

THE PREVENTIVE PROGRAMMES

IN THE TOWN OF VELIKA GORICA AND THE PRESENTATION OF THE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY VELIKA GORICA

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The Preventive Programmes for Children and Youth Behavioural Disorders

Identity Card of the Town of Velika Gorica

Status: Town - The Friend of Children
70 000 inhabitants - 60 settlements
700 newborns annually - positive natural increase
4 kindergartens - 2300 children
7 primary schools - 6000 pupils
1 art school - 350 pupils
4 secondary schools - 2000 pupils

Starting points:

1. The Convention on the Rights of the Child - States, governments and local authorities have an obligation to learn about, understand, observe and implement the Convention.
2. Expert and scientific knowledge - The behavioural disorders occur in the child's environmental surrounding which consists of family, school and local community.

The program developmentprocedure:

Meeting of experts
Setting of general goals and objectives
Need assessment
Setting of specific objectives
Programme development, implementation and evaluation

Universal prevention:

- Velika Gorica has the status of the Town - the Friend of Children; the rights of the child are exercised and observed in different areas of children's life (education, social care, health care, leisure time, participation);
- Police and children in the community - Children visit the police station where the contact-policeman gives them a presentation on the work and role of the police. He also introduces them to the dangers of substance abuse and teaches themself-defence;
- Parents awareness raising - The booklet "A Guide for Parents" was given to all parents; the booklet provides an expert outline of different issues confronted by parents and information about institutions and NGOs they can contact;
- Children's City Council - It gathers children from kindergartens and primary schools; they discuss problems and ask local authorities to provide solutions.

Need assessment and targeted interventions:

- Risk and protective factors assessment to plan children's and youth activities in order to propose priorities for preventive actions - research conducted in all schools
- Sample: 1018 pupils in the 7th grade of primary schools and the 1st grade of secondary schools
- The research included CTC Questionnaire (The Community that Cares Survey, 2006)
- Outcomes: priority problem is alcohol consumption
- Targeted intervention: "Booze is Snooze" Campaign



