

TOY FOR INCLUSION – ACCESS FOR ALL

PILOTING PHASE IN SLOVAKIA - DATA ANALYSIS



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INTERNATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

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Contents

Introduction	3
The project	3
The Toolkit	4
The purpose of the evaluation	4
Methodology	5
Participants and Tools	5
Limitations	6
Findings	7
Professionals	7
Children	10
Parents	10
Conclusions and Recommendations	12
General Conclusions	12
Toolkit Revision: Recommendations	14
Appendices	16
Appendix 1: Focus group questions for professionals	16
Appendix 2: Post-pilot interview for sub-sample of professionals	19
Appendix 3: Focus group questions for parents	25
Appendix 4: Focus group questions for children	28
References	29

Introduction

The project

The project 'TOY for Inclusion – Access for All' (2020-ongoing) is supported by the Kahane Foundation and is developed and implemented by the Slovak NGO Škola dokorán (WOS) and international NGO International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI), which is based in the Netherlands.

It builds on the existing project 'TOY for Inclusion' and aims to foster and support the inclusion of young children with special educational needs (SEN) and their families, as well as children from minority groups in non-formal educational settings, namely the Play Hubs¹.

The project includes the following activities:

- Desk research on most promising evidence-based approaches for inclusive education for children with special needs.
- Development of a toolkit for practitioners on how to promote inclusive formal and non-formal education with young children and their parents.
- Capacity building of the Local Action Team on how to promote inclusive education for young children and their families.
- Implementation of non-formal educational activities for young children and their families in the Play Hub.

In this project, ICDI is responsible for the desk research² as well as the development of the toolkit for practitioners, including its evaluation during a pilot period of 12 months and a final review.

¹ Play Hubs are safe, nonformal, high-quality, Early Childhood Education and Care spaces where relationships between young children (0 to 10 years) and families from all backgrounds are built. They are inclusive spaces where children and adults of all ages meet, spend quality time together and play with each other; children can borrow toys and educational materials to bring home; parents, grandparents, and practitioners can informally learn and exchange information about child health, early learning, and development. Play-based activities are organised to support creativity, increase confidence, develop social, emotional and verbal skills and unlock each child's potential. This helps children in their transition to formal education. This is particularly relevant for families from Roma, migrant or socially disadvantaged backgrounds, to whom Play Hubs give extra attention. In fact, Play Hubs are a flexible solution that offers inclusive educational opportunities for all those children who are often excluded from formal educational services. For more information, visit: www.toy4inclusion.eu

² See research report published in 2021 and available at this link: <https://icdi.nl/media/uploads/downloads/toy-for-inclusion-access-for-all-research-report-final.pdf>

This report illustrates the **findings of the evaluation** conducted in the **Play Hub in Roškovce** during the piloting period **April 2021-April 2022**. **The purpose of the pilot** was to use **the Toolkit³ in the Play Hub and evaluate its impact and content**. Particularly, the evaluation focused on understanding whether the Toolkit helped professionals to successfully promote inclusive education for children 0-10 years of age regardless of their abilities, socio-economic, ethnic or cultural background. Furthermore, this evaluation was aimed at highlighting possible adaptations that might be needed to improve the Toolkit and its practical application and ensure its relevance for other (future) programmes.

The outcomes of this evaluation will be used **to review and finalise the Toolkit** with the aim to **introduce it to other Play Hubs in Europe**. The findings and the Toolkit will also be presented to professional organisations and state institutions in Slovakia.

The Toolkit

The Toolkit provides theoretical background, including key concepts and methodologies, as well as practical tips and easy-to-use adaptable activities that professionals can use in order to facilitate **prevention, early interventions** and **inclusive education** through a **child-centred approach**, with special attention to children with SEN and children from minorities (for example, Roma).

Furthermore, the Toolkit also highlights the importance of parenting support groups, focusing on the topics of responsive parenting, child development, SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights), as well as on the engagement of fathers in their child's development and learning, as well as how to bring different services together to ensure the holistic development of all children regardless of their needs.

