



The case study describes the progress of a child from disadvantaging environment who is visiting a school club where Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) method is being utilized.

Model casuistic – Filip, 10 years old

#### *Personal anamnesis*

Filip lives in a segregated Roma community with his family. He originates from a socially disadvantaged background. He is short and thin for his age. Despite his dire circumstances he seems easy-going.

#### *Family anamnesis*

Filip (\*2008) was born a fourth child. He has got three older sisters, two younger brothers and one younger sister. His mother (\*1985) and father (\*1980) are not married. They did not finish the basic education and have never worked since. Their income consists of family benefits and social benefits. Both parents smoke and like to drink alcohol, which takes its toll on the family atmosphere the children grow up in.

Their house is made up from one room filled with beds and a small aisle. There is no room where the children could play, or write homework, or draw. They bring in water from the single water main in the settlement. For cooking and heating they use a single stove. Electricity they installed illegally. In those woeful conditions, however, a television is not missing, on which they watch, apart from the news, telenovelas and detective series all day long.

Children seem to be neglected just as the household they grow up in. The parents do not pay much attention to them, sometimes they do not even care if there is enough to eat. They attend the school unkempt, often dirty and in torn up clothes. No one cares whether they woke up on time to get to school or that they have nothing to eat until lunch time.

#### *School anamnesis*

Filip spent the first year at school (2014) in zero grade. Main reason for that being he did not attend any school preparation. He started to visit afternoon school club at the same time. In the zeroth grade his performance was average.

The deficiencies of how he was brought up manifested notably during the first grade, where he was not able to keep up with his classmates and had to repeat the grade. However, not even repeating helped Filip to acquire the required knowledge. Despite him trying the letters and numbers still confused him. He was not able to understand and systematically work the information he was given.

A great deal of his difficulties is caused by the language barrier because for him, like for many of his classmates, Slovak was a foreign language until coming to school.

His class teacher recommended a special-pedagogical examination. Based on this Filip was moved to a second grade of special class. Smaller collective and reduced curriculum and tempo do Filip well. His class teacher commends him as best in the grade. He partakes in every task and works actively during classes. He knows all the letters of the alphabet and with help is able to read. He can add up to twenty. Subtracts with assistance. He still uses finger to help him count. He likes to sing very much.

His verbal display is less intelligible, has a slight lisp and does not pronounce properly. It could be caused by his neglected and crooked teeth, in the front he has an extra tooth growing, which he realizes and is ashamed of. At school he seeks collective and likes to spend time in group. He is capable of working individually.

Filip finished the second grade of special class with straight As. The beautiful mark average is a bit overshadowed by a few absences without leave. He allegedly had no shoes and was waiting for a benefit so his parents could buy him some. But no one thought about telling the school.

#### *Social anamnesis*

Those around him have him for a happy child. Looking at Filip just makes you smile. Little, inconspicuous boy who cheers everyone up when he walks into the room. He has got large, penetrating eyes, which enthrall you immediately.

He likes company that allows him to show off. To play individually is of no meaning to him. He needs to have somebody around at all times. He desires to be the centre of attention. He competes in everything and with everyone. He respects adult's authority and seeks it out. He is studious and energetic.

He cannot concentrate for very long, his attention switches from one incentive to another. His favourite game is *Sorry!*, he likes colouring pictures and cuts anything he can with scissors. He does not excel at any sport, he likes to ride scooter the most.

In spare time he helps his father gather and chop wood, he watches TV series or wanders aimlessly around the settlement with his friends. In summer he spends whole days at the stream, bathing.

#### *Difficulties found after joining the club*

When we first met he seemed bashful, he covered his smile with his hands. It was apparent we was looking forwards to the club. He understood little Slovak, spoke even less but tried to communicate very much.

He wanted to be the one to help with everything. He had to be the one to prepare the school supplies, close the door, and wipe the board. When we asked one of his classmates he was offended and refused to work, or he pretended not to hear us, pushed his classmate and readied the things.

He perceived us visually but did not know what we were talking about. He kept raising his hand to answer the given question even when he did not know the answer. He was starting to work on the tasks before we finished giving instructions. He did not know how to wait. He was literally shaking when he was not able to act immediately. He dived headlong into every task. He was overly competitive and focused on the goal only. He did not care how he would write the letters down as long as he could finish first. He was not able to even enjoy a snack. While other ate calmly at their desks, he stood by the door with his slice of bread in hands so he could exit the class right after us.

