Networking for children in Serbia

“Network of Civil Society Organizations for Children in Serbia (MODS)”
Child position and welfare- major issues

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in Serbia.
Every fourth child in Serbia is poor.
Inequalities among children are created at the earliest age.
The invisible children:

- Legally invisible – there are Roma children that have not been listed in birth records and consequently their right to education, health and social protection cannot be implemented.
- Children with developmental disabilities
- Children in institutions- without parental care, with disabilities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of children and youth placed in institutions (up to 18 years of age)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2104</td>
</tr>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>1702</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>995</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>800</td>
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Child position and welfare – challenges

- poverty and social exclusion of children (children younger than 14)
- support for living in family environment
- adequacy of social welfare allocations for children - child allowances
- support to parents, financial and services
- legally invisible children
- education strategy
child rights/ welfare initiatives of cluster of CSOs for children

- Civil Society Organization Focal points within the programme of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for implementation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

formed CSOs cluster for children
child rights/ welfare initiatives of cluster of CSOs for children

- The initiative of the Cluster for Children to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy regarding the children status in welfare institutions.
- The initiative for cooperation with the Ministry of Education.
- The initiative to the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights about resolving the issue of legally invisible children.
- Invitation to towns and municipalities of Serbia to begin the process of making local action plans for children.
Recommendations to the Ministry of Education

Improve cooperation with civil society organizations
Sign the memorandum of cooperation with NGO
Provide better respect for child opinions in schools
Good education in regular schools must be available to everybody, especially to children from disadvantaged social groups
Change the education financing system so that financing is based on the number of children included in education and on the individualization of the education process
Public debate on the draft of the Law on Social Welfare

- More government responsibility, especially in child protection since children are not responsible for their poverty
- More support to families with children so they could overcome **the obstacles for inclusion of children in the life of their community**
- Provide family environment for all children so they could grow up in natural setting
- What kind of society do we want to live in?
Child focused networks/ coalitions/ partnerships

- Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Monitoring the Implementation of Child Rights in Serbia
- Network of Civil Society Organizations for Children - MODS
- Pestalozzi Network
- Parents' Network
Networking for children

Founding Network of Civil Society Organizations for Children - MODS

- Grew out of Cluster of CSOs for Children
- Adopted Platform
- The Cooperation Agreement signed
- The Coordinating Board elected
Network of Civil Society Organizations for Children in Serbia

MODS

gathers the organisations which, by their activities, contribute to the exercise of rights, improvement of the position and life quality of the children in Serbia
The Platform of the Network of Civil Society Organizations for children in Serbia

The goals of the Network of CSO for children are:
Increasing the involvement of CSO and children in creation of policies for children;
Developing the capacities of the organizations for the advancement of status of children and strengthening mutual cooperation;
Creation of channels of communication between the network and local, provincial and state authorities and institutions, the EU political bodies and other international institutions;
Cooperation with other networks and organizations;
Increasing the visibility of CSO contribution to the advancement of status of children.
The network will strive for:

- Implementation of rights of all children;
- Increasing of social inclusion and development of inclusive society;
- Reduction of child poverty;
- Advancement of availability and quality of formal and informal education and culture;
- Advancement of availability and quality of health protection, life environment and child safety;
- Protection of children from harm, neglect, abuse and violence;
- Increased budget share, more adequate planning and distribution and more transparent budget spending.
Structure of the Network for children in Serbia

- **Assembly** is the highest body which each member of MODS has one representative in. Decisions are made at meetings or by electronic communication with two-thirds majority.

- The Coordinating Board has 7 members and its role is to coordinate the work of MODS, make yearly work program of MODS, represent MODS before third persons and the public, evaluate the realization of requirements for admission into MODS.

- The thematic groups that define the priority issues for a particular period and coordinate the action plan. MODS Children Council, which is an advisory body that would protect the interests of children and be supportive to adults

- Council of Friends of the Network
MODS Secretariat.

The role of the Secretariat is to provide the exchange of information, logistic and technical support for MODS activities and for the functioning of the Network, the Coordinating Board and the thematic groups.

The seat of the Secretariat is in Niš in the premises of the Association for Development of Children and Youth – Open Club.
NETWORK RESOURCES

t the moment MODS works as a non-profit informal group gathering CSOs for which membership is optional.

ODS does not have sources of financing; particular activities are financed by donors and through projects.

ODS currently consists of 43 CSOs which signed the Cooperation Protocol.

At present, MODS members come from 26 towns and municipalities in Serbia.
NETWORK RESOURCES

- Total number of employees in MODS members (CSO) - 137
- Total number of members in MODS members (CSO) - 3000
- Total number of volunteers in MODS members (CSO) - 110
- CSOs which operate on the whole territory of Serbia - 32
- CSOs which operate locally - 14
NETWORK RESOURCES

MODS members mainly cover following thematic fields

- Education (37 CSOs)
- Social services (37 CSOs)
- Health protection (25 CSOs)
- Children leisure activities (36 OCD)
MODS- next steps

raising visibility and influence
building credibility and capacity for advocacy
development of potential services for members
maintaining activities
developing expertise
The MODS remains open for other civil society organizations in Serbia which can become members by signing the Cooperation Agreement.

And

for regional cooperation and networking with the related networks