The purpose of the evaluation

The **purpose** of this evaluation was:

- To **assess the Toolkit** from the perspective of the Play Hub staff and professionals from other services, as well as parents and children attending the Play Hub
- To **evaluate inclusive education activities and their impact** on children, parents and professionals
- Based on insights gained from the gathered data, **provide recommendations for the revision and finalisation of the Toolkit**.

³ The draft version of the Toolkit used for the pilot can be accessed at this link: <https://icdi.nl/media/uploads/downloads/toolkit-inclusive-community-based-ecec-toy4incl-access-for-all.pdf>

Methodology

The evaluation report is based on qualitative data from **post-pilot focus group discussions with parents, children and professionals**, including the Play Hub staff, as well as **personal interviews** with two Play Hub staff. This design was chosen to **gain in-depth knowledge of each group's experience with the Toolkit** and its use in the Play Hubs. Furthermore, the themes discussed in the Toolkit can be sensitive for children with SEN and/or minority groups and their parents, and it is believed that asking questions about personal experiences and opinions in the safe environment of a group setting could give participants the confidence to open up as they are surrounded by their peers.

For safeguarding purposes, all data is kept **anonymously** when presented in this report. Furthermore, a **consent form** was signed by the participants. Everybody, including children, received a **written invitation** to participate in the focus groups, which explained the purpose of the discussion, where it would take place, what it would involve, **confidentiality** and use of data.

The research tools employed for this data analysis were designed by the researchers of the ICDI and translated from English into Slovak by the staff of Škola dokorán. The staff of Škola dokorán was also responsible for the data collection, and the ICDI – for data analysis. The data was collected from June to September 2022.

Participants and Tools

In total **30 individuals participated in this study**, including **10 children** (3 to 10 years of age) with and without SEN, **10 parents** and **10 professionals** (3 Play Hub staff and 7 visiting professionals from health, SRHR and childcare institutions). Focus group discussions were conducted with all three target groups (see appendix 1-3).

Notably, only mothers took part in the focus group with parents, whereby there were **5 mothers of children with SEN**. All selected **parents were from the Roma community** to assess the **impact that the programme had on Roma children**.

The participants of the focus group with **professionals** included the headmaster of a primary school and a kindergarten, 4 teachers, 1 Mayor, 2 Roma activists, a teacher's assistant, and a psychologist, whereby **all of them have been working with children and parents of the Roma communities in eastern Slovakia for a long time**. Furthermore, in addition to participating in a focus group discussion, **2 professionals from the Play Hub staff also took part in individual interviews**, which provided deeper insight into their opinions regarding the Toolkit (appendix 4). In order to clarify and expand findings, an **additional interview** with the headmaster and a psychologist was conducted by the ICDI staff (09-09-2022). This interview provided deeper insight and significantly contributed to the data analysis.

Importantly, **children were divided into two groups** depending on their age. 5 younger children aged from 4-5 years old, with and without special needs and disabilities were in the first group, while the second group included 5 older children aged 6 to 10 years. Children could share their opinions in a group setting and in an age-appropriate manner without becoming overwhelmed or intimidated by the setting. Furthermore, focus groups for children included **creative methods of expression**, which aided children in **sharing their opinions and emotions** associated with the Play Hub and program, such as **drawing**. Notably, 4 from 10 children in the samples had SEN, ranging from learning disorders, impaired communication capacity, behavioural problems and hearing impairment.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations associated with the employed methodology, namely: a **relatively small sample size**; parents who took part in the focus group discussions came only from the Roma community; **only female parents** expressed their interest to participate in the focus group discussions, **limiting our insight into paternal views and experiences**. Furthermore, the research **tools** that were developed for this data analysis had to be **translated from English into Slovak**, which could result in the **original meaning being lost or altered**, either due to **language peculiarities and/or subjectivity of the translation**. The summaries of the interviews and the focus group discussions (apart from the interview conducted with the ICDI staff) had to be **translated back into English for the data analysis**, which might have led to further **distortions or misinterpretations of the original information**. Furthermore, the data for this analysis was collected by the staff of Škola dokorán and not external researchers, **increasing the chance for bias or subjectivity** in interpretation.

Findings

Professionals

The professionals consider the Play Hubs in Roškovce as a way of breaking down barriers between the communities, namely the Roma minority and other groups.

