

# UNICEF CO

## 2016 CONSOLIDATED EMERGENCY REPORT

March 2017



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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Heavy rainfall in Eastern Croatia in May 2014 caused large-scale flooding with subsequent collapse of transit routes and evacuation of local population. In three days the precipitation levels have exceeded the average for three months. According to the official records there were 2 casualties, 27,255 people suffered the consequences of flooding, 8,635 people from Vukovar-Srijem County were evacuated leaving their homes that were either destroyed or severely damaged. Based on the data from the State Geodetic Administration 2,680 residential buildings, 4,713 ancillary and farm buildings, 4,234 business buildings and 32 public buildings were damaged. Additionally, agricultural crops encountered considerable damage with 8,242 livestock died. Even before the floods, worst affected areas by the floods were among the poorest in Croatia, with low economic activity and high unemployment rates. Floods exacerbated this situation, as many small business were destroyed in the floods.

Croatia has been able to address the immediate humanitarian relief needs in the flooded areas on its territory with its own capacities. However, in order to address the needs of the affected people and areas in the short-, medium- and long term, on 23 May 2014 the Government of Croatia sent an appeal for international humanitarian assistance.

Since the onset of the crisis, UNICEF CO has been closely coordinating its emergency interventions with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, which is the national coordinating body for the international organisations, as well as liaising with the other line Ministries responsible for the specific aspects of the emergency response. In line with the Core Commitments for Children in emergencies, UNICEF-supported interventions included critical supplies in health, WASH and education; communication for development in emergencies in health, and psycho-social support in child protection.

As for the Education component, in 2014 UNICEF supported the procurement of the school-books for children in five flood-affected municipalities and one town (Kalnik, D. Kukuruzari, H. Dubica, H. Kostajnica, Jasenovac). In partnership with the local authorities, CO supported the purchase of the textbooks for elementary school children in the amount of 50% of the total value. The total number of elementary school children that were supported through the co-financing program was 843.

In 2015, recovery phase of the emergency response has been implemented, with Government leading in the reconstruction of housing that suffered widespread damage, with majority of recovery efforts and support in reconstruction being focused on Gunja, settlement with population of 3,732, worst affected by the floods in 2014.

Following the lessons learned in the implementation UNICEF Emergency Response programme in the early recovery and relief phase, and assessments conducted together with local authorities, consultations with the Municipality of Gunja and the Ministry of Science, Education and sports, UNICEF CO selected pre-school education as a focus of UNICEF's support to the children affected by floods in 2015 and 2016.

At the end of 2014, UNICEF CO advocacy efforts have resulted in agreement with the Municipality to ensure premises for the establishment of the first formal pre-school programme within the new Gunja Community Center building. The Center has been constructed with the funds from the public private partnership and planned to host local library, cultural center and kindergarten. At the beginning of 2015, Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Municipality of Gunja, committing local authorities to ensure premises for the new kindergarten, and committing UNICEF CO to support the equipment of the kindergarten with furniture, playing materials, picture books as well as elements for the playground surrounding the Center, as well as financial resources for running the kindergarten until the end of 2016. During the construction phase of the Gunja Community Center, UNICEF CO committed to supporting informal pre-school education in the premises temporarily assigned by the

Municipality and shared with the local NGO for children with disabilities. The plan for the opening of the kindergarten was initially planned for November 2015, but it has been postponed due to delays in the construction works on the new Community Center and other administrative and technical obstacles.

In 2016, the cooperation with the Gunja Municipality continued, based on the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding. Informal preschool education workshop was continuously provided, as well as technical and financial support to the Municipality in the overall process of the establishment of the kindergarten.

## **2. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT**

In June 2014, Croatian Government expressed strong commitment to the reconstruction and recovery of the flooded area by passing the Law on rehabilitation of the consequences of disaster in Vukovar-Srijem County. One of the main challenges proved to be the reconstruction of housing but the process eventually started in late summer and has been ongoing throughout 2015 with the majority of reconstruction now done in Gunja which is also the largest settlement hit by the floods with population of 3,732 inhabitants. During 2016 the majority of houses were repaired or reconstructed with the support of the Government, and the container settlement has been closed.

With the progress of reconstruction and recovery, all services were re-established, including health and social welfare. High unemployment in Gunja drives poverty in the area, where high share of population lives of social benefits. Floods have exacerbated this situation as many small business bankrupted after the floods.

