

# "ŠKOLE PODRŠKE" – SCHOOL OF SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN CROATIA

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A short project description and video (subtitled in 29 languages) are published on the [European School Education Platform](#).

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND RELEVANCE OF THE MEASURE

### WHICH NEEDS DOES THE MEASURE ADDRESS?

The School of Support (Škole podrške) programme was launched in the Croatian Sisak-Moslavina county in 2021 after a strong earthquake had hit the area in late-2020. The aim of the programme is to empower schools, teachers and students in to develop resilience, inclusivity and mental health support. The programme put special focus on students who are in a more vulnerable position due to different life circumstances. The programme is still ongoing, and it is applicable to all children and young people in primary and secondary schools.

### WHO WAS INVOLVED IN IDENTIFYING NEEDS, THE PLANNING AND THE DESIGN OF THE MEASURE?

The programme is designed and implemented by the Forum for Freedom in Education (FFE) and UNICEF Croatia.

One of the first activities when the programme started was to analyse the situation in 20 schools and the local community itself after the earthquakes. Based on this, experts developed **recommendations for decision-makers** with special emphasis on the needs of the educational staff, children and young people. The [publication is available online](#) (in Croatian).

### WHO IS/WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURE?

Forum for Freedom in Education.

## WHAT RESOURCES ARE/WERE INVOLVED (E.G. MATERIAL, SPACE, AMOUNT OF FUNDING)?

Funding of the programme is covered by UNICEF Croatia.

## HOW ARE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTATION BEING SUPPORTED (E.G. DO THEY RECEIVE SPECIFIC TRAINING)?

The school teams underwent a series of educational programmes and assessments. The project team conducted a needs assessment, drafted conclusions and recommendations, and published a set of textbooks and workshop collections on the topic of emotional coping and resilience.

As part of the programme, all participants (teachers and other school staff) receive 41 hours of dedicated training on mental health, resilience, and cooperation with parents. Also, a specific development programme for school leaders is available 'Academy for school leaders' (52 hours programme): it aims to strengthen school leaders for inclusive school management with special emphasis on the well-being and mental health of children and young people.

## IMPACT OF THE MEASURE

### WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE MEASURE?

After three years of implementation, a survey was conducted among teachers and students who participated in the 'Schools of Support' programme. 68 educators and 426 primary and secondary school students participated in the research. According to the research the participants believe that the programme has had a positive impact on the development of various socio-emotional skills among students in primary and secondary schools, and at the same time, the teachers perceive that this programme is useful for them. They estimate that they have strengthened their own competences for teaching topics related to personal and social development and the mental health of children and young people. Also, students believe that the programme made a positive contribution to a better school environment and a general sense of well-being among the students.

The [research publication](#) is available online (in Croatian).

### WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED MOST TO THE SUCCESS OF THE MEASURE?

The above-mentioned research showed that after joining the programme, teachers report on strengthened competencies in the field of teaching related to personal and social development and mental health of children and young people. They also emphasise their own positive impressions, as well as the observed positive effects of this program on students.

### HAVE THERE BEEN ANY OBSTACLES WHEN IMPLEMENTING THE MEASURE, AND HOW HAVE THEY BEEN ADDRESSED?

Teachers who participated in the programme stated that there were some challenges in integrating the planned number of workshops into existing school activities (such as classes, extracurricular activities, etc.), and the importance of connecting the workshops with other activities carried out in the school. It is also important to think about

strengthening the collective's capacity to use the tools from the available workshops in their teaching.

## EVIDENCE BASE

IS THERE A MONITORING/EVALUATION SYSTEM IN PLACE? WHAT IS MONITORED, AND HOW IS IT DONE?

There is a continuous evaluation and monitoring of the training programme and supervision (through anonymous evaluation forms). The evaluation includes satisfaction of participants with different aspects of the training provided (contents, methods, trainers, etc.)

ARE FURTHER EVALUATIONS PLANNED AND WHEN WILL THE RESULTS BE AVAILABLE (IF THEY PLAN TO BE PUBLISHED)?

In 2024, a report on how inclusion, wellbeing and mental health are included in the school's annual curriculum and plan and the programme will be developed.

There is no information for 2025.

IS THERE ANY SPECIFIC THEORY OR RESEARCH/SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE THAT HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MEASURE?

Not available.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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