The professionals indicated that for most of them the toolkit had been their **first encounter** with such a **detailed explanation of the topic**. They praised its content and confessed that it was an **eye-opening experience** as it made them look at the education and upbringing of the Roma children and children with disabilities in a new way.

When asked which activities organised by the Play Hub are most useful for parents, 30% of the participants indicated that **play time for parents and child(ren)**. Additionally, 25% of respondents said the most useful activity is the **information and support offered to parents** by the Play Hub staff.

The professionals have also indicated that a number of other specific activities and workshops have been particularly useful for parents, such as:

- **intergenerational learning,**
- **playful learning,**
- **drawing and reading books,**
- **meetings with professionals,**
- **various mother-child activities,**
- **proper hygiene workshops.**

When asked whether the Play Hub has changed their way to approach diversity and inclusion, professionals have indicated that the Play Hub was a **model environment for inclusion and prevention of discrimination**, and a safe environment for those who have been long subject to poverty and social exclusion. They have praised particularly the philosophy of the programme and the opportunity it offers to lend toys and organise activities with- and for the families from the community. Furthermore, the professionals have indicated that there is a strong, yet unmet, need to open such Play Hubs in other places, particularly in Eastern Slovakia, where the situation in the Roma communities is particularly worrisome due to increasing segregation, poverty, and social exclusion.

Regarding the influence of the Play Hub on inter-sectoral collaboration in the community, the professionals have indicated that **new forms of cooperation** have emerged since the establishment of the Play Hub, especially with medical professionals (doctors, nurses) and local government representatives. Furthermore, the workshops provided at the Play hub and organised by representatives of different services (education, health, social services) helped many Roma families to build trust towards these services and to gain knowledge about what they have to offer. In fact, many families were unaware of the services offered by the government regarding employment, social

welfare, and material assistance. As a result of this project, professionals believe that the access of vulnerable families to public services has increased.

Moreover, the professionals reflected that their **collaboration with parents has significantly improved as parents started trusting them more and started coming to them for support and guidance, which has never happened before.** This was especially the case for parents of children with SEN, who, thanks to the project, realised that they do not have to be excluded from society and can successfully be integrated into the education system among other children.

The professionals have also indicated that it is essential to maintain and preserve the **Play Hubs**, since those are **in most cases the only educational setting supporting and helping the Roma community in the villages and towns where they work.** Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of advocacy activities in order to raise awareness at the national level of the importance and impact of inclusive education and learning environment (such as the Play Hub) on children's development.

Importantly, the current project 'TOY for Inclusion: Access for All' introduced new themes in the Play Hub, such as SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights), supporting parents of children with special needs, changing the school environment and curriculum to promote the inclusion of children with special needs. **The topics concerning SRHR have been highlighted as those of particular importance** as they are still seen as **taboo** in the community. The professionals indicated that Roma women are generally left in darkness regarding their options for contraception, health security system in Slovakia, possibilities for gynaecological check-ups and their rights as women. Importantly, they generally have poor reading skills and are often shamed to talk in the Slovak language as they rarely are fluent in it, they have high adolescent birth rate, and early marriage is not uncommon among them. Maintenance of traditional patterns in Roma communities contribute to the observed gap between their awareness and understanding of the topics related to SRHR and the general Slovak female population.

In the additional personal interview, the two professionals (Play Hub staff) reported to have found the Toolkit useful in the following ways:

- Toolkit helped the professionals to fully understand the topics included in it.
- Thanks to the trainings and well-designed toolkit, the Play Hub staff managed to **build trustworthy relationships with parents** and the whole of the Roma community, who previously did not trust them – as members of the majority community - in matters pertaining to maternity, sexuality, women's rights, and most importantly the upbringing and care of children suffering illnesses or those with SEN.
- The trainings and the Toolkit helped the Play Hub staff to start using **innovative, active, and creative activities rather than the more traditional and passive methods** that were being used previously.

- They found the **guides on how to work with children with disorders and SEN particularly helpful**, as well as the chapter regarding connecting home, school and other services.
- The Toolkit **helped the professionals to select the right toys, games and activities** that could be used to stimulate children's psychosocial development.
- Furthermore, professionals have particularly praised certain activities, namely storytelling with grandparents and creating new handmade toys, **that parents can recreate at home**.

