



ANNUAL REPORT

2017

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INTRODUCTION

The Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia – MODS currently gathers 96 organizations which contribute to the realization of rights, improvement of the position and improvement of the quality of life of children in Serbia through their activities.

The mission of MODS is to realize rights, improve the position and improve the quality of life of children in Serbia.

MODS goals:

- > Increasing participation of civil society organizations and children in policy making related to children;
- > Developing capacities of organizations to improve the position of children and strengthening cooperation;
- > Establishing channels of communication between the network and local, provincial and republic authorities and institutions, institutions and bodies of the European Union and other international bodies;
- > Establishing cooperation with other networks and organizations;
- > Increasing the visibility of civil society organizations' contributions to improving the position of children.

In its activities, the Network advocates for:

- > Realizing the rights of all children;
- > The life of all children in the family environment and the promotion of family support;
- > Increasing social inclusion and developing an inclusive society;
- > Reduction of child poverty;
- > Improving the accessibility and quality of formal and non-formal education and culture;
- > Improving accessibility and quality of health protection, environment, and child safety;
- > Protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence;
- > Increased allocations, more adequate planning and distribution of funds, as well as more transparent spending of the budget.

MODS gathers organizations that share the same values and principles:

The best interests of the child – defined in the General Comment 14 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child above all interests of adults, organizations and other stakeholders;

Participation of children – we believe that children should actively participate in decision-making processes and policy formulation related to them, and accordingly, the Network will take into account participation of children within its activities.

Children's voluntariness – the participation of children in activities of the Network as well as activities of member organizations is voluntary, and their presence and participation can in no way be conditioned or abused;

Non-discrimination – we respect children and work with them and their families and communities in which they live and work regardless of sex, their ethnic, racial or religious affiliation, beliefs, sexual orientation and other personal qualities.

The right to life, survival, and development – we believe that every child deserves the same starting position in life, and the ability to develop in accordance with their abilities and **respect for the rights of the child** is an essential value of the Network.

Comprehensive Approach – we believe that every child has the right to a comprehensive approach to health and social care, as well as education, and the right to have access to mechanisms of support and care that will be adapted to their individual needs in order to achieve the maximum potential of a child.

Solidarity, empathy, and humanity are represented in mutual relations of members, and with beneficiaries, we work with, which means that we cherish an approach that reconciles professionalism and humanity and becoming familiar with beneficiaries while building and preserving their trust.

Children's wellbeing and family environment – *we believe that family is the best environment for a child* and that each child has the right to a family, and that a society has an obligation to participate actively in preserving family and strengthening capacities and empowering parents or caregivers, as well as health, safety and well-being of children, both in terms of material and any other kind of assistance, as well as in the sense of caring for adequate atmosphere in which a child grows up.

Social responsibility - we believe that a society and all those who represent key-players in a society, those who make decisions and are in charge of policy-making and implementation have a significant impact on children, their future, and their families, and that their actions should always be in the best interest of children and families with children.

Organizational Standards

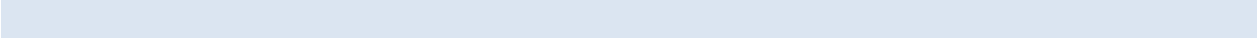
- The work of MODS **is public, and we are open** to accepting new ideas, and we continuously improve strategies, plans, and activities in order to achieve objectives at local, national and international levels.
- We apply **best practices** by exchanging experience and knowledge among members and other organizations and helping each other with the aim of achieving better and more significant results and improving work with children, families, and communities.
- We are positioned as **mutually equal** regardless of the size, financial capacity and public status of the organization at the local, national and international level.

- It is in the interest of each member organization as well as the Secretariat to **maintain good mutual relations** and not to undermine the credibility and the name of organizations in their publicly expressed views.
- We solve problems and difficulties among teams, the Steering Committee and other organizational units of MODS, as well as member organizations. MODS does not take sides in resolving conflicts between member organizations and/or other organizations; if the assistance or mediation of MODS in solving a problem or a conflict is requested, MODS can provide space and mediation for the conflict resolution process.
- As for decision-making meetings and MODS Assembly, each member organization should send a person who can make decisions on behalf of an organization and actively engage in joint MODS activities.
- Each member organization accepts the task of promoting activities of MODS, and, in that case, not only the performance and commitment of the organization but joint activities too. Each member organization remains independent with its own identity, but in the event of public appearance on behalf of MODS, it does not express its own views but views of MODS that have been adopted in agreement with the Assembly and/or MODS Steering Committee. A member organization does not disclose publicly views that are contrary to fundamentals, principles, and values of MODS.
- Decisions related to the positioning of MODS, standpoints and other activities are made by consensus. In case different and/or contrary opinions and standpoints of member organizations, we engage all available internal mechanisms for professional relationships and discussion in order to reach a message or a standpoint acceptable by all, reflecting the consistency of our principles and values in case of a particular topic. In case it turns out to be impossible, MODS will not stand in public with an attitude on a particular topic.
- Each member organization **can seek the support of MODS** for a joint statement or position.
- **We support and encourage ideas, suggestions, and recommendations** related to management and effectiveness of MODS, as well as a critical overview of MODS activities. All of those mentioned above should be presented in an appropriate way that does not jeopardize the dignity and efforts of an individual or a member organization.
- If a representative of an organization or an organization **acts through its statements or documents in violation of the standards and values of the Code of Ethics, the Steering Committee will initiate the exclusion procedure in accordance with the Article 6 of the MODS Statute**. The Steering Committee may decide to send a NOTE to the organization first if it considers that the exclusion would be either too strong or a hasty measure.