Assessment of needs during the relief phase, highlighted need for early child learning and development services, since the availability and accessibility of even basic services is very poor. There is no paediatrician in Gunja, as well as no kindergarten nor any parenting support services.

Young children that attended UNICEF-supported Child Friendly Space during the relief phase in 2014 and activities of the non-formal preschool education and care programme in 2015 benefitted from psychosocial support and education activities, as many came from deprived households that struggle with adequate nutrition, hygiene and early learning materials. In Q4 2014, UNICEF CO has transformed Child-Friendly Space in Gunja into regular informal early education and pre-school activity with the aim to establish kindergarten within the new building of the Gunja Community Center, built with funds from the public-private partnership.

During 2016 UNICEF CO continued to provide support to the Municipality through a number of activities aiming to mobilize and build capacities of the Municipality and to ensure continuity and sustainability in service delivery. The roles and responsibilities for the sustainable provision of quality preschool education activities were defined within the initial MoU with the Ministry of Science and Education and the Municipality, and within the Letter of Agreement with the Municipality. Substantial financial and technical support, facilitation and advice had been provided to the Municipality in identifying various sustainability mechanisms, which are expected to result in a long-term availability of the service as of 2017.

### 3. HUMANITARIAN RESULTS

#### EDUCATION: PROGRESS IN 2016

Within its Emergency Response and Recovery activities during 2016, aimed at supporting establishment of early education in flood-affected areas, UNICEF CO continued to provide technical support in introducing and sustaining the quality preschool care and education programme in Gunja, by facilitating establishment of a kindergarten under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Gunja.

Outputs of the Emergency Response and Recovery in 2016:

1. Pre-school children in Gunja have regular access to informal pre-school education activities, until the regular formal preschool education programme is established. During the working week, daily up to 40 children of pre-school age attend informal pre-school education activities.
2. Administrative and technical requirements for the formal establishment of the regular pre-school education programme in the new Gunja Community Center have been met, with UNICEF's support.

Partners:

- a) Municipality of Gunja
- b) Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
- c) City of Zagreb
- d) Other partners

Activities:

In order to define specific activities to realise abovementioned outputs, the joint project was developed in close cooperation between the Municipality and the UNICEF CO, titled: "*A START FOR A LIFETIME: providing early education in the Gunja Municipality*". The project was the integral part of the Letter of Agreement (LoA) between UNICEF CO and the Gunja Municipality.

The LoA specified the following purposes of cooperation:

- 1.1. To introduce and sustain a formal quality preschool care and education programme in Gunja, by establishing a kindergarten under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Gunja, which will also be available to children from nearby villages.
- 1.2. As the Gunja Municipality, devastated by floods, had no sufficient budgetary resources to independently fund the establishment of the kindergarten, UNICEF CO agreed to provide initial financial and technical support. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports committed to provide guidance and technical support in the process.
- 1.3. The Gunja Municipality was responsible to provide premises for the kindergarten and to conduct all administrative and procedural activities related to formal establishment of the kindergarten. The Municipality was also responsible to create conditions and adapt the Municipality Budget to ensure funding and long term sustainability of the kindergarten. It was expected that the Gunja Municipality, as the formal founder of the kindergarten, to take over the full functioning of the kindergarten as of the 2017.

## **Specific activities of the project:**

### **Interactive and educational group activities for children**

During 2016, the Municipality officially took over the coordination of the informal preschool education programme, which was previously conducted by the NGO Društvo Naša djeca Vinkovci (Society Our Children of the City of Vinkovci) as the post-flood recovery initiative. The purpose was to provide the informal preschool programme until the formal establishment of the kindergarten.

Through the concept of non-formal pre-school education, pre-school children in Gunja had the opportunity to benefit from a number of interactive, educational, creative, sport and recreational activities. Special emphasis was focused on activities that contribute to school readiness and development of pre-literacy skills of pre-school children. Activities were organised in the premises temporarily assigned by the Municipality and shared with another local NGO, every working day from 10:00 to 16:00 hrs. On a daily basis 30 - 40 children participated in the non-formal pre-school education programme.