The trainings and workshops focused on SRHR were at first received with distrust, and some mothers were shocked that these topics were discussed so openly, as it still is a taboo in the community. Furthermore, they were afraid that their personal stories might be shared with their partners, fuelling domestic conflicts and possibly exacerbating situation at home. Later, when closer relationships between staff and mothers were established, the trainings were received very well, and became the **most popular trainings among mothers. As a result, mothers also started to ask the professionals for advice regarding more personal topics, such as violence at home**. The professionals shared that **the Play Hub is the only place for the Roma women to share their experiences related to the topics of SRHR and ask advice** in a safe environment. The professionals also talked about other emerging needs and challenges, which could give an important direction for the revision of the Toolkit. Namely, they mentioned:

- **the pressing need for more specific and detailed activities** aimed **particularly** at the **Roma community**, considering their **social exclusion and extreme poverty**, as well as their **poor Slovak language skills**.
- The request for **extra training and support to successfully promote inclusiveness** in the Play Hub and **other services in the community**. This is the case due to an increasing number of families in **extreme poverty**, who are significantly affected by the **lack of food and basic wellbeing needs**.
- During the implementation of the pilot, the professionals faced a number of challenges, in particular connected with family **reluctance, difficulty to gain paternal involvement and COVID-19**.
- The professionals indicated that there is **increasing demand for further extension** of the section of the Toolkit related to **SRHR and development of a group discussion with the Roma women** with a list of **suitable questions and discussion topics** (phrased in a simple language and with consideration of a generally low educational level of the Roma women), ranging from the **female rights, modern contraceptive methods, to the health care system in Slovakia and domestic violence**.

Children

The children indicated that they **feel welcome** in the Play Hub as staff and visitors are very friendly and there are lots of toys they can use with their friends or family members. They also said that they particularly enjoy going to Play Hub with **their mothers or sisters, with whom they have their quality time for playing and drawing**. Children have also indicated to have a lot of friends in the Play Hub, particularly from the Roma community. Notably, some children in both focus groups experienced difficulties communicating in the Slovak language. When that happened, their views were expressed in the drawings and artworks produced during the focus group discussion to represent how they see the Play Hubs and how they feel when they are there (Image 1).

Image 1 – Drawings of children who participated in the focus groups.



The children also shared some challenges they face and suggestions for improvements. One of the children with a hearing disability indicated that the staff is extremely helpful and shows him what to do when he cannot hear. Nevertheless, sometimes other children laugh at him, and he has more difficulty establishing contact with them. Therefore, it is very important to pay **extra attention to fostering positive bonds between children with- and without SEN, increasing their understanding of SEN and foster kind interactions.**

Finally, children suggested that a **higher variety of toys** (such as cars and airplanes), as well as **more outdoor activities** (such as playing football together or having a trip/picnic outside) would further improve their experience of the Play Hub.

Parents

The parents – all of whom were Roma mothers - who participated in the focus group showed their excitement about the Play Hub and **praised its inclusiveness**. They indicated that their **children feel happy** in the Play Hub, but also that the Play Hub helps their children **in becoming more successful at school and improve their proficiency in Slovak language**. They also praised the activities

organised in the Play Hub, such as drawing, reading books, watching films, and having the opportunity to take toys to play at home. Furthermore, they found the trainings with the medical professionals particularly helpful.

The parents have all stressed that they love spending time with their children in the Play Hub, as their houses are very small and often cold. Furthermore, they indicated that they often cannot afford purchasing toys or materials for drawing and other creative crafts, thus, they recognise how important the Play Hub is for the **holistic development** of their children. Attending the Play Hub also increases the play time at home, as parents take a number of toys to their home, as well as some children's books and materials required for drawing. Parents reported that these activities **significantly increase positive interactions and strengthen the bond with their children**. On top of that, thanks to the parenting workshops offered in the Play Hub, parents started to better **understand the importance of play and communication with their children**. They also indicated that since the establishment of the Play Hub, their Slovak language skills have increased, which has allowed them to start speaking Slovak at home with their children and facilitated their communication with the school. They have also started having **more trust in the Slovak community due to the positive interactions with the Play Hub staff**. The mothers have highlighted in their answers that **they feel accepted and welcome in the Play Hub**, which they have never experienced before in contexts outside the Roma community. They have also made new friends with other families. All parents have indicated that their relationship with the school and their involvement in their child(ren)'s education have significantly improved since the establishment of the Play Hub, particularly due to:

- Increased Slovak language skills of both parents and children
- Increased interactions with the school as some of the teachers work in the Play Hub
- Possibility to ask for the help and the support of the Play Hub staff, as well as the help of professionals from other services.

