responsible for programme development, implementation and monitoring/evaluation	**UNICEF CO Office**
	National experts in positive parenting and ECD
	NGO Growing up Together Centre
	Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA), including its three regional offices
	Programme implementers - interdisciplinary teams including psychologists, pedagogues and kindergarten teachers Regional coordinators
	Line ministries – MoSPY and MoSES
Main target groups	**Parents**
	Programme implementers - interdisciplinary teams comprised of psychologists, pedagogues, and kindergarten teachers
Final beneficiaries	**Children of involved parents**
Other enabling indirectly involved actors	**Sustainability Council**
	Kindergartens, family and rehabilitation centres and NGOs in which the programme is implemented (principles and other professionals working in the institutions, but not directly part of the programme)
	Local self-government
	Newly trained programme supervisors
	UNICEF donors

Figure 1: Visualization of involved stakeholders



5. Evaluation purpose, objective and scope

In line with the Terms of Reference (ToR), this external evaluation was envisaged as a **comprehensive, thorough and ambitious research endeavour** that took into account, explored and assessed all aspects of two parenting support programmes initiated by Government of Croatia and UNICEF in Croatia - Growing up together and Growing up together PLUS.

By **assessing the performance** of these two respective programmes based on the OECD DAC's **criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability**, the final evaluation report **provides relevant findings and usable conclusions and recommendations.** These conclusions could allow for **further improvements, adjustments and potential revision of the offered parenting support services, as well as to provide insights in the capacity of their sustainability.**

ToR has envisaged a moderate focus on **stakeholder involvement**, although considering the participative nature of this intervention, and thus multiplicity of perspectives of the key stakeholders that have shaped it, the critical obligation of this external evaluation was **to facilitate authentic expression of experiences, opinions, criticisms and expectations of all the involved actors**, capturing

expected plurality in the analysis. This was achieved through extensive field work, which included 101 respondents. All of them were given a chance to formulate how they see the role of their institution/organisation in the future implementation of the programmes. This enabled constructing a comprehensive new model of sustainability, building on these expressed current positions of all key involved stakeholders. The evaluation team has also established active collaboration with the representatives of the GuTC in order to get access to monitoring database of the programmes and internal evaluation questionnaires collected over the years. Finally, ToR envisages final presentation of the findings which should suit as a starting point for new discussions by the key stakeholders, probably through already established body of 'Sustainability Council'.

The evaluation **covered the period from programme development in 2008 until May 2016**. As the programme was implemented across Croatia, **geographical scope was throughout Croatia.**

6. Evaluation framework - evaluation criteria and questions

In line with the best evaluation practice of using **OECD's DAC evaluation criteria, also suggested in UNEG evaluation standards,** the evaluation examined programmes' **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability**. The following Table 3 presents evaluation questions associated with each of the main evaluation criteria.

The evaluation team has **in-depth reviewed originally proposed evaluation questions (EQs) in the ToR and proposed certain amendments.** Special attention has been given in adopting the initial evaluation questions under the criteria of impact to the newly reconstructed ToC, which asked for reorganization of evaluation questions between effectiveness and impact criteria.

Table 3: Evaluation criteria and corresponding evaluation questions

Evaluation criteria	**Evaluation questions** **Note:** *Sections in Italics are amended/rephrased by the evaluation team.*
RELEVANCE	To what extent are programmes aligned with the government policy priorities regarding family and community-based services? Are these programmes relevant to the actual needs of the beneficiaries, both parents/primary caregivers and professionals who work with them, *as well as other professionals working with parents and children in the implementing institutions*? Do the programmes respond to the needs of parents (e.g. regarding parents' gender, economic status, employment, having a child with disability etc.)? *How initial programme designers were selected, and to what extent is their expertise related to the themes of intervention?* *In which way did the programme use network of other UNICEF country offices and/or other international practices in organising parenting support services in designing the programme? Have evaluations of these types of interventions been used in programme development?* *To what degree is the programme coherent/compatible with other similar national/regional or local initiatives directed towards parenting support?*

EFFECTIVENESS	To what extent have the programme objectives, *captured in three corresponding outputs,* been achieved? *To what extent did these outputs contribute to the outcome of the programme as presented in ToC?* What were the major factors (strengths and weaknesses of the programmes) that influenced achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? What external factors (e.g. regional, gender and cultural aspects and aspects of institutional characteristics) affected the programme's effectiveness? Was an appropriate combination of tools and approaches used in the implementation of the programmes? *To what extent did programmes contribute to the increasing demand and recognition for parenting support services among parents, professionals working with parents, expert community, as well as decision makers (at both national and local level)?*
IMPACT	*To what extent did programmes contribute to long-term positive changes in parents' behaviours towards children, facilitating in that way supportive family environment?* *Being the final beneficiaries of the intervention, is there any evidence suggesting changes in behaviours of children whose parents are involved in the programme?* *To what degree have some external factors (and which ones) diminished the positive effects of the programmes on parents' behaviour?* *What is the role of continuous support to parents (Parents' clubs or other) in sustaining long-term positive changes in behaviours towards children?*
EFFICIENCY	To what extent have UNICEF and other stakeholders made good use of its human, financial and technical resources in programme development *and implementation*? Were key programme activities cost-efficient in regards to the achieved outputs? To what extent did the set structure of roles and responsibilities contribute to the programmes' efficiency? *How efficient were models of communication and coordination as well as internal system for monitoring and evaluation?*
SUSTAINABILITY	*To what extent are the programmes' results (impact if any, and outcomes) likely to continue after the programme? Is stakeholders' engagement likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated or institutionalized after UNICEF's direct assistance ceases?* What are the key factors that have been positively or negatively influencing long-term sustainability of programmes? To what extent has UNICEF been able to support its partners in developing capacities and establishing mechanisms to ensure ownership and continuity of service, both on national and subnational level?

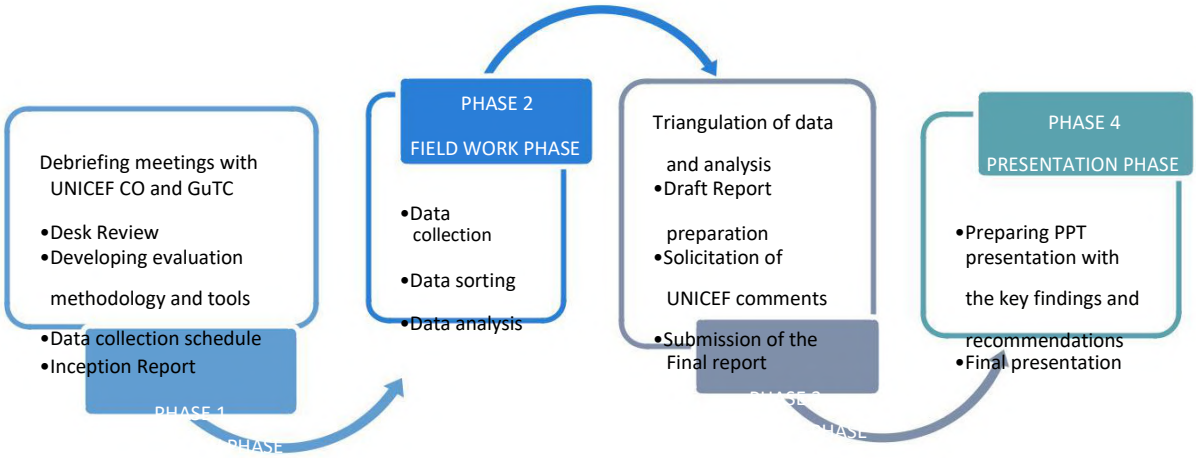
7. Evaluation methodology

The methodology model used for this evaluation was based on **mix method approach** of data gathering to yield the most reliable and valid answers to the EQs. The approach has been based on combining desk review of existing programme-related and relevant policy documents, as well as analysis of available secondary monitoring data. Primary data collection tools that have been used include impact survey questionnaire for involved parents, as well as face-to-face semi structured interviews and focus group discussions for identified key stakeholders. This approach enabled **triangulation of results** and thus **robustness of the final evaluation findings. Counterfactual elements** in evaluation methodology are partially embedded, in line with given financial and time resources for this evaluation. They included reflecting on the results from the control/comparison groups in the pilot phase of programme development for GuT Plus programme, in detail presented under effectiveness section.

As presented in Figure 2, the evaluation process was divided in **four phases** – (1) desk review/inception phase, (2) field work phase, (3) reporting phase and (4) presentation phase. The consecutive application of the key evaluation methods ensures that the findings and insights gained are fully fed into the next evaluation phase, **with several points of interpretation** and adequate process for reaching a multi-layered, integrated understanding of this complex parenting intervention.

Validation process by the UNICEF CO as the Contractor has encompassed all stages of the evaluation, while at the same time **impartiality and independence** of the evaluation team was valued in the highest terms.

Figure 2: Evaluation phases



Data collection and analysis methods

1. **Desk Review (DR):** Review of available programme documents was a major part of the inception phase. Special emphasize was put on determining existing secondary monitoring data available for the main target group – parents, which were alongside internal evaluation questionnaires collected throughout the programme implementation. In order to answer certain evaluation questions, predominately relevance, desk review extended to consulting relevant international and national policy documents.

   - **Data analysis of internal pre/post workshop evaluation for parents, gathered through programme evaluation**

During the inception phase, it was noted that until September 2016.today, there were 2114 **pre/post questionnaires for parents gathered for GuT programme and 255 for GuT PLUS programme**. This data has been occasionally analysed, for instance for the purpose of preparing Programme manuals or presentations of the programme at the conferences. However, for the purpose of the external evaluation proposed here, this data have been cumulatively analysed. Data was collected by employing various measures of parental satisfaction on taking part in the programme, as well as different measures of parental behavioural intentions, attitudes, beliefs, stress, reactions toward child's negative emotions, and parenting self-efficacy. This analysis is presented in the section on effectiveness, as evidence for outcomes of the programme on the target group of parents.

2. **In-depth Interviews (IDIs):** IDIs with various key stakeholders have been an important source of evidence for many of the evaluation questions, in order to collect their views across all evaluation criteria. Used interview guides are presented in the Annex 3. After receiving contact details by the UNICEF CO and GuTC, all the respondents have been directly contacted and asked for participation.

In-depth Interviews have been used for collecting data from UNICEF CO, GuTC, line ministries and ETTA.

3. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** FDGs have been additional method for data collection where multiple representatives of the same group of stakeholders were gathered in the same location in order to facilitate debate across various evaluation criteria. Used focus group guides are presented in the Annex 3. These respondents have been contacted with the assistance of regional coordinators who invited and organized a focus group discussion in their (or in few cases other) implementing institution.

Focus Group Discussions have been used for programme implementers at the level of implementing institution, including principles, implementers, regional coordinators and supervisors.

Sampling of respondents for IDIs and FGDs

Data collection from the relevant informants was **based on the presented stakeholder analysis** that recognizes the levels and types of involvement of different involved actors. Decisions on the sample were based on the **geographical scope of programme activities**, type of communities, as well as **the overall number of informants** in certain identified stakeholder group.

Since the beginning of the programme implementation, its geographical spread led to a **wide national coverage** of all of the 20 counties and the City of Zagreb as the capital. According to the internal monitoring database, overall **157 implementing institutions took part in the programme** through initial education of professionals and later on through implementation of workshops for parents. Majority of the implementing institutions **(79%) include kindergartens**. **The highest number of implementing institutions are located in the City of Zagreb, Primorje-Gorski Kotar county, Split-Dalmatia county, Zagreb county and Istria county, amounting to 62%** of the overall number of participating institutions.

Within the participating institutions, overall **598 professionals were educated to become GuT programme implementers and 106 for GuT PLUS programmes.** The current number of educated professionals is 622, since certain number of them took part in education for implementers of both programmes. Subsequently, educated professionals within their institutions have provided structured educational programme to around **4000 parents (3644 within GuT programme and 413 within GuT PLUS)**.

The presented analysis of the entire population of the main target groups suited as a necessary starting point in constructing the adequate **sample of informants for this formative evaluation**, with **several criteria** taken into account:

Since the programme was implemented in all of the counties in Republic of Croatia, informants across **various counties** have been included in the sample;

Cost-effectiveness of the field work phase was reached by identifying as many informants from different stakeholders' groups as possible during a single field visit;

Field visits were planned in a way to ensure the **highest population coverage** possible by choosing the counties with larger number of participating institutions and educated professionals;

Within the field visits, institutions covered have varied in a **settlement size** of their origin in order to avoid prevalence of only informants from the larger regional centres. Although focus groups with programme implementers were planned to be held in larger regional centres due to above mentioned cost-effectiveness, in collaboration with regional coordinators, special attention was paid to include implementers also from smaller settlements who have been invited to attend the focus groups;

Institutions whose professionals have been invited to participate in the field work have vary in their **level and type of involvement,** such as the year of enrolment in the programmes, implementation of one or both programmes, number and proportion of educated professionals per institution, number of programme cycles and number of parents involved;

Sample has also been responsive to **informants** that made certain **unique contribution** such as the case study of the City of Koprivnica that financially supported the programme or involvement of NGOs specialised in ECD that influenced further development of the respective programmes.

All other stakeholders that were directly or indirectly responsible for programme development, implementation and monitoring/evaluation, including UNICEF CO members, representatives of the line ministries, ETTA and representatives of Growing up Together Centre have been involved through individual and group interviews.

Table 4: Realized scope and structure of sample of informants by single fieldwork visits

LOCATION	STAKEHOLDER/INFORMANT INVOLVED
1. **City of Rijeka (Primorje-Gorski Kotar county)**	2 regional coordinators 6 programme implementers from kindergartens 1 principal of a kindergarten 1 programme implementer from a family centre 3 programme implementers from an NGO 1 programme supervisor

		1 representative from the regional office of ETTA in Rijeka
2.	**City of Rovinj (Istria county)**	1 regional coordinator 15 programme implementers from kindergartens 1 principal of a kindergarten 1 programme implementer from a family centre
3.	**City of Split (Split-Dalmatia county)**	2 regional coordinators 4 programme implementers from kindergartens 1 principal of a kindergarten 1 programme implementer from a family centre 1 programme supervisor 1 representative from the regional office of ETTA in Split
4.	**City of Šibenik (Šibenik-Knin county)**	4 programme implementers from kindergarten
5.	**City of Osijek (Osijek-Baranja county)**	6 programme implementers from kindergartens 1 representative from the regional office of ETTA in Osijek
6.	**City of Vinkovci/Vukovar (Vukovar-Srijem county)**	1 regional coordinator 8 programme implementers from kindergartens 2 principals of a kindergarten
7.	**City of Koprivnica (Koprivnica-Križevci county)**	1 representative from a local government 2 programme implementers from kindergartens 2 programme implementers from rehabilitation centre
8.	**Zagreb county**	1 regional coordinator 1 programme implementer from 1 kindergarten
9.	**City of Zagreb**	8 regional coordinators 12 programme implementers from different kindergartens 1 principal of kindergarten 1 programme supervisor 3 UNICEF CO members 2 Representatives of MOSES 1 Representative of MOSPY 2 Experts – programme developers 1 Representative of ETTA in Zagreb
OVERALL		**13 regional coordinators** **58 programme implementers from kindergartens** **6 kindergarten principals** **3 programme implementers from family centres** **5 programme implementers from NGOs and rehabilitation centres** **3 programme supervisors** **1 representative from a local government** **3 representatives from the line ministries** **4 representatives of ETTA** **3 UNICEF CO members** **2 experts – programme developers**

4. **On-line impact questionnaire for parents:** The evaluation team has set-up an **online survey among parents who finished the programme six or more months ago**, in order to reflect on the impact of the programme on their parenting behaviour, attitudes, knowledge, and self-perceptions. Questions were aligned with the impact defined in the newly reconstructed ToC. The survey was administrated by using an online survey interface (Google Forms).

   It has been acknowledged that there are **data collection limitations** in this respect, primarily as at the time of data collection there is **no unified dataset with contact details of parents**. These

contacts remain only in the archives of implementers on the level of involved implementing institutions. Having that in mind, contact details of parents were gathered through the network of regional coordinators who invited implementers in their region to collect these contact details in a unified spreadsheet prepared by the evaluation team for easier data assembling. Alongside this procedure, another direct procedure was employed. Active link of the survey, with supporting instructions, presentation of the evaluation process and evaluation team and contacts was distributed by the regional coordinators to programme implementers in their region. Implementers were instructed to forward the online survey link with its instructions to parents whose e-mail contacts were in their databases. In this way, we have managed to use the positive benefits of prior contact that programme implementers had with parents in motivating them to respond to the survey.

No strong predictions were set on the structure of sample of parents with this impact survey, due to **three identified risks**. **Firstly,** during the inception phase, the level of existing email contacts of involved parents was unknown. **Secondly,** the procedures for collecting these contacts relied on voluntary cooperation of regional coordinators and implementers to provide the evaluation team with this data. **Thirdly,** even in case these two risks would be mitigated, it is known that this type of survey can generate rather low response rates, especially when administrated long after the end of the intervention.

However, recognizing these risks, the evaluation team decided that answering EQs related to impact can be done only by administrating the survey of this kind, regardless of its limitations. Sample of parents that was collected through online survey consists of overall **203 respondents with 192 of them taking part in GuT and 11 of them in GuT Plus programme.**

Sensitivity to human rights, gender and equity

In line with UN and UNICEF's focus on human rights, gender and equity, the evaluation design and conclusions were guided by paying attention to these aspects on two levels:

- With regard to designing evaluation methodology, enabling in turn to capture insights also related to GuT Plus programme and to pay attention to devise a field work plan which would have a solid regional representation in the sample, as discussed above.
- With regard to use human rights, gender and equity perspective in making assessment throughout the presented analysis. This was achieved in all evaluation criteria as a horizontal approach, paying special attention to capture all aspects of the programme design and implementation which would support its focus on securing and elevating human rights, gender and equity.

Methodological limitations

Terms of Reference have identified **four groups of methodological limitations** to conduct this evaluation assignment. The evaluation team has noted these constraints and paid appropriate attention in mitigating them in the evaluation methodology. The summary of these mitigation measures are outlined in the table below.

Table 5: Limitations and mitigation measures

Limitation identified by TOR	Mitigation measure proposed by the evaluation team

• **Limited data/information on parenting behavioural practices and children's outcomes** The major limitations of the evaluation are limited data/information on parenting long term behavioural practices and information on children's outcomes, meaning once when children leave kindergarten programmes. However, this can be mitigated by organising focus groups discussions and/or in-depth interviews with parents who were involved in programmes. This mitigation strategy will be further discussed and agreed with the evaluation team. Key informant interviews, questionnaire and focus group discussions will be used to compensate for the lack of key M&E data. Broad information gained through conducted internal process evaluations can also be used for mitigating limitations mentioned above.	Focusing on examining long term behavioural practices of parents involved in the programme has been strongly recognized by the evaluation team. For that purpose, an online impact questionnaire has been developed. The rationale behind it is presented in detail on page 23-24. The full questionnaire is also annexed.
• **No documented/explicit results frameworks** Another limitation is that there are no documented/explicit results frameworks or specific documents with theory of change and respective indicators/targets that will allow to discuss clearly defined results of the programme activities. Therefore, an evaluator will be asked to support UNICEF team in reconstructing Theory of Change in the evaluation field preparation phase.	Recognizing the lack of initial programme concept paper in which the intervention will be presented based on either some Logical Framework (LF) or Theory of Change (ToC) model, the evaluation team has in cooperation with UNICEF CO staff retroactively developed an implicit ToC. The presented ToC (page 10-14) captures the evaluators' understanding of how the programme has conceptualized the change it aimed to trigger, both visually and narratively. However, the lack of results framework has also been acknowledged and although reconstructed outputs reflect desired results, they are not followed by a set of corresponding indicators. While this cannot be fully met retrospectively, the field work has envisaged to at least partially reconstruct how different stakeholders perceive 'success' of the programmes in order to elaborate on certain (at least) implicit benchmarks.
• **No mainstreamed gender and equity dimension** When it was initially designed, the programme did not mainstream gender and equity dimension. The programme was initiated within the previous UNICEF Country Programme Cycle (2007-2011) when equity approach in designing programme activities was not considered as a leading principle. Furthermore, due to identified lack of relevant parenting support services, the programme was developed to provide universal service for all parents.	Lack of explicit equity dimension would be met by reconstructing implicit equity practices throughout the programmes (such as already initially recognized special approach paid to CWDs, social assistance beneficiaries, national minorities, as well as fathers who are underrepresented participants of the programmes).

• **Limited applicability of evaluation criteria questions for Growing Up Together PLUS** The proposed evaluation criteria questions cannot be fully applied for GT PLUS programme because the implementation of this programme started in 2014. Therefore, the evaluation team will be requested to develop appropriate modifications to the suggested questions in order to ensure a meaningful review of the GT PLUS Programme.	The methodology for this evaluation was developed in a way to be equally applicable to both programmes – GuT and GuT PLUS and the evaluation team does not find this as serious limitation. Where needed, generated data will be presented separately for these two sub-programmes.

8. Ethical considerations

While designing the evaluation methodology, the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation were consulted and the following approaches were utilized:

- As already stated in the Offer made by the evaluation team, during the selection of ET members it was taken into account that there is no potential or real conflict of interest since none of the involved evaluation team members have in any way contributed to design or implementation of the two UNICEF programmes subject to this evaluation;

- The ET has respected all procedures and methodology choices outlined in this report and has completed the evaluation as agreed with the UNICEF;

- Information has be analysed based on reliable data and observations and findings reported accurately and impartially, secured by representative sample of target groups involved, internal harmonization in protocol for conducting IDIs and FGDs, detailed note keeping and if consented audio recordings. Finally, multiple points of quality controls both internally among the team members and by UNICEF were embedded in the Work plan;

- All involved evaluators who have conducted primary data collection are experienced social science researchers who have undertaken basic ethics training within their university degrees, with ample application of these ethical standards in earlier research assignments.

- Before each IDI or FGD, the interviewer/focus group facilitator has explained the purpose of the evaluation, process and duration of focus groups/interviews. Moreover, to ensure that all participants can make informed decision about their participation, the ET has obtained their written consent. For that purpose, special consent forms were designed (please consult Annex 4), detailing all rights of the interviewees.

- Online questionnaire has also secured confidentiality of respondents and their collected contact details were not used for any other but research purposes within this evaluation.

9. Evaluation findings

9.1 Relevance

1. To what extent are programmes aligned with the government policy priorities regarding family and community-based services?
2. Are these programmes relevant to the actual needs of the beneficiaries, both parents/primary caregivers and professionals who work with them, as well as other professionals working with parents and children in the implementing institutions?
3. Do the programmes respond to the needs of parents (e.g. regarding parents' gender, economic status, employment, having a child with disability etc.)?
4. How initial programme designers were selected, and to what extent is their expertise related to the themes of intervention?
5. In which way did the programme use network of other UNICEF country offices and/or other international practices in organising parenting support services in designing the programme? Have evaluations of these types of interventions been used in programme development?
6. To what degree is the programme coherent/compatible with other similar national/regional or local initiatives directed towards parenting support?

With regard to programme's relevance, this section assesses its **alignment with international and national policy documents and trends** related to community services directed towards parents to fulfil their parental roles; **the level of responsiveness of the programme's design to the needs of the main target groups** (i.e. parents and preschool teachers and professionals); **appropriateness of the selection of programme's developers**; **potential synergies with similar programmes developed by other UNICEF COs or other existing international practices worldwide; as well as its coherence with other similar programmes implemented in Croatia.**

It can be concluded that the programme was developed by employing **two interlinked problem frames** which emerged during 2006, 2007 and 2008, relying both on the UNICEF Country Programme 2007-2011, and its programme component of early child development (ECD), their 2006 campaign 'First three are the most important!', as well as new research findings related to needs and current behaviours of parents and preschool institutions.

The first problem frame was related to the **emerging new agenda around the concept of 'positive parenting'**. According to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, while the child is entitled to care, security and an upbringing that is respectful of his/her personality and individuality, parents are **entitled to support by the State Parties in fulfilling their parental function** (Article 27). However, in practice, parental support programmes to assist them in coping with their parental role and responsibilities are seen as a **rather new trend in Europe**, **gaining more importance over the last two decades.**

As a more substantial step forward, in 2006 the **Council of Europe has** published **Recommendation 19**, encouraging the Member States to promote and put in place policies and measures relating to 'positive parenting'[5], including a release of supporting guidelines towards parents and experts working with them. The document was **translated and published in Croatia by the Ministry of Family,**

[5] 'Positive parenting' is defined as parental behaviour based on the best interests of the child that is nurturing, empowering, non-violent and provides recognition and guidance which involves setting of boundaries to enable the full development of the child.

Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity in 2008, which contributed that the theme of parenting support more prominently reached the national agenda. This new focus was **part of the broader change within family policy**, **expanding the attention away from being only concerned with socially unacceptable parenting** (i.e. child abuse and neglect) **towards the concept of 'socially desirable' parenting.**

Among the basic pillars of positive parenting - advocating nurturing, empowering, non-violent, as well as parenting based on recognition and guidance – the aspect of 'non-violence' is the most prone to empirical research, resulting in generating new evidence in this regard prior to programme development. Based on the interviews with the UNICEF CO and the programme's authors, as a highly relevant aspect in problem framing was a research showing **still high prevalence of parental behaviour not always being in the best interest of the child, although Croatia in 2003 was one of the first countries which legally prohibited corporal punishment of children.** Based on a **survey conducted in 2007**, commissioned by the UNICEF CO at the beginning of their 2007-2011 mandate, conducted on the sample of 1400 parents of 1-year-old children, it was found that a third of the parents reported hitting child's bottom, and a quarter the hand in the previous 7 days, while over a half shouted at the child. Only half of the parents always attended to the crying baby, while the other half would leave a baby to cry because they did not want to spoil him/her.

Within the same survey, **the parents' needs for professionals' advice and information on child care and upbringing** was among the most common answers when asked what would help them the most in their everyday care for their child, while **many parents also mentioned educational activities for parents and children, as well as support from other parents**. There was also a significant proportion of parents who had 'no one' as a source of informational or practical support. This was i**n line with previous research recognizing the need for various types of support** (e.g. practical, informational, emotional, material) **of parents to their parenting role from informal networks, as well as educational, health and social services** (Pećnik & Raboteg-Šarić, 2005).

This overall focus on parenting support was also reflected in the ***National plan of activities for rights and interests of children 2006-2012***. At the level of goals, the document explicitly supported 'developing culture of responsible and competent parenthood and to develop attitudes on parenting as a role that has to be learnt as a part of lifelong learning'. It even formulated 'obligation' to organize educational programmes for parents and to develop 'schools for parents' for the beneficiaries of the social centres. The strategic document has also put an emphasis on preventive programmes to end violence. Model to achieve this is 'interdisciplinary', although without operational aspects. Similar orientation on positive parenting is maintained in the new ***National strategy for rights of children in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020,*** where additional stress in put on measuring and evaluating outcomes and impacts of these interventions and with special focus on vulnerable group of parents, such as Roma, parents with children with disabilities and parents at lower economic standard.

Besides the problem being framed related to parents and their competencies, the programme was also seen as **a mean to deal with the need of preschool teachers and professionals to collaborate with parents as a part of their everyday professional work**. Croatian legal framework regulating preschool education at different places directly encourages collaboration of preschool staff with parents. **Law on preschool upbringing and education** states that '…a preschool institution is obliged to complement family upbringing with openness to establish active collaboration with parents and

child's direct surrounding.' (Article 16, OG 10/97, 107/07 and 94/13). **Programme direction for upbringing and education of preschool children** (Herald of Ministry of education and culture, 7-8/91) from 1991, besides the key role of securing optimum conditions for child's development, as the second goal of all preschool institutions states the need '…to offer support to parents in their care for safety and upbringing of their child'.

Furthermore, **State pedagogic standard for preschool upbringing and education** (OG 63/08 and 90/10) positions 'programmes with parents' among various potential 'special programmes' to be offered. It also explicitly states that 'other duties' of any preschool teacher and especially pedagogues and phycologists is among other roles also 'collaboration and counselling of parents'. ***National plan of activities for rights and interests of children 2006-2012*** has also pointed out to 'organize education of pedagogues for work with parents' and later ***National strategy for rights of children in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020*** *on 'lifelong learning' of professionals in the educational system*. The models of how to fulfil these duties are **left to each preschool institution to decide upon** within their **given space of professional and institutional autonomy.**

As UNICEF in the initial step of programme development consulted with ETTA, **they have jointly developed (and ETTA has later administrated and analysed) a survey conducted among preschool institutions in Croatia to gather insights on their current practices of collaboration with parents and programmes being offered, as well as to explicitly gather their level of interest to take part in a new programme** for parents to be developed by UNICEF, in cooperation with ETTA and external ECD experts.