### **Promoting and advocating the importance of ECD and early education in local community and among parents**

The project staff and the Municipality representatives were continuously engaged in promoting and advocating the importance of early childhood development and early education and care in the local community, including among parents of the youngest children. Parents were especially appreciative in regard to those activities - recognising and valuing the opportunity for their children to build their early skills and knowledge, to socialise with other children and to spend time in the environment that stimulates their physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

### **Formal establishment of the kindergarten**

In 2015 the Municipality officials initiated necessary actions related to the formal administrative establishment of the kindergarten. Based on the consultation with the representatives of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Municipality prepared basic administrative documentation. Subsequently, based on the formal decision of the Municipality Council, the formal approval for the establishment of the kindergarten has been obtained from the Ministry. During 2016 the kindergarten programme was also finalised by the temporary director of the kindergarten. Capacity of the kindergarten was intended for up to 50 children. Additional support and technical advice (facilitated by UNICEF CO) was provided by the representative of the City of Zagreb responsible for preschool education, including required conditions and standards applied for new kindergartens. Since there have been continuous technical and administrative obstacles throughout 2016, the full establishment of the kindergarten was significantly delayed. Some of the obstacles were related to the delays in the construction work of the community centre, insufficient financial resources of the Municipality to ensure adequate venues and obtain the working permit for the kindergarten to start, political instability and lack of capacities of the Municipality to coordinate and manage the overall process. In spite of that, there is still determination present, and the Municipality committed to continue the process during the 2017.

## **Furnishing and equipping the kindergarten and outdoor children's playground**

In consultation among the engineering company, the temporarily appointed director of the kindergarten, Gunja Municipality, the representative of the City of Zagreb and UNICEF CO, and based on the technical conditions required for the future kindergarten, specifications of the necessary furniture, equipment and didactic materials were defined. Due to the limited administrative and financial management capacities of the Municipality the whole public procurement process was conducted by the UNICEF CO. All necessary equipment and furniture have been purchased in accordance to the technical requirements and standards, including the outdoor playground equipment and the fence.

## **Identifying additional funding opportunities, resources and sustainability mechanisms**

In order to support long-term sustainability and continuity in the implementation of the preschool education programme in Gunja, the UNICEF CO provided support and advice to the Municipality officials to identify additional funding opportunities, in spite of a number of obstacles. In accordance to that, the Municipality Mayor established initial cooperation with several potential counterparts to provide additional financial support. Also, a number of alternative options were jointly considered in order to ensure long-term sustainability of the future kindergarten (e.g. cooperation with the City of Zagreb, assistance from the Turkish Development Agency, integrating the kindergarten with one of the existing ones in the neighbouring municipality etc.). Even though by the end of 2016 no firm confirmation on the long-term sustainability has been made, the Municipality has identified the alternative option and ensured resources for the continuation of the informal preschool programme. They provided the alternative venue, financial and human resources, utilised the equipment provided by the UNICEF CO and continued to provide activities for children, until the overall conditions for full long-term establishment of the formal kindergarten will be met.

## **Effective Coordination**

The cooperation among parties conducting the project activities was regulated through the initial MoU among the three key partners – The Municipality of Gunja, UNICEF CO and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. Additionally and more specifically, mutual roles and responsibilities between two implementing partners: UNICEF and the Gunja Municipality were regulated through the detailed Letter of Agreement, specifying also all the details regarding the implementation of specific activities. In that regard, the Municipality of Gunja committed to coordinate the overall implementation of the project, including providing premises for the kindergarten, conducting all remaining administrative and procedural activities related to formal establishment of the kindergarten and actively engaging in identifying and ensuring resources and conditions for the long-term sustainability of the future kindergarten. UNICEF CO committed to provide technical assistance, advice and financial resources to support initial establishment of the kindergarten, including provision of all required equipment and supply. It was also agreed that UNICEF CO will support the provision of the non-formal pre-school programme during the transitional period, until the kindergarten is formally established, but no longer than by the end of 2016. UNICEF CO also facilitated additional expert consultative support in cooperation with the representatives of the City of Zagreb, mainly in regard to the advice on the required standards and conditions for establishment and furnishing the kindergarten.

Due to the significant lack of capacities of the Municipality for effective coordination and management, the coordination of the overall project implementation and among relevant partners has been facilitated by the UNICEF CO. Also, the transfers of funds and the implementation of the project were coordinated in accordance

to the HACT rules and procedures. Additional support was also provided by the UNICEF's contracted company for financial revision.