Standards of conduct with children

The basis of the standards of all MODS activities is to protect children from any form of abuse, violence, and exploitation. Staff, volunteers, and member organizations are obliged never to allow:

- Physical, psychological or sexual abuse of children;
- Beating or kicking children under no circumstances, especially under the pretext of a disciplinary measure;
- Taking advantage of or abusing children for any purposes;
- Acts that could lead to child abuse or represent a risk of maltreatment and abuse of children;

- Sexually provocative behaviour and/or behaviour that could embarrass, degrade, underestimate or cause harm to children or in any other way lead to a form of emotional abuse;
 - Participating in behaviour or practices that are illegal, dangerous or may lead to abuse and exploitation of children;
 - Discrimination and discriminatory behaviour towards children, as well as favouring certain children in relation to others;
 - Photographing or recording children without consent of their parents/caregivers and without giving information about the purpose of use documented material.
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1. MODS ORGANIZATION

1.1 MODS ASSEMBLY

The regular Annual Assembly of the Network Organization for Children of Serbia (MODS) was held in Kragujevac from November 3 to 5, 2017. The session was chaired by Radomir Jevtić, president of the Association "Step Ahead" from Kruševac. During the working session, the Assembly first reviewed the Network Report for 2016, presented by Director Saša Stefanović, the report on the work of the Steering Committee presented by President of the Committee Jasmina Miković (Praxis), as well as the Report of the Supervisory Board presented by Olgica Beba Bajić (Open Club), President of this body. After a brief discussion, the Assembly unanimously adopted all the reports submitted.

The MODS Assembly then proceeded to select 8 new members of the Steering Committee, as well as to decide on the admission of new organizations to the Network membership. The elected members of the Steering Committee are Jasmina Miković (Praxis), Kenan Rašitović (Youth Forum for Roma Education), Tatjana Lazor-Obradović (Know How Center), Dragana Soćanin (Association Parent), Marija Petrović (Centre for the Rights of the Child), Gordana Plemić (Association Parent), Vesna Mraković-Jokanović (SOS Children's Villages Serbia), and Mladen Milutinović (Open Club). Iva Eraković (Children's Friends of Serbia) was elected a member of the Steering Committee at the MODS Assembly in 2016 and has a mandate of another two years. MODS Assembly accepted 16 new organizations in its membership. The Assembly has excluded the Association of Fathers from its membership for actions that are not in accordance with the values, principles and MODS Code of Ethics.

1.2 MODS STEERING COMMITTEE

MODS Steering Committee has 9 members and is committed to the implementation of MODS objectives set by the Statute. In 2017, two meetings of the Steering Committee were held. At the sessions, members of the Committee discussed strategic priorities and action plans. The Steering Committee discussed the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation with the SCTM, membership of the National Association of Parents and Teachers. The Steering Committee discussed the findings of the research aimed at determining programme and organizational capacities of the members of MODS, based on which recommendations for improving the programme and organizational capacities of MODS members were defined. On the basis of the findings and recommendations, a plan for improving the capacity of MODS members was developed. A decision was made to publish a call for a roster to form a database of experts in areas that are relevant to the work of MODS. The Steering Committee agreed that it is necessary to improve strategic fundraising of MODS by involving a person who would be engaged in fundraising affairs.

The Steering Committee reviewed the work of individual member organizations whose representatives expressed views that were contrary to the values and principles of MODS Code of Conduct. The members of the Committee called for the provisions of the Statute regarding the potential exclusion of certain members. It was agreed that the Code of Ethics of MODS is presented at the Assembly, which was adopted at the previous MODS Assembly. The Code of Ethics will be available on the MODS website. After the discussion, the Steering Committee decided to send a proposal to the Assembly for the exclusion of the Association of Fathers of Novi Sad. The organization had an opportunity to give a

statement on the proposal for exclusion. By a majority of votes of the representatives of the Assembly, this association was excluded from MODS at the Assembly held in Kragujevac from November 3 to 5, 2017.

1.3 MODS THEMATIC GROUPS

Within the Network of Organizations for Children's of Serbia, there are 4 thematic groups functioning according to the following priorities: ***social inclusion and poverty reduction, protection of children from violence, inclusive education, the participation of children.***

More than 100 representatives of MODS members were involved in the work of the thematic groups. At the meetings of the thematic groups of MODS members, they got familiar with relevant policies and harmonized joint activities.

Coordination of the thematic groups was carried out by:

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND REDUCTION OF POVERTY OF CHILDREN

Marko Milanović, Centre for Research and Development of Society Ideas

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE

Radomir Jevtić, CSO Step Ahead,

QUALITY EDUCATION AND INCLUSION

Valentina Zavišić, Initiative for Inclusion "VelikiMali",

PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN

Mladen Milutinović, Open Club

In 2017, 8 meetings of the thematic groups were held:

Two meetings of the thematic group "Poverty of Children and Social Inclusion" were held. The meetings presented the activities of MODS and its members in the field of social inclusion and poverty reduction; the main findings from the Country fact sheet report on children in the system of alternative care in Serbia (the report from the European Opening Doors Campaign); recommendations for the keynote of the Prime Minister nominee for the composition of the new Government were presented; MODS observations on the report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Chapter 23 were announced, the part relating to the rights of the child. Members of the thematic group developed proposals for amendments to the Rulebook on precise conditions and standards for providing social protection services; members of this group were involved in developing standards for intensive family support services; they considered an initiative for standardization of social-educational and counseling-therapeutic services.