Need for a programme – implementers' perspective

'I will finally do something that is a role of a psychologist. '

'A pedagogue is usually somewhere behind, nobody sees or hears him/her, but is always guilty of everything, with this programme he/she can be useful, doing something fulfilling and strongly related to his/her profession. '

'Preschool education did not fulfil the need to work with parents, but has fully focused on direct work with children.'

Statements of the programme implementers collected during the conducted focus groups

Based on 211 responses, covering 877 preschool locations, 34.343 enrolled children and 5.328 preschool teachers and professionals, the results have shown that **only 13,7% of preschool institutions offer 'School for parents'** as a more structured interaction with parents and in only 1,1% of cases for parents whose children do not attend kindergarten. On the scale from 1-5, the kindergartens have **on the average graded their interest to take part in this new programme with 4,22**, with the highest interest being recorded in Zagreb (4,64) and the lowest in Osijek region (4,11).

The need of the preschool teachers and professionals to become better equipped with competencies to interact with parents through a structured programme have also been **strongly confirmed in the focus groups (N= 88) conducted during the field work within the scope of this evaluation.** Some of their statements are highlighted in a text box on the right. Furthermore, some of them have also pointed out that **during their formal academic education they were not offered with any tools with regard to collaboration with parents**. Instead, their education was fully focused on work with children, where this programme has the capacity to fill in this gap.

Among the interviewed stakeholders, there was a **jointly shared view on relevance of the selected authors who developed the programme** - ECD expert Mrs. dr.sc. Pećnik and a preschool psychologist Mrs. Starc, allowing in that way for a needed synergy between academic perspective of Mrs. Pećnik and a career-long experience of working in a preschool institution with ample experience in working with parents by Mrs. Starc. The UNICEF CO has also especially highlighted that their interest in selecting the appropriate experts was focused on finding partners who were willing to use

contemporary approaches based on collaborative, rather that solely educational function of the programme, and it was seen as especially relevant that Mrs. Pećnik was a member of the group on a behalf of the Council of Europe who directly contributed to the development of CoE Rec(2006) 19 on positive parenting.

Appropriateness of the programme's concept was also **reinforced during the conducted focus groups with programme implementers** who have stressed its **uniqueness in establishing non-hierarchical relationship between the programme implementers and parents, where the content of the programme is not imposed on parents.** In theoretical frameworks, this usually refers to the '**empowerment model'** of parenting support which, **unlike the 'deficit model',** acknowledges the competences that parents already have and enables them to build on it and share it with the knowledge of the professionals on a partnership basis (Pećnik and Ivanić Blažina 2011: 5).

Furthermore, programme implementers have the **most usually described the programme as being 'systematic' and 'structured'**, where none of the 11 offered workshops can or should stand alone. Many implementers have also described the concept of the programme as providing 'security', specially commending the idea to mix both preschool teachers with pedagogues and psychologists in implementation teams. The authors have also confirmed that developing a highly structured programme was **in line with the original concept to offer it as a universal service by using existing state-owned preschool institutions and where they can be implemented with some additional training.** Yet, the consulted implementers have also stated that the programme **allows for a certain level of freedom to adjust it to their individual specific expertise, letting them to 'give a part of themselves', as well as to adjust to the particular needs of each group of parents**. It was also often highlighted that the programme successfully **balances theory and practices** and is **rich in real life examples**. Some implementers have also highlighted that the structure of the workshops strongly benefits by **dividing the group in smaller groups** of 3-4 parents for some exercises which facilitates their opening up to the group.

Although new approaches towards providing structured expert assistance to parents in their parental role has been emerging across other European countries, in the phase of programme development, **the UNICEF CO did not directly consult their design and implementation models**. The UNICEF CO has stated this resource was not accessible to them and in their understanding there were no similar programmes in their more direct regional surrounding.

With regard to **other existing programs in Croatia directed towards parents of preschool children**, the reflections on the scope and content of the offered programmes at that time of programme development were collected through a survey administered by ETTA, showing **rather low presence of these programmes in preschool institutions across Croatia**. Also, these programmes were more based on educational, not so much workshop model. It was also confirmed through the focus groups

with programme implementers they are **usually unaware of any other offered structured programme**, where some of the implementers have stated that **prior to engagement in GuT they would have developed by themselves some content for parents, usually without systematic monitoring or evaluation.** Limited cases of other more structured programmes have been noted, but none of them being present over longer periods of time or having wider reach than locally.

Once these discussed inputs with regard to the need to develop a new structured programme were fully gathered, the project developers have put together **a project proposal** assembling relevant situation analysis and justification, general programme concept, as well as a four step plan of action, starting from developing a pilot programme, initial education for the first programme implementers, internal evaluation and finalizing the 'programme package', including supporting materials. These activities have covered a timeframe from June 2008 to September 2009. At that time, but also afterwards, **the programme did not develop corresponding Theory of Change or any other Results-based framework which would elaborate dynamics of programme's further development beyond its initial setting up stage, along with potential risks to its implementation and sustainability. The project proposal also did not elaborate commonly agreed success indicators, including desired rhythm of programme expansion across the country, as well as financial implications and resources needed for both implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation. This has resulted in its 'organic' development, yet with a notion shared both among the authors and UNICEF CO to make it available across the country as wide as possible.**

As **the programme has from its start relied on an active involvement of ETTA**, the UNICEF CO has **in January 2009 signed with the Agency a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was valid until the end of 2009**. It asked from ETTA to commit to offer GuT as a part of their regular programmes of professional development for preschool teachers and professionals and to involve 'as many as possible' new individuals, issuing also formal certification for implementing the programmes upon the completion of the training.

Although not explicitly guided by a strategic programme document, based on all conducted interviews with involved stakeholders, the evaluators hold that **the programme has been directed from the perspective of continuous insurance of its high quality and relevance to the target groups**, **not only its expansion.** This is also visible in the **elaborate models of project monitoring and internal evaluation,** presented in detail in the Efficiency section, which have **regularly enabled abundant information on programme effectiveness and relevance for the target groups**, **resulting in a set of modifications beyond initial corrections based on the piloting among the first 24 involved kindergartens**.

Examples of these adaptations include the following, securing implicitly in this way the focus on equity

- designing a separate programme ('Growing up Together Plus') for parents with children with disabilities;
- introducing Parents' Clubs as a form of continuous support after the end of 11 workshops;
- recent development of a set of 4 workshops intended solely for fathers (Fathers' Clubs) stemming from the observation they are an underrepresented group in comparison to the level of involved mothers, securing gender equality;

- development of a third sub-programme for parents of lower economic standards and lower education level, usually at multiple socio-economic risks, in collaboration with Centres for social welfare ('Growing up Together and us').

Although the programme was **originally developed as the universal programme for different profiles of parents**, the **internal monitoring data substantiate that the majority of involved parents are with higher educational statu**s (47% with BA level and 18% with MA), as well as that t**he mothers are more commonly represented** (90,6%), which were both **relevant insights in these programme adaptations.** On the top of that, as stated by the implementers during the focus groups, as a frequent barrier to access to the service is often also **a lack of organized care for children during the time of the workshop**.

Furthermore, **special attention in securing programme's relevance was put on the decision to develop a separate programme for a group of parents with children with disabilities**, with the rationale this would be beneficial for both groups of parents. As confirmed by the interviews with both

UNICEF CO and programme developers, **this decision was made primarily based on the feedback of involved implementers on the ground** which have over the years increasingly noting a decrease in programme effectiveness when having these two groups of parents together. This was also **strongly substantiated during the conducted focus groups with programme implementers (N=88)** who almost without exception hold that based on their direct experience of group dynamics during the workshops, **the decision to separate these groups was an appropriate one.** Their direct observation is that the parents of children with disabilities have **'different' problems** and **can drift away from the group** when listening to the problems of parents with children with regular development, usually seen as too 'trivial' to theirs. On the other hand, parents of children with regular development can 'close' after listening to issues parents of children with disabilities regularly face.

During the course of the field work, it was however noted that this decision to form a separate programme for parents of children with disabilities is **not supported by ETTA and the Ministry of science, education and sport**, but is in contrast seen as a **discriminative practice**. However, it was also noted that **some ETTA advisers were on the contrary supportive of this decision**. As a logistical way forward, in order to verify formally programmes by the Ministry, it was asked from each preschool institution offering the GuT Plus programmes that they also offer regular GuT programme, leaving parents freedom to choose. However, it is unknown how many parents have actually used this opportunity.

In conclusion to programme's relevance, it can be stated that **the programme emerged after a mixture of different types of inputs**, including responsiveness to the emerging international trends on positive parenting, strategic focus of UNICEF CO in 2007-2011 mandate to the issues of ECD and parental support, needs assessment among both parents and preschool teachers and professionals, coupled with motivation to decrease still high observed prevalence of corporal punishment among parents in Croatia.

UNICEF CO has **managed to launch the programme in cooperation with ETTA**, which as a state agency **has a mandate to offer professional development to professionals within the educational system**. At that time, ETTA was **opened and focused to offer new structured support to preschool teachers**

and professionals related to collaboration with parents, enabling in this way exercising mutual interests.

Although **grounded in evidence-based needs analysis**, programme development l**acked a comprehensive logical model, including indicators, time frame for action, responsibilities of all involved stakeholders and risk analysis**. Regardless of this lack of elaboration on the long term implementation model, the programme can be **assessed as highly relevant for both target groups – parents and preschool teachers and professionals**. This is based on the observed success to effectively put in place orientation towards 'empowerment model' vs. 'deficiency model', where parents become active partners in workshops, not only subjects of education. It also successfully **balanced highly structured content with freedom left to individual implementers** to complement it with their expertise. As judged by the implementers themselves, by envisaging a **team of implementers** delivering the workshops, it provides a feeling of increased security to all implementers, in this way also dividing workload and enabling professional synergies.

Finally, due to the programme developers who were internally motivated to provide a programme of a high quality, the programme has gone through **multiple adaptations**, which all can be **assessed as appropriate** and **in function of programme's overall relevance towards parents,** especially regarding specific needs of fathers, parents at multiple socio-economic risks, and health status of their children and thus consequently to its potential for increased effectiveness**.**

9.2 Effectiveness

1. To what extent have the programme objectives, captured in three corresponding outputs, been achieved? To what extent did these outputs contribute to the outcome of the programme as presented in ToC?
2. What were the major factors (strengths and weaknesses of the programmes) that influenced achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
3. What external factors (e.g. regional, gender and cultural aspects and aspects of institutional characteristics) affected the programme's effectiveness?
4. Was an appropriate combination of tools and approaches used in the implementation of the programmes?
5. To what extent did programmes contribute to the increasing demand and recognition for parenting support services among parents, professionals working with parents, expert community, as well as decision makers (at both national and local level)?

With regard to programme's effectiveness, this section assesses the level of achieved programme's goals; the key benefits for the target groups; the major factors influencing (non)achievement of the programme goals, with an outlook to the degree to which the programmes have contributed to the increase in demand and recognition for parenting support services among all stakeholders. The section is organized around the key identified goals[6], and corresponding activities, outputs and outcomes.

[6] The third programme outcome - which relates to the capacities of the key duty bearers to ensure programme sustainability – fully overlaps with the criterion of sustainability so it will be answered under that section.

Effectiveness with regard to raising competencies of programme implementers – preschool teachers and professionals – for supporting parents in their parental role

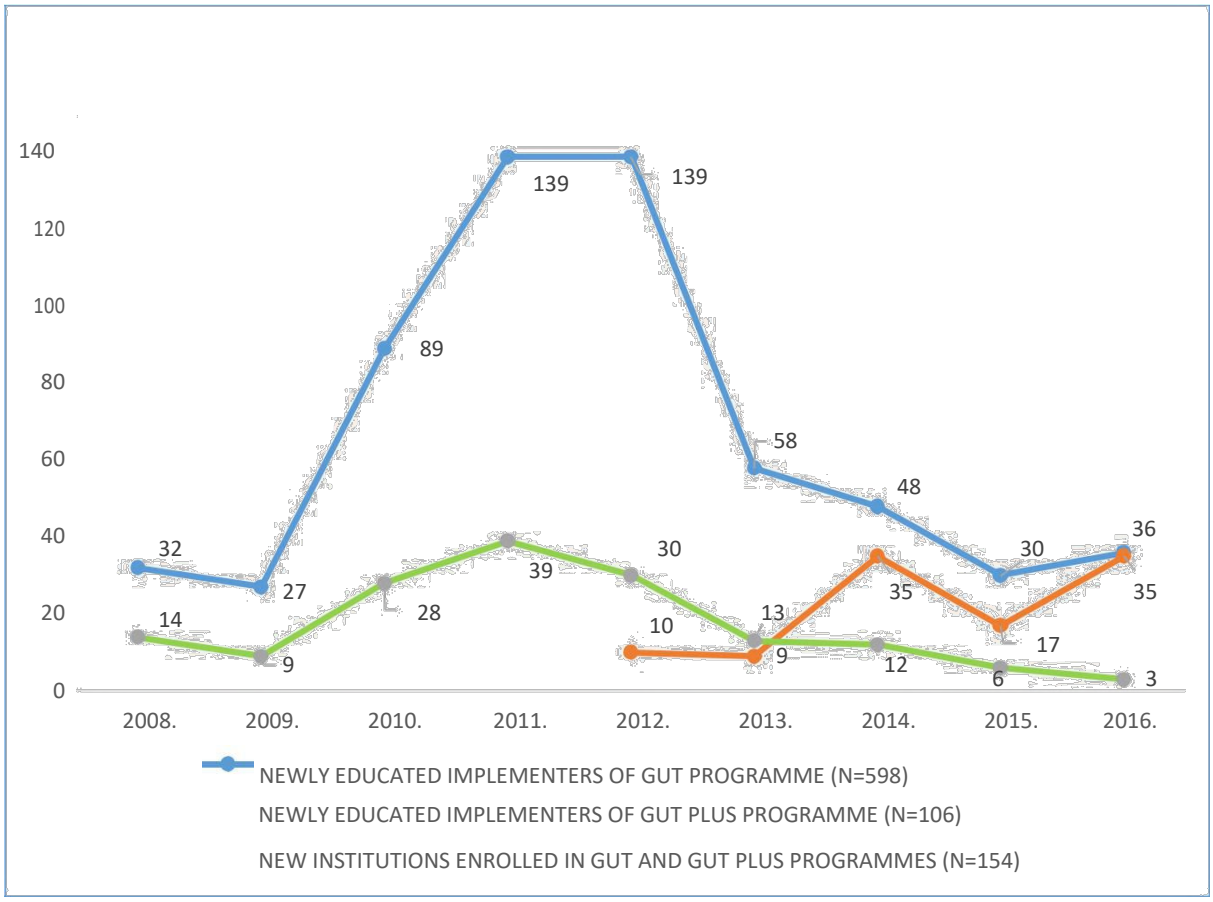
As noted earlier, **the original project proposal did not comprehensively state all programme goals, results and indicators, so they were reconstructed in collaboration with UNICEF CO during the inception phase and are now presented in the newly developed Theory of Change model**. Based on this model, the first programme's goal and corresponding output relates to the competencies of programme implementers, formulated as following:

Professionals involved in ECD within education and social protection sectors have strengthened capacities for supporting parents in providing their parental role in the best interest of the child.

Based on the programme's internal monitoring database, as presented in Figure 3, from 2008 – 2016, **in total 598 implementers have finished a training for GuT and 106 also for GuT Plus programme**. Due to the lack of programme indicators which would determine the level of a desired reach, it is possible to asses this output only in relative terms, suggesting it was a function of given opportunities in terms of the available funds to organize new cycles of trainings, as well as demands from preschool teachers and professionals.

Since the peak in 2011 and 2012, the number of newly trained implementers is decreasing. As explained during the interview with the programme authors, this was a **deliberate decision to shift attention from future expansion to the quality of work of already operating implementers,** as it was increasingly visible they need additional support, such as supervision or regional peer meetings.

Figure 3: Number of new implementers of GuT and GuT Plus programmes that took part in initial education and institutions enrolled in both programmes



In order to become GuT or GuT Plus implementers, the preschool teachers and professionals have to successfully finish a **standardized initial training and evaluation seminars**. The concept of education puts a **heavy emphasis on practical aspects and workshop simulations**, which were during the focus groups (N=88) especially valued among the participants.

Out of the total number of educated participants (N=622), **36 (5,8%) have not implemented a single workshop cycle**, which can be asses as a **rather low percentage, suggesting this education prepares them well to become confident in facilitating workshops with parents**. As discovered during the field work, **reasons for the observed drop out are usually of the objective nature** (such as, maternity leave, change of work, retirement, not enough parents to form a group of a minimum size).

During the conducted focus groups with programme implementers, they have also **especially valued the fact that the programme concept sets up an interdisciplinary team of 2-3 members**, allowing synergies of experiences, division of workload and supporting self-confidence.

In line with the guiding programme principle that the programme is **voluntary, both for new implementation institution to enrol, and on the individual level of preschool teachers and professionals to apply for initial education**, it was noted during the focus groups with the implementers that they are **strongly intrinsically motivated** to take part in the programme.

When asked about **the key competencies gained** from taking part in the programme, preschool teachers and professionals stated they have gained **listening skills; increased professional self-esteem, and developed facilitation skills for group workshops and interactions with adults.**

Furthermore, when the implementers are parents or grandparents themselves, they have stated they also **benefited on a personal level, questioning their previous parenting approaches.**

Many interviewed implementers also pointed out to **unexpected positive effect of the programme among the implementers related to new team work competencies**, usable also in other environments and tasks. This included new synergies between the preschool teachers and professionals, as well as among the professionals themselves (pedagogues and psychologists).

Reflecting on their **changed relationship with parents**, they emphasized that the programme facilitated the change towards their relationship with parents based on **the principle of equality, which often resulted in parents' higher willingness to ask for further expert support, and increased respect and trust towards the institution.**

As mentioned earlier, the programme has after its initial years started to **introduce a set of supporting activities for certified implementers** in order **to assure the quality of their work with parents**. These included **intervision** and later also **supervision**, bi-annual **regional meetings** organized by a network of 19 regional coordinators selected among the most active and motivated implementers, as well as a **yearly national conference.** During 2015 and 2016, through **the EU project 'SUPPORT – Systematic Support for parenting'**, implemented by NGO 'Portić' from Rijeka in partnership with GuT Centre and NGO 'Step forward' from Daruvar, the programme benefited from educating 13 new supervisors who then provided supervision to 94 programme implementers across 5 counties and 13 cities. Within the same project, a new document comprehensively outlining quality standards and indicators has also been developed, serving as a self-assessment tool for both involved implementers and institutions.

With regard to the **climate of the institution** in which the programme is being implemented, seen as an enabling/disabling factor for effectiveness, focus groups revealed that **the majority of involved implementers feel supported by their principles and other colleagues not directly involved in GuT implementation**. This is probably the result of the fact that **the programme is voluntary**, which **suits as a filter** to involve only motivated institutions. This is especially evident when a principle is also an implementer of the programme or is even a regional coordinator. However, **in some cases, the implementers did in fact complain on their leadership which is not fully supportive of the programme**, usually related to the fact that the management has changed since the institution's initial enrolment in the programme. **The most usual reason why the leadership objects to the programme's implementation** is related to programme's cost-effectiveness, meaning it targets rather limited number of beneficiaries (parents) and is at the same time intensive in supportive activities, such as regional meetings or supervision, thus putting additional demands on the staff and financial resources of the involved institution.

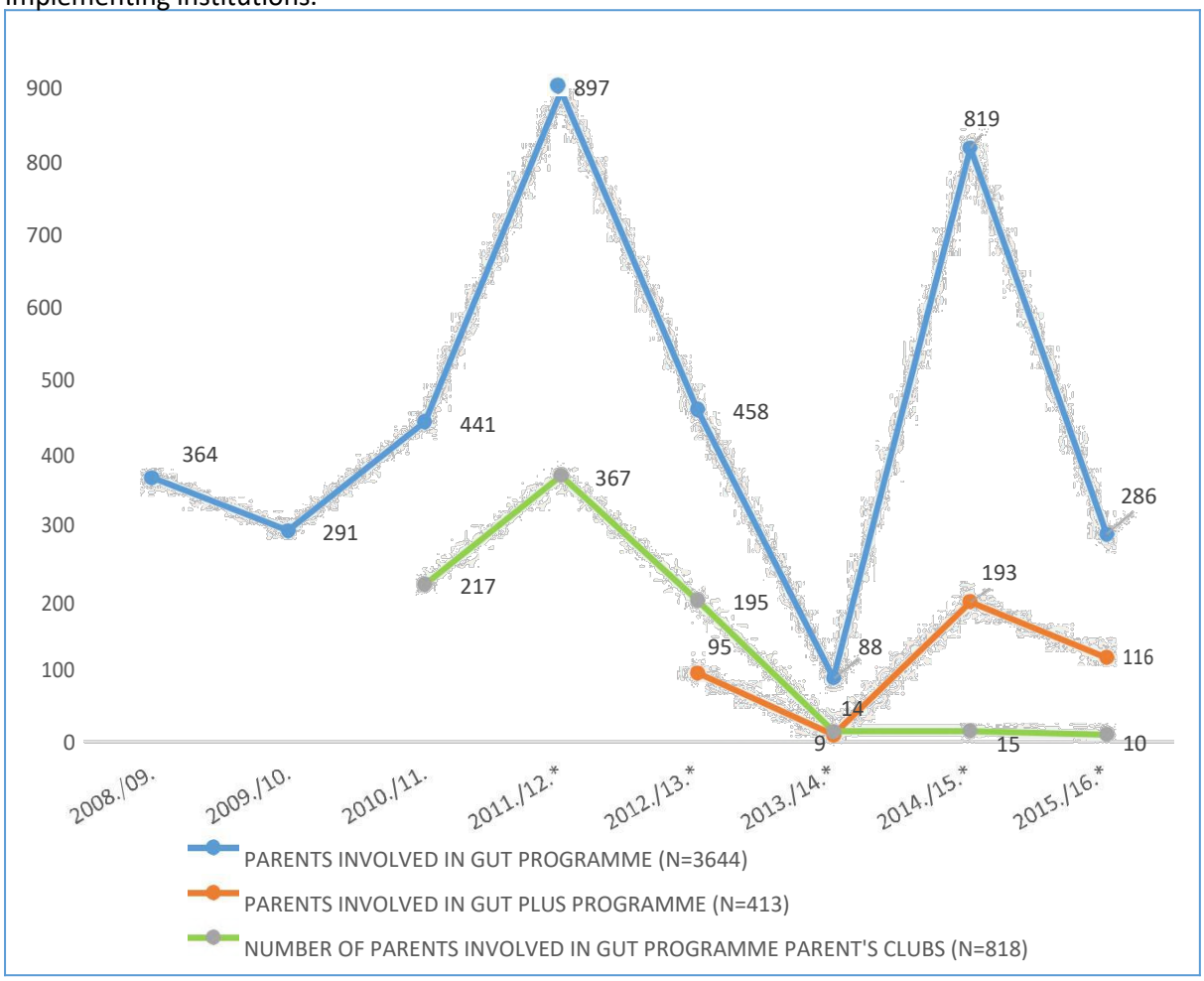
Effectiveness with regard to <u>raising competencies of involved parents</u>

Based on the reconstructed ToC, the second programme's goal and corresponding output relates to the competencies of involved parents, formulated as following:

Parents involved in parenting support programmes have developed or enhanced their competencies for parenting in the best interest of their child/children.

Based on the internal monitoring database of the programme, as presented in Figure 4, from 2008 – 2016, a total of **3.644 parents have took part in GuT programme and 413 in GuT Plus programme**. Drop-out rates are not available, but recording them is planned in the newly designed quality standards and indicators.

Figure 4: Number of parents involved in the GuT and GuT Plus programmes and Parent's Clubs in all implementing institutions.[7]



Although not explicitly stated in programme documents, **many interviewed stakeholders hold that the programme should pay attention to its equal distribution/presence of institutions offering the programmes across the country**. This is based on the notion that parental support programmes are **'rights' which should be offered to all parents**. When the proportion of involved kindergartens was calculated in relation to the total number of state-owned[8] kindergartens across Croatia (Croatian

[7] Data was generated from an internal database provided by the GuT Centre on June 10, 2016. This database represents the most comprehensive source of information on programmes implementation. However, certain data is still not complete due to processes of data collection (data on implemented education is transferred from implementers to regional coordinators and then to GuT Centre) or is not provided to GuT Centre at all. Further on, in years marked with * part of the data on the number of parents involved is missing and only data on educational cycles is provided. In order to provide complete overview of the implementation scope, estimations of group sizes were calculated based on the average number of parents from years where data is complete.

[8] It should be noted that preschool education in Croatia is also offered in private-owned kindergartens and religious facilities, although the programmes have so far not been implemented in these institutions, so they were left out of comparison.

Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Reports, 2016[9]), it was found that, **on average,** the programmes have been implemented **in 36% of Croatian kindergartens,** although with **regional disparities** (Table6).

Among the state-owned kindergartens, as a somewhat unexpected finding, the proportion ranges from no included kindergartens in the programme in Lika-Senj County to 65% of included kindergartens in City of Zagreb and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

Table6: Regional coverage of involved kindergartens at the county level

County	**% from the total state-owned kindergartens in each county**
City of Zagreb	65%
Primorje-Gorski Kotar County	65%
Zagreb County	61,11%
Šibenik-Knin County	57,14%
Vukovar-Srijem County	50%
Karlovac County	50%
Brod-Posavina County	50%
Istria County	42,31%
Sisak-Moslavina County	28,57%
Split-Dalmatia County	27,5%
Osijek-Baranja County	26,67%
Međimurje County	20%
Bjelovar-Bilogora County	18,18%
Zadar County	17,24%
Požega-Slavonija County	16,67%
Virovitica-Podravina County	16,67%
Dubrovnik-Neretva County	16,67%
Varaždin County	10%
Koprivnica-Križevci County	9,09%
Krapina-Zagorje County	5,88%
Lika-Senj County	0%
Average of the Republic of Croatia	**36%**

[9] This source provided regional data of the number of kindergartens in Croatia including also all their branches, so the evaluation team had to request a different format of data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics which then suited as a base for calculation of regional presence of the programme in the state-owned kindergartens.

During the interview with the representatives of the GuTC (programme authors), it was stated there are **generally two main reasons for the observed regional disparities**. In some kindergartens (usually small ones with only a few groups of children) there are no professionals (pedagogues, psychologists) and having at least one in the implementation team is required. As the second reason, although efforts are continuingly made to promote the programmes, it is highlighted some institutions are still not familiar with the existence of programmes and its benefits. UNICEF CO has also stated that one specific measure to secure equal availability of the programmes across Croatia was the earlier presented initiative to offer them through family centres in each county.

With regard to the effects of the programme for parents, in the impact survey administrated by the evaluation team (N=192), on the scale from 1-5, **the parents included in GuT programme have graded with the average grade of 4,35 the level to which their needs for expert assistance in parenting have been met with the programme**. As the total number of parents who attended **GuT Plus workshops** was rather limited in the sample (N=11), this data is only tentative, **although suggesting somewhat lower average grade with regard to the same question (3,91)**. Similarly, when asked about **the overall satisfaction with the workshops, on the scale form 1-5, the average grades were 4,63 for GuT and 4,0 for GuT Plus parents.**

The analysis of the **internal evaluation measures** was also conducted as a part of this evaluation process in order to establish the effectiveness of the implemented programmes with regard to its influence on parental self-efficacy in parenting, quality of interactions with a child and parents' beliefs about parenting. Internal evaluation measures were part of the programme's design with the aim to measure changes in the abovementioned dimensions of parenting. In order to measure potential benefits that parents could have experienced from taking part in the programmes, evaluation measures were administrated **before and after the workshops**. For 244 respondents that took part in GuT programme, **additional data was collected 6 months after the end of the workshops** in order to capture the long-term effects of the programme.

This dataset was provided to the evaluation team by the programme authors and consists of the majority of parents' population that took part in the GuT programme over the last 8 years (estimated total number of involved parents is around 3600). Even though this data is provided by the authors of the programme, its analysis was done independently by the evaluation team. Authors of the programme have performed a similar analysis of the data for various purposes (presentations at the scientific conferences, regular monitoring of the programme's effectiveness and planning quality-related improvements of the programme), but **the analysis within the scope of this evaluation took now into consideration all data collected so far**. This kind of monitoring data represents a strong basis for making evidence-based conclusions on the programme effectiveness with regard to parents.

