

THIRD PARTY PROJECT OVERVIEW – IMPACT4VALUES

CALL 2 – ACTIONS FOR DEFENDING EU VALUES

**8. Association ANCHOR – preschool teachers in the protection of children right in preschool, Kindergarten, the first step in education, and not a political arena**

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Funding awarded	9.990,00 EUR
Project duration	6 months (25.11.2024 – 25.05.2025)

In the early childhood education system (ECE), there are educational inequalities and non-compliance with national and EU regulations due to the way funding is structured, particularly the insufficient resources from local government units (LGUs). We aim to ensure equal access and quality in ECE and to provide salaries for educators that are equal to those in primary schools. Therefore, three months ago, we launched an Initiative to change the funding model for kindergartens, in which we requested the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Science, Education, and Youth to be more actively involved in securing funds from the state budget for the salaries of kindergarten staff, covering about 80% of kindergarten costs, while the remaining costs would be covered by LGUs.

We also learned that the Ministry of Demography and Immigration intends to present a model for „taking over“ the salaries of kindergarten educators, alongside the abolition of existing legal provisions requiring LGUs to continue investing in kindergartens. The fact that the first step of formal education is being removed from the education sector is concerning and represents a serious call to action. Such a model will lead to new, greater problems, such as further reductions in investments and a new outflow of skilled professionals, of which there is currently a shortage of over 5,000, who are already being replaced by unqualified workers. These decisions will further increase educational inequality, and we must take urgent action before the potential adoption of the new model. As part of this action, we will develop a proposal for a kindergarten funding model, conduct a public advocacy campaign, and organize a protest.

**Expected Project Results:**

Achieving an impact on retaining early childhood education within the education sector and increasing funds from the state budget allocated to preschool institutions, which will be evident from the following results and indicators:

- Early childhood education is retained within the education sector: At least 30 local government units (LGUs) have transparently supported the proposed funding model for kindergartens with the accompanying analysis and justification submitted to the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

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- A public campaign on the funding model has been conducted, reaching and mobilizing at least 250,000 people on social media and in the media, as well as at least 1,500 people at a public protest.
- At least 3 parliamentary clubs have publicly supported the proposed funding model.