The thematic group "Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence" held two meetings where the activities of member organizations in the VAC project were presented in order to improve intersectoral cooperation at the local level on the protection of children from abuse and violence;

systematic recommendations for improving the protection against domestic violence sent by MODS to the addresses of the three Ministries: Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans' Affairs and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs; there was also a discussion about the situation in Serbia in the area of banning corporal punishment of children in all environments. Members of the thematic group got familiar with the results of a national research on intersectoral cooperation on child protection, carried out in 127 local communities in Serbia, in cooperation with UNICEF, SeCons and MODS; [a child protection map](#) was presented; an initiative to join the *EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program-REC* program was presented; Child Protection HUB was presented as well as the opportunities offered by this program to all interested organizations and individuals dealing with the protection of children from violence. The members of this thematic group were involved in the consultative process of developing the Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence. The representative of MODS, Jelena Žunić (Children's Rights Centre from Užice), was a member of the Working Group for drafting a Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence.

Two meetings of the **thematic group "Quality Education and Inclusion"** were held. The work of this thematic group was devoted to the exchange of information in the field of education, the activities of individual members and the initiatives of our network – the work and participation of MODS members in the Joint Body, MODS Agreement and the SCTM and the initiative to work on equalizing the ISC practices. The document "What is Inclusive Education" was presented at the meeting, which should serve as an official MODS attitude on education. A special meeting of the members of the thematic group was devoted to the draft Law on the fundamentals of the education system. Members were involved in consultations on draft laws on dual education and the Textbooks Law.

The **"Participation of Children" thematic group** held two meetings dedicated to the issue of how children's participation can be improved – at the level of the organization, the local community, and the national level. Organizations had the opportunity to get acquainted with the practice of involvement and work with children in different environments. At one meeting, they talked with children from the Open Club who shared their experiences on activism, involvement, cooperation...

Members stressed the importance of exchanging information within the network, the need to hold regular meetings on the topic of participation, to promote the participation of children, to draw up a document on what the participation of children is for the needs of MODS members. A special meeting was dedicated to the theme of developing a sustainable mechanism for the participation of children, which would enable the voice of as many children from different groups and ages to be directly heard.


1.4 MODS SECRETARIAT

MODS Secretariat was established with the aim of providing technical support and helping further MODS work. The role of the Secretariat is to provide conditions for the exchange of information, logistical and technical support for the activities of MODS and its members. In accordance with this, the Secretariat organized consultative processes with members, supported by the participation of members in the development of proposals for public policy for children, integrated joint proposals and

recommendations for the improvement of public policies; supported activities to improve the programming and organizational capacities of MODS members.

In addition to regular activities, MODS Secretariat planned, organized and realized annual MODS assemblies, 2 meetings of the Steering Committee, 8 meetings of the MODS thematic groups, 12 training sessions (4 internal training sessions, 2 external training sessions, 2 webinars, 4 online courses) – all with the participation and support of members. Moreover, it carried out activities on the establishment of an internal part of the website with materials for members, publishing and conducting the competition for the comic with the image of Različak.

An effective system of communication with representatives of MODS member organizations, as well as with delegated members of the thematic groups, and the Steering Committee was established. MODS has its own website www.zadecu.org, with an updated member organization database, and is also represented on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.



2. REALIZED ACTIVITIES AIMED AT ACHIEVING NETWORK PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The second part of this report is related to the activities that have been carried out within the set objectives of MODS:

- ⇒ Increasing participation of civil society organizations in children policy formulation
- ⇒ Developing capacities of organizations to improve the position of children and strengthening cooperation;
- ⇒ Establishing channels of communication between the network and local, provincial and republic authorities and institutions, institutions and bodies of the European Union and other international bodies;
- ⇒ Establishing cooperation with other networks and organizations;
- ⇒ Increase the visibility of civil society organizations' contributions to improving the position of children.

2.1 INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN CHILDREN POLICY FORMULATION

MODS prepared and submitted:

[Proposals on Changes and/or Amendments of the Draft Law of the Fundamentals of the Education System](#)

[Proposals on Changes and/or Amendments of the Draft Law on Dual Education](#)

[A letter to the Minister and Prime Minister Nominee Ana Brnabić, for the preparation of the keynote speech](#)

[Recommendations for improving systemic protection in the area of prevention and protection against domestic violence to the Ministries for Social Affairs, Justice, and Interior](#)

[Amendments to the Draft Law on Financial Support to the Family with Children](#)

[Notes on the semi-annual Report of the Negotiating Group for Chapter 23 and the Report no. 4/2016 on the implementation of the Action Plan for Chapter 23](#)

[Draft Law of the Fundamentals of the Education System Analysis](#)

[Draft Law on Dual Education Analysis](#)

[Proposal on Changes and Amendments to the Constitution in the area of Child's Rights](#)

[MODS Position - Free textbooks should be more accessible](#)