With respect to the GuT programme, the sample of parents that were included in a database consists of **2114 datasets**, collected from 2010 until 2016. As already noted, **for 224 respondents, additional data was collected 6 months after their involvement in the workshops**. Data was collected from 214 institutions in which the programmes were implemented (kindergartens, family centres and NGOs). Out of those who provided information on their gender (N=1889), **90,6% (N=1711) were mothers and 9,4% (N=178) fathers**. This confirms a strong prevalence of mothers, also highlighted through the focus groups with programme implementers (N= 88). The structure of respondents suggests they were

predominantly educated on the B.A. level (47,9%), additional 18,3% on the M.A. level, with remaining 33,8% having high school level of education.

Evaluation measures included:

Parents' beliefs on parenting questionnaire (composed of 7 separate items regarding parents' common beliefs on parent-child interaction, reactions to certain child's behaviours, and attitudes towards corporal punishment);

Parenting self-efficacy scale (a 5-item measure asking parents to give self-assessments regarding their parenting competences and level of self-efficacy in parental role);

Interactions with a child scale (consisted of 4 items where parents were asked to assess frequency of 2 appropriate/desirable and 2 inappropriate/non desirable interactions with a child in a week that preceded the evaluation implementation).

To examine potential differences in observed measures between **pre, post and after situation** (before implemented workshops, immediately after and six months after), **inferential statistical methods** were used. Since the measurements were administered in a form of repeated measures (the same respondents, paired with codes, were asked repeatedly to provide their answers), **paired sample t-test and repeated measures analysis of variance were performed.**

Results revealed **significant decline in parents' agreement with inappropriate beliefs on parenting** after the programme workshops. More precisely, the parents reported higher responsiveness on various child's needs: to be more active in child's preparation for potential unpleasant event or to be more attentive in cases of child's cry. They tended to be more aware of importance of setting boundaries to children and more prone to believe that showing positive affection will not immediately spoil their children. Parents also showed lower degree of intentions to strongly confront children in order to 'break' their stubbornness or defiance or to corporally punish them even in cases when child's behaviours are life-threatening. Additionally, they became more aware of the fact that even youngest children require explanations when something is forbidden.

Analysis has also shown that **parents reported significantly higher parenting self-efficacy after taking part in the workshops**[10]. This result can be **an indicator of programme's role in reassuring positive parenting self-esteem**. Confirming this finding, the focus groups with programme implementers (N=88) indicated that during workshops parents receive positive feedback on good and quality practices they employ in their parenting, as well as suggestions for improvement of practices that they do not feel comfortable with. In this particular aspect of parental identity, a group of similar parents that also take part in the workshops serves as a benchmark through which parents establish that there is no 'perfect parent' and that the other members of the group have their own difficulties as well as solutions to various challenges in everyday parenting.

In context of **the long term parental perceptions on their parenting self-efficacy**, for 224 parents, data was also collected 6 months after they were involved in the workshops. On this particular sample, results show that there is **no significant difference in perceived parenting self-efficacy immediately**

[10] M_{pre}= 2,87 (SD=0,445); M_{post}= 3,13 (SD=0,418); t=25,774; df=1868; p<0,01

after the workshops implementation and 6 months later, meaning perceived parenting competences **remained on the same level** as they were just after the end of workshop implementation[11]. This gives significant amount of evidence for the long term effects of the programme on parental self-perceptions.

If we take into consideration the **gender of the parent** when analysing parental self-perceptions, performed analysis of variance shows a significant main effect regarding whether these self-perceptions are given by mothers or fathers. We can conclude that **the workshops equally improve parental self-perceptions of mothers and fathers**, **but mothers generally tend to have higher self-assessment regarding their parenting competencies than fathers, before as well as after the workshop implementation**[12]. Additionally, when it comes to **parental educational background**, results show that there is **no significant difference in influence of the workshops on parental self-perceptions for parents of different education**. In other words, education does not have a moderating effect on the positive impact of involvement in the workshops; this positive impact tends to be equal for all groups of parents regardless their education[13].

With regard to parents' reports on appropriate and inappropriate interactions with a child, programme also shows significant influence. Results clearly indicate **significant increase of appropriate interactions and decrease of inappropriate interactions with a child immediately after taking part in the workshops**[14]. Parents reported on **employing appropriate parental practices more often** (e.g. involvement in activities that are both interesting for parent and a child, helping a child to solve her/his problems, etc.), as well as decreased occurrence of inappropriate practices such as yelling, corporal punishment and other inadequate correctional measures.

In the context of **long term changes**, results show that 6 months after taking part in the workshops, **the level of inappropriate interactions with a child remains on the level that was reported just after the workshops implementation**[15], **but frequency of appropriate interactions with a child returns to a level that was established before the workshops**[16]. It can thus be concluded that **the workshops have significant positive long-term influence on diminishing inappropriate parental behavioural practices, but in terms of sustaining positive behavioural practices this influence is not significant in a way to show long-term effects**.

Additionally, when we take into account **parent's gender**, results show that **mothers again report higher frequency of both appropriate and inappropriate behaviours towards their children in comparison with fathers**. It generally shows higher level of involvement of mothers in terms of their interactions with their children. However, in the context of appropriate interactions with a child, both mothers and fathers benefit from taking part in workshops which can be seen, as mentioned before,

[11] M_{pre}= 2,93 (SD=0,458); M_{post}= 3,17 (SD=0,378); M_{after}= 3,23 (SD=0,382); F=51,079; df=2;214 p<0,01

[12] Main effect of workshops: F=221,987, df=1,1813 p<0,01; Main effect of gender: F=32,532, df=1,1813 p<0,01; Interaction of variables: F=0,011, df=1,1813, p>0,05.

[13] Main effect of workshops: F=564,044, df=1, p<0,01; Main effect of education: F=0,523, df=1, p>0,05; Interaction of variables: F=0,079, df=1, p>0,05.

[14] Appropriate interactions: M_{pre}= 3,03 (SD=0,712); M_{post}= 3,2 (SD=0,662); t=10,473; df=1850; p<0,01. Inappropriate interactions: M_{pre}= 1,85 (SD=0,623); M_{post}= 1,5 (SD=0,465); t=26,670; df=1861; p<0,01.

[15] M_{pre}= 1,85 (SD=0,642); M_{post}= 1,51 (SD=0,431); M_{after}= 1,5 (SD=0,451); F=51,456; df=2,208; p<0,01.

[16] M_{pre}= 3,02 (SD=0,701); M_{post}= 3,14 (SD=0,663); M_{after}= 3,03 (SD=0,663); F=3,280; df=2;206; p=0,039.

in increased levels of positive behaviours after the workshops[17]. In terms of inappropriate interactions with a child, there is a significant moderating effect of gender variable – **mothers report a stronger decrease in employing inappropriate interactions with a child after the workshop implementation in comparison to fathers**[18]. To conclude – mothers are more involved in interacting with a child in both appropriate and inappropriate ways. Both mothers and fathers benefit in taking part in the workshops, especially mothers in context of decreasing inappropriate interactions with their children.

Education of parents did not moderate positive impact of taking part in the workshops on parents' appropriate interactions with children[19]. However, the results show that **parents with a high school level of education experienced stronger decrease in inappropriate interactions with a child than those of B.A. or M.A. level of education**[20]. It can be concluded **that parents of lower education benefit more than those of higher educational level in terms of diminished inappropriate interactions with a child, but not in terms of increased appropriate interactions.**

Table 7: Summary of the effectiveness measures for GuT programme

Effectiveness measures	GuT programme effects
Parents' beliefs on parenting	Increased agreement with appropriate beliefs Decreased agreement with inappropriate beliefs
Parenting self-efficacy	Increased parenting self-efficacy immediately after the workshops, which remains stable after six months No differences in programme effectiveness for parents of different gender and educational background
Interactions with a child	Increased level of positive interactions and decreased level of negative interactions with a child Negative interactions remained decreased after six months, but positive interactions returned to pre-programme level six months after its implementation Mothers as well as parents of lower education reported stronger decrease in negative interactions

Regarding the **GuT Plus programme**, the sample of parents that were included in a database consists of **255 datasets**. In monitoring evaluation measures for this programme, the authors also included **a comparison group** to provide more valid conclusions on the programme effectiveness. Comparison group consisted of **67 datasets** of parents who were not included in the workshops implementation. **No long-term follow-up data was collected. Both groups of parents had equal characteristics** regarding socio-economic status, age, and the level of motivation to take part in some kind of educational activities aimed at enhancing parenting skills. There were **certain differences in types of children's disabilities**. In the group of parents that took part in the programme, there was a higher

[17] Main effect of workshops: F=36,738; df=1;1799 p<0,01; Main effect of gender: F=6,492; df=1;1799 p<0,05; Interaction of variables: F=0,031; df=1;1799 p>0,05.

[18] Main effect of workshops: F=160,768; df=1;1810 p<0,01; Main effect of gender: F=5,788; df=1;1810 p<0,05; Interaction of variables: F=12,034; df=1;1810 p<0,05.

[19] Main effect of workshops: F=91,805; df=1;1758 p<0,01; Main effect of education: F=0,562; df=1;1758 p>0,05; Interaction of variables: F=0,736; df=1;1758 p>0,05.

[20] Main effect of workshops: F=613,769; df=1;1770 p<0,01; Main effect of education: F=20,78; df=1;1770 p<0,01; Interaction of variables: F=7,084; df=1;1770 p<0,01.

percentage of children with intellectual disabilities, speech and language disorders and children without diagnosis, whereas in a comparison group, there was a higher proportion of children with motoric, hearing or visual impairment. Children with disabilities from autistic spectrum and children with multiple disorders were equally represented in both groups.

In a group of parents that were included in the workshops, **85% (N=216) were mothers and 15% (N=38) fathers; in 13,3% of cases** both parents attended workshops. These figures indicate a strong prevalence of mothers, also seen in the GuT programme datasets. Parents were predominantly educated on a high school level (52,6%), followed by those on the M.A. (31,1%) and B.A. level (13,1%).

Evaluation measures that were taken into consideration regarding this programme are somewhat different than those for GuT programme and consist of the following:

The Parenting Morale Index[21] (measure of everyday emotion prevalence encountered in a role of a parent of a child with disabilities).

Parenting stress – parental incompetence[22] (measure of parental stress experience due to feeling of incompetence and lack of support).

Interactions with a child (consisted of the 5 item self-reported behavioural measure where parents were asked to assess frequency of 3 appropriate/desirable and 2 inappropriate/non desirable interactions with a child in a week that preceded the evaluation implementation).

Parents' needs for support (measures of parental need for support in various aspects such as need for information, need for personal support, need for support for communication with family and non-relatives as well as need for support in explaining child's condition to relatives and non-relatives).

Parent-defined goals of intervention (measure of parental aspirations regarding the programme and fulfilment of these goals).

Similar set of statistical methods was used in this analysis as used in the GuT programme evaluation, including mixed analysis of variance.

Analysis has shown that when taking into account measures of parental perceptions, such as the Parenting Morale Index, **there has been a significant increase of parenting morale**[23] in the group of parents that took part in the programme, while the same effects were not recognized among parents that were not included in the programme workshops. It can be concluded **that the programme has empowered parents to feel more competent in dealing with various demands of their children**. We could expect, based on these results, lower levels of parental stress due to empowerment of parental perceptions, but **the results show that decrease of parental stress occurs equally in both groups of parents**[24]. **In order to conclude that programme workshops brought some relief to parents, this decrease in the level of stress should have been stronger in a group of parents involved in the workshops than those that were not.** Otherwise, this result can be attributed to the nature of

[21] Trute, B., et.al. (2009)

[22] Profaca, B. and Arambašić, L. (2004)

[23] Main effect of time of measurement: $F=20,261$; $df=1;306$ $p<0,01$; Main effect of group: $F=3,038$; $df=1;306$ $p>0,05$; Interaction of variables: $F=7,397$; $df=1;306$ $p<0,01$.

[24] Main effect of time of measurement: $F=4,208$; $df=1;320$ $p<0,05$; Main effect of group: $F=16,365$; $df=1;320$ $p<0,01$; Interaction of variables: $F=0,006$; $df=1;320$ $p>0,05$.

measurement, scale or some other undefined reasons that happened beyond the content of the programme workshops.

When taking into account self-reported behavioural measures, analyses of the effectiveness of GuT Plus programme yielded similar pattern of findings as did analyses of the effectiveness of GuT programme. **Results show no programme's facilitation of appropriate interactions with a child.**[25] There has been no increase of such behaviours after the completion of the programme workshops, which is in accordance with the results of comparison group, where no increase was also found. **On the other hand, significant decrease of inappropriate interactions with a child was found in a group of parents that were enrolled in the programme workshops.**[26] In a comparison/control group, no significant difference was found. This can raise a question of problems of measurement of positive interactions with a child, or even positive aspects of parenthood in general since negative practices tend to be more robust, visible and uniformed constructs in comparison to the positive practices that show greater versatileness and subtleness which can create difficulties in designing instruments for these particular measures.

In assessment of **parental needs** before and after the programme workshops implementation there were some inconclusive results. As in the case of parental stress, there has been a decrease in parental need for information, but equally in both groups of parents. In general, the parents in a group that was enrolled in the programme workshops tend to have greater need for information, but that need was not influenced by the programme since a **decrease in need for information after the workshops was of the same magnitude as of those parents who were not enrolled in the workshops**[27]**. With regard to parents' need for personal support in coping with parental role, decrease of this need was found only in a comparison group, while in the group of parents that were enrolled in the workshops this need has remained the same.**[28] This might be a result of programme's aim to raise awareness of importance of taking care for themselves in order to be able to cope with all the responsibilities that being a parent to a child with disabilities brings. Alternative explanation might bring us to the conclusion that programme cannot be effective in meeting these needs due to heterogeneity of disabilities of children and alongside parental needs, for all parents taking part in the programme workshops. Confirmation of this assumption comes from the results that show there is **no significant influence of the programme on needs the parents have for support in communication with their close surrounding (partners, family, relatives)**[29] **and with those that belong to a broader circle of people**.[30] As stated before, these results can be dependent on differences among parents regarding

[25] Main effect of time of measurement: F=0,000; df=1;305 p>0,05; Main effect of group: F=0,007; df=1;305 p>0,05; Interaction of variables: F=0,000; df=1;305 p>0,05.

[26] Main effect of time of measurement: F=6,104; df=1;309 p<0,05; Main effect of group: F=0,171; df=1;309 p>0,05; Interaction of variables: F=9,616; df=1;309 p<0,01.

[27] Main effect of time of measurement: F=28,889; df=1;318 p<0,01; Main effect of group: F=4,831; df=1;318 p<0,05; Interaction of variables: F=1,214; df=1;318 p>0,05

[28] Main effect of time of measurement: F=7,643; df=1;316 p<0,01; Main effect of group: F=24,929; df=1;316 p<0,01; Interaction of variables: F=5,537; df=1;316 p<0,05

[29] Main effect of time of measurement: F=15,263; df=1;319 p<0,01; Main effect of group: F=4,320; df=1;319 p<0,05; Interaction of variables: F=0,164; df=1;319 p>0,05

[30] Main effect of time of measurement: F=18,701; df=1;320 p<0,01; Main effect of group: F=10,746; df=1;320 p<0,01; Interaction of variables: F=2,398; df=1;320 p>0,05

their needs, type of difficulties of their child, level of involvement their child requires or the child's developmental status (his/her delay in comparison to regular development).

Influence of the programme workshops was also measured through **the goals that parents wanted to fulfil by taking part in it**. Before the start of the programme workshops, parents have chosen the goal *"to change something in relationship with my child with disability"* the most often, with 3/4 of parents expressing the wish to fulfil this goal. **After the implementation of programme workshops almost 87% of parents reported that they have either moderately or significantly changed something in relationship with their child with disability, with only 2% reporting that they have not changed anything in their relationship.** Additionally, 64,2% of parents wanted *"to change how they personally feel regarding being a parent to a child with disabilities"* and **after the programme workshops almost 80% reported that they managed to make either moderate or significant difference in how they personally feel as a parent of a child with disabilities**. In context of relationships with other family members, before the start of the programme 42,1% of parents wanted *"to change something in relationship with their husbands/wives/partners"* and 38,2% wanted *"to change something in their relationship with other child/children in family"*. In both cases, results were striking: **63,6% of parents changed something moderately or significantly in their relationship with their husband/wife/partner and 72,3% changed something moderately or significantly in their relationship with other child/children in family**.

Table 8: Summary of effectiveness measures for GuT Plus programme

Effectiveness measures	GuT Plus programme effects
The Parenting Morale Index	Significant increase of parenting morale
Parenting stress – parental incompetence	No evidence of influence on the levels of parenting stress
Interactions with a child	No influence on the positive interactions with a child Significant decrease in inappropriate interactions with a child
Parents' needs for support	Brings awareness among parents of the need to take care for themselves No clear influence on other parental needs for support
Parent-defined goals of intervention	Influence go beyond expected changes in relationship toward child with disability, husband/wife/partner, other child in the family or how they personally feel as parents of a child with disability.

In conclusion to programme's effectiveness, there is a robust evidence of programme's effectiveness to both implementers and parents as the main programme's target groups. Implementers are in high percentages actually starting to implement workshops after the end of a standardized training and they especially value the concept that they operate in teams. They point out to listening skills, facilitation skills and increased professional self-esteem as the main effects of the programme. They also strongly emphasize their changed and intensified relationship with parents due to the programme. Nonetheless, due to the lack of programme's indicators which would suggest the level of anticipated reach of the programme, programmes' national presence can be assessed only in relative terms, suggesting it was a function of given opportunities in terms of the available funds to organize new cycles of trainings, as well as demand from the preschool teachers and professionals. However, regional disparities in coverage of programme across Croatia are evident.

With regard to the programme's effectiveness towards parents, both programmes show significant effect on parental self-assessments in a way that they feel more competent in their parental role after taking part in the workshops. Parents feel empowered and more confident in ways they approach everyday parental obligations. In line with that, programmes effectively change parental inappropriate beliefs about parenting and bring awareness to the need for taking care of themselves. In terms of behavioural changes, programmes show positive effect on self-reported inappropriate parenting behaviours, but not on self-reported appropriate parenting behaviours.

9.3 Efficiency

1. To what extent have UNICEF and other stakeholders made good use of its human, financial and technical resources in programme development and implementation?
2. Were key programme activities cost-efficient in regards to the achieved outputs?
3. To what extent did the set structure of roles and responsibilities contribute to the programmes' efficiency?
4. How efficient were models of communication and coordination as well as internal system for monitoring and evaluation?

With regard to programme's efficiency, this section assesses the level to which UNICEF and other stakeholders made good use of their human, financial and technical resources; programme's cost-efficiency, the structure of roles and responsibilities, modes of communication and coordination, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Although there is not a suitable reference to other similar programmes in Croatia which could be used to compare them against the implementation costs of GuT and GuT Plus programmes, it can be concluded that **the programme was relatively moderate in using financial resources**, primarily as it was **based on the model to use existing human resources in preschool education and social welfare system**. This refers to the fact that it offered trainings to already existing experts working in these institutions, during their regular working hours and as a part of their regular work assignments, in contrast to a potential model where an entirely new group of implementers would be trained/formed. Costs of the programme are only available from a behalf of UNICEF CO, but not also from the ETTA, which over the years has financed the programme by organising new cycles of trainings for implementers, regional meetings, supervision and annual conference.

The types of the costs covered by UNICEF included the following: (1) consultants' contracts; (2) alongside ETTA, organization of trainings for implementers (for instance, in the social welfare system for employees of the family centres), as well as some of the held annual conferences; (3) design and publishing of the programme's manual and finally (4) in 2014 and 2015 providing financial support to the GuT Centre.

In total, over eight years, **these costs amounted to around 180 thousand USD spent from the UNICEF's budget**. In absence of other benchmark, given the fact that this is **less than the average**

amount of a year to year and a half long EU-funded project[31], which usually has a target group of between 30-60 individuals, and having in mind this programme has educated more than 600 implementers and reached more than 4000 parents, **the cost-effectiveness can be assessed as rather high.** However, besides the lack of insights in the funds spent by ETTA, this also does not include costs for human resources from a behalf of the UNICEF permanent staff. Furthermore, during the focus groups with programme implementers (N= 88), it was also noted that some preschool principles were providing **financial stimulations** for the implementers involved in the programme or alternatively, were offering **days off**. The standard was that each workshop demands around 5 hours of work by an implementer, including preparation, meaning the implementers would be entitled to 7-8 days off per one held workshop cycle consisting of 11 workshops.

Certain level of dissatisfaction due to these harmonized compensation practices was recorded among the interviewed implementers, which is **greater among preschool teachers than professionals**, as professionals can more easily re-organize their workload to meet the demands of the programme, while teachers have their regular shifts with children which are less prone to adjustments. These different practices are **in line with the autonomy of each kindergarten to organize implementation**, where preschool institution from more affluent local communities are in a better position to negotiate from their founders some additional funds for stimulating their employees. Although this would suggest space for additional harmonization, the evaluation team holds that is not necessarily possible due to the given reasons of individual financial contexts. Furthermore, the evaluation team assesses that this level of current dissatisfaction is not too alarming, although it should be promoted that leadership of each involved institution finds at least some ways for compensating their implementation teams, in line with its means. Among **non-financial means for compensation** for all involved implementers is the system of **formal advancement**, managed also by ETTA. Although ETTA suggests advancement is possible based on the fact that somebody implements this particular programme, the practices among interviewed implementers vary across the regional ETTA's offices they belong to.

The evaluators specially commend the current level and sophistication of monitoring practices put in place by the programme, designed since its beginning, and recently additionally improved by a UNICEF's support to the GuT centres, especially in terms of keeping a joint database. This database was also an important source of information to the evaluation team. The **database includes** the number of educated implementers by year; number of other staff who finished education; number of involved parents; number of held Parents' clubs, etc. However, the database **should also be enriched with certain new indicators, such as parents' drop-out rates** , currently not systematically kept. A separate base is also held, compiling all **pre/post/after outcome questionnaires**, which are paired by codes for comparisons. It was however noted that out of 3600 parents who took part in the GuT programme, 2114 dataset are collected, which although a large sample, suggest missing data for almost 1500 participants. This is the result of the fact that only for the first workshop cycle held by an implementer these questionnaires were mandatory, as well as the fact that each questionnaire filled in before the programme implementation had to be paired with the questionnaire filled in by the same respondent immediately after the programme implementation, which was not always possible.

31 Based on a study published by Projects Equals Development Ltd. in 2014, the average amount of the grant in IPA-financed projects (N=390) in Croatia was 179.033,05 €. Available at: http://pjr.hr/pjr-eu-ucinkovitost/.

With the process of programme's growth, a special role was assigned to the most active and motivate implementers who were given the status of '**regional coordinators'**. This network is a **great asset to the programme, decentralizing some of its functions**, acting as a link to collect monitoring data from the field and delivering it to the GuT Centre. Having in mind that there is a heavy burden on human resources to keep up with such a sophisticated monitoring practices, which as much it is currently a strength, it can also become a risk, the evaluation team holds that UNICEF can play a role in elevating these practices and make them more sustainable, all within their role not to be actively involved in daily management of the programme, but with securing some of its needs that fall outside the realm of any other current stakeholder. The evaluation team holds the programme would benefit from a **tailor-made online monitoring tool** which would make more efficient the process of data gathering and analysis, which is currently run manually by sending out filled in questionnaires by post from regional coordinators and later being imported by GuT in a joint database.

In conclusion to programme's efficiency, although lacking a strong comparative benchmark, the programme can be assessed as cost-efficient, given its rather wide scope and quality standards in relation to the budget spent so far. This is primarily possible as it uses the existing network of preschool teachers and professionals who dominantly implement the programme in their regular working time, or with some additional compensation by their institutions. Monitoring practices can be especially commended, which enables continue feedback on both programme's outputs and outcomes. As these practices rely heavily on human resources to keep track of them, there is space for further improvement, potentially in a form of a tailor-made online monitoring tool, which would also make monitoring practices more resilient to potential future growth of the programme, in terms of new institutions taking part and parents enrolling.

9.4 Impact

1. To what extent did programmes contribute to long-term positive changes in parents' behaviours towards children, facilitating in that way supportive family environment?
2. Being the final beneficiaries of the intervention, is there any evidence suggesting changes in behaviours of children whose parents are involved in the programme?
3. To what degree have some external factors (and which ones) diminished the positive effects of the programmes on parents' behaviour?
4. What is the role of continuous support to parents (Parents' Clubs or other) in sustaining long-term positive changes in behaviours towards children?

With regard to programme's impact, this section assesses the extent to which the programmes have influenced long-term changes in parents' relationships towards their children in order to ensure supportive family environment. It also analyses the influence of potential external factors that could have diminished programmes' influences, as well as the role of continuous support to parents in order to sustain long-term positive changes.

In order to assess today's point of view of parents as one of the target groups involved in both programmes, **online survey was designed and administered during this evaluation process**. As stated before, data on impact of the programme, as it was defined in newly reconstructed ToC, could have

been gathered only through feedback of parents who took part in the programme. The content of the online survey is based on the measures that were part of the internal evaluation process in order to estimate trends of parenting beliefs and self-assessments in long-term context, but also broaden with questions that would give an insight to parents' need for support, factors they encounter that positively or negatively influence their parenting practices and their direct overview towards programmes and their support components (e.g. Parents' Clubs).

Sample of parents that was collected through online survey consists of overall **203 respondents with 192 of them taking part in GuT and 11 of them in GuT Plus programme.** Analysis will be presented separately for each programme. The sample of GuT Plus programme respondents, even though it matches the proportion between populations of parents in both programmes, is quite limited and should be analysed only with special caution. Furthermore, it should be taken into account **the possible bias of the findings regarding the sample of respondents in general, since it is expected that**

those parents with higher motivation took part in the survey. This can lead to a positive selection of parents with their answers in favour of the programmes. This problem was mitigated by using both quantitative and qualitative measures to gain deeper insights as well as trying to triangulate these results with those from other sources of information (such as internal evaluation measures and focus groups).

Online survey has reached parents from **9 different counties in case of GuT and 3 in case of GuT Plus programme.** Parents took part in the GuT programme in every year of its implementation (2008 – 2016) with majority of parents from 2012 – 2015. Parents took part in GuT Plus programme in 2014 and 2015. Out of those who gave information on other personal characteristics, there were **88,9% mothers and 11,1% fathers in GuT sample**, whereas we find only mothers in GuT Plus sample. Majority of parents in both samples are **highly educated** (83,2% of B.A. or M.A. level and 16,8% of high school level in GuT and 72,7% of B.A. or M.A. level and 27,3% of high school level in GuT Plus). This is in line with other sources of information used in this evaluation.

In context of capturing the changes that have emerged in parents' behaviours and life in general, parents enrolled in GuT programme report in **high percentage on observed changes**: **91,6 percent of parents say that the workshops made changes in their lives**. These changes are also evident in quantitative measures where parents could assess the level of effect programme workshops had from today's point of view on scale from 1 – workshops had no effect at all to 4 – workshops had significant positive effect. **Results** (Table 9) **show robustness of effects of programme workshops even from today's point of view.** It has to be noted that since it was not viable to actually measure or observe parental behaviours, we rely on observations from self-assessment scales included in this online survey.

Table 9: Parents' self-assessment of the effect that GuT programme workshops had on observed measures from today's point of view

	(1- No effect; 2- Small positive effect; 3– Significant positive effect; 4– Exceptional positive effect)
Your knowledge about children	2,96
Your knowledge about parenting	3,03

Your behaviour towards your child	3,06
Your sense of stress in parenting	2,77
Your sense of pleasure in parenting	2,96
Your ability to balance different roles (parenting, work, marital/partner)	2,52
The quality of your relationship with your child	3,07
The quality of your relationship with child's other parent	2,44
The quality of the relationship and the atmosphere within your family	2,65
Your skills regarding the search for support and help from others to fulfil your parental responsibilities	2,41
Your prevailing emotional mood	2,65
Your sense of satisfaction with yourself	2,71
Your sense of overall life satisfaction	2,63

When analysing qualitative data, from the current point of time parents report on **changes dominantly in areas of having more understanding for children's behaviours and acting with greater amount of patience regarding their child.** Other changes that were significantly covered in parents' responses are evident in their improved communication with a child, employing more effective communication techniques that include more precision in their communication, less judgment and greater tolerance. Other changes that parents experienced consider better understanding of children's needs, behaviours and emotions from a developmental perspective, reasons behind children's behaviours which enabled them to be able to take perspective of a child in certain situations. Some parents also report on higher awareness on need for support which led to being more open to communicate more often with other parents and relatives and taking into consideration expert support too.