The parents indicated that they did not face any challenges In the Play Hub and were **very excited and enthusiastic** about it. The only **suggestion for improvement** in their eyes would be **opening more Play Hubs in other Roma communities** as they have shared that the Roma houses are usually very small and cold, and parents in most cases cannot afford any toys or materials for drawing and crafts. Notably, they highlighted in their answers that they would **particularly appreciate more activities encouraging interaction and play between children and parents**, such as different **craft workshops**. They would also welcome more **discussions and meetings with the professionals from other sectors**, particularly **medical staff** and **social workers**.

Conclusions and Recommendations

General Conclusions

This report contains the findings of an evaluation conducted between April 2021 and April 2022 by ICDI on the piloting of the **Toolkit on Inclusive Community-Based ECEC** developed in the context of the project 'TOY for Inclusion: Access for All' (2020-ongoing). The project is coordinated by Škola dokorán and aims to achieve three specific outcomes:

- to **organise inclusive non-formal education activities** for **young Roma children** with and without **disabilities** to facilitate a smooth transition into primary education and improving their educational experience and performance in the long run.
- to **collaborate** with Roma (future) parents to promote **responsive and positive parenting** for all children, so that **children can be better supported** at home and in school.
- to **build the capacities** of early years services (education, health and social) to be more **inclusive** towards children with disabilities and their families, and to be **culturally sensitive** towards those with **minority backgrounds**.

The focus group discussions were conducted with parents, children, and professionals. Additionally individual interviews were conducted with two Play Hub staff.

The evidence produced during the evaluation will be used to review and finalise the Toolkit, which will be then shared with Play Hubs in other countries and with the local and national authorities in Slovakia.

The findings showed that the Play Hub plays a very important role in the lives of the members of the Roma community. Furthermore, the parents and professionals stressed the **need for such initiatives in other Roma communities of Slovakia and across Europe**. The focus particularly on various vulnerable groups (such as children with **SEN**) and **minorities** (such as Roma) is particularly important because they are often subject to social exclusion and prejudice and live in conditions of extreme poverty.

Furthermore, the Toolkit helps the professionals to fully understand various topics associated with **inclusive education, children with SEN, and playful learning, as well the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation**. The advice provided in the toolkit **helps the professionals to build strong and trustworthy relationships with parents in the Roma community**. As a result, professionals are able to discuss with parents personal topics such as maternity, parenthood, sexuality, women's rights, as well as care of children with special needs. Furthermore, the **innovative and creative activities** suggested in the toolkit are particularly helpful for the **stimulation of holistic children's development**.

The professionals have also indicated that they find the part of the toolkit focusing on **Playful learning** the most useful part. This part helped them to select the right toys, games and activities to **stimulate**

children's psychosocial development, also in case of SEN. Thanks to the activities outlined in the Toolkit, the Play Hub staff created a creative, safe and stimulating environment. The activities that were more positively received by children and their parents were: **storytelling with grandparents, creating new handmade toys, activities that parents can repeat at home, and meetings with professionals from other services.**

Inclusion of children with SEN in the Play Hub has **improved** thanks to the project and the use of the Toolkit. However, the findings of this analysis showed that some cases of exclusion, mocking and bullying still happen. It is important to pay extra attention to the **prevention of bullying and exclusion through the stimulation of positive interactions between children with and without SEN.**

The professionals indicated that the Toolkit could be improved by including more specific and detailed activities aimed particularly at the Roma community, and families suffering from social exclusion and extreme poverty, as well as those who have poor Slovak language skills.