[The initiative for improving the work of inter-sectorial committees](#)

Contribution for SERBIA PROGRESS REPORT – the area of promotion of the rights of the child and the position of children from vulnerable groups

Draft Law on Financial Support to the Family with Children Analysis

Draft Textbooks Law Analysis

PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION IN THE PROCESS OF CHILDREN POLICY FORMULATION

1. **Proposals on Changes and/or Amendments of the Draft Law of the Fundamentals of the Education System and Proposals on Changes and/or Amendments of the Draft Law on Dual Education.** 5 member organizations participated in the process of preparing the proposal for amendments to these two educational laws: Centre for Youth Integration, FRENED, CSO Parent, West Balkan Institute (WEBIN), Play Centre and Agroinvest Foundation (not a member of MODS).
2. Five members took part in the preparation of the proposal for **changes and amendments to the Constitution:** Centre for Youth Integration, Citizen's Association Parent Novi Sad, NGO Parent, Know How Centre, Friends of Children of Serbia.
3. **A letter to the Minister and Prime Minister Nominee Ana Brnabić,** for the keynote speech – four members participated: Praxis, NGO Parent; Know-How Centre, Children's Friends of Serbia.
4. **Recommendations for improving systemic protection in the area of prevention and protection against domestic violence** to the Ministries for Social Affairs, Justice, and Interior. The following members participated: Know How Centre, Praxis, Step Ahead Kruševac.
5. **Amendments to the Draft Law on Financial Support to the Family with Children** – The following members participated: (6): Know How Centre, NGO Parent, Here's a Hand, NGO Parent Temerin, City Association for Assistance to People with Autism Subotica, Safe Base.
6. **Notes on the semi-annual Report of the Negotiating Group for Chapter 23 and the Report no. 4/2016 on the implementation of the Action Plan for Chapter 23** – GriG, MDRI-S and Know-How Centre.
7. **MODS Position - Free textbooks should be more accessible** – Zlatibor Circle; CiM; OFER Bujanovac; Know How Centre; UCPD; Youth Centre Vrnjačka Banja; Assistance to Children, INDIGO; Iskrice; Praxis, NGO FRENED Majdanpek (11 members in total).
8. 10 MODS members participated in delivering materials for the **Draft Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children Against Violence.** Members that participated in the development of positions and comments of MODS regarding the topics that should be included in the Strategy are: Friends of Children of Serbia, Step Ahead, NGO Libero, NGO Parent Novi Sad, Užice Centre for Child Rights, Child Rights Centre, Atina, Play Center, SOS Children's Village Serbia, GriG. 5

MODS members that have contributed to the comments and suggestions on the first draft version of the Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence are: Center for Child Rights, Užice Center for Child Rights, NGO Atina, Friends of Children of Serbia and Step Ahead Kruševac. 2 MODS members which contributed to the 2nd working version of the Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children Against Violence are: Užice Center for Child Rights and Child Rights Center (October 2017). As for the 3rd working draft of the Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children Against Violence, suggestions, and comments on the changes/amendments to this draft were given by Užice Center for Child Rights and NGO Atina, and Praxis.

Deinstitutionalisation Campaign: "Opening Doors for Europe's Children"

MODS is involved in the campaign "Opening Doors for Europe's Children" coordinated by Eurochild and Hope and Homes for Children, with the campaign including organizations and networks of organizations for children from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Ukraine and Serbia. The goal of the pan-European advocacy campaign "Opening Doors for Europe's Children" is to improve the quality of life of children and young people who are at risk or in the process of leaving alternative care across Europe, through the promotion of deinstitutionalization.

The campaign in Serbia is coordinated by MODS in cooperation with the Mental Disability Rights Initiative MDRI-S. At the national level, the objective is to start developing a comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy and action plan that will clearly operationalize the objectives, activities, steps and actors in the process of transformation of institutions, as well as the provision of funds from the European Union from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and their use to develop local support services to prevent further institutionalization and ensure the return of children from institutions to the local community.

2.2 ESTABLISHING CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE NETWORK AND LOCAL, PROVINCIAL AND REPUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND INSTITUTIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES

Several meetings were held as well as information exchange with representatives of the Children's Rights Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans' and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team, Office for European Integration, Office for Human and Minority Rights.

Jasmina Miković, Deputy Executive Director of Praxis and President of MODS Steering Committee, became a member of the Children's Rights Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Jelena Žunić Cicvarić, Programme Director of Užice Centre for Child Rights, represented MODS in the working group for the development of the Strategy for the Protection of Children Against Violence. MODS representatives were involved in the working group for the development of the Rulebook on Intensive Family Support Services.

MODS Director Saša Stefanović, together with Ira Raković, the representative of the association "Our Children" from Zenica and the Network of Non-Governmental Organizations for Children of Bosnia and Herzegovina "Stronger Voice for Children", paid a working visit to Brussels from 21 to 23 May. The visit was realized within the project "Young with a Voice" implemented by the Association for Development of Children and Youth – Open Club, with the financial support of the European Union. The aim of the visit was to introduce representatives of the relevant bodies of the European Union to the situation of children rights in the countries of the Western Balkan.

During their stay in Brussels, Saša Stefanović and Ira Raković met with the representatives of the Basic Rights Unit from the Directorate-General for Justice and the Units of the Western Balkans from the Directorate-General for Enlargement, with the coordinator of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Child Rights, as well as representatives of the European network Eurochild.