"I think I became more patient in my relationship with children and try to see some situation from their point of view."

"I became much calmer since I realized that my child senses my every mood change."

"I openly talk to other parents more often on challenges of parenthood. I tend to judge myself less if I don't meet criteria of an ideal mother."

"I much more understand my child's emotions and needs. I learned that is important to set boundaries to a child which is useful for her and not restrictive."

Statements of the parents from GuT programme collected in impact survey.

In GuT Plus sample, 8 mothers (72,7%) acknowledged changes in their lives. No additional quantitative measures were taken into account due to sample size and analysis focused on qualitative data. What they feel today as a benefit of a programme is certainly better understanding of certain children's behaviours that go beyond the scope of regular development. Mothers also report on changes in their parenting roles – they became more aware that they are parents of a child with disability.

"I started accepting that I am a mother to a child with disabilities and that there are many other parents who are dealing with it."

"I realized that there is a lot of support (institutions, experts) that can help me in raising my child." *Statements of the parents from GuT Plus programme collected in impact survey.*

In addition, they also became more aware that there are more parents who have similar life situations and became more sensitized to the needs of other children too.

When taking into account potential benefits that **children as final beneficiaries** of the programmes could have experienced, indirect measures were employed through assessment of parents through this survey and observations gathered through focus groups. In GuT sample of parents, **67,6 % report on observed changes in a life of a child due to their enrolment in programme workshops**. In qualitative data analysis, 15% of parents explicitly reported on changes regarding child, such as higher self-esteem, more patient, responds better on set boundaries, has less rage episodes (tantrums) and they last shorter, perceived higher level of happiness, improved ability to describe their feelings, improved concentration on delivering some task etc. Majority of other answers were defined as influence of improved parental skills and benefits that they have from the programme implementation which led to improvement of their relationships with a child and finally to a benefit for a child. More precisely, parents report on improved communication with a child, better responsiveness of a child, more effective ways to come to an agreement and improved quality of the time spent together.

"My children express their feelings better."

"He became more cooperative; his tantrum frequency is lower as well as their duration." "She understands better what I am saying."

"He understands my needs and I understand his."

"The relationship that I have with him has changed in some aspects what changed his behaviour."

"I set boundaries with greater confidence and my child reacts easier to it. There are less "difficult" situations." "I suppose she changed, maybe it's my subjective view. I think that my child has acknowledged that I started to respect her like a person and that she opened herself more to me." "My child is growing up with less worried and relaxed parents".

Statements of the parents from GuT programme collected in impact survey.

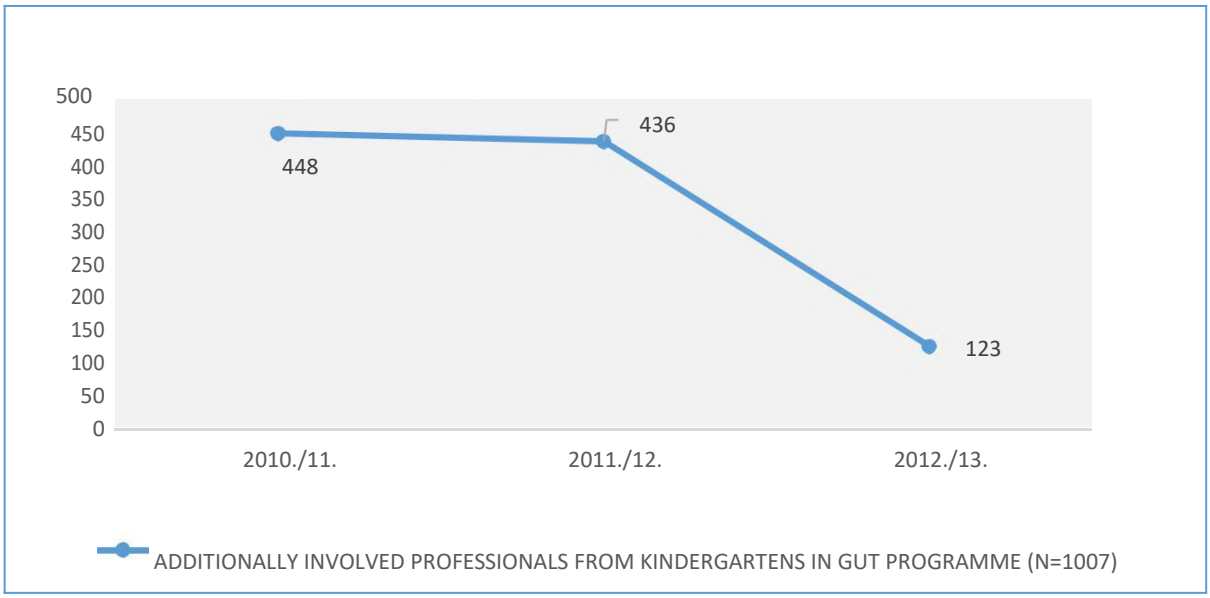
Among mothers that took part in **GuT Plus programme**, 5 of them (45,5%) reported on change that occurred in their child's behaviour. It can be seen that all of the provided answers were defined through parental influence on a child, such as more effective communication, increased calmness among mothers that led to calmer child. These results go in line with the goal of GuT Plus programme that is strongly oriented towards providing support for parents to feel more competent in their parental role and to raise awareness on the need for personal support.

When analysing **information gathered through informants in focus groups**, it can be concluded that not much attention was paid on observing changes in children's behaviours in this particular context. That was even more difficult in cases of implementation of workshops in family centres.

Long-term effects of the implemented programmes have been threatened not only by the passage of time but other external factors. In the survey, parents report on risk factors in close surrounding (partner, family, relatives) and especially on a lack of continuous support in sustaining the effects of taking part in implementation of programmes' workshops. Parents in both samples report on significant amount of behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that they encounter among their partners, family, friends, and other educational experts that are not in line with their behaviours, attitudes and beliefs gained after taking part in the workshops. In a sample of parents in GuT programme, 46,8% finds it moderately and additional 11,7% strongly interfered in their intentions to employ newly acquired skills and knowledge with the fact that their partners' behaviours, attitudes and beliefs are not in line with what they acquired during workshop implementation. This effect is somewhat smaller when the opposing behaviours, attitudes and beliefs on parenthood are present in a broader circle of people (family, friends, other educational experts) where 46,2% is moderately and additional 7% strongly interfered in their intentions to employ newly acquired skills and knowledge. In a sample of mothers in GuT Plus programme, the same trend can be observed, but it is difficult to put any strong conclusions due to a small sample size. These effects can be described as unexpected finding since current monitoring practices did not capture these occurrences. One of the **mitigation strategies** to minimize abovementioned external risks is to encourage and motivate both parents of a child to attend the workshops. Another way to mitigate this risk is to include more content in the workshop design that would cover topics on co-parenting which is in line with recent literature on parenting support or even when possible include topics on relationship between parents since it is proven to have great impact on exercising parenting practices and overall quality of parenting. Data from the focus groups with implementers gives strong evidence on positive influence and benefits of having both parents in workshops. Implementers report on witnessing greater understanding, harmonizing their attitudes regarding various issues between both parents throughout the workshop implementation process.

During the implementation process, the need to harmonize the approach towards parenting **on the level of an implementing institution** has also been recognized. This was seen as a way to prevent the abovementioned factors that can diminish long-term positive effects of the programme – including behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of other professionals working in the institution that are potentially not in line with what parents acquired during workshop implementation. Therefore, in 2010, the programme has also started to provide **education to preschool teachers and professionals in the implementing institution but who are not directly taking part in the programme (Figure 5).** During three years, in total additional 1007 teachers and professionals have been educated. There is no evidence for continuation of this activity after 2012/2013, which is partially in line with the overall decrease of new implementing institutions taking part in the programme.

Figure 5: Number of additionally educated professionals, not taking direct part in the programme



Programme's design has recognized the need for providing continuous support to parents, primarily through providing Parents' clubs which give parents who took part in workshops the opportunity to stay in touch with other parents, satisfy their needs for additional knowledge or refresh the effects they have gained from the workshops. In the sample of parents who took part in GuT programme, 34,6% expressed the need for additional support they had immediately after the implementation of workshops, with 21,7% of them who tried to meet this need by taking part in Parents' Clubs. Remaining 78,3% of parents were asked to identify reasons for not enrolling in the Parents' Club and dominant answers were that they **did not even know of existence of such Clubs (45,6%) or they did not have enough time to take part (38,1%).** It is clear that the future programme implementation could contribute to increasing the percentage of parents taking part in Parent's Clubs as a promising type of continuous support. These findings from the impact survey for parents were supported by the evidence from the focus groups: *"less parents enrolled in the Clubs, but it was very meaningful for those who attended"*. When analysing qualitative data most common reasons to attend the Clubs that were reported by the parents are in vast majority the need for additional support from experts (workshop implementers) and other parents, need to refresh the effects from the workshops, spending quality time with other parents, and explore new themes on parenting. Alongside taking part in Parents' Clubs, the need for additional support is evident even from the fact that **64,6% of parents made friendships with other parents during the workshop implementation** and they assess these friendships as beneficial in exercising their parental obligations. The need for continuous support is also evident in the fact that **only 6,8% of parents in the sample reported that they are in no need for support in the present moment** (none from the GuT Plus sample). Parents dominantly say that th**e two most appropriate ways of meeting the needs for continuous support** in the present moment are: taking part in new workshops (60,9%) and individual counselling (53,1%). Mothers in GuT Plus sample report on the needs for the same types of activities with stronger accent on individual counselling.

In conclusion to the programme's impact, parents strongly recognize the effects of their enrolment in the workshops even when providing assessment from today's point of view. Many of the changes

are substantial in a way that underlying processes in their relationships with children were altered. This is not affected by the potential loss in acquired facts or information about parenthood provided during the workshops. Most of the encountered changes parents describe as relational changes: they changed the way they think on various aspects regarding parenthood. This kind of insight provides a longer resilience to long-term changes. In addition, changes in parents' relationships with their children consequently can change children's behaviour, as it has been documented by qualitative data in impact survey. It has been also found that there is a great level of need for continuous support, immediately after the workshops as well as in the long term context. Provision of Parent's Clubs met the needs for continuous support for only small number of parents due to their inaccessibility to the majority of parents. Additionally, other forms of support, suggested by parents, such as individual counselling, should be considered when trying to prevent diminishing of long-term positive changes of the programmes.

9.5 Sustainability

To what extent are the programmes' results (impact if any, and outcomes) likely to continue after the programme? Is stakeholders' engagement likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated or institutionalized after UNICEF's direct assistance ceases?

What are the key factors that have been positively or negatively influencing long-term sustainability of programmes?

To what extent has UNICEF been able to support its partners in developing capacities and establishing mechanisms to ensure ownership and continuity of service, both on national and subnational level?

With regard to programme's sustainability, this section assesses the potential for continuation of programme's results and stakeholders' engagement; the key factors positively and negatively influencing long-term sustainability of programmes; as well as the support by UNICEF to its partners to ensure ownership.

Programme has from its start been focused at finding a model through which the intervention could subsequently become led by national stakeholders. UNICEF has thus defined its position as being an initiator of the programme, by providing support for programme development though subcontracted ECD experts, organising its piloting and developing programme's manual, with the expectation it would be scaled up by involved stakeholders. As presented **under relevance section, attention was focused on the ETTA as the national agency founded in 2006 with a mandate, among other, to organize professional development of teachers and professionals in educational system from preschool to high school level. In 2009, UNICEF and ETTA have signed an MoU, valid for a year,** where

ETTA committed itself to offer their mechanism of professional development for preschool teachers and professionals and to involve 'as many as possible' new individuals in the programme, enabling also formal certification upon the completion of the training. The Contract has not been renewed after it expired, as UNICEF has assessed that the mechanism has become functional and sustainable.

However, at the time of this evaluation, the concerns with the programme's sustainability were at their highest level, **fuelled by the fact that the ETTA has expressed the view that is not able and/or willing to financially support the programme anymore**, including the new cycles of trainings for implementers, intervision/supervision, regional meetings and annual national conference. Evolution

of this position was **taking place during the last three years**, finally resulting that the last education which was financed by ETTA was held in Rijeka in February 2016, while the two subsequently organized educations in 2016 (in May in Dubrovnik and in June in Osijek) were only publicized by ETTA on their web portal, but were financed by the GuT Centre which in 2015 received some additional funding from the UNICEF.

Perspectives of programme implementers on the issues of sustainability

By reflecting on the new avenues of sustainability since 2013, when it was observed the ETTA is somewhat decreasing its support, an idea emerged **to initiate GuT Centre as an NGO to be able to apply for alternative sources of funding to meet in this way some recognized new needs of the programme, especially with regard to quality control and ongoing support for current implementers**. However, although suggested by ETTA's representatives this may threaten future collaboration, the expectation on a behalf of the GuT Centre and UNICEF was that ETTA will regardless of this change continue to put on disposal and finance its model of professional development to the programme. At the same time, a **new informal coordination body was also formed - the so-called 'Sustainability council'** - gathering two members from MoSPY, one member from MoSES, one member from UNICEF CO, two members from GuTC and two members from ETTA, although its activities were so far limited to two meetings and did not result in any tangible conclusions as a way forward.

them it seems as this programme does not matter.'

'Maybe the problem is in the fact the programme is free of charge.'

'I cannot believe that somebody can have something against this programme, somebody is not getting alone here with somebody.'

'Our programme GuT is mentioned in Italian publications as a positive example of collaboration with parents, but it seems as if it is not good enough for us here in Croatia. '

Since 2014, **the activities of the newly founded GuT Centre** have actually led to **securing funds from the EU-funded project** through which it was possible to offer new service of supervision to implementers. Other examples of finding alternative funding included the **MoSPY-funded projects** to develop a new sub-programme 'GuT and us' for parents at multiple socio-economic risks and 'Father's clubs'. **UNICEF has also supported the Centre in 2015/2016**.

Official clarifications by the ETTA are that it withdraws from further financial support of the programme as the programme is now managed by an NGO, and they as a public body cannot put any NGO in a favoured position. This applies to educations of new implementers, regional meetings, intervision/supervision and annual conference. Although the NGO exists from the end of 2013, not until 2016 was this message conveyed as clearly as now. The Agency has however offered its further support by publicizing new educations and national conference on their ettaedu.azoo.hr portal and by issuing certifications. As the additional reason behind their changed policies, during the interviews, their withdrawal was also framed in the context of a **lack of their human capacities**.

In this context, it has to be pointed out that due to organic development of the programme, **new needs were continuously emerging, both financial and logistical**, which in the evaluators' opinion

was one of the key reasons behind these developments. In comparison, other types of professional

development programmes usually offered by ETTA, in a format of expert events, are shorter and with larger target groups. This made this programme **to a degree unfit for ETTA's regular *modus operandi***, especially given the fact that the programme is inherently expanding. In light of this, even the expert advisor who worked in the ETTA during its inception years, often seen by various stakeholders as one of the key figures in programme's organisational success, has confirmed that her commitment primarily came from personally believing in the programme but its complexity was to a significant part stepping out of her regular workload.

On the top of that, the Agency underwent a **change of leadership in 2015**, as well as the change of some other staff involved in programme's initial development, causing significant levels of **'institutional memory loss'.**

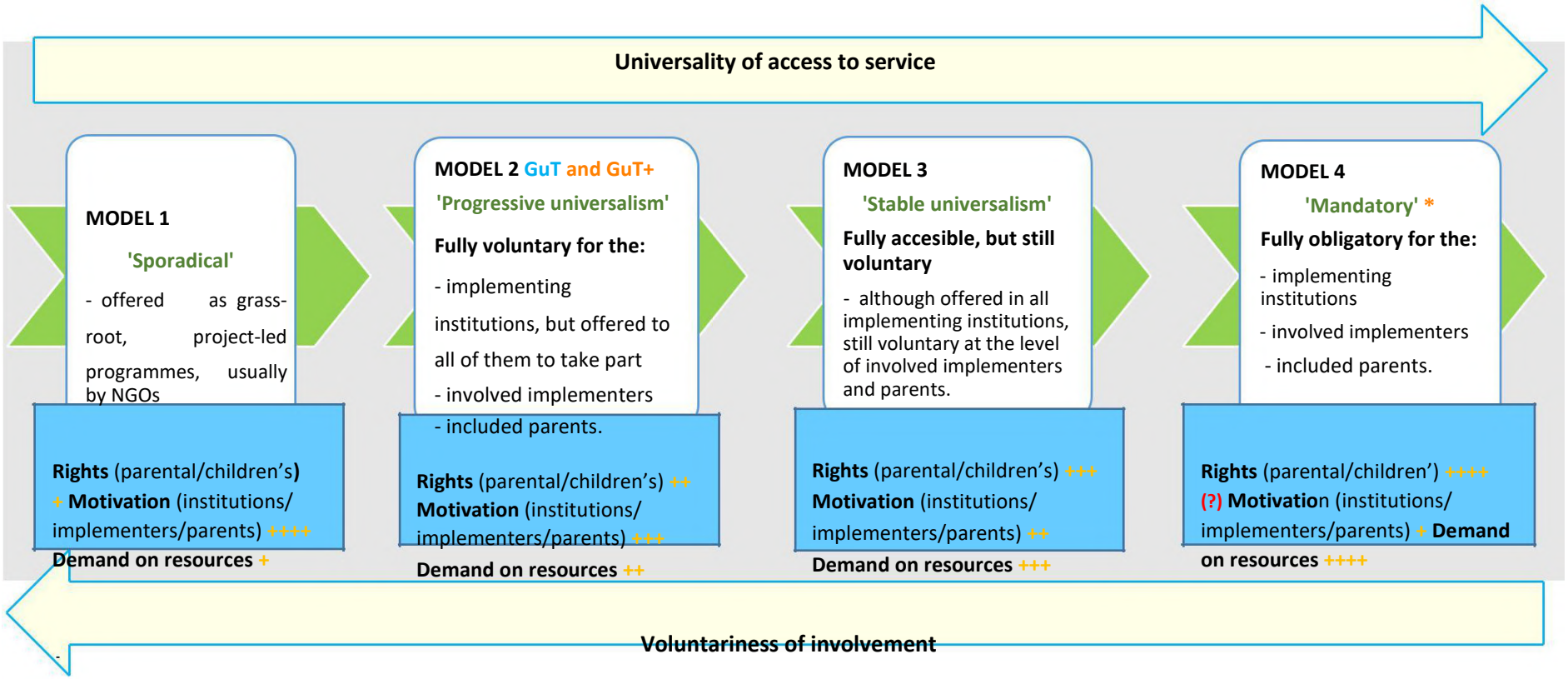
Relating these developments to the analysis presented under relevance section, although the programme development was rooted in an ample needs analysis, with active involvement by ETTA which designed and administered a survey among kindergartens in Croatia, **there was not and still is not a national strategic document which would give a clear mandate to any institution in the system of upbringing and education to provide parental support services**. A set of documents regulating preschool education suggest the importance of 'collaboration with parents', but without offering a model how to actually put in place this obligation, leaving it to the autonomy of each kindergarten. Current documents also put higher emphasise on the needs of preschool staff to interact with parents, in contrast to defining parental support as a *right*. This has caused that currently there is not a 'hard base' to demand responsibility of any stakeholder.

From a broader perspective, the programme is **a sophisticated type of service**, which from its start **relied on the existing resources among state-owned kindergartens**, where implementers can with only some additional training become agents of this new service being offered to parents. This was rooted in the notion that parental support is **a *right* of all parents, based on both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe's Rec (2006) 19 on positive parenting**. At the same time, national policy framework now and at that time did not explicitly follow the rights-based approach, while at the same time the programme did not develop supporting activities which would advocate a policy change on this level.

Figure 6 brings **a comparative outline** of the potential models of implementation starting from **'grassroots, project-led' model**, towards '**progressive universalism'** as assessed being the current model in place, towards **'stable universalism'** and finally **'mandatory'** model. Each of the presented models are looked from the perspective of: (1) to **what degree they fulfil the notion to secure 'parents' rights to parental support**'; (2) **demands they put on resources** (both human and financial), and finally (3) **motivation they generate** from included institutions, implementers and parents to take part. There are **two inversely proportional principles at play** – **universality of the access to service** which is generated from the rights-based approach and **the level of voluntariness of involvement as a way to secure motivation**. Although a more elaborate analysis of strengths and weakness of the chosen model of implementation has not been performed during programme development phase, especially as at the beginning the UNICEF was receiving supportive signs of collaboration by ETTA, it can be assessed that **the initial model represents in fact the best ratio between these three factors at play** (rights, motivation and resources). It provides high level of motivation on a behalf of involved institutions and implementers, it embeds the notion of moving towards universal access and it represents a model with a moderate demand on resources in relative terms comparing it to the other models.

However, **the evaluators hold that over the eight years, the programme has to a degree 'overgrew' the capacities of ETTA to be the principle pillar of its implementation and sustainability**, especially as programme's needs have grown from the original focus on only ensuring education for new implementers to other forms of support, with an inherent need to grow further. In this context, the evaluation team holds that re-investigation of the appropriate implementation model is crucial to its future sustainability. Given the fact that it can be assessed that **the strongest asset for sustainability are highly motivated programme's implementers (and programme authors),** who first hand witness programme's effectiveness on themselves and involved parents, the evaluation team has developed a comprehensive new model of implementation, taking into account all presented factors, with a goal to enable that the programme incrementally moves from 'progressive universalism' to 'stable universalism', in line with the rights-based approach.

Figure 6: Types of potential implementing models with regard to the principle of voluntariness of involvement *vs*. universality of access to service



* According to the Council of Europe's REC (2006) 16, under 'Fundamental principles of policies and measures' it is considered these policies should 'be based on a voluntary choice by the individuals concerned, except when public authorities have to intervene to protect the child'.

In Croatia, in 2015/2016, out of 554 kindergartens, 1 is state-owned, 340 (61,4%) are owned by local self-governments, 208 (37,5%) are private-owned and 25 are run by religious communities. As many kindergartens have multiple branches, the actual number of facilities of the ones founded by local self-government is effectively higher, meaning that **77% of kindergartens fall in the category of being founded by a local self-government and 19,5% are private-owned** (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Reports 2016). Besides the obligatory pre-school programme for all children one year before they start elementary school, as well as programmes for children with disabilities or national minorities, all other needs (including salaries and material costs) are covered by local governments.

There are **555 local self-governments in Croatia, including 127 cities and 428 municipalities**. The only distinction between cities and municipalities is that the former usually comprise of urban areas whereas the latter commonly consist of a group of villages. By the Constitution and other laws, **they are entitled (sometimes in collaboration with regional self-government) to organise pre-school education on their territory**, although given the fact that some of them are very small (on average less than 3000 inhabitants), due to the economy of scale that is not always the case.

According to **the State pedagogic standard for preschool upbringing and education** (OG 63/08 and 90/10), each preschool institution besides its regular programme for meeting needs of children, can also offer **the so-called 'special programmes'**, including foreign language, music, arts, sports, IT, eco groups, health, preventive or religious programmes. Among these are also explicitly listed 'programs with parents'. In financial terms, they are either **covered by their founder or directly from parents.**

Given this framework, **the evaluation team holds that GuT and Gut Plus programmes should be financially supported by its founders or potentially parents themselves, although the programme has originally been conceived to be free of charge for parents, evoking rights-based approach**. This means that each kindergarten wanting to take place should in its annual work plan advocate funding for its implementation from its founder. Given the fact that the programme so far did not develop comprehensive costs analysis, the UNICEF should in the future assist developing itemized financial projection, especially as now after eight years of implementation almost all implementation steps are standardized, providing a clear base for this analysis. For instance, during the focus group with the programme implementers (N=88), they have shared that there is a level of consensus that the programme demands 5 hours per each of the 11 workshops, per member, including preparation. It also became a standard that the number of team members is 2-3. This allows development of a detailed projection of expenses for each workshop cycle, which should be complemented with other needs necessary for its high quality delivery, such as regional meetings or supervision.

In this perspective, proposing a new model where GuT and GuT Plus programme should be financed by its founders, **the City of Koprivnica could serve as an example for other local communities**. In this respective case, during 2015 the experts within the department for social activities in the City of Koprivnica recognized the need for providing support for parents with children with disabilities in its local community and GuT Plus programme was recognized as appropriate to meet these needs. Experts from the City of Koprivnica included professionals from institutions to which they are founders (Rehabilitation Centre Podravsko Sunce and Kindergarten Tratinčica) to take part in initial education to become GuT Plus programme implementers. Two expert teams were formed (one per institution) which implemented overall 4 programme cycles with 27 parents included in 2015. During its implementation, full organizational and financial support was provided by City of Koprivnica. This

included additional fees for programme implementers, organization of care for children of parents who took part in workshops, refreshment and material costs, costs of attending supervision and evaluation meeting and annual conference of programme implementers.

The main recognized risk of such a model in Croatia, with still significant regional disparities, is that certain founders of kindergartens are struggling even with supporting regular preschool programme (recent examples of Vrgorac or Hrvatska Kostajnica). However, as a part of its regional development policy, Croatia has in 2014 designed a **comprehensive regional development index** which groups every unit of local-self-government in one of the **5 categories based on a mixture of measures**, allowing to suit as an analytical base for certain **corrective measures** for those units of local-self-government which could not afford such programmes. **The programme should then strategically advocate towards the ETTA to finance new educations for implementers *only* for the lowest ranging cities and/or municipalities to level-up these disparities when/if they are interested to take part, in the context of rights-based nature of the programme.**

An alternative and/or additional model of applying corrective mechanisms relates to the role of GuT Centre. The evaluators hold that, even though the ETTA has distanced itself from this legal format, the Centre is and should remain the holder of authors' rights to the programme's values and concept, performing also monitoring and quality control function which cannot be assigned to any other currently known stakeholder. Given the fact that **the programme so far did not open up towards private-owned kindergartens, in light of the rights-based approach, the programme should in the future initiate this collaboration on an income-generating basis.** This means that each private kindergarten interested to offer this service to its parents would financially cover the cost of the initial education for implementers to the Centre, and in line with the existing quality standards perform other agreed follow-up measures. Given the fact that Centre is a non-profit organisation, this generated income could be used to level-up the needs of those self-governments wanting to take part in the programme but being at the lowest regional development index (for instance, group 1 at 75% of the average national development).

With regard to **ETTA's further role in this model**, it should be negotiated as a part of this entire redesigned package that **ETTA remains the financier of the annual conference of the programme**, as its duration and number of participants falls perfectly in the type of activities they usually support.

With regard to the role of the **Ministry of science, education and sport**, they have themselves suggested the programme **could be verified on a national level to become an official 'standard for collaboration with parents', evoking similar examples of religious communities verifying their classes**. This would facilitate **increased formal recognition of the programme**, which would still leave freedom to each kindergarten to decide on any other programme it would develop on its own or by other experts. This would not avoid the current practice that each kindergarten needs to separately verify the programme, as according to the current regulation in place, the purpose of this step is to prove that the institution has educated staff for programme implementation.