### **Factors for success and constraints**

Key positive aspect identified during 2016 was related to the overall progress of the revitalisation of the Gunja Municipality upon the 2014 floods. There has been evident progress in rebuilding the houses and overall normalisation of life in Gunja. Also, previously established cooperation with the Gunja Municipality, UNICEF CO and the Ministry provided solid grounds for further joint activities in sustainable provision of activities and programmes for the youngest children in Gunja. Feedback from parents of children participating in the informal preschool education programme provided useful information on the increased school readiness of children who participated in the programme. In regard to the actual coordination and realisation of the activities, the main positive aspect was related to the involvement and technical advice provided by the representative of the City of Zagreb. Finally, it is also important to emphasise that in spite of the lack of financial, human and coordination capacities of the Gunja Municipality, political instability in the middle of the year and a number of other priorities of the Municipality administration, the key Municipality officials remained committed to continuously provide preschool education programme for the youngest children, identifying and realising options to ensure continuity of the service.

The main constraints identified during 2016 were the same as those reported on in 2015. They were primarily related to delays and slow progress of the construction work on the Gunja Community Centre and challenges in obtaining some additional permits to adapt the venue for the kindergarten. Also, there have been repeated and frequent delays and omissions in the administrative coordination of the joint project, requiring continuous support and facilitation by the UNICEF CO. Significant lack of technical capacities of the Municipality officials to respond promptly to different and new operational demands pertaining to the opening of the kindergarten, which resulted in continuous delays in activities.

### **UN Coherence**

UN Country Team was not engaged in the recovery phase.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

UNICEF CO was able to maintain high level of monitoring mechanisms to ensure timely and effective services for the most vulnerable from the flood affected areas.

Structured and clear HACT procedures and assurance activities, strong field presence and continuous exchange of information enabled UNICEF CO to establish and maintain close cooperation with local stakeholders and partners in order to monitor progress of the activities and to provide support and advice when required.



## 4. RESOURCES

For its regular programme, UNICEF CO in Croatia relies on its in-country private sector fundraising. When the region was affected by floods, CO Croatia in agreement with PFP launched the appeal for assisting the flooded areas. Following the request from the Croatian Government, Croatia joined regional floods appeal. Some two thirds of the received funds were raised in Croatia, mostly through donations of individuals and corporates.

Since the significant funds were raised through the in-country private sector fundraising for activities in flood affected areas, it was agreed to utilise those in activities of the post-flood recovery activities, including partially non-formal preschool education during 2015, while the rest of funds from the German Committee for UNICEF CO were used for integral activities during 2016 related to the establishment of the formal kindergarten in the Municipality of Gunja.

GERMAN COMMITTEE GRANT: SM140416

Sector	Appeal Target	Funded*	What to report here?
Assessments and Monitoring		2,183.36	\$ for surveys, M&E staff/partnerships, etc.
Advocacy / COMS		342,63	\$ for advocacy, campaigns, advocacy staff
Technical Assistance		12,157.08	\$ for programme/coordination staff, consultants providing technical assistance
Service Delivery		105,221.33	\$ for PCAs, supplies, SSFAs, etc.

### Thematic Humanitarian Contributions Received for 2014-2016 (in USD):

Donor	Programmable Amount	Total Contribution Amount
UNICEF CO	329,813	346,296
German Committee	121,993	131,752
<b>Total</b>	<b>451,806</b>	<b>478,048</b>

## 5. FUTURE WORK PLAN

Although the formal cooperation with the Gunja Municipality was finalised on December 31, 2016, the UNICEF CO will continue to provide technical support and advice in future efforts of the Municipality to formally establish the kindergarten and to sustain the preschool education programme as of 2017.

The Municipality already identified additional local financial and human resources to continue with the provision of the informal preschool education programme. Also, certain alternative options have also been identified by the Municipality in relation to the separate venue for the future kindergarten. The Municipality Mayor established the initial cooperation with the Croatian Post, to provide their premises, while the Municipality will ensure funding for the adaptation of the building. That will enable to have a separate building just for the kindergarten, instead of dividing the premises of the Community centre.

Further cooperation with the relevant Ministry and other experts and stakeholders will be facilitated by the UNICEF CO in order to provide additional support to the Municipality in these efforts.

## 6. EXPRESSION OF THANKS

On behalf of the children, families with children and women from the affected areas of Croatia, UNICEF wishes to express its gratitude to all donors for their support, contributions, and commitment to the early recovery and rehabilitation efforts. UNICEF CO appreciates and acknowledges the Croatian Government, NGOs and UN and international organizations, whose partnership made achieving the key results for children in Croatia possible.



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