The professionals also indicated that they feel that they require **extra training and support to successfully promote inclusiveness** in the Play Hub and other services in the community. Furthermore, the toolkit could provide extra advice regarding overcoming the **challenges associated with family reluctance to seek help, difficulty to achieve paternal involvement, and COVID-19.**

The parents appreciated the workshops aimed at increasing parental awareness and understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights the most. As a result, Roma women started going to the Play Hub's staff also for **advice regarding violence at home and sexual abuse.** This indicates that the **Play Hub has become a safe haven for mothers who seek help and support.**

The parents and children shared their enthusiasm about the Play Hub and its **importance and positive impact** on their lives. The children also indicated that they would love to have **more outdoor activities and games** (such as football), as well as day trips and picnics in nature.

Toolkit Revision: Recommendations

- All topics presented in the Toolkit have been praised by the professionals and should not be cut from the final version. When introducing new information, it is important to focus on **practical advice, concrete examples, and recommendations** rather than theoretical background.
- **Incorporate detailed examples of various indoor activities, suitable for children with a range of disabilities (both physical and mental disabilities) and for different age groups, presented in the form of Activity Cards**
- **Expand and add detailed examples of possible outdoor activities and games** (for example, in the form of **Activity Cards**), considering children with **SEN**
- **Provide additional practical guidance and ideas with concrete examples on how best to include children with disabilities in play and educational activities and how to adapt play and educational activities to various needs and abilities**

- **Add concrete examples and practical advice on how to actively facilitate and foster positive interactions between children with and without disabilities, for example how children can learn about, appreciate, and recognise each other's individual needs and abilities, how to promote the idea of playing together, supporting and helping one another.**
- **Add practical advice** regarding how to **promote agency in children with disabilities**
- **Add practical advice** regarding how to **make children with SEN feel more comfortable with playing with other children**, particularly those who have difficulty learning or interacting, or those who have significant physical impairments (such as difficulty moving or hearing)
- **Provide advice and detailed recommendations regarding how to prevent and tackle bullying of children with SEN**

- **Provide advice regarding activities** aimed specifically at the **Roma community**, considering their **extreme poverty, social exclusion**, and often **poor Slovak language skills**
- **Expand practical advice and recommendations with clear detailed examples** regarding **promotion of inclusiveness** in the Play Hub, other services, and the local community, focusing on **different SEN and the Roma community**
- Further **extend** the section of the Toolkit related to **SRHR with guidelines and recommendations for professionals** for cases of **sexual and/or physical abuse** and **develop a group discussion** with a list of **suitable questions** and discussion topics (phrased in a **simple language** and considering a generally low educational level of the Roma women), ranging from **women's rights and modern contraceptive methods to the health care system in Slovakia and domestic violence**.
- **Provide practical advice regarding how to provide support to families significantly affected by the lack of food and basic wellbeing needs**
- Provide **practical advice regarding overcoming** the challenges associated **family reluctance to receive help or ask for it** and **difficulties to increase paternal involvement** in the Play Hub and children's upbringing
- **Provide practical advice on raising awareness about the importance of paternal role in the holistic development of children in the communities where traditional role division is generally prevalent**, such as the Roma
- **Provide concrete examples of activities that could help strengthen the bond between children and their fathers**, either in the Play Hub or at home

Appendices

Appendix 1: Focus group questions for professionals

Introduction:

For 10 professionals (LAT members, Play Hub staff and visiting professionals) Introduction. First it is important to thank the professionals for participating in the pilot and for agreeing to be interviewed. Also important to put the professionals at ease and create an informal atmosphere in which they feel free to talk reassuring them that there is no right or wrong answers.... rather you are interested in finding out about their experience so that the programme can be improved.

1. What does inclusion mean for you?

2. Which activities organised by the Play Hub are most useful for parent?

- The play time they can spend with their child(ren) at the Play Hub
- The toys they can bring home
- The information and support offered by the Play Hub staff
- The information and support offered by the visiting Professionals
- The activities hosted/ran by the Play Hub themselves

3. Please explain your answer, include a list of specific activities or workshop themes.

4. How has the Play Hub changed your way to approach diversity and inclusion? Provide examples:

5. How has the Play Hub influenced the way you collaborate with professionals from other services in the community? Provide examples:

6. How has your collaboration with parents (and especially parents of children with special needs) changed thanks to your participation in the activities at the Play Hub? How? Provide examples:

7. Is there something new that you learned since you collaborate with the Play Hub?

8. Have you changed your understanding of/approach to working with children based on your experience in the Play Hub? How? Provide examples:

9. The current project 'TOY for Inclusion: Access for All' introduced new themes in the Play Hub, such as SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights), supporting children with special needs, supporting parents of children with special needs, changing the school environment and curriculum to promote the inclusion of children with special needs. Name of thing you learned on these topics which was new to you.