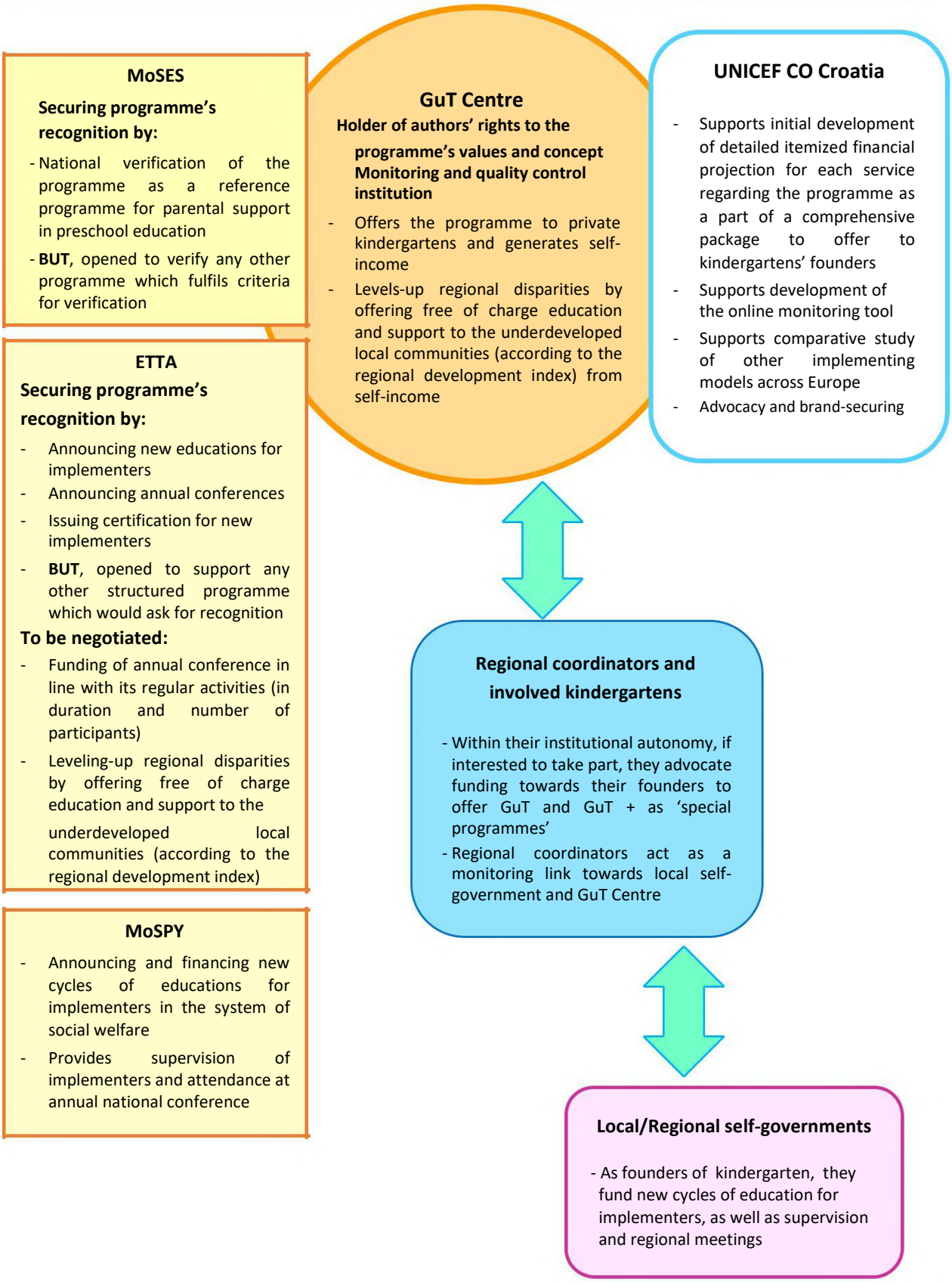
With regard to the **Ministry of Social Policy and Youth**, which is in charge of family centres, as they have received in 2011 initial education for their staff, their demand for new educations is significantly

lower, given the fact there is only 20 family centres. The Ministry within its organisational structure has a **Department for quality control and professional development** under the **Sector for support of institutions and other providers of social services** which should be approached to monitor needs for potential regenerations of implementing teams lacking enough qualified members, as well as for organising supervision and attendance at annual conference.

In conclusion to programme's sustainability, it can be determined that the programme has in 2016 reached a standstill with the changed ETTA's attitude towards further financial support to the programme, seriously jeopardizing overall programme's sustainability. The evaluation team has thus put forward a comprehensive alternative model (Figure 7), placing the financial demand on the preschool founder, namely local self-government. Recognizing the risk of significant regional disparities in Croatia, two proposals to level up this concern were presented. Encouraging GuT Centre to open towards private-owned kindergartens is also suggested in order to meet the proclaimed value of progressive universalism, based on the idea that parental support is defined as a human right.

Figure 7: Schematic sustainability model directed towards securing the current model of 'progressive universalism' and moving incrementally towards 'stable universalism'

Current presence of the programme within the state-owned kindergartens: 36%
Space for potential expansion: additional 64% + 208 private kindergartens



10. Conclusions

Following extensive analysis throughout the report, the following conclusions with regard to the main evaluation criteria can be made for GuT and GUT Plus programmes.

RELEVANCE: The programme can be **assessed as relevant for the observed social problem and Croatian context**, as it emerged after a mixture of different types of inputs, including responsiveness to the emerging international trends on positive parenting; strategic focus of UNICEF CO in its 2007-2011 mandate to the issues of ECD and parental support; needs assessment among both parents and preschool teachers and professionals, coupled with motivation to decrease still high observed prevalence of corporal punishment among parents in Croatia. However, although grounded in evidence-based needs analysis, **programme development lacked a comprehensive logical model**, including indicators, time frame for action, responsibilities of all involved stakeholders and risk analysis. Regardless of this lack, the programme can be **assessed as highly relevant for both target groups – parents and preschool teachers and professionals**. This is based on the observed success to effectively put in place orientation towards 'empowerment model' vs. 'deficiency model', where parents become active partners in workshops, not only subjects of education. It also successfully balanced highly structured content with freedom left to individual implementers to complement it with their expertise. As judged by the implementers themselves, by envisaging a team of implementers delivering the workshops, it provides a feeling of increased security to all implementers, in this way also dividing workload and enabling professional synergies. Due to the internally motivated programme developers, the programme has gone through **multiple adaptations, which all can be assessed as appropriate and in function of programme's overall relevance towards parent**s, especially regarding specific needs of fathers, parents at multiple socio-economic risks and health status of their children.

EFFECTIVENESS: Judging from a robust evidence, **the programme can be assessed as effective to both implementers and parents as the main programmes' target groups**. Implementers are in high percentages starting to implement workshops after the end of a standardized training and they especially value the concept that they operate in teams. They point out to listening skills, facilitation skills and increased professional self-esteem as the main effects of the programme. They also strongly emphasize their changed and intensified relationship with parents due to the programme. With regard to parents, both programmes show significant effect on parental self-assessments in a way that they feel more competent in their parental role after taking part in the workshops. Parents feel empowered and more confident in ways they approach everyday parental obligations. In line with that, programmes effectively change parental inappropriate beliefs about parenting and bring awareness to the need for taking care of themselves. In terms of behavioural changes, programmes show positive effect on self-reported inappropriate parenting behaviours, but not on self-reported appropriate parenting behaviours. However, due to the lack of programme's indicators which would suggest the level of anticipated reach of the programme, programmes' national presence can be assessed only in relative terms, suggesting it was a function of given opportunities in terms of the available funds to organize new cycles of trainings, as well as demand from the preschool teachers and professionals, with still evident regional disparities in coverage.

EFFICIENCY: Although lacking a strong comparative benchmark, t**he programme can be assessed as cost-efficient**, given its rather wide scope and quality standards in relation to the budget spent so far. This is primarily possible as it uses the existing network of preschool teachers and professionals who dominantly implement the programme in their regular working time, or with some additional compensation by their institutions. **Monitoring practices can be especially commended**, enabling continuous feedback on both programme's outputs and outcomes. As these practices rely heavily on human resources to keep track of them, there is space for further improvement, potentially in a form of a tailor-made online monitoring tool, which would also make monitoring practices more resilient to

potential future growth of the programme, in terms of new institutions taking part and parents enrolling.

IMPACT: With regard to contributing to supportive family environment for children and enabling parents to consume the right on receiving appropriate support in fulfilling their parental responsibilities**, the programmes can be assessed as impactful**. Parents strongly recognize the effects of the workshops even when providing assessment from today's point of view. Many of the changes are substantial in a way that underlying processes in their relationships with children were altered. This is not affected by the potential loss in acquired facts or information about parenthood provided during the workshops. Most of the encountered changes parents describe as relational changes: they changed the way they think on various aspects regarding parenthood. This kind of insight provides a longer resilience to long-term changes. In addition, changes in parents' relationships with their children consequently can change children's behaviour. However, the need for continuous support, immediately after the workshops as well as in the long term context is still needed. Provision of Parent's Clubs met the needs for continuous support for only small number of parents due to their inaccessibility to the majority of parents. Additionally, other forms of support, suggested by parents, such as individual counselling, should be considered when trying to prevent diminishing of long-term positive changes of the programmes.

SUSTAINABILITY: As seen that the programme has in 2016 reached a standstill with the changed ETTA's attitude towards further financial support to the programme, **the programme's sustainability can only be achieved with more significant changes in overall implementation model and roles of the key stakeholders.** The evaluation team has thus put forward a comprehensive alternative model, placing the financial demand on the preschool founders, namely local self-governments. Recognizing the risk of significant regional disparities in Croatia, two proposals to level up this concern are presented. Encouraging GuT Centre to open towards private-owned kindergartens is also suggested in order to meet the proclaimed value of progressive universalism, based on the idea that parental support is defined as a human right.

11. Lessons learnt and recommendations

11.1 Lessons learnt for any similar programme in the future

Stronger use of result-based frameworks in programme development phase
For UNICEF CO

- At the time of programme development, as well as afterwards, the programme did not develop a results-based framework which would elaborate dynamics of programme's further development beyond its initial setting up stage, along with potential risks to its implementation and implications for sustainability. The project proposal also did not elaborate commonly agreed success indicators, including a desired rhythm of programme expansion across the country, as well as financial implications and resources needed for both implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

  This has resulted in its 'organic' development, yet with a notion shared both among the programme authors and UNICEF CO to make it available across the country as wide as possible. As a lesson learnt from this programme, in any new programme special attention should be paid on these issues during programme development phase, suiting also as a base for all involved stakeholders to understand their roles and expected commitment. For highly collaborative programmes as this one, this should be done in a participatory manner with all the relevant key stakeholders whose involvement is expected during implementation.

More explicit comparative approach in programme development to find the most suitable design and implementation model
For UNICEF CO and programme authors

- Although new approaches towards providing structured assistance to parents in their parental role has been emerging across other European countries, in the phase of programme development, the UNICEF CO did not directly comparatively elaborate on their design and implementation models. This was implicitly taken into account by engaging highly relevant programme authors with understanding of the emerging practices in other national settings. However, as a lesson learnt from this programme, more explicit efforts in consulting and reflecting on other existing practices is advised as a part of programme development phase.

Formalizing collaboration with institutional stakeholders whose commitment is strongly expected For UNICEF CO and programme authors

- In any similar programme, special attention should be paid on formalizing collaboration with institutional stakeholders whose commitment is strongly expected. In the case of this programme, initial attention was focused on the ETTA as the national agency founded in 2006 with a mandate, among other, to organize professional development of teachers and professionals in educational system from preschool to high school level. In 2009, UNICEF and ETTA have signed an MoU, valid for a year, where ETTA committed itself to offer its mechanism of professional development for preschool teachers and professionals and to involve 'as many as possible' new individuals in the programme, enabling also formal certification upon the completion of the training. The Contract has not been renewed after it expired, while further participative planning, coupled by presenting a strategic vision of the place of the programme within the current system of preschool education, would be preferred. Using UNICEF's Country Programmes signed with the Government should also suit a base to provide clearer mandate to institutional actors on their expected level of commitment.

Maintain the level of sophistication of used monitoring practices in any other similar programme
For programme authors/GuTC

- The evaluators specially commend the current level and sophistication of monitoring practices put in place by the programme, which is strongly recommended to be realized in any similar programme in the future, especially as besides providing the outlook on *outputs*, the currently used monitoring tools also provides feedback on programme's *outcomes* and even impacts with regard to involved parents as the main programmes' target group.

11.2 Recommendations as a concrete way forward in further implementation of the evaluated programmes

Besides being divided between strategic and operative level, all recommendations indicate for whom they are intended to. Their order reflects the level of priority.

Strategic level

Introducing local self-governments as founders of preschool education to become primary agents of programmes' financial sustainability
For UNICEF CO, GuTC and ETTA

- The evaluators hold that over the eight years, the programme has to a degree 'overgrew' the capacities of ETTA to be the principle pillar of its implementation and sustainability, especially as programme's needs have grown from the original focus on only ensuring education for new implementers to other forms of support, with an inherent need to grow further. In this context, the evaluation team holds that re-investigation of the appropriate implementation model is crucial to its future sustainability. Given the fact that it can be assessed that the strongest asset for sustainability are highly motivated programme's implementers (and programme authors), who first hand witness programme's effectiveness on themselves and involved parents, the evaluation team suggests that GuT and GuT Plus programmes become financially supported by the founders of preschool institutions.

  The main recognized risk of such a model in Croatia, with still significant regional disparities, is that certain founders of kindergartens are struggling even with supporting regular preschool programme. However, as a part of its regional development policy, Croatia has in 2014 designed a comprehensive regional development index which groups every unit of local-self-government in one of the 5 categories based on a mixture of measures, allowing to suit as an analytical base for certain corrective measures for those units of local-self-government which could not afford such programmes. The programme should then strategically advocate towards the ETTA to finance new educations for implementers *only* for the lowest ranging cities and/or municipalities to level-up these disparities when/if they are interested to take part, in the context of rights-based nature of the programme.

GuTC to open up towards private kindergartens on an income-generating basis and to subsequently level-up the needs of those self-governments wanting to take part in the programme but being at the lowest regional development index

For GuT Centre

- An alternative and/or additional model of applying corrective mechanisms relates to the role of GuT Centre. The evaluators hold that, even though the ETTA has distanced itself from this legal format, the Centre is and should remain the holder of authors' rights to the programme's values and concept, performing also monitoring and quality control function which cannot be assign to any other currently known stakeholder. Given the fact that the programme so far did not open up towards private-owned kindergartens, in light of the rights-based approach, it is recommended that the programme in the future initiates this collaboration on an income-generating basis. This means that each private kindergarten interested to offer this service to its parents would financially cover the cost of the initial education for implementers to the GuT Centre, and in line with the existing quality standards perform other agreed follow-up measures. Given the fact that Centre is a non-profit organisation, this generated income could be used to level-up the needs of those self-governments wanting to take part in the programme but being at the lowest regional development index (for instance, group 1 at 75% of the average national development).

Maintaining ETTA's role to publicize the programme through their web portal and to offer formal certification to involved implementers

For ETTA

- In any future developments, as a minimum, the ETTA is firmly advised to stay in charge of publicizing the programme among preschool teachers and professionals on their web portal, as well as to offer formal certification. Any decision to fully abandon cooperation with ETTA

would put the entire programme outside any institutional support which can have long term negative effects on its status. If possible, it is recommended to be negotiated as a part of this entire redesigned package that ETTA remains the financier of the annual conference of the programme, as its duration and number of participants falls perfectly in the type of activities they usually support.

Securing national verification of the programme
For UNICEF CO, GuTC and line ministries

- Authors and UNICEF CO are encouraged to submit to the Ministry of science, education and sport a request for national verification so the programme becomes an official 'standard for collaboration with parents', evoking similar examples of religious communities verifying their classes. This would facilitate increased formal recognition of the programme, which would still leave freedom to each kindergarten to decide on any other programme it would develop on its own or by other experts. This would not avoid the current practice that each kindergarten needs to separately verify the programme, as according to the current regulation in place, the purpose of this step is to prove that the institution has educated staff for programme implementation.

Further advocating towards clearer acknowledgment of parenting support services as a right of each parent
For UNICEF CO in collaboration with authors of the programme to advocate and for line ministries to take into consideration

- National strategic documents relevant to the subject are dominantly declarative, without strong operational mandate to institutions in the system of upbringing and education to provide promoted parental support services on positive parenting. A set of documents regulating preschool education suggest the importance of 'collaboration with parents', but without offering a model how to actually put in place this obligation, leaving it to the autonomy of each kindergarten. Current documents also put higher emphasis on the needs of preschool staff to 'collaborate with parents', in contrast to defining parental support as a *right*. This has caused that currently there is not a 'hard base' to demand responsibility of any stakeholder, meaning there is space for policy advocacy which would position parental support service in
  Croatia at the level suggested by Council of Europe's Rec (2006) 19.

Institutionalizing education of new implementers in the social care system For MoSPY

- With regard to the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, which is in charge of family centres, as they have received in 2011 initial education for their staff, their demand for new educations is significantly lower, given the fact there is only 20 family centres. The Ministry within its organisational structure has a Department for quality control and professional development under the Sector for support of institutions and other providers of social services which should be approached to monitor needs for potential regenerations of implementing teams lacking enough qualified members, as well as for organising supervision and attendance at annual conference.

Monitoring regional presence of the programme and designing focused regional promotion For GuT Centre and regional coordinators

- Although not explicitly stated in programme documents, many interviewed stakeholders hold that the programme should pay special attention to its equal distribution of institutions offering the programmes across the country. This is based on the notion that parental support programmes are 'rights' which should be offered to all parents. However, when the proportion of involved kindergartens was calculated in relation to the total number of state-owned kindergartens across Croatia (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Reports, 2016), it was found out that, on average, the programmes have been implemented in 36% of Croatian kindergartens, although with significant regional disparities. Future programme implementation should pay more attention to monitor this aspect of implementation, with developing measures such as focused regional promotion in cooperation with already existing regional coordinators.

Designing a new online monitoring tool to secure sustainability of currently sophisticated but burdensome monitoring practices
For UNICEF CO, in collaboration with GuTC

- Having in mind that there is a heavy burden on human resources to keep up with such a sophisticated monitoring practices, which as much it is currently a strength, it can also become a risk, the evaluation team holds that UNICEF can play a role in elevating these practices and make them more sustainable, all within their role not to be actively involved in daily management of the programme, but with securing some of its needs that fall outside the realm of any other current stakeholder. The evaluation team holds the programme would benefit from a tailor-made online monitoring tool which would make more efficient the process of data gathering and analysis, which is currently run manually by sending out filled in questionnaires by post from regional coordinators and later being imported by GuT in a joint database.

Maintaining good practice of interdisciplinary implementation teams
For authors of the programme and GuTC

- Evaluation findings suggest wide acceptance and effectiveness of the employed concept that this type of programme is implemented by a team of 2-3 members, mixing preschool teachers and professionals, resulting in greater self-confidence of all members, enabling synergies of their expertise and division of workload. This is a strong asset of the programme design which is unique in the context of educational system in Croatia, meaning it advised to be kept, as well as promoted to other countries having similar parenting support programmes.

Consulting other European practices to learn from comparative examples For UNICEF CO and GuTC

- In order to further inform strengths and weakness of the selected model of implementation, it is strongly advised to consult other European practices, the most suiting in a format of a comparative study. Furthermore, exchange of practices with Bulgaria and B&H where the Croatian model of the programme has expanded is also recommended, potentially in a form of a consultative meeting or joint conference. Special focus in assessing other models should be paid on how they respond to the three key criteria put forward by the evaluation team – (1) responsiveness of the service to fulfil parents' rights to obtain institutional support in parenting, (2) motivation generated by involved institutions, implementers and parents to take part; and finally (3) demands of the programme in terms of both human and logistical resources, including the role of the relevant national institutions.

Operational level

Preparing financial projections on the key implementing aspects
For GuT Centre

- Besides encouraging to develop programme indicators, programme (re)development would highly benefit from more detailed financial projections based on the newly proposed model of sustainability, presented in this report. As now after eight years of implementation almost all implementation steps are standardized (including the number of needed days per workshop, number of involved implementers per workshop, as well as number of workshops per cycle), this allows development of a detailed projection of expenses for each workshop cycle, which should be complemented with financial implications of other needs necessary for programme's high quality delivery, such as regional meetings and supervision.

Encouraging promotion of the programme through parents-to-parents promotion For implementers of the programme

- During the FGDs with implementers, it was concluded that the most effective technique for programme promotion among new parents is the appraisal of the programme by parents who have already taken part, usually during the regular parental meetings. Among other used methods such as using institutional websites and social networks, this one should be the most indorsed one.

Standardized monitoring of the emerging drop-out rates of parents
For GuT Centre, regional coordinators and implementers

- Currently there is no systematic data on a drop-out rate of the enrolled parents, although monitoring this data is envisaged in the newly developed guidelines for programme's quality control, so it is highly advised this becomes a standardized internal monitoring practice.

Securing baby-sitting services in implementing institutions during the workshops For GuT Centre, regional coordinators and implementers

- It was observed during the FGDs with implementers that the most significant barrier to access among *interested* parents is the lack of services for baby-sitting while they attend the workshops. It is advised to provide this service at the level of involved institutions, which is also in line with the newly developed quality control guidelines.

Promoting at least some type of compensation for involved implementers For GuT Centre and preschool principles

- Certain level of dissatisfaction due to the harmonized compensation practices of involved implementers was noted, which is greater among preschool teachers than professionals, as professionals can more easily re-organize their workload to meet the demands of the programme, while teachers have their regular shifts with children which are less prone to adjustments. These different practices are in line with the autonomy of each kindergarten to organize implementation, where preschool institution from more affluent units of self-government are in a better position to negotiate from their founders some additional funds for stimulating their employees. Although this would suggest space for additional harmonization, the evaluation team holds that is not necessarily possible due to the given reasons of individual financial contexts. The evaluation team

assesses that this level of current dissatisfaction is not too alarming, although it should continuously be promoted that leadership of each involved institution finds at least some ways of compensation, in line with its means.

Clarifying conditions for compensation to implementers by formal advancement For ETTA

- Among non-financial means for compensation for all involved implementers is the system of formal advancement, managed also by ETTA. Although ETTA suggests advancement is possible based on the fact that somebody implements this particular programme, the practices among interviewed implementers vary across the regional ETTA's offices they belong to. This aspect of implementation has to be further clarified with ETTA.

Extending the collection of pre/post/after questionnaires beyond the first implementing cycle for each new implementer
For GuTC

- A database compiling all pre/post/after questionnaires is held, which are paired by codes for comparisons. It was however noted that out of 3600 parents who took part in the GuT programme, 2114 datasets are collected, which although a large sample, suggests missing data for almost 1500 participants. This is the result of the fact that only for the first workshop cycle held by an implementer these questionnaires were mandatory, as well as the fact that each one had to be paired with the same respondent, which was not always possible. However, possibilities to extent the collection of pre/post measurements to all involved parents should be explored.

Securing mFore stable offer of Parents' Clubs to interested parents For programme implementers

- Data show there is a significant decline in the number of Parents' Clubs in the last years, indicating that a little less than half of the parents were able to join the Clubs since they were either not offered that year or the parents were not even aware of its existence. Since data on parents' needs for continuous support is robust, this activity represents a way of ensuring long-term effects of the programme and should be further supported.

Where possible, offering also individual counselling to parents, especially for GuTC parents For programme implementers

- According to the newly developed quality standards, as well as data reported by parents in the conducted impact survey, individual counselling was nominated as one of the ways to ensure continuous support for parents. This would be especially beneficial for parents included in GuT Plus programme due to their diversified needs regarding different disabilities of their children. In cases of limited resources (human, organizational, financial), advantage should be given to GuT Plus parents.

Stronger promotion of a joint attendance by both parents
For programme implementers

- Since data has shown that parents report on interfering factors in their intentions to implement acquired knowledge and skills regarding positive parenthood within their close surrounding, we recommend the stronger accent is given on promoting participation of both parents during parent

recruitment process. This approach can be applied even in cases of divorced parents who share parental responsibilities. However, it cannot be adopted with single parent's families where one parent is absent. Another way to mitigate risk of interfering factors in sustaining long-term changes is to include more content in the workshops that would cover topics on co-parenting or when possible include topics on relationship between parents as an important support system for positive parenting.

Enhancing group dynamics with attendance of more than one father
For GuT Centre, regional coordinators and implementers

- Acknowledging prevalence of mothers, whenever possible, it is advised to include more than one father as it was shared by the implementers that one father in a group can withdraw from more active participation, while having more than one father significantly improves group dynamics.

In any future impact survey, including measurements of benefits of the programme to children as final beneficiaries
For GuT Centre

- To be more in line with newly reconstructed ToC, in any future impact survey, it is advised to include questions that would capture possible changes affecting children, being defined as the final beneficiaries of the programmes.

12. Annexes

12.1 Annex 1: Evaluation team competences

Sirius – centre for psychological counselling, education and research is a Croatian non-governmental organisation founded in 2006 upon principles of promotion, implementation, research, development and improvement of psychological and psychosocial assistance and support with the aim of prevention of risk behaviours, betterment of quality of life for individuals and families, with relevant expertise in external evaluation. To complement Sirius's expertise, the evaluation team was complemented with two additional experts:

dr. sc. Gordana Kerekeš (as a team leader 1) with a highly relevant academic background in the areas of early child development (ECD), parenting support, child and family protection, extensive knowledge in social sciences research, using both quantitative and qualitative methodology, excellent knowledge on international and national child protection policies and documents, as well as child and human rights.

mr. sc. Maja Horvat (as a team leader 2) with unique experience in designing and conducting more complex evaluations of projects, programmes and public policies, complemented with her proficiency in using social science research methodology and its relation to evaluation criteria.

CVs of all evaluation team members are summarized here as follows:

Gordana Keresteš (**team leader 1 – ECD expert**) received B.A. (1989), M.Sc. (1995) and Ph.D. (1999) degrees in psychology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia (FHSS UZ). She has been employed at the Department of Psychology since 1990 and elected an assistant professor in developmental psychology in 2001, associate professor in 2007, and full professor in 2012.

She teaches courses in developmental psychology at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level. Her research interests focus on various aspects of child and adolescent development, parenting behaviour and the role of contextual factors in development.

She was a principal researcher in two scientific projects funded by Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES): War, children's social behaviour, and the role of family (1998-2001) and Parents' personality and parenting during child's transition to adolescence (2006-2012).

As a researcher, she participated in four scientific projects funded by Croatian MSES: Psychological and neurophysiological development of the child (1990-1991), Children in war (1991-1996), Long-term effects of war on children's psychosocial adjustment and school as a source of support (1997-2000), and Determinants of parenting behaviour (2002-2006).

She is also a member of the Management Committee for COST Action IS1401 Strengthening Europeans' capabilities by establishing the European literacy network (2014-2018, proposer of the Action Rui Alves, PhD, University of Porto, Portugal).

She has published several books and around 40 research papers in Croatian and international scientific journals and presented her work on many scientific conferences.

She is a member of the Journal Council of Clinical Psychology; Croatian National Council for Children; Croatian Psychological Association, and International Society on Early Intervention; European Association of Personality Psychology and European Society for Developmental Psychology.

Maja Horvat (team leader 2 - evaluation expert) holds an MSc degree in Public policy from Queen Mary, University of London and MA degree in Political Science from Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb. She has ample experience in *ex-post*, periodic/mid-term and *ex-ante* evaluations of projects, programmes, strategic documents and even laws. These cover various social development areas from social integration of marginalized groups, development of human resources and employment, protection of human rights, education on various levels and sustainable development.

In 2015, she co-authored, with dr.sc Eben Friedman, evaluation of the *National Roma Inclusion Strategy and its Action Plan for the period 2013-2015*, commissioned by the Government Office for human rights and right of national minorities, representing one of the first evaluations carried out for national policies, not driven by a foreign donor. In 2014/2015, she had a chance to be part of the international evaluation team, which assessed the impact on sectors of employment, social inclusion and education of Croatian IPA *Human Resources Development Operative Programme 2007-2013*, including almost 200 projects funded through this programme, so far representing one of the largest evaluation carried out in Croatia.

Based on her academic background and professional experience, she has excellent knowledge of quantitative and qualitative social science research methods (document analysis, content analysis, surveys, semi-structural individual and group interviews, focus groups).

She is a member of the Croatian evaluation network (CEN), as a part of the Regional network of policy evaluators from the Western Balkans (REMEVA).

Mirela Miharija (Sirius evaluation team member 1) holds an MA degree in Psychology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She is also a family mediation specialist based on her postgraduate education of Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb. In terms of additional education, she is also an experienced psychotherapist based on her education in process and psychology and transactional analysis.

Through her work in various public sectors – mental health, international peace organizations, care for children and youth in need for alternative care, national ministries and administrations, nongovernmental organisations, she acquired a broad variety of knowledge and competences in areas of national programmes and policies, needs of disadvantaged groups in society, conflict resolution, family dynamics and conflict mediation, etc.

For the last 5 years she is a president and head of office of Sirius – centre for psychological counselling, education and research where she has developed and implemented numerous actions in areas of improvement of non-institutional care for children (foster care system), prevention of risk behaviours such as violence and substance abuse among children and youth, development of parental skills and more supportive environment for single parents and parents in general.

During her work in public administration institutions, she had the opportunity to develop national programmes and planes for youth, implement various European directives in areas of youth policies and empower cooperation with civil society organizations. She holds and excellent knowledge in national policies in areas of youth, children, families and plans for deinstitutionalization of care for children without appropriate parental care.