Similar situations occurred when playing games. Filip tried to manipulate the rules to his advantage. He had no trouble cheating. When he started losing he quit playing and left. He argued often. He did not stay focused on one thing only. We noticed Filip wished to be a part of everything that took place in the club. He would run from one group to another, which sometimes left him with no time to play at all. He always had to sit in the front row. He was unable to sit still on a chair. He kept swinging or turning around.

He could not respect others' opinions. When someone had different opinion he would assault him verbally. He was clueless as to how to navigate the information we gave him. His way of work was very chaotic, making him fail often. He would then name the bad task or bad colours as responsible. Afterwards he deemed the task impossible to finish.

His behaviour was seriously unsteady. He was overjoyed with expectations just as he was reluctant and sad. He was quick to appreciate a thing just to push it aside a second later. His emotions were constantly changing. However, he was never aggressive.

#### *Progress under the influence of FIE*

As we mentioned earlier, Filip began to visit the club in 2014. We have been working with the FIE method for the past three years. He went through the Organization of Dots and Recognizing Emotion instruments.

We noticed many positive changes in Filip. He began to perceive what we ask about and thinks about our questions. He does not dive headlong into solving tasks. He learned to plan his work before taking the first step. We are very happy to hear him ask the question 'Why?' for the past year.

He progressed in his concentration, is able to focus on one task until it is finished. He is happy about his success. He came to understand it is not bad colour or bad task that fails during a task, but himself. He can evaluate his own work, assess and express what he is content with and what needs improving.

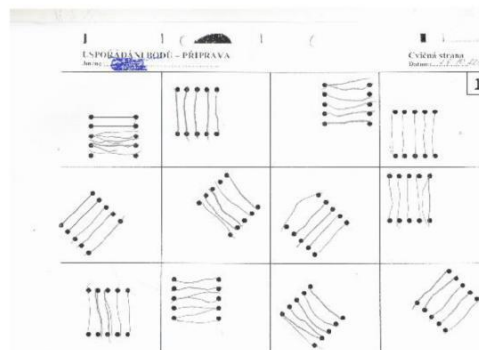
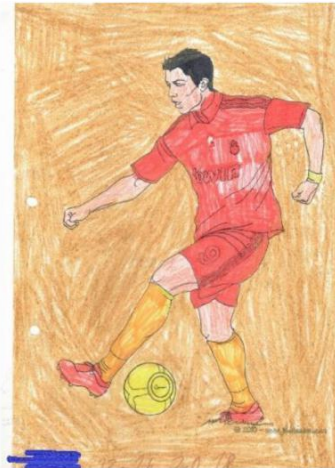
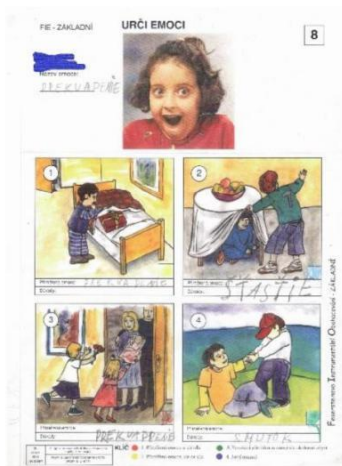
We managed to get his overly competitive nature under control. It all changed at one moment, when he made a mistake on one page in the Organization of Dots instrument. He noticed the mistake, took rubber and began to erase it and correct it. He was so immersed in filling out the page he did not even notice his classmates had already finished. When he realized he was last, it did not bother him at all and he went on with the task as if nothing happened. He was able to enjoy the path to the goal, not just the goal itself for the first time. Following this experience his writing improved as he is not that hasty, compares and corrects the letters when he is not satisfied with how they look. He eats his snack peacefully with others and is not kicking his heels at the doorstep.

He took a leap in his emotions as well. He learned to tolerate others who play the game. He does not push his interests so much, more and more often he is able to adapt to the collective and do not quit the game. He even managed to lose *Sorry!* a few times without it ending with a row or ill mood. He can apologize nicely when we does someone wrong.

While working with the Recognizing Emotion instrument he was able to speak his mind beautifully and share many a life experience, happy and sad, which were not adequate for him to have lived them at his age.

## Conclusion

A third grade of special class awaits Filip in September. We firmly believe he will continue to handle school requirements better and better so he can grow up a self-confident and knowledgeable person who does walk astray in life.



*Because of the nature of information provided the name of the child was changed.*

Velka Ida, August 2018



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