

“UNDERSTANDING MY BODY CHANGES” SEXUALITY EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE CITY OF NOVI SAD, SERBIA



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City of Novi Sad, Serbia

CONTEXT

- ☞ Republic of Serbia - no formal sexuality education
- ☞ Children (age 8-10) in primary schools learn about the changes in puberty in a very small extent (only 0,34% of school subject curriculum “Nature and society”).
- ☞ Sexuality education relies on individual initiatives of teachers, non-governmental organization and parents.
- ☞ There is still some resistance of parents and teachers



DESCRIPTION

First phase

- ☞ 2015/2016 school year
- ☞ pilot education „What is happening to me“
- ☞ third grade pupils (age 9)
- ☞ improvised health education tool
- ☞ workshop curriculum on the theme of puberty
- ☞ separate body parts that represented changes in puberty
- ☞ positively evaluated by pupils and teachers



ACHIEVEMENTS

This educational program enabled educators to apply a comprehensive educational approach that empowers children in acceptance of their body changes and acquiring higher level of self-esteem. Also, the program motivated teachers and health workers to implement comprehensive sexuality education with children aged 8 to 10.

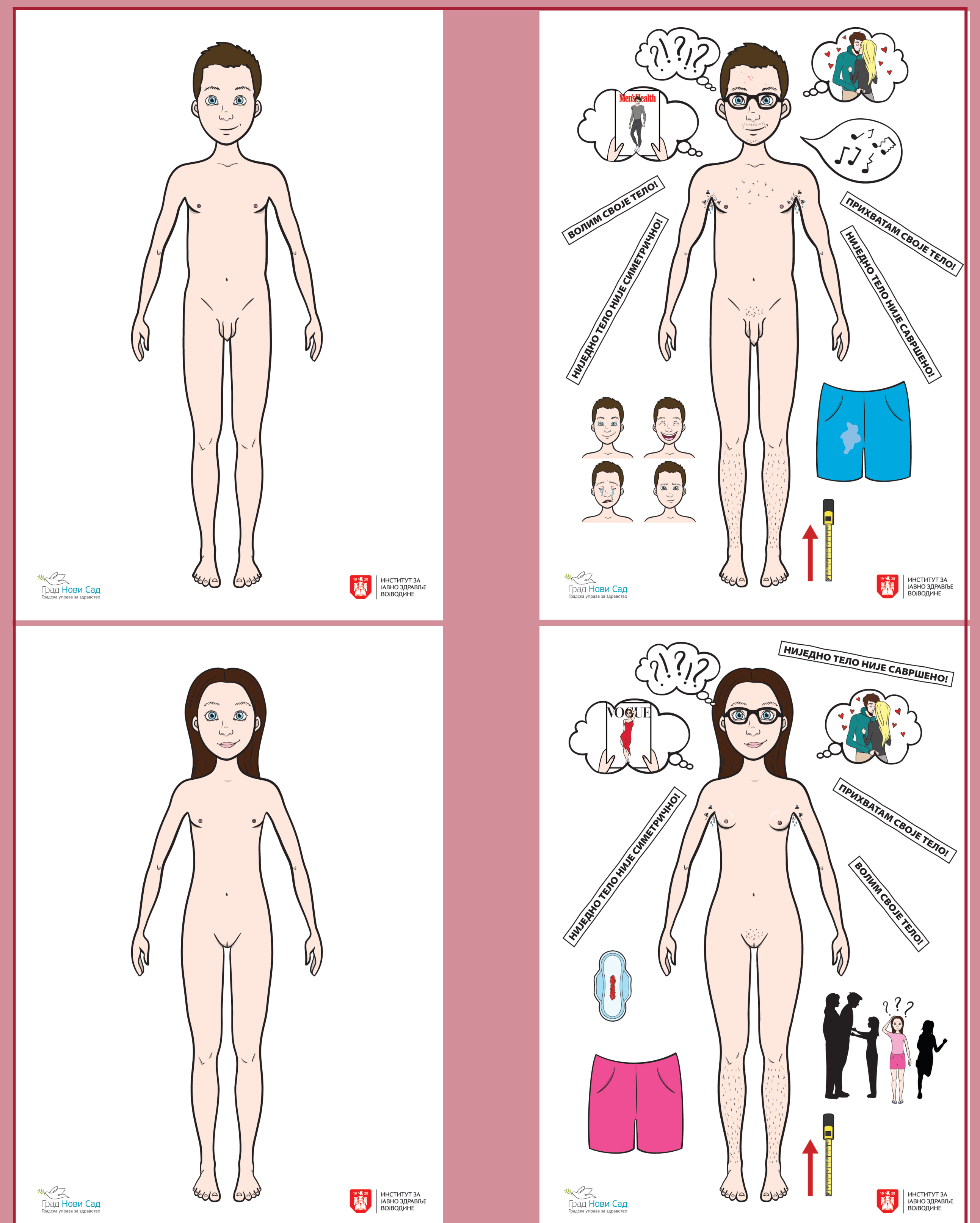


RATIONALE

- ☞ Document *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe*
- ☞ Accepting body changes in puberty is one of the main developmental tasks of adolescence: build knowledge, images, values, attitudes and skills about their body, intimate relationship and sexuality
- ☞ There is obvious need for an additional, professional and prevention-oriented role with the demands of being relevant, effective, acceptable and attractive to young people.
- ☞ Considering the context concerning sexuality education in Serbia, it is important to empower and encourage teachers and health professionals at the local level to work together in incorporating age-appropriate sexuality education in regular school curriculum and extracurricular activities.

Second phase

- ☞ march - may 2018.
- ☞ curriculum “Understanding my body changes”
- ☞ education tool “My Body”
- ☞ target group: children aged 8 to 10
- ☞ theoretical part - body and psychosocial changes, body hygiene, positive body image and self-esteem
- ☞ practical part: posters with a girl and a boy figure
- ☞ separate illustrations: children paste cardboard cut-outs with body parts and psychosocial changes in puberty on the figures → a trigger for discussion
- ☞ Educators training: - 29 schools; 60 teachers; - 16 health professionals
- ☞ Evaluation - assessed positively training, highly motivated
- ☞ Further process evaluation - monitoring meetings, evaluate the implementation of the program



CONCLUSIONS

- ☞ relates to empowering people (educators and children)
- ☞ addressing gender equality
- ☞ improving health literacy in children

This program introduced holistic understanding of sexuality education of children aged 8 -10 in Novi Sad elementary schools and provided quality tools and method to address complex issue of human development in adolescence.