



Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) "Growing with Children's Rights" Good Practices and Initiatives

Children Right to Get Free Education in Latvia *Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia*

Country(ies): Latvia

Title of practice: Children right to get free education in Latvia

Main scope/theme: Education and information on children's rights

Managing organisation(s): Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia, <http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/en/homepage>, contact person: Anna Haruzika, anna.haruzika@tiesibsargs.lv

Brief description: Accordance to article 112 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, everyone has the right to education. The State shall ensure that everyone may acquire primary and secondary education at no charge. Primary education shall be compulsory. Before August 2013, the right to free education was not fully ensured in Latvia. Even though the legal regulation stipulated that the state and local governments should provide educational materials, in practice, parents were forced to buy everything necessary for their children. Thus, the actual situation did not ensure children's equal rights and opportunities to obtain education. In 2011, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia started working on resolving this issue in order to change the illegal practice. In August 2013, new amendments to the Education Law of the Republic of Latvia came into force. The amendments indicated precisely what should be bought by parents (e.g. clothes, shoes, stationary), and what kind of educational materials should be provided by schools. As a result, additional state and local funding was provided to all schools in Latvia.

Timeframe: From June 2011 until October 2013

Type of activities: Establishment of Advisory Board on issues related to access to education; involvement of the society in reporting illegal practises; analysis of legal regulations; requests to provide information; proposals for law amendments; reports to relevant institutions; personal consultations; trainings.

Results and outputs: New amendments to the Education Law came into force. Change in illegal practice (for now parents do not have to buy educational materials).

Target group(s): Children and adolescents, parents, public authorities and civil servants, public at large

Success factor(s): Active role of the media, tremendous support from the society, cooperation with stakeholders

Estimated budget and human resources: It is not possible to specify the precise budget. Two people were working on the project, namely: the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia, Juris Jansons, and the Head of the Children's Rights Division of the Ombudsman office, Laila Grāvere.