

# UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA CAP STUDY

Doc. dr. sc. Vesna Vlahović-Štetić  
Prof. dr. sc. Vlasta Vizek-Vidović  
Department for Psychology  
Faculty for Philosophy in Zagreb

## **Evaluation of the project "Prevention of Child Abuse Through the School System and Local Community – CAP"**

"Step by Step" Parents' Association started the project "Prevention of Child Abuse Through the School System and Local Community – CAP". Goal of this project is to prepare children, teachers and other school staff to prevent different forms of abusive behavior more effectively. CAP program is based on childrens' abilities rather than on limitations of their activities and constant parent supervision. The idea of the program is to teach children what they **can** do if they find themselves in a dangerous situation and to whom to confide.

Implementation of the project is planned in three phases:ž

1. Education of an initial group of experts for implementation of CAP
2. Implementation of CAP in pilot schools
3. Wider implementation and preparation of the program for other groups of children (preschoolers, adolescents, children with special needs)

Two first phases are concluded and based on them an evaluation of the project has been performed. CAP project has been evaluated through analysis of available resources, evaluation of trainings and through analysis of project effects.

## **Evaluation of available resources**

"Step by Step" Parents' Association established a cooperation with the International Centre for Child Assault Prevention (ICAP) whose Child Assault Prevention program (CAP) has had been implemented successfully in 25 states of the USA and 13 countries around the world. During a 5 day seminar in 1999. ICAP experts Pat Stanislaski and Cheryl A. Mojta trained a group of 46 teachers, psychologists, special education experts and social workers for implementation of CAP. The Seminar covered following subjects: understanding of the abuse phenomena, what is prevention, specifics in working with children, how to lead a children workshop, how to work with parents and school staff, how to act as a "child advocat" – legal regulations and responsibilities toward children, how to work in culturaly diverse communities and how to organize a child assault prevention program. Participants got CAP internationally valid certificates.

After the seminar, CAP teams were formed, and after a period of practice, supervision, since CAP allows no improvisation, they performed CAP in schools.

It is extremely important that members of the team had supervision. Supervision was performed by eminent experts who are experienced in working with abused children. This kind of supervision enables working on professional, personal and ethical dilemas that might occur during work. Supervision ensures exchange of experiences and permanent mutual support that prevents burnout and giving up on working on the project.

Step by Step Parents Association implements CAP with and approval of the Ministry of Education and Sports-Department for School System Improvement. Supervision performed by consultants from that Department will answer the question if CAP is appropriate for recommendation to all schools. This cooperation is essential for the long-term planning and wider implementation of CAP.

Evaluation of resources leads us to a conclusion that CAP Program fulfilled all important preconditions for initiation of an educational program: it has trained experts motivated for working in child abuse prevention, expert supervision is ensured for team members and a cooperation with the Ministry of Education as a meritor institution for programs to be implemented within the school system has been established.

### ***Evaluation of the training***

Second phase of the project was to implement CAP workshops in pilot schools. Program was implemented in thirteen primary schools.

| <b>LOCATION</b> | <b><i>NAME OF THE SCHOOL</i></b>  |
|-----------------|---|
| Split           | OŠ Gripe<br>OŠ Trstenik   |
| Rijeka          | OŠ V. Cara Emina<br>OŠ Podmurvice<br>OŠ Gornja Vežica                                     |
| Dubrovnik       | OŠ M. Getaldića   |
| Mala Subotica   | OŠ Mala Subotica  |
| Feričanci       | OŠ V. Nazora  |
| Zagreb          | OŠ T. Brezovačkog<br>OŠ I. Cankara<br>OŠ I. Gundulića<br>OŠ J. Kaštelana<br>OŠ M. Laginje |

Each school was covered by

- one 2-hour workshop for school staff,
- one 2-hour workshop for parents and
- one 1-hour workshop for children (2nd graders).

Goal of the staff workshop is to sensitize the staff for the problem of child abuse, to inform them of their duty as adults to protect children and with the legal procedure concerning reporting, to teach them how to react when a child decides to confide in them and tell them about their problems and taught them how to reinforce preventive skills in the classroom after workshops.

Goal of the parent workshop is to sensitize members of the family for the problem, teach them how to communicate better with their children and how to develop preventive skills at home. Workshops for school staff and parents preceded workshops for children.

