

The Omama project gives children a new chance

The vision of the Omama project is to help every child born into generational poverty grow up to be a successful person with an education, decent job, and a dignified life. We want to transform the broader ecosystem of an early childhood development and open it for socially excluded communities. We want to mobilize internal sources of these communities to bring a positive change.

The objectives of the Omama project for next 2 years:

- **To maximize the quality of the program** by creating the system of ongoing innovation based on observation and real data from terrain about value and impact of the Omamas activities. We engage the early childhood development experts who will evaluate the data and help us to develop continuous improvements in the program to build better foundations for our small clients in their early childhood on which they can build a better life later on.
- **To scale the number of children in the program** to several hundreds according to success in fundraising.
- **To build an extension for our children in their age 4-6 years** by overcoming barriers in kindergartens and building the informal alternative program for those who cannot attend the formal preschool program.



Focal points of the Omama project

- **We work with the youngest children (0-3) when the foundation for future success in school and in life is built (Novelty Criteria)**
Out of all the organizations working with the Roma population, Cesta von is the only which currently works with this age group.
The Omama project is the only one of its kind as all the activities with the target group are implemented directly in the homes of the poor families.
- **The poor help themselves (Involvement Criteria)**
Omamas come directly from the excluded communities—the settlements.
They fully understand the situation and the people.
They can reason with the parents in a language they can understand.
- **Omamas are employed part-time (Involvement Criteria)**
They are also motivated by the fact that this work increases their standard of living and pulls them out of poverty.
Each omama has her own mentor from the middle-class, who is employed for 10 hours a week to support and advise her as her ally in the community.
- **Omamas receive high-quality practical training on a quarterly basis involving experts and ECD practitioners (Effectiveness Criteria)**

Omamas use a set of toys and a support manual compiled of many practical activities.

The presence of the parent at each lesson is required.

Parents can then help to enhance their children's child development using practical advice from the Omamas.

- **We cooperate with organizations, institutions, professionals and other stakeholders in the field to ensure synergy and support for our little clients later in their lives (Serving as an example Criteria)**
If a more serious developmental problem has been identified, Omamas are trained to refer families to professionals, such as pediatricians or Early Intervention Centers.
Cesta von regularly communicates with its donors and followers on its website and social media and it has triggered interest in various groups in the topic of generational poverty.

To see how the project works, check out the following videos:

The training:

<https://www.facebook.com/cestavon.sk/videos/511973339213576/>

The implementation:

<https://youtu.be/vBZuSusu6tc>

Ommas help to develop children 0-3 years old using modern program methods developed by Play Wisely.

From an early age, they are read to, they expand their vocabulary, and they develop their cognitive skills.



The children receive the appropriate stimuli. They develop their fine motor skills at a sufficiently early age and they learn shapes, colours, and numbers.

At the parent meetings, mothers share their joys and sorrows and they learn about child rearing.

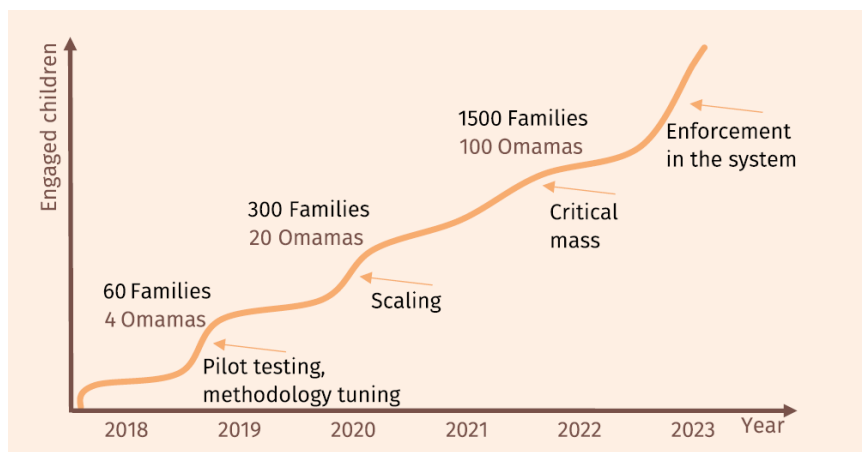
Results for 1 community

- 15 -20 families with young children receiving early childhood development intervention
- Better school readiness
- More functional families, more ambitious goals and attitudes toward formal education

Long-term impact

- Better school results for children from generational poverty
- Higher employment rate/higher income

Growth strategy



Funding

The initial funding for the project came from individual donors who believed in its positive impact on excluded Roma communities. Since then, the number of individual donors has grown to 500. The organization now has over 100 regular individual donors and has received grants from various corporate and institutional donors, such as the US Embassy, American Chamber Of Commerce, the ESET foundation, the Telekom Fund, the Granvia Foundation, the Slovenská sporiteľňa Foundation. It is regularly approached by volunteers and media representatives for interviews about project. We plan to mobilize the state funding later on.

Costs

The direct project costs for 1 year	1 Omama	20 Omamas
Annual costs for Omama salary (part-time)	4,260 €	
Annual costs for a mentor (10 hours/week)	4,230 €	
Travel costs	1,600 €	
Education and training of Omamas and mentors	2,510 €	
Toys and other development tools	200 €	
Communication, office costs	1,000 €	
Total direct costs	13,800 €	276,000 €
Project development and administration		
Program management, fundraising, accounting, expert lecturers, technical equipment, offices		99,000 €
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS		375,000 €

Economic Return on Investment

Utilizing foreign cost-benefit analyses, we conservatively calculate a 10-fold return. With that estimate Every child in whose early childhood development we invest will return at least EUR 30,000 during his or her lifetime. At the same time, the costs of the necessary accompanying interventions in the future are reduced.

With 20 Omamas working with 300 families with 1–2 children in early age, the calculated annual cost per 1 family is 1,250 EUR (approx. 1,000 EUR per child). **The total costs for 3 years of early childhood care per 1 child in the Omama project are approx. 3,000 EUR.**

Social Return on Investment

- Engaged children have a better foundation for the full development of their potential to escape from poverty.
- The space for ethnic tensions is diminishing; social cohesion is increasing.
- The country has more educated citizens, and companies have more employees with an increased added value.