Lovorka Brajkovic (**Sirius evaluation team member 2)** graduated at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia and holds PhD in Biomedicine and Health (clinical medical sciences), School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Croatia. She has finished postgraduate studies – specialist study in Clinical psychology and postgraduate studies in Psychotraumatology – School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

She is a licensed clinical psychologist, Research Associate – Social Sciences, field of psychology and Research Advisor – Biomedicine and Health, field of clinical medical sciences. At Department of psychology School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek, she is a senior research assistant, Clinical and Health Psychology, and at Department of Educational Sciences and Education of Teachers, Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb she is external teaching assistant, course: Developmental Psychology and Educational Psychology.

She is a reviewer for Quality of Life Research (publisher: Springer, IF: 2,486) and Aging and Mental Health (publisher: Taylor and Francis, IF: 1,751). She is also a mentor and committee member for students in PhD programs and for students in graduated and post - graduated University program.

She published more than 40 scientific papers, published in international journal, indexing in CC and WoS Core journals and more than 15 invited lectures at international (World and European) congresses and she has participated at more than 40 international congresses and more than 30 national conferences and symposia, publishing original scientific data. She is also author of three books, and author of 14 book chapters and member of two scientific project.

Based on her academic background and professional experience, she has excellent knowledge of methodology – social science research methods (quantitative and qualitative research methods, statistical data analysing, content analysis, surveys, etc.).

She is a member of several domestic and European and International associations, and chairperson of committee and of unit at Croatian Psychological Society and at Croatian Psychological Chamber.

Danijel Bićanić (Sirius evaluation team member 3) holds an MA degree in Psychology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. He has broad experience in both application of psychological science and practice in context of nongovernmental sector. Through his work in Sirius, he had opportunity to work with various target groups and to implement different actions, projects and activities.

Since Sirius is aimed on provision of psychosocial support to endangered target groups such as parents and children in foster care system, youth in risk of violence or substance abuse behaviours, long-term unemployed individuals, he is experienced in development of various interventions and activities designed specifically for above mentioned target groups. In addition, he has the possibility to use his expert knowledge in context of counselling, workshops implementation, public appearance, vocational guidance, psychological diagnostics and interventions.

In terms of expertise on fund raising and project implementation, he has a wide experience in producing project proposals for domestic and international donor (Ministry of Social Policies and Youth, IPA programme), as well as managing project actions. He is currently project manager of 2 projects – Youth Job Clubs – Pilot Project in Sisak-Moslavina County and "Klub za zapošljavanje mladih Sisak".

Since 2011, he had the opportunity to conduct evaluation studies for 5 projects funded by the EU worth more than 900 500€ in areas of integration of disadvantaged groups of children in regular education system (children members of Roma national minority and children with speech disabilities), modernization of curricula in area of adult education and integration of persons with disabilities in local communities.

Based on his academic and professional experience and knowledge, he holds excellent knowledge in evaluation and social sciences research methodology, design of research instruments, application of appropriate statistical methods, defining outcome indicators of project activities and actions in general. In 2015. he joined the Croatian evaluation network (CEN).

Ivana Belamarić (Sirius evaluation team member 4) holds an MA degree in Psychology, Centre for Croatian studies, University of Zagreb. She is a co-founder of CSO Sirius – centre for psychological counselling, education and research in 2006 and plays a crucial role in its development as an established and well recognized organization in areas of providing psychosocial support to disadvantaged groups.

Today, she holds a position of programme manager and is responsible for implementation of Sirius programme development. She is well experienced in national and international programme and project management.

During her work in Sirius, she has designed and implemented numerous projects and programmes concerning the area of care for children – improvement of foster care system, improvement of foster carers parental skills, integration of relevant stakeholders in foster care system, strengthening the parental competencies in single parent families etc. A sample of relevant national projects implemented include "Quality foster care for a happy childhood" – 3-year program (2010 - 2013), "Program to support the development of foster care for children" – 3-year program (2014 - 2017) "Healthy growing", "Happy Parent for a Happy Child" "Strengthening the Associations of foster parents for children" - 14months project (2014 - 2016).

She is also a project manager in 2 international projects: "FALEFOS – Family Learning in Foster Families" – 2year international project 2013 - 2015 (Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, Romania and Croatia) and "Carecomp - Competence Development for Carers and Educators of Children in Foster Care in the Context of Transition from Institutional to Community Based Care" - 2year International project 2014 - 2016 (Romania, Hungary, Austria and Croatia).

Working as an associate in Ministry of family, veteran's affairs and intergenerational solidarity, department for children and youth, she acquired knowledge in state administration, public policies and the development of national documents.

Due to her educational background and working experience she holds excellent knowledge in project and programme cycle management, fund raising opportunities, on relevant national policies and current trends and undertakings in area of deinstitutionalization of care for children without parental care.

She is a member of expert working group for assessment the quality of projects applied to call for proposal for children and youth of Ministry of social policies and youth from 2004.

12.2 Annex 2: List of respondents

No.	Name and surname	Institution/ organisation	Location of institution/institution	Position	Date of contact
1.	Snježana Bratić	KINDERGARTEN Ivane Brlić Mažuranić	Zagreb	Speech-therapist	17.6.2016.
2.	Mirjana Slamar	KINDERGARTEN Izvor	Samobor	Educator	17.6.2016.
3.	Željka Horvatić	KINDERGARTEN Iskrica	Zagreb	Pedagogue	17.6.2016.
4.	Anđela Lukač	KINDERGARTEN Šegrt Hlapić	Sesvete	Psychologist	17.6.2016.
5.	Željka Bill	KINDERGARTEN Budućnost	Zagreb	Educator	17.6.2016.
6.	Božana Strinić	KINDERGARTEN Zrno	Zagreb	Psychologist	17.6.2016.
7.	Miroslava Polonji	KINDERGARTEN Savica	Zagreb	Psychologist	17.6.2016.
8.	Vesna Flegar Vondra	KINDERGARTEN Savica	Zagreb	Pedagogue	17.6.2016.
9.	Ivana Sošić Antunović	KINDERGARTEN Rijeka	Rijeka	Psychologist	28.6.2016.
10.	Radmila Bezjak	KINDERGARTEN Rijeka	Rijeka	Educator	28.6.2016.
11.	Brankica Ljubović Jereb	KINDERGARTEN Rijeka	Rijeka	Educator	28.6.2016.
12.	Latinka Longin	KINDERGARTEN Rijeka	Rijeka	Special educator	28.6.2016.
13.	Darko Sambol	KINDERGARTEN Rijeka	Rijeka	Psychologist	28.6.2016.
14.	Lahorka Jurčić	KINDERGARTEN Rijeka	Rijeka	Expert coordinator	28.6.2016.
15.	Davorka Guštin	KINDERGARTEN Rijeka	Rijeka	Principal	28.6.2016.
16.	Sonja Pribela-Hodap	KINDERGARTEN Viškovo and NGO Portić	Rijeka	Psychologist	28.6.2016.
17.	Tamara Sremec	NGO Portić	Rijeka	Supervisor	28.6.2016.
18.	Nina Vela Vrabec	Social care centre Rijeka - Family centre	Rijeka	Social pedagogue	28.6.2016.
19.	Gorana Mišćević	KINDERGARTEN Opatija	Opatija	Educator	28.6.2016.
20.	Danijela Perić Kosović	NGO Portić	Rijeka	Psychologist	28.6.2016.
21.	Ksenija Vičić	NGO Portić	Rijeka	President	28.6.2016.
22.	Nataša Jelenić Herega	NGO Uzor	Matulji	Psychologist	28.6.2016.
23.	Dijana Begović	KINDERGARTEN Grigor Vitez	Split	Psychologist	29.6.2016.
24.	Ani Mrnjavac	KINDERGARTEN Marjan	Split	Principal	29.6.2016.
25.	Blaženka Klarić	Social care centre Split - Family centre	Split	Counsellor	29.6.2016.
26.	Asja Podrug	KINDERGARTEN Kaštela	Kaštel Stari	Special educator	29.6.2016.
27.	Blanka Tomasović Todorović	KINDERGARTEN Omiš	Omiš	Speech-therapist	29.6.2016.
28.	Adrijana Bedrica	KINDERGARTEN Čarobni Pianino	Split	Psychologist	29.6.2016.

29.	Jelena Birsa	KINDERGARTEN Cvit Mediterana	Split	Psychologist	29.6.2016.
30.	Ljubica Lovreković	KINDERGARTEN Velika Gorica	Velika Gorica	Psychologist	29.6.2016.
31.	Kristina Barbarić	KINDERGARTEN Tatjane Marinić	Zagreb	Principal	29.6.2016.
32.	Suzana Kozina	KINDERGARTEN Sunčana	Zagreb	Psychologist	29.6.2016.
33.	Dobrila Zvonimira Paulić	KINDERGARTEN Tratinčica	Zagreb	Psychologist	29.6.2016.
34.	Karolina Šeremet	KINDERGARTEN Radost	Zagreb	Educator	29.6.2016.
35.	Jelena Šošić	KINDERGARTEN Bukovac	Zagreb	Educator	29.6.2016.
36.	Violeta Kukić	KINDERGARTEN Bukovac	Zagreb	Educator	29.6.2016.
37.	Vedrana Debijađi	KINDERGARTEN Velika Gorica	Velika Gorica	Pedagogue	5.7.2016.
38.	Minja Jeić	KINDERGARTEN Vrbik	Zagreb	Psychologist	5.7.2016.
39.	Kamea Jaman	KINDERGARTEN Trešnjevka	Zagreb	Psychologist	5.7.2016.
40.	Sonja Marković	KINDERGARTEN Malešnica	Zagreb	Pedagogue	5.7.2016.
41.	Inga Seme Stojnović	ETTA	Zagreb	Senior adviser	9.9.2016.
42.	Gordana Horvat	UNICEF	Zagreb	Programme officer	12.9.2016.
43.	Marijana Šalinović	UNICEF	Zagreb	Social policy officer	12.9.2016.
44.	Đurđica Ivković	UNICEF	Zagreb	Deputy head of office	12.9.2016.
45.	Nina Pećnik	GuT Centre	Zagreb	President, programme author	13.9.2016.
46.	Branka Starc	GuT Centre	Zagreb	Secretary, programme author	13.9.2016.
47.	Ivana Milić	MoSPY	Zagreb	Senior expert associate	15.9.2016.
48.	Renata Milanković Belas	KINDERGARTEN Tatjane Marinić	Zagreb	Psychologist	16.9.2016.
49.	Tatjana Solarić	KINDERGARTEN Medo Brundo	Zagreb	Pedagogue	16.9.2016.
50.	Vesna Kašuba	KINDERGARTEN Zrno	Zagreb	Pedagogue	16.9.2016.
51.	Martina Mikac	KINDERGARTEN Vedri dani	Zagreb	Pedagogue	16.9.2016.
52.	Tijana Vidović	MoSES	Zagreb	Senior expert adviser	20.9.2016.
53.	Marija Ivanković	MoSES	Zagreb	Head of office for preschool education	20.9.2016.
54.	Sandra Orbanić	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Principal	22.9.2016.
55.	Ljiljana Pekica	KINDERGARTEN Vesela kuća	Pula	Principal	22.9.2016.
56.	Ornella Brezovečki	KINDERGARTEN Naridola	Rovinj	Educator	22.9.2016.

57.	Serena Santin Kocijančić	KINDERGARTEN Naridola	Rovinj	Educator	22.9.2016.
58.	Romina Curto	KINDERGARTEN Naridola	Rovinj	Psychologist	22.9.2016.
59.	Ines Puhar	Social care centre Pazin - Family centre Pula	Pula	Head of the branch	22.9.2016.
60.	Rita Meden Bilić	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Pedagogue	22.9.2016.
61.	Jelena Prgomet	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Psychologist	22.9.2016.
62.	Loredana Cerovac-Štiber	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Pedagogue	23.9.2016.
63.	Samanta Morgan Subiotto	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Educator	23.9.2016.
64.	Kristina Milošević	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Educator	23.9.2016.
65.	Vesna Radman	KINDERGARTEN Radost	Poreč	Health manager	23.9.2016.
66.	Lorena Drandić	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Educator	23.9.2016.
67.	Vera Kufner	KINDERGARTEN Radost	Poreč	Psychologist	23.9.2016.
68.	Barbara Mikluš	KINDERGARTEN Duga	Umag	Pedagogue	23.9.2016.
69.	Petra Brnić	KINDERGARTEN Duga	Umag	Psychologist	23.9.2016.
70.	Larisa Laković	KINDERGARTEN Radost	Poreč	Educator	23.9.2016.
71.	Anamarija Matika	KINDERGARTEN Neven	Rovinj	Educator	23.9.2016.
72.	Jasna Šverko	ETTA - regional office Rijeka	Rijeka	Senior adviser	23.9.2016.
73.	Ivana Vukušić	KINDERGARTEN Šibenska maslina	Šibenik	Psychologist	23.9.2016.
74.	Julijana Roković	KINDERGARTEN Šibenska maslina	Šibenik	Educator	23.9.2016.
75.	Dijana Paškov	KINDERGARTEN Šibenska maslina	Šibenik	Educator	23.9.2016.
76.	Irena Kožić	KINDERGARTEN Šibenska maslina	Šibenik	Educator	23.9.2016.
77.	Katica Pećnik	KINDERGARTEN Osijek	Osijek	Pedagogue	28.9.2016.
78.	Tajana Mikloš	KINDERGARTEN Osijek	Osijek	Psychologist	28.9.2016.
79.	Vladimirka Vidović	KINDERGARTEN Osijek	Osijek	Psychologist	28.9.2016.
80.	Marijana Hanić	KINDERGARTEN Osijek	Osijek	Educator	28.9.2016.
81.	Marica Teofilović	KINDERGARTEN Osijek	Osijek	Educator	28.9.2016.
82.	Gabrijela Hajba	KINDERGARTEN Osijek	Osijek	Special educator	28.9.2016.
83.	Luja Zamečnik	ETTA- regional office Osijek	Osijek	Senior adviser	28.9.2016.
84.	Iva Krešić	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Psychologist	29.9.2016.
85.	Jasna Puljić	KINDERGARTEN Radosno djetinjstvo	Ivankovo	Principal	29.9.2016.
86.	Suzana Zidar	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Educator	29.9.2016.
87.	Ljubica Jozić	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Educator	29.9.2016.
88.	Mirela Dajak	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Educator	29.9.2016.
89.	Goradana Radić	KINDERGARTEN Krijesnica	Stari Jankovci	Principal	29.9.2016.

90.	Sandra Šimunić	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Educator	29.9.2016.
91.	Dubravka Vukić	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Educator	29.9.2016.
92.	Monika Dragun	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Pedagogue	29.9.2016.
93.	Snježana Španić Vrabec	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Educator	29.9.2016.
94.	Silvija Peras	KINDERGARTEN CPO Vinkovci	Vinkovci	Educator	29.9.2016.
95.	Tončica Kalilić	ETTA- regional office Split	Split	Senior adviser	30.9.2016.
96.	Narcisa Jembrek	City of Koprivnica	Koprivnica	Senior administration officer	11.10.2016.
97.	Ida Šipek	KINDERGARTEN Tratinčica	Koprivnica	Psychologist	11.10.2016.
98.	Diana Radić	KINDERGARTEN Tratinčica	Koprivnica	Speech-therapist	11.10.2016.
99.	Dunja Vargović	RC Podravsko sunce	Koprivnica	Special educator	11.10.2016.
100.	Anja Holeček	RC Podravsko sunce	Koprivnica	Sensory integration pedagogue	11.10.2016.
101.	Maja Ferlindeš	City of Koprivnica	Koprivnica	Senior expert associate	11.10.2016.

12.3 Annex 3: Consulted sources of information

UNICEF SOURCES

Generic Theory of Change underlying UNICEFs engagement in CEE/CIS Region
(2013) How to design and manage Equity – focused evaluations, UNICEF, 2011

Initial Project proposal (internal, unpublished document)

Internal monitoring database kept and updated by GuTC, accessed on May 7, 2016

List of Executive and Advisory committee members of GuTC and members of Sustainability council

Pečnik, N. & (2010). Roditeljstvo u najboljem interesu djece i podrška roditeljima najmlađe djece, Zagreb: UNICEF

Revised supplementary programme note on the theory of change for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017

Starc B. (2014). Roditeljstvo u najboljem interesu djece i podrška roditeljima najmlađe djece s teškoćama u razvoju, Zagreb: UNICEF

UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2008

UNICEF Inception Report Assessment Grid (excel table)

UNICEF Procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis, 2015

UNICEF (2013). Kako roditelji i zajednice brinu o djeci najmlađe dobi u Hrvatskoj, Zagreb: UNICEF

UNICEF Revised Core Roles (internal, unpublished document)
UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, 2005

Strategic Guidance Note on Institutionalizing Ethical Practice for UNICEF Research, 2013

OTHER SOURCES

Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2013). Statistical Reports.

Delale, E. A., & Pećnik, N. (2010). Učestalost i međuodnosi korektivnih i preventivnih odgojnih postupaka majki djece predškolske dobi. *Ljetopis socijalnog rada, 17,* 49-69.

Law on the Ombudsman for Children (2003).

Pećnik, N. & Raboteg-Šarić, Z. (2005). Neformalna i formalna podrška jednoroditeljskim i dvoroditeljskim obiteljima. *Revija za socijalnu politiku, 12,* 1-21.

Šućur, Z., Kletečki Radović, M., Družić Ljubotina, O., & Babić, Z. (2015). Siromaštvo i dobrobit djece predškolske dobi u Republici Hrvatskoj. Zagreb: UNICEF.

12.4 Annex 4: Data collection instruments

GIDI, IDI, FGD guides

Each in-depth interview, either individual or group, as well as focus group discussion will start with the presentation of the evaluation team and the evaluation objectives. Respondents will be given a consent form and the evaluation team member will familiarize them with its content.

In the consent form, mutual understanding is set, including voluntary participation of the respondents, their right to withdraw from the interview/focus group discussion at any moment, their right not to answer questions they are uncomfortable with, conditions under which the interviews/focus group discussions will take place and the information on usage of data gathered during this evaluation phase.

Interviews will last up to 60 minutes and focus group discussions up to 120 minutes with participation of at most 7 people. With consent of the participant/s, both of the data collection methods will be audio recorded in order to make later interpretation of collected data fully accurate.

In line with standard evaluation practices, the interviews and focus group discussions will be attended only by the evaluators and the interviewed people.

Each interview/focus group discussion will start with an introductory question to determinate their involvement in the programmes.

Regional coordinators

- **Introductory question:** What is the main reason for you to enrol in the training programme and later implementation of GuT/GuT PLUS programme?
- **RELEVANCE 1** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled your needs in the area of working with parents – supporting them in positive parenting? Please explain.
- **R2** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled needs of parents in providing supportive family environment? Please explain.
- **R3** When it comes to parents with different backgrounds (e.g. gender, economic status, employment), was the GuT/GuT PLUS programme equally relevant, accessible, interesting, useful to all of these groups of parents?
    - How would you explain the predominance of mothers taking part in the programme?

- What are your observations of economic and educational status of parents taking part in the programme? What are the reasons for that?

- **R4** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme in Croatia? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

OUTPUT 1

- **O1 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for professionals.

- **O1 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme strengthened your competencies in providing support to parents in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **O1 E3** What is your opinion on the programme design (e.g. workshop content, training design, work materials, evaluation, monitoring) in the context of providing support to preschool education professionals?

- **O1 E4** Which are, in your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **O1 E5** Which are, in your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **O1 E6** What would you consider to be major personal gain from taking part in the programme?

- **O1 E7** How did you become a regional coordinator?

OUTPUT 2

- **O2 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for parents.

- **O2 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of parents in providing positive parenting and supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **O2 E3** What is your opinion on the programme design (e.g. workshop content, training design, work materials, evaluation, monitoring) in relation to providing support to parents?

- **O2 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme when it comes to parents?

- **O2 E5** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness in the context of providing education for parents?

- **O2 E6** What is your recollection on parents' feedbacks on taking part in the education in terms of parental behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, competences level, dealing with stress etc.? Is there a pattern in their responses that you can recognize?

- **O2 E7** In your case, did you observe that parents of children that are not in the regular care in kindergartens have had and used the opportunity to also take part in the educational programme?

OUTPUT 3

- **O3 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of establishing cooperation between

relevant stakeholders to make this programme sustainable and fully operational even for the future parents and professionals.

- **O3 E2** In your opinion, what were the key motivational factors to maintain the programme implementation during the last 8 years and based on that experience what are your predictions for further implementation of the programme?

- **IMPACT 1** To what extent do you think that the programme contributed to establishment of supportive family environment?

- **I2** Did you have the opportunity to witness/observe any changes in behaviour of children whose parents were enrolled in the programme? If yes, please explain.

- **I3** From your perspective, what can be obstacles that can diminish long-term behavioural changes among parents that were enrolled in the programme?

- **I4** How do you see the role of Parents' clubs in sustaining long-term behavioural changes among parents?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** How are the programme activities organized in your kindergarten regarding implementer's workload, additional pay etc.?

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare and comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** Have you been able to differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)

- **EFFI 4** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **EFFI 5** Can you explain the process of establishment and functioning f regional/national network of programme implementers, its roles and tasks and your concrete roles as regional coordinator?

- **EFFI 6** When it comes to internal evaluation processes and monitoring on implementation of the programme, could you please clarify the established procedures?

- **EFFI 7** From your point of view, what are the key factors that contributed to lower levels of activity among some institutions or even their inactivity?

- **SUSTAINIBILITY 1** Can you identify strategies, actions taken during the programme implementation that can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S2** Can you identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme on the national/organisational/personal level?

Programme implementers (Kindergartens, Family centres, NGOs and RCs)

- **Introductory question:** What is the main reason for you to enrol in the training programme and later implementation of GuT/GuT PLUS programme?

- **RELEVANCE 1** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled your needs in the area of working with parents – supporting them in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **R2** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled needs of parents in providing supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **R3** When it comes to parents with different backgrounds (e.g. gender, economic status, employment), was the GuT/GuT PLUS programme equally relevant, accessible, interesting, useful to all of these groups of parents?
    - How would you explain the predominance of mothers taking part in the programme?
    - What are your observations of economic and educational status of parents taking part? What are the reasons for that?

- **R4** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme in Croatia? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

OUTPUT 1

- **O1 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for professionals.

- **O1 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened your competencies in providing support to parents in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **O1 E3** What is your opinion on the programme design (e.g. workshop content, training design, work materials, evaluation, monitoring) in the context of providing support to preschool education professionals?

- **O1 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **O1 E5** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **O1 E6** What would you consider to be major personal gain from taking part in the programme?

OUTPUT 2

- **O2 EFFECTIVENESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for parents.

- **O2 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of parents in providing positive parenting and supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **O2 E3** What is your opinion on the programme design (e.g. workshop content, training design, work materials, evaluation, monitoring) in context of providing support to parents?

- **O2 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme when it comes to parents?

- **O2 E5** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness in the context of providing education for parents?

- **O2 E6** What is your recollection on parents' feedbacks on taking part in the education in terms of parental behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, competences level, dealing with stress etc.? Is there a pattern in their responses that you can recognize?

- **O2 E7** In your case, did you observe that parents of children that are not in the regular care in kindergartens have had and used the opportunity to also take part in the educational programme?

OUTPUT 3

- **O3 EFFECTIVENESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of establishing cooperation between relevant stakeholders to make this programme sustainable and fully operational even for the future parents and professionals.

- **O3 E2** In your opinion, what were the key motivational factors to maintain the programme implementation during the last 8 years and based on that experience what are your predictions for further implementation of the programme?

- **IMPACT 1** To what extent do you think that the programme contributed to establishment of supportive family environment?

- **I2** Did you have the opportunity to witness/observe any changes in behaviour of children whose parents were enrolled in the programme? If yes, please explain.

- **I3** From your perspective, what can be obstacles that can diminish long-term behavioural changes among parents that were enrolled in the programme?

- **I4** How do you see the role of Parents' clubs in sustaining long-term behavioural changes among parents?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** How are the programme activities organized in your kindergarten/family centre/rehabilitation centre/NGO regarding implementer's workload, additional pay etc.?

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare and comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** Have you been able to differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)

- **EFFI 4** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **EFFI 5** Can you explain the process of establishment and functioning of regional/national network of programme implementers, its roles and tasks?

- **EFFI 6** When it comes to internal evaluation processes and monitoring on implementation of the programme, could you please clarify the established procedures?

- **EFFI 7** From your point of view, what are the key factors that contributed to lower levels of activity among some institutions or even their inactivity?

- **SUSTAINABILITY 1** Can you identify strategies, actions taken during the programme implementation that can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S 2** Can you identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme on the national/organisational/personal level?

Kindergarten Principals

- **Introductory question:** What is the main reason for your organisation to enrol in the programme implementation?

- **RELEVANCE 1** How does the programme fit with other actions implemented in your organisation regarding work with parents?

- **R 2** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme in preschool organizations in Croatia? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

- **R 3** What is your opinion, to what extent does the programme meet the needs of professionals in kindergartens regarding supporting parents in parenting in the best interest of a child?

- **R 4** What is your opinion, to what extent does the programme meet the needs of parents in kindergartens regarding supporting them in parenting in the best interest of a child?

- **R 5** Do the parents in your organisation have some special needs or characteristics that could not have been covered or taken into account by this programme?

- **EFFECTIVENESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success on the level of your organisation?

- **E 2** To what extent did the implementation of these programmes contribute to recognition of the need for similar actions among decision makers?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** Have you been able to differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)

- **EFFI 2** Have you been satisfied with communication and cooperation with different stakeholders during the programme implementation?

- **EFFI 3** How are the programme activities organized in your kindergarten regarding implementer's workload, additional pay etc.?

- **SUSTAINABILITY 1** Can you identify key factors that could facilitate or diminish the on-going implementation of the programme on the national or organisational level?

Programme supervisors

- **Introductory question:** What is the main reason for you to enrol in the training programme and later implementation of GuT/GuT PLUS programme?

- **RELEVANCE 1** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled your needs in the area of working with parents – supporting them in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **R 2** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled needs of parents in providing supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **R 3** When it comes to parents with different backgrounds (e.g. gender, economic status, employment), was the GuT/GuT PLUS programme equally relevant, accessible, interesting, useful to all of these groups of parents?
    - How would you explain the predominance of mothers taking part in the programme?
    - What are your observations of economic and educational status of parents taking part? What are the reasons for that?

- **R 4** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme in Croatia? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

OUTPUT 1

- **O1 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for professionals.

- **O1 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened your competencies in providing support to parents in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **O1 E3** What is your opinion on the programme design (e.g. workshop content, training design, work materials, evaluation, monitoring) in the context of providing support to preschool education professionals?

- **O1 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **O1 E5** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **O1 E6** What would you consider to be major personal gain from taking part in the programme?

- **O1 E7** How did you become a programme supervisor?

- **O1 E8** What are your main roles as a programme supervisor and how of did you have chance to practice it?

OUTPUT 2

- **O2 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for parents.

- **O2 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of parents in providing positive parenting and supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **O2 E3** What is your opinion on the programme design (e.g. workshop content, training design, work materials, evaluation, monitoring) in the context of providing support to parents?

- **O2 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme when it comes to parents?

- **O2 E5** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness in the context of provision education for parents?

- **O2 E6** What is your recollection on parents' feedbacks on taking part in the education in terms of parental behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, competences level, dealing with stress etc.? Is there a pattern in their responses that you can recognize?

- **O2 E7** In your case, did you observe that parents of children that are not in the regular care in kindergartens have had and used the opportunity to also take part in the educational programme?

OUTPUT 3

- **O3 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of establishing cooperation between relevant stakeholders to make this programme sustainable and fully operational even for the future parents and professionals.

- **O3 E2** In your opinion, what were the key motivational factors to maintain the programme implementation during the last 8 years and based on that experience what are your predictions for further implementation of the programme?

- **IMPACT 1** To what extent do you think that the programme contributed to establishment of supportive family environment?

- **I2** Did you have the opportunity to witness/observe any changes in behaviour of children whose parents were enrolled in the programme? If yes, please explain.

- **I3** From your perspective, what can be seen as obstacles that can diminish long-term behavioural changes among parents that were enrolled in the programme?

- **I4** How do you see the role of Parents' clubs in sustaining long-term behavioural changes among parents?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** How are the programme activities organized in your kindergarten regarding implementer's workload, additional pay etc.?

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare and comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** Have you been able to differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)

- **EFFI 4** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **EFFI 5** Can you explain the process of establishment and functioning of regional/national network of programme implementers, its roles and tasks?