MODS representatives in advisory bodies, working groups, steering committees

Jasmina Miković, Deputy Executive Director of **Praxis** and President of the MODS Steering Committee became **a member of the Children's Rights Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia**.

Jelena Žunić Cicvarić, programme director of **Užice Center for Child's Rights** represented MODS in the working group for the development of the Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence.

Olivera Majdič, **NGO Parent** and **Milan Đorđević**, **NGO Denizen** are members of the **Steering Committee of the National Association of Parents and Teachers of Serbia (NARNS)**

Suzana Momčilović, **NGO Our Dreams Valjevo**, is a member of the Steering Committee of the project "Creating a Situation Analysis on the situation of Children With Developmental Disabilities in Serbia" on behalf of MODS. The project is implemented by NOOIS which is an integral part of IPA II project "Protecting Children from violence and promoting social inclusion of children with disabilities in development/disability in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey".

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE INVESTING IN CHILDREN – BENEFIT FOR ALL CHILDREN

The International Conference ["Investing in Children – Benefit for All Children"](#), with the guests from 21 European countries, organized by the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia (MODS), Eurochild, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (SIPRU) and UNICEF, was held on October 10, 2017 in Belgrade.

The conference was opened by high officials of the Republic of Serbia, among whom **Slavica Đukić Dejanović**, Minister without portfolio in charge of demography and population policy and President of the Children's Rights Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, **Zoran Đorđević**, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veterans' and Social Issues in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, **Mirjana Čojbašić**, State Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, and **Ivan Sekulović**, Manager of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (SIPRU), as well as high representatives of international institutions, among whom Severina Leonardi – deputy director of UNICEF and Mieke Schuurman, Senior Policy and Advocacy Coordinator from Eurochild. The conference

was also addressed by Jorge Cardona, a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and a responsible person for General Comment no. 19 on public consumption for the realization of the rights of the child (Article 4).

[A recorded statement](#) for the conference was sent by Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion, European Commission.

The international conference "Investing in Children – Benefit for All Children" called for the need to increase child support and that the funds available should be better aligned with policies and legislation aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion of children. Child poverty in Serbia is above the average of the population and one of the highest in the EU.

2.3 ESTABLISHING COOPERATION WITH OTHER NETWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

"Strengthening capacities for advocacy and monitoring of the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia"

MODS is implementing the project **"Strengthening capacities for advocacy and monitoring of the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia"** with the support of UNICEF. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of MODS and its members to participate in the process of defining policies and conducting advocacy campaigns; to establish and improve the dialogue with state authorities; increase the impact of advocacy activities on children's policies.

Young with a Voice

Within the Young With a Voice project implemented by the Association for the Development of Children and Youth – Open Club in partnership with networks and representatives of networks of organizations for children from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo* cooperation with the Child Pact Regional Child Protection Network, with the support of the European Commission, activities were carried out involving representatives and members of MODS. Within this project, the Director of MODS had meetings with representatives of the European Commission in Brussels and an opportunity to inform them about the situation of the rights of the child in Serbia and our region. A regional conference was held in Belgrade, where representatives of networks and organizations for children from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo* took part, presenting data on the status of children in the region, with a special focus on migrant children, refugees, and children in a street situation. The participants defined and agreed on joint regional recommendations addressed to the European Commission.

United Voices for Children

United Voices for Children project with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is being implemented by World Vision Germany and Agroinvest Foundation Serbia with the aim of improving the capacity of national networks and coalitions for children, members of ChildPact from Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova and Serbia. In Serbia, the partner on the project is the Association Parent. Within this project, activities that contributed to strengthening and increasing the capacity of MODS for cooperation with the media, as well as the foundations for the development and use of diversified funding sources, were carried out. We continued to build our [Friends Club](#) and cooperation with companies. MODS got its [Ambassadors](#), public figures from the world of culture and sports (Ana Stanić, Aleksandra Radović, Vasil Hadžimanov, Nataša Kovačević – a basketball player of the Red Star, Filip Filipović – a Serbian water polo team player, Duško Pijetlović – a Serbian water polo team player, Andrija Prlainović – a Serbian water polo team player, Živko Gocić – a Serbian water polo team player, Milan Aleksić – a Serbian water polo team player, Uroš Petrović – a writer, Stevan Piale – an actor). [A promotional video](#) was created with water polo players, world and Olympic champions.

The competition for the design of the MODS mascot was opened, after which MODS got its mascot - Različak. Through this project, RSD 100,000 were provided for the production of the Različak doll. The doll "Različak" thus became a socially responsible product made by textile recycling which accounts for 6% of the total waste in Serbia. Women who belong to vulnerable groups participated in the production of 120 puppets, and the doll was designed and realized by the Koba Yagi Toys studio in cooperation with the Women's Centre from Užice.

The members of the Steering Committee and MODS Secretariat did the training and received expert support to develop a strategy for fundraising for MODS for the period 2018-2020.

Empowering child's strengths for violence prevention

The Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia – MODS implemented the project "Empowering child's strengths for violence prevention" in coordination with the Social Activities and Practice Institute – SAPI from Bulgaria and the support of the OAK Foundation. In addition to Serbia, the project includes organizations from Moldova, Latvia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Albania, and Romania.

