



The case study describes the progress of a child from a socially disadvantaged community attending a school club using the Feuerstein Instrumental enrichment method (FIE).

Model casuistry – Anička, 9 years old

Case study describes progress of a child of socially disadvantaged background, who has been visiting for second year now a club, in which Feuerstein's method of Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) is being applied.

Personal anamnesis

Anička was born in a Roma family living in segregated settlement not far from Kosice as a fourth child. At first sight she seems jolly, rarely letting go of her smile.

Family anamnesis

Anička was born in 2008 as the only daughter of her mother (*1985) and father (*1982). She has four brothers. The eldest (*2002), then (*2003), (*2005) and youngest (*2017). Her parents are married. Neither of them has finish basic education. Her father has never worked and often took drugs. Currently he is incarcerated for his children not attending school. She has also never worked so far and she spent most of her time on maternity leave. She drinks regularly and neglects taking care of both her children and the household. The family inhabits derelict house, which they own, in the settlement. The house consists of one room that serves as kitchen, living room, bathroom and bedroom all together. As for the toilet they use a meadow near the settlement. They have access to electricity in their house. Water is provided at the central pipeline in the settlement. For heating they burn wood in stove, on which they also cook.

The children have none of their basic needs satisfied. At home they only speak Romani. They come to school unwashed, uncombed, with no snack, not properly dressed. During hard winter they would go outside in only a slim sweatshirt. Often the lunch in school is the only meal they get for the day. Nobody is paying much attention to them and neither does anyone help them with their schoolwork.

School anamnesis

Anička never attended preschool. After reaching the age to enter the school she was therefore put in zeroth grade. When she started coming to school she did not meet basic hygienic standards and only spoke Romani. She socialized quickly in the collective in her grade. Both gross and fine motor skills were at a very low level. To add to that, Anička is left-handed. She could not hold pencil properly and pushed it too hard against the paper. She was able to pay attention for only a short time. Elementary knowledge of shapes, colours, animals and numbers was missing.

Not even in the zeroth grade could she overcome the lack of competence piled in her preschool years. Hygienic habits got better as well as her motor skills, but that did not suffice for finishing the first year, where the pace was too quick for her. Her vocabulary was lacking. Anička was not able to remember the subject matter and could not understand her teacher's instructions, which led to her disrupting the class often. At the end of the first school year she failed in Mathematics, Slovak and Science and had to repeat the grade.

In the school year 2017/2018 she is entering the second grade in her fourth year of compulsory education.

Social anamnesis

Anička seems as a joyful, carefree child at the first glance. Only the state of her clothes tells of her background. She searches for company of her peers. She likes to be in the centre of attention. This she manages by speaking loudly, sometimes by misbehaving during classes or after school. She does not have problem to fight a boy or a girl if she thinks she is in the right. She has to have a last say. Despite all that she is popular with other kids. She likes to draw and sing but only keeps at it for a short while. Her most favourite pastime is to play a mother with a doll and a pram. At other activities she usually requires presence of an adult.

As we mentioned earlier, her family does not really pay attention to her. Because of her mother drinking she needs to often take of the household. Carry water, gather wood, sew and

wash clothes, she is capable of all that. If she is not working at home she wanders around the settlement with her friends.

Difficulties observed after entering the club

During our first meetings in the FIE club Anička was quiet and shy. When our eyes met she would avert hers. It took longer time before we actually established a relation. Because of lacking Slovak vocabulary we communicated via an assistant or her classmates would translate for her. As time went on Anička started to be willing to talk with me in Slovak, but she would always quickly give up, with her vocabulary she was unable to finish words or sentences. It was easier for her if others translated her words.

She was very active when tidying the class, cleaning the board and handing out teaching aids. All activities she was confident in doing well she wanted to do alone. When more children were doing them she could not stand not being the first to finish.

She had difficulties with drawing. When her task was to draw something she knew and wanted to draw she did not have the courage to take the pencil and start drawing. She went uncertain and encouragement and hints from her classmates would not help. It was apparent she was fighting on the inside, but could not overcome the fear. Similar situation repeated itself with both reading and writing numbers and letters. Anička defended herself that she did not know how to do it, saying she would make a mistake and we were to leave her alone.

She did not treat her classmates well. If they did not do what she wanted, did not give her a toy she wanted or did not lend her a pencil, she began to act aggressively. She could not accept she had to wait for some things. When she did not get what she wanted she began to attack others both verbally and physically.

Progress under the influence of FIE

Thanks to FIE we can observe a huge improvement in many areas. In two school years she managed to go through the Organization of Dots and Identify Emotions Instruments.

She advanced her communication skills. Thanks to the principles of FIE she has much richer vocabulary. Mainly she overcame the shyness when talking to others. She no longer leaves her sentences unfinished. She tries until her sentence is correct, thinking aloud of how to form the sentence and is not ashamed of it.

