

LIBERA

**Croatian Association for Education, Entrepreneurship and
International Cooperation**

**PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT FOR „WE EMPOWER CROATIAN CHILDREN TO
OVERCOME FEARS“**



Dear donors and supporters,

Thank you for your support of the project. The fact that you are with us all the time gives us strength and courage to move on. **We believe that these workshops of ours, that aim to pay more attention to the children's health, will also trigger a different approach towards children who have exaggerated fears.** Of course, during the implementation of our ideas in the project there are always challenges and obstacles that sometimes seem insurmountable.

As Ruta left for a new workplace, and Benny returned to the Association for Guide Dog Training and Mobility,

Psychologist Josipa has now joined our team and the therapy dog Rico, who normally work as part of the Stančić Rehabilitation Center from Zagreb.

Our biggest challenge in the past period is the fact that we do not succeed in getting parents interested in the mentioned topic.

Before leaving, **Ruta presented very interesting techniques for talking to a child when he is overcome by strong fear**, but

only a few parents came to the workshop. We were a little surprised by the situation and **the parents' lack of interest**, but we were encouraged by

the fact that the children show an increasing interest and that they accept all our ideas with great curiosity.

The workshop led by a new psychologist Josipa was for the 2nd grade of Kralja Tomislav Primary School in Zagreb.

As always, the workshop was held in the Tin Ujević library, because the entire space of the library is adapted to children and their education.

During the lecture **Josipa implemented very fun games that the children accepted** with enthusiasm such as:

Game 1. Say something about yourself with the aim of getting to know the children and the workshop leader.

Game 2. CROSS/ CIRCLE The goal of the game was: getting to know the similarities and differences in the group.

We understand how different we are from each other, but that we are unique as such and ready to cooperate.

Game 3. Telling a story - Rico's bad day The goal of the game was to encourage them to think about how we can improve our

mood when we have a bad day.

Game 4. That's it! The goal was to **become aware of the activity(s) they enjoy the most**, to share their interests with others.

The tools that can be used to lift the mood and encourage the experience of pleasant emotions and to **highlight the importance of having**

or finding a (favorite) activity.

During the activity Rico was really patient and endure petting, playing and excited shouting of the children.

Also, after the workshop we were happy because the children were extremely satisfied with everything they learned.

We continued with informal socializing and we had a discussion on how to involve parents more in the whole project who, due to lack of time and

a large number of obligations, are not very cooperative. **However, expected results of the workshop were achieved especially in the part: finding**

an activity that we like and that does not cause us stress and finding activities that will include all children regardless of their diversity.

Josipa emphasized that engaging in this activity is one of the ways to "repair" a bad day, a bad mood, and a way to experience pleasant emotions.

The realization of project activities in the previous period is in accordance with the set goals of the project, related to the following:

- socializing and workshop for 24 children with a therapy dog Rico and his mentor Josipa,
- carrying out different games that point out the diversity of each of us and teach us empathy,
- children's photo session to remember the wonderful socializing with friends and activities with the therapy dog and
- handing out gifts that included pens, crayons, papers and candy.

All those **activities will help prevent later severe forms of anxiety** and at the same time contribute to solving related specific social problems and proactively

influence the development of the community as a whole.

Activities with a therapy dog are unique and not yet so frequent and well-established in the educational system, despite numerous worldwide studies that

show that the mere presence of a dog raises the mood, motivates activity and prolongs attention and concentration on the task. **Considering the relaxing**

and stimulating role of therapy dogs for children's development, this type of workshop represents an innovative activity for Croatian school students.

So far, thanks to your support, we have included over 100 children aged 8-12, and our intention is to implement the program in all Croatian schools

and include all school students.

Therefore, **your support is invaluable** and **we invites you to stay in touch with us** or contact us through social media or through our website

if you want to know more about our project. We believe that the pictures in the attachment will also cheer you up.

With love and warmth,

The Libera Team