- **EFFI 6** When it comes to internal evaluation processes and monitoring on implementation of the programme, could you please clarify the established procedures?

- **EFFI 7** From your point of view, what are the key factors that contributed to lower levels of activity among some institutions or even their inactivity?

- **SUSTAINIBILITY 1** Can you identify strategies, actions taken during the programme implementation that can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S 2** Can you identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme on the national/organisational/personal level?

Case study of City of Koprivnica

- **Introductory question:** Could you please explain the nature of your involvement in the GuT/GuT PLUS programmes implementation?

- **RELEVANCE 1** In which way and to what extent, in your opinion, is this programme relevant for your local community?

- **R 2** In which way does it address the needs you encounter in your local community in the area of providing support to professionals and parents in creating supportive family environment?

- **R 3** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

- **EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success considering its implementation in your local community?

- **E 2** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **E 3** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **E 4** What would you say that is your major contribution to effective implementation of the programme, what are the activities that you have supported so far?

- **E 5** In your opinion, to what extent are resources (human, financial, organisational) secured for on-going implementation of the programme? Is there enough motivation from the key stakeholders for further programme implementation?

- **E 6** In your opinion did this program contributed to awareness rising among decision makers (on national and local level), parents and professionals on the need for providing accessible and quality parenting support services? If yes, please explain.

- **EFFICIENCY 1** In your opinion, is the programme designed in a way that human and financial resources are used in an efficient way? Please explain.

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare, comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** How would you explain and differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.) if any?

- **EFFI 4** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **EFFI 5** Could you explain your role in the implementation of the programmes?

- **SUSTAINIBILITY 1** In your opinion what actions during the programme implementation can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S 2** How do you see your role in future implementation of this programme? Please explain.

- **S 3** In your opinion who should have the main responsibility for financial stability of further implementation of the programme?

- **S 4** Please, identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme?

UNICEF CO staff

- **Introductory question:** Could you please explain the motivation behind starting the development and implementation of the GuT/GuT PLUS programmes?

- **RELEVANCE 1** In which way and to what extent, in your opinion, are these programmes aligned with the national policy priorities regarding family and community based services?

- **R 2** Has this changed from the beginning of the programme implementation to present day?

- **R 3** In which way could have the political changes influenced the relevance of the programmes by changing the national priorities regarding family and community based services?

- **R 4** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled the needs of professionals in the area of working with parents – supporting them in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **R 5** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled needs of parents in providing supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **R 6** When it comes to parents with different backgrounds (e.g. gender, economic status, employment), is the GuT/GuT PLUS programme designed to be equally relevant, accessible, interesting, useful to all of these groups of parents?

- **R 7** How initial programme designers were selected and how their expertise relates to the themes of intervention?

- **R 8** To what extent and in which way has the network of other UNICEF country offices and/or other international practices been used in designing the programme?

- **R 9** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

- **R 10** What is your opinion on further development of the programme with its extensions for special populations of parents and children (GuT PLUS, social assistance beneficiaries)? Please explain.

OUTPUT 1

- **O1 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for professionals.

- **O1 E2** To your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of professionals in providing support to parents in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **O1 E3** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **O1 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **O1 E5** What would you say that is UNICEF-s major contribution to effective implementation of the programme, what are the activities that you have supported so far?

OUTPUT 2

- **O2 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for parents.

- **O2 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of parents in providing positive parenting and supportive family environment? Please explain.

OUTPUT 3

- **O3 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of establishing cooperation between relevant stakeholders to make this programme sustainable and fully operational even for the future parents and professionals.

- **O3 E2** What would you say that is UNICEF's major contribution to establishment of continuing cooperation between relevant stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability of the programme?

- **O3 E3** In your opinion, to what extent are resources (human, financial, organisational) secured for on-going implementation of the programme? Is there enough motivation from the key stakeholders for further programme implementation?

- **O3 E4** In your opinion did this program contributed to awareness rising among decision makers (on national and local level), parents and professional on the need for providing accessible and quality parenting support services? If yes, please explain.

- **IMPACT 1** To what extent do you think that programme contributed to establishment of supportive family environment?

- **I 2** From your perspective, what can be obstacles that can diminish long-term behavioural changes among parents that were enrolled in the programme?

- **I 3** How do you see the role of Parents' clubs in sustaining long-term behavioural changes among parents?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** In your opinion, is the programme designed in a way that human and financial resources are used in an efficient way? Please explain.

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare, comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** How would you explain and differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)?

- **EFFI 4** How do you see the role of UNICEF in programme implementation?

- **EFFI 5** How would you assess cooperation with ETTA, line ministries, and Centre GuT in implementation of these programmes?

- **EFFI 6** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **EFFI 7** Do you consider that the role of UNICEF in implementation of these programmes should change and if so, please explain how?

- **SUSTAINIBILITY 1** In your opinion what actions during the programme implementation can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S 2** How do you see the role of UNICEF in future implementation of these programmes? Please, explain.

- **S 3** In your opinion who should have the main responsibility for financial stability of further implementation of the programme?

- **S 4** Please, identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme?

Representatives of line ministries (MoSPY and MoSES)

- **Introductory question:** Could you please explain how has the cooperation with UNICEF started on (designing and) implementing GuT/GuT PLUS programmes?

- **RELEVANCE 1** In which way and to what extent, in your opinion, is this programme aligned with the national policy priorities regarding family and community based services?

- **R 2** Has this changed from the beginning of the programme implementation to present day?

- **R 3** In which way could have the political changes influenced the relevance of the programme by changing the national priorities regarding family and community based services?

- **R 4** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled the needs of professionals in the area of working with parents – supporting them in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **R 5** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled needs of parents in providing supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **R 6** When it comes to parents with different backgrounds (e.g. gender, economic status, employment), is the GuT/GuT PLUS programme designed to be equally relevant, accessible, interesting, useful to all of these groups of parents?

- **R 7** What is your opinion on further development of the programme with its extensions for special populations of parents and children (GuT PLUS, social assistance beneficiaries)? Please explain.

- **R 8** What is your opinion on the expertise of the authors of the programme?

- **R 9** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

- **R 10** Do you have any suggestions regarding organization of programmes of supporting parents on national level?

OUTPUT 1

- **O1 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for professionals.

- **O1 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of professionals in providing support to parents in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **O1 E3** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **O1 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **O1 E5** What would you say that is MoSPaY/MoSES contribution to effective implementation of the programme, what are the activities that you have supported so far?

OUTPUT 2

- **O2 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for parents.

- **O2 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of parents in providing positive parenting and supportive family environment? Please explain.

OUTPUT 3

- **O3 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of establishing cooperation between relevant stakeholders to make this programme sustainable and fully operational even for the future parents and professionals.

- **O3 E2** What would you say that is MoSPaY/MoSES contribution to establishment of continuing cooperation between relevant stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability of the programme?

- **O3 E3** In your opinion, to what extent are resources (human, financial, organisational) secured for on-going implementation of the programme? Is there enough motivation from the key stakeholders for further programme implementation?

- **O3 E4** In your opinion did this program contributed to awareness rising among decision makers (on national and local level), parents and professional on the need for providing accessible and quality parenting support services? If yes, please explain.

- **IMPACT 1** To what extent do you think that programme contributed to establishment of supportive family environment?

- **I 2** From your perspective, what can be obstacles that can diminish long-term behavioural changes among parents that were enrolled in the programme?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** In your opinion, is the programme designed in a way that human and financial resources are used in an efficient way? Please explain.

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare, comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** How would you explain and differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)?

- **EFFI 4** How do you see the role of MoSPaY/MoSES in programme implementation?

- **EFFI 5** How would you assess cooperation with UNICEF, Centre GuT, and ETTA in implementation of this programme?

- **EFFI 6** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **EFFI 7** Do you consider that the role of MoSPaY/MoSES in implementation of this programme should change and if so, please explain how?

- **SUSTAINABILITY 1** In your opinion what actions during the programme implementation can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S 2** How do you see the role of MoSPaY/MoSES in future implementation of this programme? Please, explain.

- **S 3** In your opinion who should have the main responsibility for financial stability of further implementation of the programme?

- **S 4** Please, identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme?

Representatives of ETTA

- **Introductory question:** Could you please explain how has the cooperation with UNICEF started on designing and implementing GuT/GuT PLUS programmes?

- **RELEVANCE 1** In which way and to what extent, in your opinion, is this programme aligned with the national policy priorities regarding family and community based services?

- **R 2** Has this changed from the beginning of the programme implementation to present day?

- **R 3** In which way could have the political changes influenced the relevance of the programme by changing the national priorities regarding family and community based services?

- **R 4** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled the needs of professionals in the area of working with parents – supporting them in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **R 5** To what extent do you think that GuT/GuT PLUS programme concept took into consideration and fulfilled needs of parents in providing supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **R 6** When it comes to parents with different backgrounds (e.g. gender, economic status, employment), is the GuT/GuT PLUS programme designed to be equally relevant, accessible, interesting, useful to all of these groups of parents?

- **R 7** What is your opinion on further development of the programme with its extensions for special populations of parents and children (GuT PLUS, social assistance beneficiaries)? Please explain.

- **R 8** What is your opinion on the expertise of the authors of the programme?

- **R 9** Are you familiar with implementation of any similar programme? If yes, how do you assess its coherence with GuT and GuT PLUS?

- **R 10** Do you have any suggestions regarding organization of programmes of supporting parents on national level?

OUTPUT 1

- **O1 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for professionals.

- **O1 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of professionals in providing support to parents in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **O1 E3** Which are, to your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **O1 E4** Which are, to your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **O1 E5** What would you say that is ETTA's contribution to effective implementation of the programme, what are the activities that you have supported so far (e.g. financial support, invitation of the institutions and professionals for involvement in the programme, improvement and modifications of the program, supporting annual conferences, regional meetings, coordination tasks, other...)?

OUTPUT 2

- **O2 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for parents.

- **O2 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of parents in providing positive parenting and supportive family environment? Please explain.

OUTPUT 3

- **O3 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of establishing cooperation between relevant stakeholders to make this programme sustainable and fully operational even for the future parents and professionals.

- **O3 E2** What would you say that is ETTA's contribution to establishment of sustainable cooperation between relevant stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability of the programme?

- **O3 E3** In your opinion, to what extent are resources (human, financial, organisational) secured for on-going implementation of the programme? Is there enough motivation from the key stakeholders for further programme implementation?

- **O3 E4** In your opinion did this program contributed to awareness rising among decision makers (on national and local level), parents and professional on the need for providing accessible and quality parenting support services? If yes, please explain.

- **IMPACT 1** To what extent do you think that programme contributed to establishment of supportive family environment?

- **I 2** From your perspective, what can be obstacles that can diminish long-term behavioural changes among parents that were enrolled in the programme?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** In your opinion, is the programme designed in a way that human and financial resources are used in an efficient way? Please explain.

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare, comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** How would you explain and differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)?

- **EFFI 4** How do you see the role of ETTA in programme implementation?

- **EFFI 5** How would you assess cooperation with UNICEF, Centre GuT, and line ministries in implementation of this programme?

- **EFFI 6** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **EFFI 7** Do you consider that the role of ETTA in implementation of this programme should change and if so, please explain how?

- **SUSTAINABILITY 1** In your opinion what actions during the programme implementation can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S 2** How do you see the role of ETTA in future implementation of this programme? Please, explain.

- **S 3** In your opinion who should have the main responsibility for financial stability of further implementation of the programme?

- **S 4** Please, identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme?

Experts – programme developers

- **Introductory question:** Could you please explain how has the cooperation with UNICEF started on designing and implementing GuT/GuT PLUS programmes?

- **RELEVANCE 1** What is your expertise related to the themes of intervention (professional background, scientific background)?

- **R 2** Which guidelines and resources did you use in designing the program (theories, research - national or international, UNICEF guidelines or other UNICEF country offices programs, experiences or evaluations of these programs, practices in other countries)?

- **R 3** In which way is the program coherent with national children's policy guidelines and other similar initiatives (local, regional, national) directed toward supporting parents in their parenting responsibilities?

- **R 4** When designing the GuT/GuT PLUS programme how did you take into account the needs of professionals in the area of working with parents – supporting them in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **R 5** When designing the GuT/GuT PLUS programme how did you take into account the needs of parents in providing supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **R 6** When it comes to parents with different backgrounds (e.g. gender, economic status, employment), did you pay attention that the GuT/GuT PLUS programme is designed to be equally relevant, accessible, interesting, useful to all of these groups of parents? Please explain.
    - How would you explain the predominance of mothers taking part in the programme?
    - What are your observations on economic and educational status of parents taking part in the programme? What are the reasons for that?

OUTPUT 1

- **O1 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for professionals.

- **O1 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened your competencies in providing support to parents in positive parenting? Please explain.

- **O1 E3** What is your recollection on professionals' feedbacks on taking part in the education? Is there a pattern in their responses?

- **O1 E4** Which are, in your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme?

- **O1 E5** Which are, in your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness?

- **O1 E6** What would you consider to be major personal gain from taking part in the programme?

OUTPUT 2

- **O2 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of providing education for parents.

- **O2 E2** In your opinion, to what extent has the programme provided support and strengthened competencies of parents in providing positive parenting and supportive family environment? Please explain.

- **O2 E3** Which are, in your opinion, major strengths and weakness of the programme implementation process that influenced the (un)successfulness of the programme when it comes to parents?

- **O2 E4** Which are, in your opinion, major external constraints, factors, obstacles that influenced, affected the programme effectiveness in the context of providing education for parents?

OUTPUT 3

- **O3 EFFECTIVNESS 1** Do you find the programme successful? What would be your definition of the programme success? Consider this question in the context of establishing cooperation between relevant stakeholders to make this programme sustainable and fully operational even for the future parents and professionals.

O3 E2 In your opinion, what were the key motivational factors to maintain the programme implementation during the last 8 years and based on that experience what are your predictions for further implementation of the programme?

- **O3 E3** In your opinion did this program contributed to awareness rising among decision makers (on national and local level), parents and professional on the need for providing accessible and quality parenting support services? If yes, please explain.

- **IMPACT 1** To what extent do you think that programme contributed to establishment of supportive family environment?

- **I 2** From your perspective, what can be obstacles that can diminish long-term behavioural changes among parents that were enrolled in the programme?

- **I 3** How do you see the role of Parents' clubs in sustaining long-term behavioural changes among parents?

- **EFFICIENCY 1** In your opinion, is the programme designed in a way that human and financial resources are used in an efficient way? Please explain.

- **EFFI 2** Could you please compare, comment the ratio, from your point of view, of the resources (financial, human, technical) invested in the programme implementation and its outputs, results?

- **EFFI 3** How would you explain and differentiate roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation (e.g. UNICEF, ETTA, line ministries, Centre Growing up Together etc.)?

- **EFFI 4** How would you assess cooperation with UNICEF, Centre GuT, line ministries, and ETTA in implementation of this programme?

- **EFFI 5** Could you please assess the nature and quality of communication and coordination with different relevant stakeholders?

- **SUSTAINIBILITY 1** In your opinion what actions during the programme implementation can ensure the continuity of the programme implementation?

- **S 2** How do you see your role in future implementation of this programme? Please, explain.

- **S 3** In your opinion who should have the main responsibility for financial stability of further implementation of the programme?

- **S 4** Please, identify key factors that could diminish the on-going implementation of the programme?

12.5 Annex 6: Survey questionnaire for parents

Dear Madam/Sir,

As part of the independent external evaluation of the support programs for parents - **Growing up together** and **Growing up together Plus** - launched by **UNICEF in 2008** and implemented in a number of kindergartens, family centres, rehabilitation centres and civil society organizations, we kindly invite you to fill in this questionnaire to collect your attitudes and beliefs as parents who took part in this programme.

Your insights will significantly contribute to the **assessment of the above mentioned programs and will enable us to identify areas of possible improvements and recommendations for future implementation**.

The evaluation is carried out by an **independent team of experts,** led by prof. dr. sc. Gordana Keresteš and mr. sc. Maja Horvat in collaboration with Sirius – Centre for psychological counselling, education and research from Zagreb.

Your **e-mail contact was obtained** from the program implementers and will be used exclusively for the purpose of this evaluation. Moreover, your e-mail contact presents the only personal information we have and which could, potentially, undermine your complete anonymity.

Your **participation** in this evaluation is **entirely voluntary** and the collected data will be used, analysed and presented only at the group level. If there is a question you cannot or do not want to answer, feel free to skip it and continue to the next question.

We kindly ask you to dedicate **10-15 minutes** of your time and significantly contribute to the quality of this evaluation process. Each of your given answers will be highly valuated.

In case of need of any type of assistance, feel free to contact us at info@centar-sirius.hr.

Thank you in advance for your effort and your invested time.

Kind regards,

Evaluation team:

Prof. dr.sc. Gordana Keresteš
Mr.sc. Maja Horvat
Mirela Miharija
Dr.sc. Lovorka Brajković
Danijel Bićanić
Ivana Belamarić

1. Have you attended Growing up together or Growing up together PLUS workshops?
   a. Growing up together
   b. Growing up together PLUS

2. What year did you attend the workshops? _____

3. Your gender:
   a. Female
   b. Male

4. Level of your education?
   a. Primary school
   b. High school degree
   c. Higher / University education
   d. MA / PhD

5. Has your partner also been involved in the workshops?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. To what extent have the workshops fulfilled your need for professional support in parenting?
   a. Not at all
   b. To some extent
   c. Largely
   d. Fully

7. When you look back the attended workshops, how satisfied are you with the overall experience?
   a. Very dissatisfied
   b. More dissatisfied than satisfied
   c. More satisfied than dissatisfied
   d. Very satisfied

   Please explain the reasons for your satisfaction of dissatisfaction: _____

8. In your opinion, how could the Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshop be improved?
   _____

9. Has your attendance on Growing up together / Growing up together Plus workshop changed something in your behaviour and your everyday life?
   a. No
   b. Yes

   If YES, what are the most significant changes, influenced by the workshops, that occurred in your behaviour and everyday life? _____

10. Have you, after attending the Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshop, attended any other similar programs aimed at providing support to parents or otherwise improving your parental skills?
    a. No
    b. Yes

    If YES, what kind of programs have you attended, who organized them and in which way have you improved your parental skills? _____

11. Have you, after completing the Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshop, feel the need for some sort of additional support that would help you continue applying the acquired knowledge and skills in your everyday life?
    a. Yes

b. No

If YES, what kind of support would be needed after completing the workshop? _____

12. Have you involved in the work of Parents' Clubs designed for parents who participated in Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshops?
    a. Yes
    b. No

13. If NO, what were your reasons for not getting involved in the work of Parents' Clubs?
    a. I did not know the Parents' Clubs existed
    b. Parents' Clubs were not available to me (e.g. they were too far from my home)
    c. I did not have time for participation
    d. I do not like the idea of Parents' Clubs
    e. I do not have the need for getting involved
    f. Something else _____

14. What were your reasons to get involved in the work of Parents' Clubs? _____

15. How satisfied were you with the Parents' Clubs?
    a. Very dissatisfied
    b. More dissatisfied than satisfied
    c. More satisfied than dissatisfied
    d. Very satisfied

16. How do you assess impact of the Growing up together/Growing up together PLUS workshops?

What effect did the workshops have on you? (Mark with an „X“ your answer)	Workshops had no effect on that	Small positive effect	Significant positive effect	Exceptional positive effect
Your knowledge about children				
Your knowledge about parenting				
Your behaviour towards your child				
Your sense of stress in parenting				
Your sense of security in parenting				
Your sense of pleasure in parenting				
Your ability to balance different roles (parenting, work, marital/partner)				
The quality of your relationship with your child				
The quality of your relationship with child's other parent				
The quality of the relationship and the atmosphere within your family				

Your skills regarding the search for support and help from others to fulfil your parental responsibilities				
Your prevailing emotional mood				
Your sense of satisfaction with yourself				
Your sense of overall life satisfaction				
Behaviour and development of your child				

17. Has the attendance on Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshops changed something in life and development of your child?
    a. No
    b. Yes

    If Yes, what changes in the behaviour and development of your child were influenced by your attendance on these workshops? _____

18. Has the attendance of Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshop resulted in development of a friendship with some other attending parents that continued to this day?
    a. No
    b. Yes

19. If yes, to what extent does this helps you in application of the acquired knowledge and skills in parenting?
    a. Not at all
    b. To a small extent
    c. Largely

20. Have you recommended Growing up together/Growing up together Plus to other parents?
    a. No
    b. Yes

21. Have you experienced the demand or interest to join the programme in your close environment from other parents (by your friends, acquaintances, colleagues, etc.)?
    c. No
    d. Yes

22. If, at this stage of parenting, you have the need for professional assistance, which type of support would you find the most useful?
    a. Repeated attendance on Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshops
    b. New workshops
    c. Individual consultations with experts
    d. Written materials (books, manuals)
    e. Video materials (educational programs on parenting, DVDs)
    f. Something else _____

23. To what extent do you find the behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of **your partner** concerning parenting, not to be in accordance with the knowledge and skills that you have gained through attending on the Growing up together / Growing up together Plus workshops?
    a. Not at all
    b. To a small extent
    c. Largely

24. To what extent does that interfere with your endeavour to implement the acquired knowledge and skills?
    a. Not at all
    b. To a small extent
    c. Largely

25. To what extent do you find the behaviours, attitudes and beliefs in **<u>your environment</u>** (other family members, friends, professionals in school or kindergarten) concerning parenting, not to be in accordance with the knowledge and skills that you have gained through participation in the Growing up together/Growing up together Plus workshops?
    a. Not at all
    b. To a small extent
    c. Largely

26. To what extent does that interfere with your endeavour to implement the acquired knowledge and skills?
    a. Not at all
    b. To a small extent
    c. Largely

27. In your opinion, what could be services, activities in your community that should be accessible to all parents in empowering their parental role?

28. Finally, please answer a few general questions about your parenting and mark how much you agree with a few general statements about parenting and children.

How much do you agree with these statements? (Mark with an „X“ your answer)	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Completely agree
If a child is about to experience a bad experience (e.g. separation, vaccination) it is the best not to tell that to a child in advance while that way discomfort will pass quicker.				
Small children often cry for no reason so the best thing to do is not to react at all.				
Small children should not be given limitations because limitations inhibit their freedom of personality.				
Too much praise and patting will spoil the child.				
It is important to break child's defiance and stubbornness early in their life.				
Sometimes it is justifiable to hit a child if their life is in danger, e.g. when climbing a window or running out into the street.				
I can easily solve most of the problems that I have with my child.				
I have enough knowledge and skills for taking care about my child.				

If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.				
I really believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good parent.				
I think that I would be a good parent to any child, regardless his/her characteristics.				
Small child does not need explanations about something he/she should not do.				

Thank you for your participation!

12.6 Annex 7: Consent form

Consent form for participation in evaluation

As part of the external formative evaluation of two parenting support programmes - 'Growing up Together' and 'Growing up Together PLUS' – performed by the independent evaluation team gathered around Sirius – Centre for psychological counselling, education and research[32], I agree to participate as a respondent in the in-depth interview/focused group discussion. The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this evaluation and the purpose of my participation as an interviewee/focus group participant has been explained to me and is clear.
2. My participation as an interviewee/focus group participant is voluntary. There has been no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
3. Participation involves being interviewed/taking part in the focus group guided by the evaluation team member(s). The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. /The focus group will last approximately 120 minutes. I allow the evaluator(s) to take written notes during the interview.
4. If I feel uncomfortable answering certain question, I have the right to retain from answering on it.
5. The use of data gathered through my participation will only be used for the purposes of this evaluation.
6. I have been given the explicit guarantees that, if I wish so, the evaluators will not identify me by name or function in their report, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this evaluation will remain secure.
7. If I wish to express something that is not the standpoint of the organization/institution I represent, I will indicate beforehand that I speak in my personal name.
8. I have been given the guarantee that this evaluation would be reviewed and approved by the UNICEF Country Office Croatia.
9. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this evaluation.
10. I have been given a copy of this consent form, co-signed by the evaluator.
11. I allow the recording by audio tape of the interview/focus group, solely for the purpose of note keeping:

[32] Evaluation team consists of Gordana Keresteš, Maja Horvat, Danijel Bićanić, Mirela Miharija, Ivana Belamarić and Lovorka Brajković who are only authorized to conduct interviews and facilitate focus group discussions.

YES NO

Please circle your answer.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Name	Participant's Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Evaluator's Name	Evaluator's Signature	Date

12.7 Annex 8: Terms of references (ToR)

TERMS OF REFERENCE
UNICEF CROATIA

Programme/Project Title:	Early Childhood Development
Consultancy/Services Title:	Formative Evaluation of the Parenting Support Programmes: "Growing up Together" and "Growing up Together PLUS"
Reference:	PRIME 2015
Consultancy Mode:	National International
Type of Contract :	Consultant Individual Contractor Institutional
Mode of Selection :	Competitive Single Source
Duration of Contract :	From: February 2016 – October 2016

1. Overall Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to primarily review and assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the implemented Government of Croatia and UNICEF's Parenting Support Programmes: "Growing up Together" and "Growing up Together PLUS".

The grasp of the evaluation is twofold. First, the role and contribution of every programme component will be evaluated in order to feed the process of further improvement, adjustments and revision of the services in terms of their quality and availability to parents. Furthermore, the evaluation will assess the impact which the programme as a whole made into the education/social care systems, and appraise the potential and challenges of its upscaling at the national level, which is important guideline for the two main partners: Government and the UNICEF Office for Croatia.

Evaluation results and recommendations will inform key decision makers such as State Education and Teacher Training Agency, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, kindergartens and other relevant public institutions, NGOs and experts that implement programs, parents and local communities, as well as the public at large. The results will also be shared with media and donors in order to increase an understanding of the importance of supportive family environment and positive parenting for child's overall development, especially during early years and garner more support for broadening and strengthening family support and early childhood services throughout Republic of Croatia and its potential scale up by the line ministries.

2. Background

2.1 Country context

Croatia is a high-income country (GNI per capita in 2014 was $13,020 which is slightly above the line for high income countries of $12,736) with a strong policy framework for the protection and fulfilment of child rights and become a member of the European Union since 2013. In addition to the highly developed strategic frameworks and legislation, Croatia has institutionalised an important mechanism for monitoring and promoting child rights in the form of the Ombudsperson for Children.

Important progress for children was noted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its recent Concluding Observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Croatia, adopted in September 2014. The Committee, whilst welcoming the progress achieved, also identified a number of areas that require improvement and expressed its concern, inter alia, over the situation of disadvantaged groups of children in Croatia. In spite of Croatia's child rights orientation and the effort invested so far, the Committee also noted a discrepancy between the established policy framework and its implementation in practice.

One of the key challenges that Croatia continues to face is the long-term economic and financial crisis, which has strongly affected the country consecutively for six years now. The crisis has had a negative impact on the well-being of children and family and continues to widen the equity gap.

The provision of parenting support services is a recent and welcome element in the Croatian policy arena. In the past, family policy was oriented towards ending socially unacceptable ways of parenting, so the concept of supporting parents to improve their parenting skills has been only introduced recently.

Regional differences are evident in the availability of such services with considerably fewer services available in the rural areas. Parents of the youngest children with low socioeconomic status most often (70%) do not use any parental support services (compared to 51% of the general population of parents).

2.2 International recommendations on parenting support

According to UN CRC, while the child is entitled to care, security and an upbringing that is respectful of his or her person and individuality, parents are entitled to support by the state in fulfilling their parental function. Council of Europe Rec(2006)19, including the Guidelines for professionals, describes important qualities in delivery of parenting support and principles of work with children and families, underlying that it is not just what is offered, but how it is offered that engages parents (e.g. partnership, relevant to the needs, the strengths perspective, non-stigmatizing & non-judgemental approach).

Even though the Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed improvements in establishing different social support services for families, insufficient availability and quality of support services offering counselling and assistance to families with respect to the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities was noted (CRC Concluded Observations, 2014).

Furthermore, concerned with the quality and conditions of parenting in European societies, underpinned by contemporary scientific knowledge on effective parenting and effective parenting support, Council of Europe Rec(2006)19 recommended that the necessary conditions for positive parenting in the best interest of the child need to be created and that such parenting should be promoted by developing awareness of its value and importance, taking pro-active approach to parenting issues, and normalizing participation in parenting programmes.