10. Do you feel you need additional training/capacity building on any of these themes, beside what the Play Hub is able to offer? If yes, which topics?

11. Do you have any suggestion for the Play Hub?

Appendix 2: Post-pilot interview for sub-sample of professionals

For a sub-sample of 2 professionals (Play Hub staff) who were involved in the 'TOY for Inclusion: Access for All' project and the piloting of the Toolkit.

First it is important to thank the professionals for participating in the pilot and for agreeing to be interviewed. Also important to put the professionals at ease and create an informal atmosphere in which they feel free to talk reassuring them that there is no right or wrong answers, rather you are interested in finding out about their experience so that the programme can be improved

1. The information and training I received before piloting the Toolkit helped me understand the topics therein illustrated:
 - Completely
 - To a large extent
 - Partly
 - To a lesser extent
 - Not at all

In which way? Please explain:

2. The information and training I received before piloting the Toolkit helped me get to know the activities therein contained:
 - Completely
 - To a large extent
 - Partly
 - To a lesser extent
 - Not at all

In which way? Please explain:

3. The information and training I received before piloting the Toolkit helped me organize activities in a different way or organize new activities:
 - Completely
 - To a large extent
 - Partly

- To a lesser extent
- Not at all

In which way? Please explain:

4. Do you feel that the toolkit helped you be a better Play Hub staff?

- Completely
- To a large extent
- Partly
- To a lesser extent
- Not at all

In which way, please explain?

5. Which part of the toolkit do you feel was most useful?

- Playful learning (Chapter 1)
- Connecting home, school and other services (Chapter 2)
- Families and the Play Hubs: Supporting parents through guided activities (Chapter 3)

Please explain why?

6. Mark with an X the topics/activities you actively addressed/used and if/why they were not easy to understand and use?

	Used? Yes or No	Difficult? Yes/No? Why?
Chapter 1 - Playful learning		
1.1 Play as a natural way of learning and the right to play for all children		

1.2 What is learning through play or playful learning?		
1.3 What does learning through play look like?		
1.4 How does a playful and inclusive learning environment look like?		
1.5 Playful classroom management		
1.6 Play-based learning for children with special needs		
1.7 Playful and inclusive learning ideas for school		
1.8 Playful and inclusive learning ideas for the Play Hub		
1.9 Inclusive playgrounds		
1.10 Connecting children with nature		
Chapter 2 - Connecting home, school, and other services		
2.1 Home-based practice interventions for young children and their families		
2.2 Other ways to involve families in school life		
Chapter 3: Families and the Play Hubs: Supporting parents through guided activities		
3.1 Responsive Parenting		
3.2 The need to positively motivate parents		
3.3 The importance of Father Involvement in Responsive Parenting		
3.4 Responsive parenting; importance for children with disabilities		

3.5 Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and links to healthy child development		
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7. If you were not able to use more than 30% of the Activities presented in the Toolkit, please explain why? (Prompt for interviewer: Not enough materials, didn't understand the activity, not appropriate for the domain, etc.)

8. Can you give me an example of a new inclusive activity which was positively received by children and/or parents? Please also explain why it was successful (Prompt for interviewer: understood by family, activity was enjoyed by parents and child(ren), activity was repeated by family after visit, it triggered questions, it brought behavioural change).

9. Can you give me an example of a new inclusive activity which was not positively received by children and/or parents? Please also explain why it was successful.

10. How were activities about Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights received by parents? Please provide examples.

11. How has the understanding of disability changed among parents after the use of the Toolkit and the activities therein proposed? Please provide examples.

12. How has accessibility and inclusiveness of the Play Hub improved for children with special needs? Please provide examples.