The topics we talk about she does not only receive passively but also thinks about them logically. More and more often she asks: "Why?" She is more perceptive of her surroundings

and tries to put individual things together to form a meaning. It is most visible when we are outside, walking in the park or on a trip away from the settlement.

With the help of FIE she is no longer shy in front of strange people. When a visitor comes to a club she has no problem to make contact with him or her and ask what he or she wants to know. It is amazing to watch Anička in an unfamiliar environment. At the end of school year we went with the kids to a town playground and to an ice-cream parlour. When the children were telling me which ice-cream they wanted, Anička asked me, whether she could ask for the ice-cream herself. It was visible that she was afraid, but she did wonderfully. Similarly she was the only one who bought a bus ticket from the conductor herself.

Anička found her inner motivation and started to want to do things. For a long time she was not able to write her first name and did not accept my help. Not long time ago she came to me if I could help her learn how to write it. Initially we practiced together and then she started to practice writing her name wherever possible. On a paper, on a board, with a chalk on a sidewalk, when her classmates were drawing pictures, until she was content that she knew how to do it well.

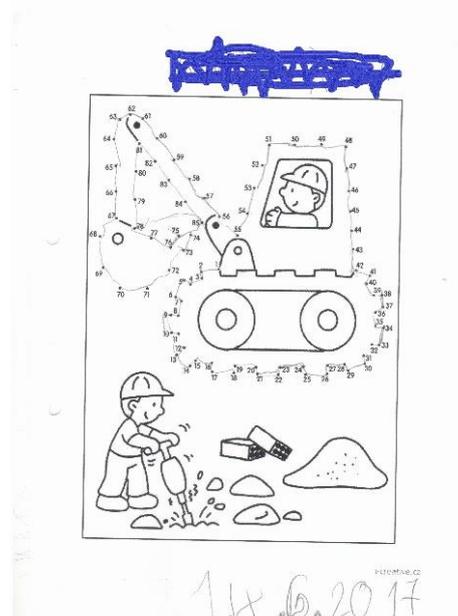
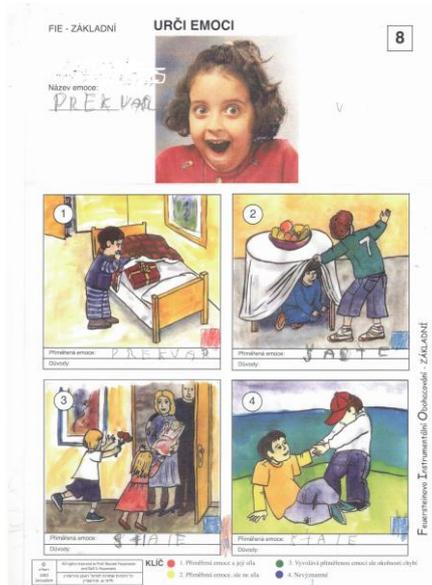
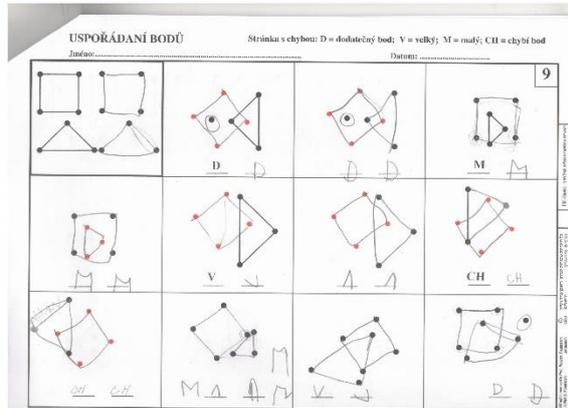
When entering the FIE club, Anička was unable to imagine nor did she think about future. Now she is able to picture how her house will look when she is grown up, on which windowsill she will keep flowerpots, which colour her sofa is going to be and what will she cook her family for lunch. She can make drawings of her thoughts and has no problem to talk about them to others.

The biggest improvement Anička made was in her behaviour. Thanks to the Instrument Identify Emotions she learned to understand her own feelings and work with them. She reacts less impulsively and her aggressive behaviour towards her peers occurs only rarely.

She started to behave emphatically. She can read her classmates' emotions and likes to talk about them. When it was time of receiving social benefits, Anička ran away after school and did not go to the club. The day after I told her that I had been troubled that she had left without telling me and that I would have liked her to tell me beforehand the next time she was not going to come so that I would not worry about her. When listening, Anička stared into ground and did not speak. After club we went home together. She grasped my hand and told me she was very sorry for escaping school. And that she would not do it again, because she did not want me to be sad.

Conclusion

Anička keeps visiting the FIE club in the afternoon. We keep expanding her vocabulary. We are working on her realizing her own value as a human. We are trying to solve new obstacles, which life of a child brings and we learn how to react to them. We are advancing slowly but steadily.



Due to the personal information presented, the child's name has been changed.

Veľká Ida, August 2018



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union