3. Parenting support programme(s)

3.1 Programme(s) description and main programme(s) objectives

In order to address the need for establishing quality and accessible parenting support services and encouraged by the request from the Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency, the UNICEF Office initiated development of innovative, comprehensive models of positive parenting support intended for parents of youngest children in general population ("Growing up Together", 2008) and for parents of youngest children with disabilities ("Growing up Together PLUS", 2014). Both programmes provide methodology of community based parenting

services in support to parents of infants and young children, and include continuous internal process evaluation to assess the impact and benefits for parents participating in the programmes.

Following are **the main objectives of the** "Growing up Together" (GT) and "Growing up Together PLUS" (GT PLUS) **programmes:**

1. To support parents of young children, including those of children with disabilities, in understanding and carrying out their parental responsibilities in ways consistent with the values of parenting in the best interest of the child.
2. To encourage, support and build capacities of professionals working with parents, by providing structured, applicable and effective tool and guidance based on the contemporary concept of positive parenting.
3. To offer sustainable, accessible, affordable, non-stigmatising community-based support service to parents in building their parenting skills.
   1.

The approach strives to reflect the strengths based perspective and empowerment model of parenting support and replace the deficit model manifested in top-down, one-way professional-parent communication that is widespread throughout educational, medical/health and social welfare settings.

The GT programme workshops are intended for parents of children age between 1 and 4 years old, and the GT PLUS programme includes parents of children with disabilities before they enrol in the elementary school (usually up to the age of 8). Although programmes were developed to provide support to parents in general, both to mothers and to fathers, it was noted during implementation that mothers were those who mainly attended workshops (around 90%), while fathers have been generally underrepresented. Efforts were made within programmes in order to establish some level of gender balance and to strengthen the role of fathers in the early childhood development, such as development of additional educational content for professionals. Nevertheless, this segment of the programme implementation needs to be further explored, both in regard to differences in their motivation to participate in the programmes as well as to potential differences in parental behaviours, reactions to programme interventions etc.

Both programmes are delivered through small-group format of eleven structured weekly workshops in kindergartens, family centres, rehabilitation centres, NGOs and other organizations providing support to the youngest children and their families. Participation in both programmes is voluntary and free of charge for parents. Kindergartens and other organizations are also free to decide whether they would include the service into their regular programmes or not.

The work is organised through the group work methodology with groups of 8 – 12 parents in order to support stimulating and empowering environment in which parents exchange their ideas about parenting with professionals and other parents, grow in their understanding of themselves as parents and the way they relate to their child as well as learn about different parenting practices and behaviours. Parents are also informed about recent scientific findings and views about positive parent-child interaction. The group work methodology enables the flow of information, knowledge, skills and support which parents find useful in carrying out their parental responsibilities and which promote development and growth of both, children and parents. Upon completion of the 11-workshop programme, parents are encouraged to meet continuously on a monthly bases in the Parents' Club, with an opportunity to further discuss and exchange information and experience on positive parenting among themselves and with support of the workshop leaders. In addition, specialized educational package was developed for other professionals working in kindergartens and other organizations, in order to provide them with knowledge on the concept of positive parenting and support them in their every-day communication with parents of the youngest children.

The programmes are conducted by interdisciplinary teams (psychologist, pedagogue, and kindergarten-teacher). These professionals are provided with a comprehensive training and support to enable them to conduct workshops with parents and to raise their competence in communication with parents based on partnership. The training package for professionals consists of: the intensive initial training, implementation of the whole programme with continuous mentoring, supervision meeting and evaluation of the first workshop cycle at the end through the evaluation seminar. The workshops for parents 'Growing up together' were internally evaluated through two pilot cycles in 2008 and 2009. Following are some of the evaluation conclusions:

• After completing a program of workshops “Growing up Together” parents felt significantly more efficient in their parenting endeavours.

• Parental beliefs and attitudes about (treatment of) a young child after the program are significantly more accepting of a child as a person and parenting practices which respect children's rights.

• After completing the program parents are more likely to encourage the child to talk about his/her fear, and less likely to minimize child's distress and react to child's negative emotions with their own distress.

• After completing the program parents are more likely to encourage child's emotional expression and problem-solving than before they enrolled in the program. Also, they are less likely to react punitively and minimize child's distress.

• Results suggest that an increase in parental empathy towards the child and readiness to provide more understanding and support to the child in distress, can be attributed to participation in the program. Developing parental sensitivity, listening and acceptance of the child was one of the programme objectives.

An internal process evaluation was also conducted in 2013, during the pilot phase of the “Growing up Together PLUS” programme implementation. The assessment noted significant behavioural and emotional changes among parents who participated in the programme. These changes reflected enhancement of their mechanisms in raising children with disabilities and parenthood. Consequently, those who did not participate in the programme did not manifest those changes.

3.2 Key stakeholders

For development and implementation of both programmes, the cooperation with the Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA) was established, in order to ensure sustainability and training for future professionals implementing the programme within the educational system (mostly kindergartens and educational organizations providing services to children with disabilities).

Furthermore, in 2014 the establishment of the Growing up Together Centre (NGO) was encouraged and supported. The Centre was established by the leading national experts in positive parenting and ECD, as well as other professionals with long-term experience in providing the programme to parents all over Croatia. The Centre regularly monitors the implementation of both programmes in kindergartens and other organizations throughout Croatia, provides information to parents and professionals, ensures sustainability in service provision quality standards, provides continuous support to programme implementers and promotes the programme at national and international occasions. The synergy between UNICEF – initiating development of the service model, ETTA – providing sustainability in training new professionals, service providers (kindergartens and other organizations) incorporating the service into their regular programmes, the NGO – monitoring continuous quality assurance, provides a solid grounds for sustainable and expanding service delivery in support to parents of the youngest children in Croatia.

The implementation of the programme was initially governed by a Quality Control Council comprised of programme’s authors, implementing partners, UNICEF representatives, line ministry for social protection and the ETTA. Once the Growing up Together Centre was established, the Council was replaced with the Centre’s Executive Board mostly comprised of experts and parents involved in the programme.

Key stakeholders, their roles and financial contribution:

UNICEF	Development of the models in cooperation with parenting and ECD experts. Coordination and support of the pilot implementation. Provision of technical guidance including knowledge sharing; financial support for contracting programme’s authors and implementers and conducting programme activities; technical and financial support for developing programme materials (training materials and materials for parents);

	provision of a platform for dialogue among relevant stakeholders; and communication activities.
Line ministries (MoSES and MoSPY)	Leadership roles and active support were to be assumed by the line ministries; introducing programme at the system level.
Education and Teacher Training Agency	Co-initiating the development of the programmes, organising and sustaining initial training for programme implementers (professionals who work with parents), as a part of the regular ETTA curriculum programme.
National ECD and parenting experts, UNICEF consultants	Developing programme concept, programme activities and programme/workshop materials. Providing training for professionals in kindergartens and other institutions which implement programmes with parents.
ECD professionals - programme implementers	Implementation of programme activities in kindergartens and other institutions, introducing and promoting the positive parenting concept and partnership approach among other professionals, parents and children.
Growing up Together Centre	Enabling capacity building of professionals; exchange of knowledge and experiences through the workshop-leaders network; promotion of the Programme and maintaining a high quality standards in providing the service to parents, creating additional projects and applying for funds in support to programmes' implementation and sustainability.
Kindergartens and other institutions/organisations that implement programme activities	Enabling and supporting programme activities (allocated time and resources), committing to improvements in working with parents, and developing the parent – professional partnerships.
Local communities	Contributing to the sustainability of the programmes, encouraging kindergartens to participate, and supporting implementation.

Parenting support programmes are expected to be available as continuous support services and to be scaled up to the national level. However, UNICEF has planned to provide direct management and funding support to these programmes until the end of the 2016. Still, in the period after 2016, UNICEF will continue to provide its technical advice to the GT and GT PLUS programmes implementation, but will be more actively engaged in developing and modelling new parenting support programme components (e.g. for parents of some other specific vulnerable groups of children). For the period 2008 – 2016, the estimated planned cost for both programmes were $350.000,00 which were expected to be covered mostly by UNICEF.

Until the mid of the 2015, UNICEF invested around $200.000,00 for GT Programme and $110.000,00 for GT Plus Programme (These funds have been ensured through the donations received from individuals and private sector in Croatia.) It should be also noted that ETTA, who facilitate and organise initial trainings for programme implementers, continuously contributes in the form of allocated staff /time resources. The exact amount and share of financial contribution was not explicitly expressed, but it can be further discussed with the ETTA representatives during the evaluation process, if needed.

3.3 Alignment with national priorities and international standards

Programmes are in line with the National Strategy for the Rights of Children in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2020, National Strategy of Education, Science and Technology (2014), the National Pedagogic Standard for

Preschool Education and Care, the Plan for Transformation and Deinstitutionalization of Social Welfare Homes and other Legal Entities Performing Social Welfare Activities in the Republic of Croatia 2014-2016 (2018), the Strategy of Social Welfare Development in the Republic of Croatia 2011-2016. All of those national documents emphasize a strong need and requirements for providing quality and accessible services for supporting parents and in order to prevent negative outcomes for children.

Implementation of these programmes is premised on the norms set out by international treaties, i.e. UN CRC, UN CRPD, ratified by the Republic of Croatia. Programmes are also based on the highest international standards and on existing best practices. By 2015 workshops have been implemented in kindergartens and family centres in around 60 towns in Croatia, with more than 3500 parents participating in programmes.
Also, the basic programme has been introduced and implemented in 14 towns in Bosnia & Herzegovina and in 13 Bulgarian community centres/libraries (the programme was modified and adapted to the local context).

Parenting support programmes Growing up Together and Growing up Together PLUS, as well as their external evaluation, are integral part of the Biannual Work Plan 2015-2016 agreed among Government of Republic of Croatia (line ministries) and UNICEF Country Office.

Therefore, in order to corroborate results achieved by programmes, and to ensure recommendations for its improvements and sustainability, UNICEF will conduct a formal assessment of the programme proposed by this TOR.

4. Evaluation purpose and objectives

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to inform UNICEF and all relevant stakeholders on the overall relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the parenting support programmes "Growing up Together" and "Growing up Together PLUS", in order to feed the process of further improvement, adjustments and revision of the services, as well as to provide grounds for long-term sustainability of the service within the existing educational and social welfare system, hence enabling continuous availability of the service to parents of the youngest children all over the Country.

The evaluation is particularly relevant to be conducted at this point of time, since the Country Office is finalising current Programme Cycle (2012 – 2016), and the findings and recommendations are expected to be utilised for discussion with key partners - Government, Local Governments, Growing-up Together Centre, experts and professionals on further joint priority actions, including adjustments of the current approach/activities.

The main objectives of this evaluation are to:

2. Provide evidence on the achieved programme results and answer whether programme concept, structure and activities are relevant, efficient and effective against each programme objective:
    a. to support parents of young children, including those of children with disabilities, in understanding and carrying out their parental responsibilities in ways consistent with the values of parenting in the best interest of the child;
    b. to encourage, support and build capacities of professionals working with parents, by providing structured, applicable and effective guidance and tools based on the contemporary concept of positive parenting;
    c. to offer sustainable, accessible, affordable, non-stigmatised community-based support service to parents for building their parenting skills, through the service mainstreaming.

3. Assess the management and coordination mechanisms of the programme, including the role of the Ministries, State Education and Teacher Training Agency, local authorities, local self-government and local communities, the Growing up Together Centre, kindergartens and other implementing institutions/organisations and UNICEF.
4. Analyse programme recognition, role and contribution within existing early education and social protection/welfare system, in order to asses programme relevance as a ground for sustainability at the national level.

5. Provide recommendations for programme improvements and scaling up by the Government/local authorities to be regularly implemented in kindergartens, and other organisations and institutions within the educational and social welfare system.

The key evaluation questions grouped by the evaluation criteria are suggested as follows:

Relevance	To what extent are programmes aligned with the government policy priorities regarding family and community-based services? Are these programmes relevant to the actual needs of the beneficiaries, both parents/primary caregivers and professionals who work with them? Do the programmes respond to the needs of parents (e.g. regarding parents' gender, economic status, employment, having a child with disability etc.)?
Effectiveness	To what extent were the three programme objectives achieved? What were the major factors (strengths and weaknesses of the programmes) that influenced achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? What external factors (e.g. regional, gender and cultural aspects and aspects of institutional characteristics) affected the programme's effectiveness? Was an appropriate combination of tools and approaches used in the implementation of the programmes?
Efficiency	To what extent have UNICEF and other stakeholders made good use of its human, financial and technical resources in programme development? Were key programme activities cost-efficient in regards to the achieved outputs? To what extent did the set structure of roles and responsibilities contribute to the programmes' efficiency?
Sustainability	What are the key factors that have been positively or negatively influencing long-term sustainability of programmes? To what extent has UNICEF been able to support its partners in developing capacities and establishing mechanisms to ensure ownership and continuity of service, both on national and subnational level?
Impact	To what extent did programmes contribute to long-term positive changes in parents' behaviours towards children (e.g. decrease in use of corporal punishment)? To what extent did programmes contribute to the increasing demand for parenting support services in general? To what extent did programmes contribute to the recognition of the need for providing accessible and quality parenting support services among decision makers (at both national and local level), parents and professionals?

Please note that all evaluation questions need to be reviewed and revised (if/as needed) once the Theory of Change has been reconstructed.

To serve the interest of UNICEF, these criteria should be applied in the framework of UNICEF's Equity-based Approach[33] and Human Rights Based Approach.

5. Scope of the Evaluation and Limitations

6.

The evaluation covers the period from 2008 to present, during which the Government and UNICEF jointly contributed by developing and implementing parenting support services through Growing Up Together and Growing up Together PLUS programmes, with specific focus on supporting parents of the youngest children including those belonging to the vulnerable groups.

Geographical scope is throughout Croatia.

Identified evaluation limitations are as follows:

33 *Please see guidelines at* http://mymande.org/content/how-design-and-manage-equity-focused-evaluations

Limited data/information on parenting behavioural practices and children's outcomes

The major limitations of the evaluation is limited data/information on parenting long term behavioural practices and information on children's outcomes, meaning once when children leave kindergarten programmes. However, this can be mitigated by organising focus groups discussions and/or in-depth interviews with parents who were involved in programmes. This mitigation strategy will be further discussed and agreed with the evaluation team.

Key informant interviews, questionnaire and focus group discussions will be used to compensate for the lack of key M&E data. A broad information gained through conducted internal process evaluations can also be used for mitigating limitations mentioned above.

No documented/explicit results frameworks

Another limitation is that there are no documented/explicit results frameworks or specific documents with theory of change and respective indicators/targets that will allow to discuss clearly defined results of the programme activities. Therefore, an evaluator will be asked to support UNICEF team in reconstructing Theory of Change in the evaluation field preparation phase.

No mainstreamed gender and equity dimension

When it was initially designed, the programme did not mainstream gender and equity dimension. The programme was initiated within the previous UNICEF Country Programme Cycle (2007-2011) when equity approach in designing programme activities was not considered as a leading principle. Furthermore, due to identified lack of relevant parenting support services, the programme was developed to provide universal service for all parents.

Limited applicability of evaluation criteria questions for Growing Up Together PLUS

The proposed evaluation criteria questions cannot be fully applied for GT PLUS programme because the implementation of this programme started in 2014. Therefore, the evaluation team will be requested to develop appropriate modifications to the suggested questions in order to ensure a meaningful review of the GT PLUS Programme.

6. Sources of Information

UNICEF publications describing both programmes (available in English and in Croatian):

- *Parenting in the best interest of the child and support to parents of the youngest children*
- *Parenting in the best interest of the child and support to parents of the youngest children with disabilities*

Relevant national strategic documents;

Report on research findings on family support services (How Parents and Communities Care About Youngest Children in Croatia, 2013);

Situation Analysis of Children in Croatia (2012 and 2015);

List of kindergartens (other institutions and organisations) that implemented programmes; Reports/information gained through internal process evaluations

Reports from kindergartens and other implementing organisations;

Training and workshop materials;

Data/information collected through survey questionnaires, interviews with key stakeholders, focus group discussions; and

Other programmatic documents, reports, assessments.

All needed documents, together with a contact list of key stakeholders (representatives of the MoSPY, MoSES, ETTA, ECD professionals–programme implementers, Centre for Parenting Support "Growing up Together", national ECD and parenting experts, selected kindergartens and other organisations that implement programmes and local community representatives) whose views should be taken into consideration, will be provided to the evaluation team once a contractual agreement has been made. In addition, Centre for Parenting Support "Growing up Together" will ensure contact details of parents agreed to be invited to participate in focus groups/interviews. Because field visit cannot include all of the education institutions/stakeholders, criteria for selection of evaluation sample should be proposed by the evaluators within the Inception report and approved by the UNICEF.

7. Evaluation Process and Methods

The proposed Evaluation team shall be comprised of one evaluation team leader and evaluation team members. If the selected evaluation team is international, it shall include at least two national experts. The composition of the team should be gender balanced.

The evaluation team leader will be responsible for all components of the evaluation including development and implementation of the evaluation methodology (for both qualitative and quantitative components) and quality assurance of the process of data analysis and report writing.

In this evaluation, mixed method approach will be applied by **combining qualitative and quantitative components** to ensure complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. The analysis will be built on information collected from variety of stakeholders through different methods including documentation review. It should critically examine the information gathered from the various sources, and synthesize the information in an objective manner. If contradictory information is obtained from different stakeholders, an effort should be made to understand the reasons for such information, including any gender-based differences.

Evaluation key questions will be assessed through focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, comprehensive review of documents as well as synthesis and analysis of data/information. Wherever monitoring systems will not be able to bring enough evidence (e.g. limited gender/equity focus), the assessment will be based on stakeholders' perceptions. The evaluation results will be validated with national partners and key stakeholders.

The evaluation process should start with the in-depth desk review of available related documentation that will be mainly provided by UNICEF and the implementing partners. A detailed design and methodology with relevant and high-quality tools for information/data collection and analysis is expected to be developed by evaluation team. Approval of the UNICEF team is required prior to implementation. All materials should be gender-competent in language and presentation.

Interviewers/facilitators utilized by the Evaluator must have relevant qualifications and be adequately trained/consulted prior to fieldwork (including gender-competency knowledge). Prior to fieldwork the Evaluator will be responsible for pre-testing some of the instruments to be utilized.

Key stakeholders and informants are to be identified within the design phase. The evaluation should follow the evaluation criteria mentioned above with appropriate additions to cover the scope of the evaluation. The approach should be participatory, gender and human rights responsive with a special focus on equity aspects.

UNICEF, line ministries and Growing up Together Centre will ensure access to kindergartens and other institutions/organisations involved in programmes. To the extent possible UNICEF and partners will provide access to parents involved in programmes.

The evaluation will follow the principles of the UN Evaluation Group's norms and standards in particular with regard to independence, objectiveness, impartiality and inclusiveness and will be guided by the UN ethics guidance[34] as guiding principle to ensure quality of evaluation process, especially apropos conflict of interest, confidentiality of individual informants, sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs, discrimination and gender equality, to address issues of vulnerable population, particularly families with children that are disadvantaged and excluded.

8. Major tasks to be accomplished and key deliverables:

The evaluation will be conducted by a team of evaluators (team of individuals, company, organisation or agency) in close cooperation with UNICEF Croatia Programme Officers and M&E focal point staff.

Table below shows a preliminary evaluation schedule that may be subject to change during the process in agreement with UNICEF.

Description	Responsible	Expected Timeline
Evaluation – inception phase		
Desk review of reference material • UNICEF team will support compilation of a list of the most important background material, documents, and reports.	Evaluation team, UNICEF team and implementing partners	

34 *Please see guidlines at* http://www.uneval.org/search/intex.jsp?q=ETHICAL+GUIDELINES

Stakeholder mapping • The evaluation team will prepare a mapping of stakeholders relevant to the evaluation. 7.	Evaluation team	15/02/2016 – 15/03/2016
Developing work plan and methodology • The set of evaluation questions will be finalized, and the instruments developed. • In cooperation with the UNICEF team, efforts will be made to reconstruct a suitable basis for assessment (theory of change or results framework) to guide the evaluation. • Field work schedule and approach will be developed.	Evaluation team	
Submitting Inception report[35] (up to 50 pages) • Evaluation work plan with timeline, methodological approach, finalised set of evaluation questions, instruments to be used, annotated outline of final report, etc.	Evaluation team	15/03/2016
Approving Inception report • Inception report to be reviewed and approved	UNICEF team and implementing partners	25/03/2016
Evaluation – implementation		
Data collection and analysis • Collection of evaluation data (primary and secondary) is expected to be carried out through different techniques, including desk-reviews, in-depth, informal and semi-structured interviews, questioner (survey) and focus group discussions. • The analysis will be based on detailed protocols/transcripts of interviews, focus groups and data/ collection (survey) results.	Evaluation team	25/03/2016-30/05/2016
Debriefing meeting • Debriefing meeting will be organized to showcase the preliminary findings, testing elements for conclusions and tentative recommendations.	Evaluation team	
Evaluation – reporting		
• Development of the 1st evaluation draft report	Evaluation team	By 15/06/2016
• Consolidated comments by UNICEF	UNICEF team	By 30/06/2016
• Development of the 2nd evaluation draft report	Evaluation team	By 15/07/2016
• Review by UNICEF and external experts	UNICEF CO and RO team (and external experts)	By 15/08/2016
• Submission of the Final Evaluation Report	Evaluation team	By 31/08/2016
• Development of: 8. (a) an Evaluation Summary with findings and recommendations from the main report 9. (b) a Power Point Presentation of the evaluation report	Evaluation team	By 31/08/2016
Use of evaluation findings:		
Presentation • Presentation of key findings of the evaluation to UNICEF Croatia team, major stakeholders and partners	Evaluation team	September 2016
Dissemination	UNICEF team	September 2016

[35] The inception phase will clarify the methodology and approach to be taken for this evaluation; depending on this there might be some changes to the contract initiated with the evaluation team.

Dissemination of evaluation report/key report findings (to key stakeholders and partners, Regional Office, media and donors).		
Follow-up • Management response	UNICEF management	September 2016

The evaluation team is expected to produce and submit the following deliverables:

Inception report (including evaluation work plan, presentation of methodological approach, instruments to be used, annotated outline of final report[36]), to be presented and approved by UNICEF and implementing partners – by March 25th, 2015

1st draft evaluation report (draft findings, conclusions and recommendations from all data sources used in the evaluation) – by June 15th, 2016

2nd draft evaluation report –July 15th, 2016

Final evaluation report (upon external review) – August 31st, 2016

Evaluation Summary Document and Power Point Presentation summarizing key findings and recommendations from the main report – August 31st, 2016.

Final presentation - delivery of Power Point Presentation of the evaluation to stakeholders – September 2016.

Please note that Inception report, draft reports and final evaluation report shall be submitted in English while an evaluation summary document and a Power Point Presentation shall be submitted both, in English and in Croatian.

Final report (approximately 50-70 pages) should contain following chapters and be aligned with the UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards[37] and the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System[38]:

- Title page and opening pages
- Executive summary
- Project description (including the logic of the project design and/or expected results chain)
- The role of UNICEF, MoSES, MoSPY, State Education and Teacher Training Agency, Growing up Together Centre (NGO) and other stakeholders involved
- Purpose of the evaluation
- Evaluation criteria
- Evaluation scope and objectives
- The evaluation design
- Description of methodology
- The stakeholders participation
- Ethical issues
- Findings
- Analysis of results
- Constraints
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Lessons learned
- Annexes

9. Accountabilities, Reporting

The lead evaluator will lead the evaluation process and the research team at all stages and coordinate with UNICEF and other stakeholders involved. The evaluator is responsible for provision of deliverables listed previously on time and of acceptable quality. The evaluator will report to UNICEF Programme Officer and Social Policy Officer (UNICEF M&E focal point).

The evaluator should act with integrity and respect for all stakeholders according to UNEG Ethical Guidelines for research. In the report, the evaluator should not refer to any personal data obtained during the evaluation. The

[36] See „UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards"

37 UNICEF - Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards

38 http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/UNICEF_Global_Evaluation___Report_Oversight_System_aFinal.pdf

evaluator should not share any findings with media in Croatia or abroad concerning individual children, families or individual institutions.

At all times it is important communicate to all the participants that the evaluation does not refer to their efforts and that a failure to implement some components of programmes would not be considered their personal failure.

UNICEF staff will review and approve the deliverables and provide relevant documents.

10. Qualification Requirements

The potential contractor (team of individuals, company, organisation or agency) provides that the Evaluation Team is a **multidisciplinary team of experts led by an Evaluation Team Leader**, in order to ensure technical expertise at each point of the evaluation.

The Evaluation Team should **include at least two national experts**.

UNICEF shall approve all members of the team (national and international) upon receipt of individual CVs and work samples for the entire team.

The Evaluation Team Leader is required to possess following competencies:

Advanced university degree in social sciences (certificates in evaluation studies an asset);

Extensive experience in designing and conducting evaluations and surveys, quantitative and qualitative analysis and data analysis (minimum of 8 years);

Excellent knowledge of monitoring and evaluation methodologies; sound judgment and ability to objectively evaluate programmes in terms of processes, as well as results achieved (evidenced through previously conducted evaluations and references);

Experience in conducting evaluations related to early childhood development (ECD), parenting support, child and family protection, education or social protection;

Proven knowledge on child rights, human rights, gender equality and social inclusion;

Excellent written and spoken English required if the team leader is an international expert, while excellent written and spoken Croatian and English is required if the team leader is a national expert;

Excellent communication and presentation skills;

Excellent skills in working with people and organising team work; Excellent analytical report writing skills;

Excellent conceptual skills;

Ability to keep with strict deadlines;

Knowledge of the country context related to family/parenting support services is an asset

Familiarity with UNICEF's mission and mandate is an asset.

Members of the Evaluation Team are required to posses following competencies:

Advanced university degree in psychology, education, special education or related field;

Minimum 3 years of expertise in the area of evaluation and experience in programmes related to early childhood development (ECD), parenting support, education or social protection;

Proven knowledge on child rights, human rights, gender equality and social inclusion;

Proven knowledge of the preschool education system, child and family protection and social protection system in Croatia;

Demonstrated ability to prepare interview/focus groups protocols and other evaluation instruments and to work with databases;

Excellent communication and presentation skills in English for international team members; excellent communication and presentation skills in Croatian and English for national team members;

Excellent analytical and report writing skills;

- Familiarity with UNICEF's mission and mandate is an asset.

While it is expected and understood that each of the team members has different competencies, **the specific nature of each expertise required should be made explicit in the proposal** and will be further discussed.

The **contractor will be selected based on the following four criteria**: Experience in conducting programme and sector evaluations, primarily in the area of ECD and parenting support, technical expertise of the members of the evaluation team, quality of the technical proposal as well as value of the technical proposal (financial offer). The proposal will be evaluated as follows:

1. **Technical components (total of 70%)**
- Experience in conducting programme and sector evaluations, particularly in the area of ECD and parenting support – 20%
- Technical expertise of the members of the evaluation team – 20%
- Quality of the technical proposal – 30%

2. **Financial component (total of 30%)**
- Value of the technical proposal (financial offer) -30%

11. Duty station and Official Travel Involved

All of the field work will take place in Croatia; all official travels will be scheduled, agreed and approved by UNICEF during the Inception phase.

12. Duration

February 2016 – October 2016

13. Performance Indicators:

Criteria for performance are quality of process and delivered products (instruments, reports, etc.), timeliness, accuracy, initiative, responsibility, competence and communication.

14. Estimated cost

All financial costs need to be proposed by the applicant.

International evaluators, please note that travel costs to and from Croatia have to be itemised within the proposed budget.

Costs for travel and accommodation during field work (within Croatia) will be agreed and approved by UNICEF during the inception phase, according to UNICEF policies and procedures.

The evaluation team/company/agency/institution will be paid upon successful completion of assignments and submission of the deliverables in accordance with the following payment schedule:

Stage	**Percentage of payment**
Upon approval of the Inception report	30%
Upon completion of the evaluation and submission of the final evaluation products: final evaluation report, evaluation summary and Power Point Presentation, endorsed by UNICEF	70%

All the original invoices related to the contract (e.g. transportation costs, accommodation, etc.) should be kept and submitted to UNICEF for reimbursement.

15. UNICEF recourse in case of unsatisfactory performance

The payments may be reduced if the assignments/deliverables are not fulfilled to the required standard. In case of serious dissatisfaction with the performance of the company the contract may be terminated in line with UNICEF procedures and as spelled out in the institutional contract.

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs are incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines (fees reduced due to late submission: 20 days - 10%; 1 month-20%; 2 months-50%; more than 2 months – payment withhold). All materials developed will remain the copyright of UNICEF and that UNICEF will be free to adapt and modify them in the future.

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