13. How has the approach towards diversity and inclusion of the other services in the community (school, preschool, health services) changed as a result of the use of the Toolkit and the activities therein proposed? Please provide examples.

14. Do you feel you need extra training or support to successfully promote inclusiveness in the Play Hub and the other services in the community?

- Yes
- No

If yes, in which areas?

15. Fill in the challenges, strengths, opportunities and barriers you faced during the TOY for Inclusion: Access for All' project:

Challenges:

Strengths:

Opportunities:

Barriers:

16. If you were to change and/or improve one element of the Toolkit, what would it be?

17. Have you any questions or any more comments about the Toolkit or the project or your role as Play Hub staff that you would like to share?

Appendix 3: Focus group questions for parents

For a group of 10 parents (5 of which of children with SEN) who regularly participate in the activities of the Play Hub.

Introduction

First it is important to thank the parent for participating in the pilot and for agreeing to be interviewed. Also important to put parent at ease and create an informal atmosphere in which she/he feels free to talk reassuring him/her that there is no right or wrong answers....rather you are interested in finding out about her experience so that the programme can be improved.

1. Let's first talk about your experience of the Play Hub. Did you feel the Play Hub staff were supportive and clearly explained activities you could do with your children? (Choose one)

- Not at all
- Partly
- A lot

Can you explain your choice?

2. Was the purpose of the Play Hub activities and workshops hosted by the Play Hub clearly explained to you? (Pick one)

- Not at all
- Partly
- A lot

Can you explain your choice?

3. Which activity was your favourite to do with your child in the Play Hub?

4. Which activities were most useful for you as a parent?

- The play time you can spend with your child(ren) at the Play Hub?
- The toys you can bring home
- The information and support offered by the Play Hub staff
- The information and support offered by the visiting Professionals
- The activities hosted/ran by the Play Hub themselves

Please explain your answer, include a specific activity or workshop theme as an example:

5. Can you tell us about anything you are doing differently as a parent as a result of the support/advice from the Play Hub?

6. What is a game you play or activity you do with your children at home?

7. Can you tell us about anything you are doing differently as a parent as a result of the support/advice from the Visiting Professionals?

8. What does inclusion mean for you?

9. What makes the Play Hub an inclusive and welcoming place for you and your child(ren)?

10. Has your relationship with other parents improved thanks to the activities in the Play Hub?
How?

11. Has your relationship with the school and your involvement in your child(ren)'s education improved or changed thanks to the activities you did and advice you received in the Play Hub?

12. Do you feel comfortable to ask for help and support from the Play Hub staff and professionals from other services? Please explain.

13. Has this improved thanks to the activities you did and advice you received in the Play Hub?

14. Would you advise a friend, family member or other parents to attend the Play Hub and be part of the program? Please explain your answer:

Appendix 4: Focus group questions for children

For 2 groups of 5 children each. Ages 3 to 10. Groups organised per age. A mix of children with and without SEN who regularly participate in the activities of the Play Hub.

Activity 1: Artwork (1 hour)

IMPORTANT: If a child does not wish to take part, he/she can say "stop" and stop at any time. Use a bell to mark starting and end time.

Example of how session could be introduced:

After some fun warm up activities, that will help us get to know each other and the purpose of our activities, we will work together for about 1 hour to make pictures, using paint, markers and other materials to tell the story of your playing and learning.

We will think about:

- What you like about the Play Hub
- What is your favourite place in the Play Hub
- One thing you learned in the Play Hub
- Your favourite game/activity in the Play Hub

The facilitator will take photographs of children's pictures so they can take their pictures home. Break (15 minutes)

Activity 2: Discussion group (45 minutes)

IMPORTANT: if a child does not want to answer, they can say 'pass'. Inform them about what you will do with the information they share with you, and that you will keep their names confidential.

- Do you feel welcome in the Play Hub? Yes/No and provide an example of a situation in which you felt welcomed/unwelcomed.
- Do your parents go to the Play Hub with you? Yes/No
- What do you do with your parents at the Play Hub?
- How does the Play Hub staff help you when you need help?
- What would you change in the Play Hub?
- Do you think you get on well with the other children in the Play Hub?

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