GRAD VELIKA GORICA
PRIJATELJ DJECE

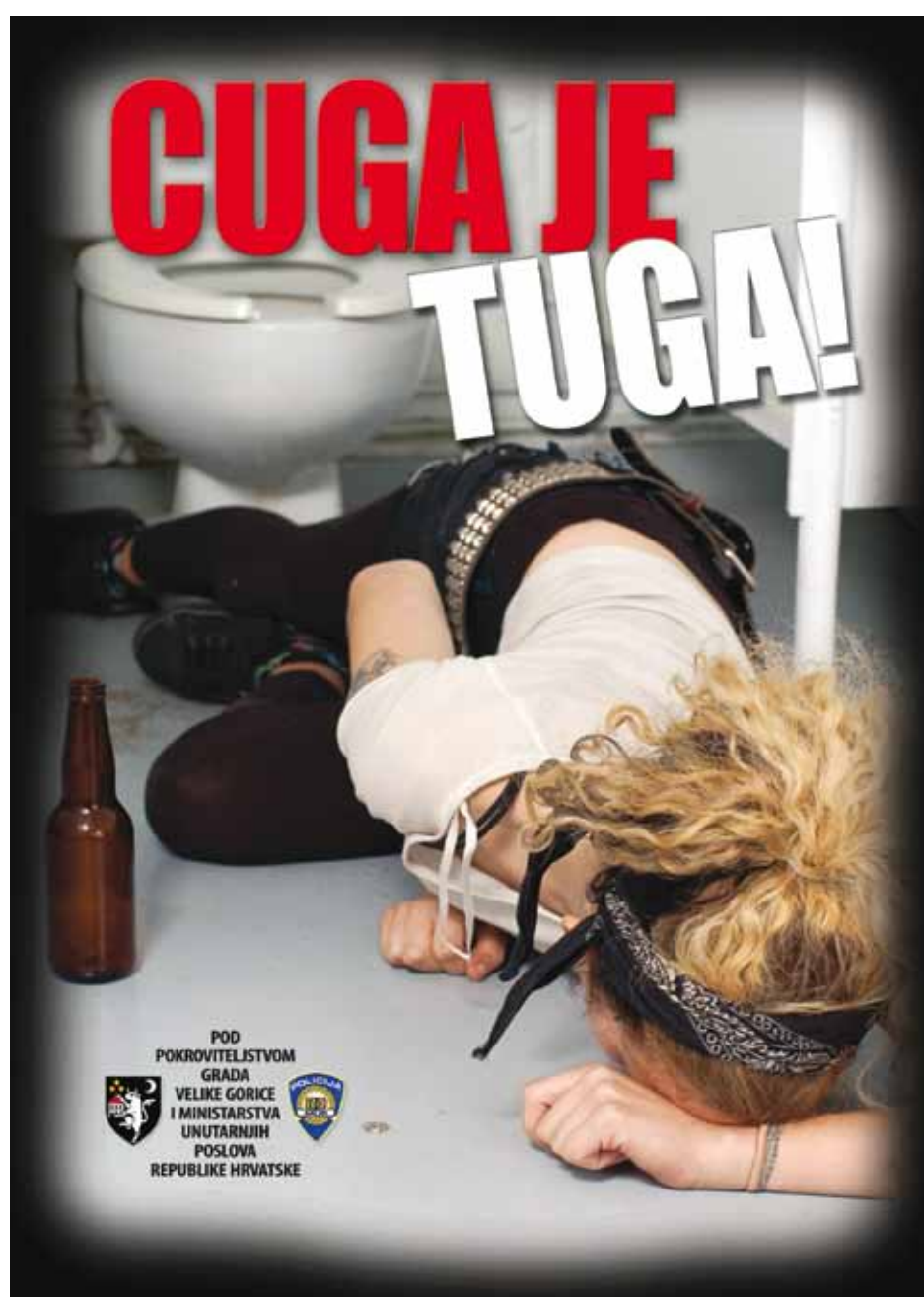
THE TOWN OF VELIKA GORICA
THE FRIEND OF CHILDREN

Activities:

1. Youth focus group (14 years old) consideration of problems from the youth's perspective
2. Press conference - campaign announcement, promotion of materials
3. A letter of invitation to all catering and shopping facilities in the area of the Town of Velika Gorica to cooperate and observe the Act on the Prohibition of Pouring and Sale of Alcoholic Beverages to Children and Minors
4. Distribution of posters "Booze is snooze" in the town and institutions
5. Distribution of stickers and T-shirts clearly indicating that alcoholic beverages are not to be sold to minors
6. Web site www.cugajetuga.net and Facebook group
7. Café bar and shop visits
8. Non-alcoholic cocktails in Club 100
9. Promotional video shot with Velika Gorica youth
10. Preparation and premiere of the performance "Hangover- What Happens the Day After" - visits to all schools



BOOZE IS SNOOZE
THE TOWN OF VELIKA GORICA



CENTRE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY VELIKA GORICA

The Centre's Identity Card

Initiation: February 2003
Founder: The Town of Velika Gorica
Activities: Implementation of psycho-social programmes for children, youth, parents and family members, support and training for experts and publishing.
Number of employees: 6
Number of associates: 30
Number of volunteers: 48
Number of programmes: 42 programmes implemented in 69 groups and through counselling programme
Number of beneficiaries: about 2000 a year
Specific quality of the Centre: It is the first and the only institution for children, youth and family in Croatia founded by the local community.
The programmes are free of charge and developed by the Centre's expert team.



- The work of the Centre is based on the community's need assessment; the Centre offers efficient and adequate programmes.
- Strategic goals:
 1. Development and implementation of quality programmes;
 2. Establishment and expansion of the network in the local community;
 3. Sharing and using of experiences in the country and abroad.

The following programmes are implemented in the Centre:

- **The programmes for positive development** are focused on skill strengthening, new knowledge learning and attitude acquisition to help children and youth in their development. We have the following programmes: Art Group, Dancing Group, Jewellery Workshop, Woodcraft Workshop, Games in the Open, Spring and Winter Corner, Hobby Art, Summer Workshop, Singing Group, Creative Group for Kids, Puppet Group, Drama Group, Hocus-Pocus, Pop Art Artists, Youth Panel Discussions, Lectures for Parents, Baby Fitness, Family Art and Craft Workshops.