The aim of the project is to improve the prevention and protection of children against violence by educating adults, primarily education professionals, to use and apply the theory of resilience in their work and to influence the reduction of violence in schools through preventive programs. Also, it is planned to create and expand a network of support, empowerment and education of professionals from different sectors (education, health, social protection) through the realization of the project, which would enable social workers, pedagogues, psychologists, paediatricians, apply the theory of resilience in their work, understand the needs of the child and ensure the realization of their rights. The plan is to develop this model of work and put it to the test in practice in Novi Sad. Project activities were carried out in cooperation with the Play Centre, a member of MODS.

MODS cooperation with Eurochild

At the General Assembly of the European Children's Rights Network Eurochild, held in Brussels on April 5 - 6, 2017, the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia – MODS was represented by President of MODS Steering Committee Jasmina Miković from Praxis. Jasmina Miković, as a representative of MODS, participated in the meeting of [the NPN Group in Brussels](#), held on May 18-19, 2017.

EUROCHILD IN SERBIA

[The meeting of the National Partners of the European Network Eurochild](#) was held in Belgrade on October 11th. The Network of Organizations of Children of Serbia hosted representatives of organizations from 20 countries of Europe, and the meeting was opened by the President of the Steering Committee and a representative of MODS at Eurochild, Jasmina Miković. Jasmina Miković was elected chairman of the NPN Group for a two-year term.

In cooperation and with the support of Eurochild, an international conference ["Investing in Children - Benefit for All Children"](#) was organized in Belgrade on October 12, 2017.

2.4 INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVING THE POSITION OF CHILDREN

MODS prepared and published the following statements:

[MODS for quality education for every child](#)

[MODS sent comments on draft educational laws](#)

[MODS called for Ana Brnabić to include the rights of the child in the keynote speech](#)

[Brnabić accepted MODS proposals – the rights of the child in the Government's Work Program](#)

[The networks of 100 organizations protest against domestic violence](#)

[Minister Đorđević visits MODS: Ministry wants better cooperation with organizations dealing with problems of children and parents](#)

[STOP to kindergartens price increase! The state wants to cut funding for kindergartens](#)

[The Children's Rights Council became operational – MODS participation](#)

[World Children's Day – greater investment in children needed](#)

[MODS calls for authorities to change controversial articles of the new Law on Financial Support to the Family with Children](#)

[Digital textbooks are our future](#)

Social Networks Information Exchange

In addition to <http://www.zadecu.org/>www.zadecu.org, MODS actively uses its Facebook page, Twitter account, and YouTube channel to promote its activities. In addition to this news, more than 200 members of the group are regularly informed about the current affairs in the field of children's rights through an open Google group "zadecu". MODS issues weekly electronic reviews that contain information and novelties that may be relevant or interesting to member organizations, as well as information on the activities of member organizations. All organizations should still feel invited to send news to MODS Secretariat at e-mail office@zadecu.org.

3. DEVELOPING CAPACITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS TO IMPROVE THE POSITION OF CHILDREN AND STRENGTHENING MUTUAL COOPERATION

Developing capacities of MODS members and establishing a mechanism for continuous improvement of their capacities was set as a specific strategic goal.

One of the key components of the UNICEF program in Serbia for the period 2016-2020 is to strengthen the capacities of independent bodies and civil society organizations for more active involvement in the processes of monitoring and advocating for the rights of the child. Support to the Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia – a representative network of organizations dedicated to the promotion of the rights of the child, their position, and quality of life – is one of the ways to achieve this goal. In the partnership with the Network, UNICEF supports the development of the capacity of the Network and member organizations to create public policies and advocacy campaigns in order to improve the protection, well-being and the rights of the child. Capacity building process is conceived as a combination of horizontal and vertical development and learning – member organizations with relevant experiences and knowledge will be invited to organize different capacity building activities for other member organizations, but capacity building sessions with experts outside the Network will be organized too, for those areas where internal expertise is not sufficiently developed.

To this end, a methodology was developed for assessing the existing and lacking capacities of the Network and member organizations, preceding the creation of capacity building programs. A database was created based on online resource mapping questionnaire and needs assessment for capacity building of the Network of Organization for Children of Serbia. Member responses helped us to establish a sustainable system for collecting the most important data about all member organizations, the needs for further capacity building, and the resources that each organization has to provide support to other members of the Network. The questionnaires were formulated for the following areas: the scope of activities of organizations, organizational capacities, needs for capacity building, development capacities and satisfaction with the work of the Network. The answers from the MODS members were used to create a report on the capacity of the Network and the plan to develop the capacity of our members.

In accordance with the stated needs, MODS has developed an internal part of the website where relevant reports, studies, surveys, and analyses can be found; a GLOSSARY with definitions of basic terms and terms from key areas for the realization of children's rights, 4 online courses; 4 internal training sessions, 2 external training sessions, 2 webinars were organized.