Goal of the workshops for children is to teach children their rights to be safe, strong and free, to inform them how to recognize potentially dangerous situations and how to act when they occur.

Most frequent abuse situations are presented through role play: child against child, adult stranger against child and known adult against children.

### ***Evaluation of the school staff workshop***

School staff was asked to evaluate the workshop anonymously immediately after the workshop. Different components of the workshop were evaluated on a scale from 1(bad) to 5(excellent). Workshops were attended by 501 participants from 13 schools total average grades are shown in the table 1.

Table 1. Average grades of School Staff Workshops (N=501)

| <b>Workshop component</b>               | <b>Average grade (M)</b> | <b>Distribution of results (<math>\sigma</math>)</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Novelty of the theme                    | 3.74                     | 1.30   |
| Level of interest regarding the content | 4.59                     | 0.73   |
| Applicability of the content            | 4.29                     | 0.90   |
| Readiness of the trainers               | 4.79                     | 0.56   |
| General grade of the workshop           | 4.53                     | 0.76   |

High grades for the staff workshop is evident in Table 1. The lowest average grade was got for the Novelty of the theme, with statistically significant differences between schools. For example this theme is the least new to the school in Gornje Vežice in Rijeka which is significantly different in estimating novelty in comparison to other schools.

The highest grade for readiness of the trainers (with lowest distribution) shows excellent level of preparation of trainers for their job.

From the evaluation aspect grades given for applicability of the content are most interesting. The goal of the workshop is to teach staff concrete preventive activities and how to react to child abuse. Assessment of this component of the workshop show that 50.9% of participants find applicability excellent, 32.5% very good, 11.6% good, 2.8% adequate, and 1.6% inadequate. These results show excellent grades for applicability of the workshop content (we should have in mind that teachers are usually greatest critics when applicability of trainings is concerned).

### ***Evaluation of the parent workshop***

Participants of the parent workshops in pilot schools were asked to grade different components of the workshop anonymously. Evaluation was performed on a scale from 1(bad) to 5 (excellent), same as in the case of staff workshops. We collected assessments from 540 parents, average values are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Average values of Parent workshops evaluation (N=540)

| <b>Workshop component</b>               | <b>Average grade (M)</b> | <b>Distribution of results (<math>\sigma</math>)</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Novelty of the theme                    | 4.30                     | 1.50   |
| Level of interest regarding the content | 4.79                     | 0.47   |
| Applicability of the content            | 4.63                     | 0.61   |
| Readiness of the trainers               | 4.85                     | 0.43   |
| General grade of the workshop           | 4.81                     | 0.45   |

Results of parents' evaluation show that all components except novelty were graded excellent. There is a significant statistical difference in assessments of novelty between schools. So parents (same as teachers) of the PS Gornje Vežica grade this subject the least new in comparison to parents in other schools. We assume that this subject was covered by the school psychologist or pedagogue earlier.

Parents' grades show their satisfaction with the workshop, and the very high grade for applicability of the content clearly suggests that the workshop met its goal to sensibilize parents for the problem of abuse and teach them how to communicate with children and how to develop preventive skills at home.

### ***Evaluation of the children workshop***

Children workshops were attended by a total of 865 pupils from 2nd grade and 42 teachers. Workshop evaluation was performed through anonymous answers given by children, and through their teachers' grades.

Children used a three level graphical-verbal scale to assess their feelings during the workshop, how they liked it and how much they learned. Separate sheets were made for boys and girls in order to present the gender appropriate language construction. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Evaluation of the children workshop – assessments given by children (N=865)

| Statement/answer                           | Frequency of answers | % of answers |
|--|----------------------|--------------|
| How did you feel on this workshop?         |                      |              |
| bad ☹                                      | 7                    | 0.8          |
| neither good nor bad 😐                     | 38                   | 4.4          |
| good 😊                                     | 820                  | 94.8         |
| How did you like it on this workshop?      |                      |              |
| I didn't like it at all ☹                  | 3                    | 0.3          |
| I liked it a little 😐                      | 23                   | 2.7          |
| I liked it a lot 😊                         | 839                  | 97.0         |
| How much did you learn from this workshop? |                      |              |
| nothing ☹                                  | 3                    | 0.3          |
| a bit 😐                                    | 20                   | 2.3          |
| a lot 😊                                    | 842                  | 97.3         |

Results of children workshops' evaluation show that a large percentage of children stated that they felt good on the workshop (94.8), that they liked it a lot (97.0%) and that they learned a lot (97.3%). Although we should keep in mind that children are possibly less critical from adults, grades are extremely good. Namely, this is a highly delicate subject and it could be assumed that children will not feel comfortable. But it is evident that the workshop was performed in an appropriate way and that children felt good in most cases.