»»» *The preventive programs* are for personal strength development and creation of stimulating surroundings for risky behaviour prevention. There are three levels of prevention - universal, selective and indicated (Mrazek, Haggerty, 1994):

»»» *Universal level* - It refers to entire populations that have not been identified on the basis of individual risk. The following programmes are implemented in the Centre at this level: Pre-school Playroom, Playing Corners, Preparation for School, Warm Nest, Classroom Activities, The Adventure is about to Begin, Psychodrama for Adults, The Course for Future Parents, Let's Grow up Together - First 3!, Club 3, Creative Parenting Club, Parenting in a Different Way, Shake off Stress.

»»» *Selective level* - It refers to individuals or groups who are at much higher risk to develop behavioural disorders. The level includes the following programmes: New Learning Tips and Tricks, Happy Classroom, I Can Do It Differently, Be What You (Already) Are, Psychodrama for Children.

»»» *Indicated level* - It targets high risk individuals who have been identified with a minimum, but evident sign or symptom of a behavioural disorder. At this level the Centre works individually with children who have an ADHD syndrome, with minors referred to our Centre by the Municipal State Attorney's Office or the Municipal Court. We also have individual counselling for children, youth, parents and family members.

»»» **Speaking and Language Development Stimulation Programmes** are designed to stimulate communication, speaking and language skills and competencies. The Centre implements the following programmes: Spelling Playroom, Individual Work with Children with Speaking and Language Disorders and Reading and Writing Disorders, Individual Counselling for Parents of Children with Speaking and Language Disorders and Reading and Writing Disorders, Individual Counselling for Parents of Children with Speaking and Language Delay, Work with Children with Specific Learning Disabilities, Individual Work with Parents of Children with Specific Learning Disabilities.

»»» *Programmes for Experts* are developed for Centre employees, associates and experts from the local community. The Centre offers supervision, consultation, mentoring, lectures and trainings. These programmes are designed to improve their professional work. The Centre also offers the programme "Workshop on Workshops" for future associates, who learn about the group work basics through their own experience.

»»» The Centre carries out regular **evaluation** of its performance and specific programmes. The evaluation concerns specific objectives and programme efficiency evaluation questionnaires. The evaluation provides an insight into the image of the Centre in the eyes of its beneficiaries, associates and citizens of Velika Gorica, but it also measures the achievement of strategic objectives.



»»» **The book "Work with Children, Youth and Family - Experiences of the Centre for Children, Youth and Family Velika Gorica"** was published in 2010. The book describes the Centre's foundation, development and operation. It is divided into four parts. The first part provides an outline of theoretical concepts which concern the community, context, protective factors for healthy children's growth and clearly indicates the role of the Centre as an "attentive environment". The second, largest part describes the programmes in the Centre. This part of the book provides abundant examples of good practice and can easily be used for educational purposes. The third part indicates the outcomes of the Centre's performance evaluation. The fourth part highlights the importance of communication at different levels and outlines modern considerations concerning team work and openness to find solutions to problems encountered during work.

"I have been in the Centre for a very long period, since the 1st grade, and now I am in the 6th grade. At first I regularly wrote my homework in the "Warm Nest" and met some new friends who I still have contacts with. I was also seeing a speech therapist, who facilitated my school work, and now I am having counselling to help me go through my adolescent period easily."

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CONCLUSION:

- The local administration represents a venue for programme consolidation, organisation and coordination.
- The programmes need to be scientifically founded.
- The national strategies provide the framework, whereas local programmes need to observe all characteristics of the local region, including its specific social and cultural identity.
- The Centre for Children, Youth and Family represents a good practice example - it was established according to the needs of the local community and its programmes are developed independently in compliance with the need assessment.
- The programme implementation requires team work and a multidisciplinary approach, which allow recruitment of all resources in the local community.
- Preventive programs protect the children's rights.