MODS ACTIVITY OVERVIEW REGARDING MEMBERS CAPACITY BUILDING

8 thematic groups
meeting

- 2 TG "Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction"
- 2 TG "Participation of Children"
- 2 TG "Protection of Children from Violence"
- 2 TG "Education"

12 training sessions

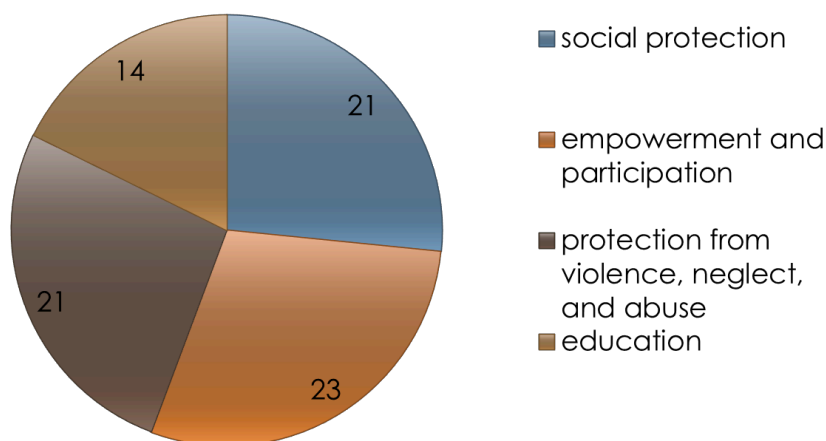
- 2 Webinars (Digital Violence, Children Rights) – 24 organizations
- 4 External training sessions (Mobilization and participation of the base, Fundraising) – 25 organizations
- 4 internal training sessions – 30 organizations
- 4 Online courses (A guide through the system of licensing social protection service providers in Serbia, Child Safeguarding Standards and their Implementation, Public Advocacy)

More than 30 documents
aimed at improving the
work of the organization

- Regulations and guidelines on financial and organizational procedures;
- Internal guidelines on child protection, child safety, work with children.

3.1 PROGRAMME CAPACITIES

Most of the member organizations, which expressed the need for further development of programme capacities, **identified four thematic areas as a priority:**



❖ In the area of **SOCIAL PROTECTION**, issues which are singled out:

- Development and sustainability of services
- Social protection Services
- Needs assessment in the local community
- Deinstitutionalization and fostering

In the framework of the thematic area of **Social Protection**, MODS organized 3 training sessions as a response to the needs expressed by member organizations:

1. *Internal training "Support programs and social protection services in the local community"*. The training was attended by **15** participants, 54% of which said they had improved their knowledge in this field.
2. *Internal training "Needs Assessment and Support to Parents and Children in the Local Community"*. The training was attended by **16** participants, **75%** of which improved their knowledge, based on the results of the evaluation.
3. Online course – "A guide through the system of licensing of social protection providers in Serbia".

❖ In the field of **EMPOWERING and PARTICIPATION**, the following specific topics have been identified as priorities:

- Mobilizing and Activation
- Empowerment for participation
- Information campaigns and awareness raising.

MODS organized the internal training "**From Decoration to Participation of Children**" based on the expressed needs of organizations within the thematic area of Empowerment and Participation. The training was attended by **11** participants, **71%** of whom improved their knowledge.

❖ In the field of **PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE, NEGLECT, and ABUSE** the following areas have been identified as special areas of interest:

- Family Violence
- Peer Violence
- Violence at School
- Digital Violence
- Child Trafficking
- Work Exploitation

MODS organized 4 training sessions based on the needs expressed by organizations within the thematic area **Protection against violence, neglect, and abuse**:

1. Internal training "**Protecting children from violence, abuse, and neglect – the responsibility of all of us**". The training was attended by 16 participants, 82% of whom improved their knowledge, based on the results of the evaluation.

2. Internal training "**Guidelines for the Application of Standards for Child Safety**". The training was attended by 14 participants, 63% of whom stated that they had improved their knowledge.
3. Webinar – "**Digital Violence Against Children**".
4. Online course – "**Child Safeguarding Standards and Application**".

❖ In the field of **EDUCATION**, the following areas have been identified:

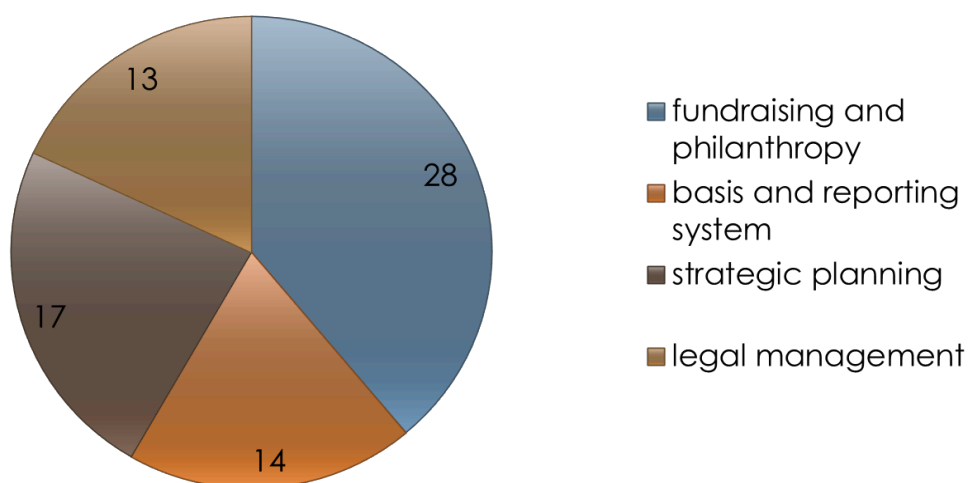
- Access to Education System
- Formal and Informal Education
- Primary School Education

MODS organized the internal training "**Social vs. Medical Model – Implications for Education**" based on the needs of organizations within the thematic area of Education. The training was attended by 15 participants, 62% of whom improved their knowledge.