Keeping the goals in mind it is very important that a large number of children feels that they learned a lot on the workshop.

We should also, mention that statistical analysis showed that there are no differences in grades regarding gender and school, ie. equal grades are given both by boys and girls, same as the grades do not differ from school to school.

Performance of children workshops were evaluated by teachers as well (N=42) according to a scale from 1(not at all) to 4 (very much). Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Average grades of children workshops – assessments given by teachers (N=42)

| Question  | Average grade (M) | Distribution of results ( $\sigma$ ) |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Are your general impressions of the workshops positive? | 4.00              | 0                                    |
| Is the material presented age appropriate?              | 3.82              | 0.39                                 |
| Is the material presented clearly?                      | 3.89              | 0.39                                 |
| Did the children feel comfortable?                      | 3.81              | 0.40                                 |
| Are the information useful?                             | 4.00              | 0                                    |
| Did CAP teams do their job professionally?              | 4.00              | 0                                    |
| Would you like to have CAP in your school again?        | 9.97              | 0.16                                 |

Results show that teachers gave extremely high, almost always the highest grades to CAP workshops for children. High children grades were, thus, confirmed by teachers grades.

Interesting information is that 40.5% of teachers listed their concrete plans for follow-up and development of strategies covered by children workshops. For example, they plan similar themes for their weekly classroom meetings; discussions about cases of abuse reported in newspapers, repetition of self-protection strategies from time to time, remind children of the strategies while covering similar contents in Nature and Croatian language classes.

Workshop for School Staff was graded from 3.47 (for the novelty of the theme) to 4.79 (for trainers' readiness). Hence all components of the workshop were graded very good and excellent in average.

Workshop for Parents got the lowest average grade 4.30 (for the novelty of the theme), and all other components were graded excellent in average (highest for readiness of trainers – 4,85). 94.8% of children that attended the workshop stated that they felt good during the workshop, 97.0% of children liked it very much and 97.3% of children in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade thing that they learned a lot at the workshop. Children's evaluations are compatible to the evaluation given by teachers' that attended children workshop.

When we speak of workshop implementation evaluation it is clearly visible that all workshops were highly graded which shows the appropriateness of the presented information as well as of the highly professional performance of CAP teams. We should specially stress out high grades of the applicability of the workshop from the part of school staff and parents, as well as opinion of the children that they acquired a lot of new knowledge.

## ***Evaluation of Program effects***

We thought that it was important to check if CAP Program had effect on the ones it was ment for. Naimely it is possible that workshops get excellent grades, but that the long-term effect on children, parents and teachers fails to take place. To be sure, we checked possible effects of the education Program after a period of two months on a limited sample of subjects.

### ***Evaluation of effects – parents***

Two months after CAP workshops we asked for opinion of parents from 4 2nd grade classrooms. Parents filled questionnaires anonymously on parent – teacher meetings. Thus we collected answers from 78 parents. Results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Responses of parents to a questionnaire on the effects of CAP Program

| <b>Statement/answer</b>  | <b>Frequency of answers</b> | <b>% of answers</b>       |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Did you talk to your child after the CAP workshop?<br>YES<br>NO  | 70<br>6                     | 89.7<br>7.7               |
| Did you find the lecture for parents helpful?<br>I did not attend it.<br>It wasn't helpful.<br>It helped a bit.<br>It helped me very much. | 29<br>0<br>34<br>14         | 37.2<br>0<br>43.6<br>17.9 |
| Did your child understand the strategies and can he/she react better?<br>YES<br>NO   | 70<br>5                     | 89.7<br>6.4               |

Results show that 89.7% of parents talked to their children about child abuse although it is visible that 32.2% of parents did not attend the lecture. Wether conversations were initiated by children or parents we find important to stress out the fact that such a large percentage of families discussed the subject.

