Pragmatic and Adaptive Skills for Children at Risk

Reachout.BG has been helping children at risk in Bulgaria more than 8 years. This project provides a one year special training to 15 abandoned children with emotional behavioral problems and intellectual disability. The children will be divided into 3 groups of 5 participants. The group work sessions will be carried out twice a week. The curriculum is designed according to children's needs and includes different types of activities as well as educational visits. Due to the proper help and support, the children will be able to succeed in an educational setting and in everyday life.

What is the problem?

Abandoned children with intellectual disability, emotional and behavioral problems are particularly vulnerable. The staff of residential care homes where the children are accommodated are not trained how to cater to their special needs. In addition, the Bulgarian education system is not flexible and does not provide opportunities for effective curriculum for these children. As children without parental care they do not receive individual care and do not develop any self-care and daily living skills.

How this project will solve the problem?

Since the abandoned children with intellectual disability are more likely to need extra support in everyday activities, the initial assessment will allow us to identify the need of each child and provide support. The results of each assessment will be analyzed to create a program based on group work that will help each child learn and develop vital communication and adaptive skills. During the group sessions they will work in teams and essential skills such as sharing, taking turns, cooperating with one another will be acquired. Breaking all the activities into small steps and teaching one step at a time will make it easier for the children to learn. In a safe learning environment the children will feel supported, which in turn will help students gain confidence in their abilities.

Main activities

Initial assessment

All 15 children will be entitled to undergo initial assessment in order for their learning and support needs to be identified. This first phase is crucial because it will represent the skills, knowledge and competence which children need to acquire.

Group work and educational visits

200 group work sessions will be carried out twice per week for a period of 1 year. The curriculum consist three main fields: 1. Development of social - communication skills; 2. Development of adaptive skills; 3 Skills for planning, organizing and fulfilling working activities the objective to create a final product

12 educational visits will be organized. The children will discover and explore new places such as museums, galleries, public institutions, etc. Learning outside will provide a vast learning experience and help the children to develop their self-confidence, broader understanding of society, connect life experiences with new spaces and objects.

Each child will be invited to keep a personal diary to record the important moments, life lessons learnt every day, daily record of the day’s schedule, observations of people around, memories and the progress in the group work.

Final event

At the end of the group work will be organized a final event. Children will invite their friends and school teachers and present their achievements and personal diaries.

Potential long-term impact

The children who finish the one year program will be able deal better with different social situations. They will communicate in an effective way to build social relationships with other familiar and unfamiliar individuals, work in groups, interact with peers and maintain friendships. They will also be able to organize their daily tasks, ask for help and use money.

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| **Detailed Description** | **Unit** | **# of units** | **Cost per Unit (US$)** | **Total cost**  **(US$)** |
| **1. Initial assessment** | **Per child** | **15** | **45** | **675** |
| **2. Trainer - group work (2 groups x 100 sessions)** | **Per group session** | **200** | **35** | **7000** |
| **3. Printing materials** | **Per child** | **15** | **30** | **450** |
| **4. Diary** | **Per child** | **15** | **10** | **150** |
| **5. Office supplies (pen, pencils, markers, glue, laminators, etc.) and board games** | **Per year** | **1** | **200** | **200** |
| **6. Educational visits (for 15 participants)** | **Per visit** | **15** | **50** | **750** |
| **7. Transport expenses (for 2 visits)** | **Per child** | **15** | **25** | **375** |
| **8. Final event** | **Per event** | **1** | **400** | **400** |
| **TOTAL:** |  |  |  | **10 000** |