Additionally, at **MODS Assembly in 2016**, the participants agreed that it would be important to create a glossary containing key terms and concepts commonly encountered by members in their work with children and families. In response, MODS has created its **GLOSSARY** with key terms in the field of social protection, education, participation, and health. The glossary, as well as all training materials, is placed in the internal part of the MODS site, in the **member corner**.

3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

The examination of organizational capacities pointed to the following four priority areas where members need capacity improvement:



MODS's response to the expressed needs of member organizations in strengthening organizational capacities included:

1. *External training* "**Mobilization and participation of the base**", 20 participants;
2. *External training* "**United resources for children – fundraising in the local community**", 20 participants;
3. *Online course* "**Public advocacy in a community**";
4. *Online course* "**Strategic planning**";
5. Webinar "**Establishing Child rights-based work in an organization and specific approaches**", 24 participants;
6. Regulations and guidelines on financial and organizational procedures;
7. Internal guidelines on child protection, child safety, work with children.

The capacity building process was conceived as a combination of horizontal and vertical development and learning - member organizations with relevant experiences and knowledge were invited to organize various capacity building activities for other member organizations, but capacity building meetings with experts from outside the Network were also organized.

Internal Network Resources

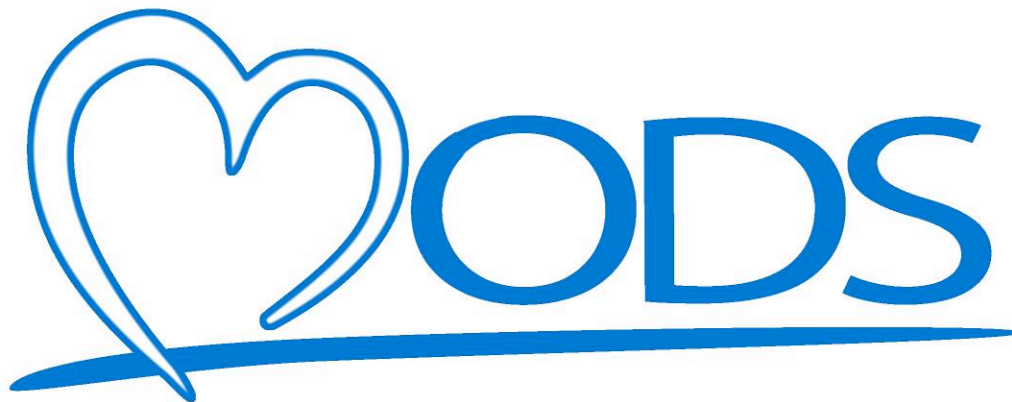
Network members who have shared their relevant knowledge and expertise (in areas for which other members have expressed the need for support) are:

- *Friends of children of Serbia* – Participation;
- *Centre for Interactive Pedagogy* – Education;
- *Foundation SOS Children Villages* – Protection of Children from Violence; Child Safeguarding Standards and Implementation;
- *Centre for Socially preventive activities*– Support programmes and development of social protection services;
- *Know How Centre* – Public Advocacy and Strategic Planning;
- *Association of Citizens with disabilities "Our Dreams"* – A guide through the system of licensing social protection service providers in Serbia;
- *NGO Libero* – Digital Violence against Children – prevention and protection;
- *Užice Centre for Child Rights* – Establishing child rights-based work in an organization and specific approaches;
- *Play Centre* – "**Protecting children from violence, abuse, and neglect – the responsibility of all of us**".

Resources outside the Network

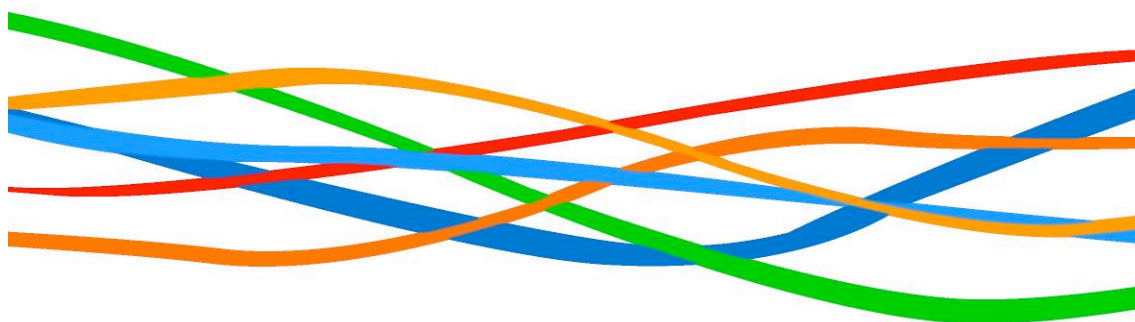
Organizations outside the Network that have helped strengthen the capacity of organizations in the areas where there is a need declared by member organizations are:

- *Serbia on the Move* – "Mobilization and participation of the base".
- Trag Foundation – "United resources for children – fundraising in the local community".



MREŽA ORGANIZACIJA ZA DECU SRBIJE - MODS

NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS FOR CHILDREN OF SERBIA - MODS



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