From the parents that attended the workshop 70.83% finds that it helped them a bit in their conversation with children, and 29.17% finds the workshop very helpful. There are no parents who find the workshop not helpful at all.

When parents assess their child's understanding of the strategies and their abbility to react 89.7% chooses the answer YES.

Parents also suggest broadening of this program for older children, more workshops on child abuse, as well as workshops on drug abuse.

### ***Evaluation of effects-children***

Special questionnaire on effects of the CAP program was applied on pupis from 4 2nd grade classrooms in three schools (N=91). Children answer five YES and NO questions. Separate sheeds were made for boys and girls in order to present the gender appropriate language construction. Results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Responses of children to a questionnaire on the effects of CAP Program

| Statement/answer  | Frequency of answers | % of answers |
|---|----------------------|--------------|
| Did you talk about it in the classroom?                 |                      |              |
| YES   | 88                   | 96.7         |
| NO  | 3                    | 3.3          |
| Did you talk about it with a friend?                    |                      |              |
| YES   | 58                   | 63.7         |
| NO  | 33                   | 36.3         |
| Did you discuss it with your mom or dad?                |                      |              |
| YES   | 87                   | 95.6         |
| NO  | 4                    | 4.4          |
| Do you find that the things you learned could help you? |                      |              |
| YES   | 88                   | 96.7         |
| NO  | 3                    | 3.3          |
| Did it help you already?                                |                      |              |
| YES   | 43                   | 47.3         |
| NO  | 48                   | 52.7         |

Results show that children discussed this subject in the classroom (96.7% answered YES), but also with their friends (63.7% answered YES). We find important that children discussed this subject with other children and adults.

It is also, interesting that after two months 96.7% of children find that the knowledge they acquired on the workshop could help them, and an extremely important information for this evaluation is that 47.3% finds that this knowledge already helped them. Hence, most of the children finds acquired knowledge usefull and almost half of them thinks that it already helped them in real life situations. This impresion surely empowers children and helps them to be safe, strong and free, what is the goal of CAP.

### ***Evaluation of effects- parents***

Although data was collected on a sample of only four teachers we will briefly present them. All teachers talked to the children about child abuse prevention, three teachers find that CAP workshop helped them with that very much, one teacher finds the workshop fairly helpful. Teachers think that children understood prevention strategies and that they can react better, and three teachers have plans for further follow up and development of strategies acquired at the CAP worshop.

### ***Evaluation of effects- school principles***

We thought that school principles and school psychologists or pedagogues will be able to

evaluate objectively both implementation and consequences of CAP Program. Questionnaires were collected from 10 subjects (out of 13) and their results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Average values of school principles assessment (N=10)

| <b>Question</b>   | <b>Average grade (M)</b> | <b>Distribution of results (<math>\sigma</math>)</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Were expectations of school staff met?                                | 4.67                     | 0.50   |
| Did the program meet your expectations?                               | 4.44                     | 0.73   |
| Was the parents' feed back positive?                                  | 4.67                     | 0.50   |
| Did the CAP teams behave professionally?                              | 5.0                      | 0  |
| Did children understand the strategies?                               | 4.56                     | 0.53   |
| Do members of your staff have plans for building up?                  | 3.33                     | 1.00   |
| Would you like to have CAP in your school again?                      | 4.67                     | 0.50   |
| Trainers readiness  | 4.89                     | 0.33   |
| Was the information on planning and preparation of the program clear? | 4.78                     | 0.44   |
| Was the facilitator able to cope with the problems?                   | 4.56                     | 0.53   |

All grades are very high, especially ones for the profesionality and readines of CAP facilitators. We should also, mention that principles aslo, commented on the satisfaction of parents that school cares for their children, as well as on the fact that school expands its educational function.

Evaluation of CAP program effects shows that large number of parents (89.7%) discussed the problem of abuse with their children and found the knowledge acquired at the workshop helpful. 89.7% of questioned parents stated that their child understood preventive strategies and can react better.

Children talked about this subject in the classroom (96.7%), but with friends as well (63.7%) and parents (95.6%). 96.7% of children find acquired knowledge helpful, and 47.3% of children already applied this knowledge successfully.

Assessment given by principles and teachers also, speak that children successfully gained knowledge on prevention strategies, but that schools already have plans to practice and build-on that knowledge.