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## Education for rural people as a component of a rural development strategy for Croatia

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**This report presents the findings of an analysis on basic Education for rural people (ERP) in Croatia** and proposes measures to improve access and quality of ERP in order to better contribute to rural development.

The report notes that the major problems in basic education are connected to educational quality (i.e. the near absence of aspects of rural life in curricula and textbooks, teacher-centered teaching methods, the lack of in-service training available for rural teachers). There are also some problems of access, in particular, difficulties with school transport and access to specific activities before or after normal school-hours. In most cases, the main cause of these problems is weak institutional capacity. This includes insufficient budget, especially for education facilities and staffing and, due to unclear roles of parties and inappropriate budgetary regulations, weak implementation of the decentralization meant to address the needs of the poorer schools in rural areas. The study suggests that priority be placed on reinforcing the capacity to plan and manage basic education for rural people. This could lead to a more efficient decentralization process which could favour rural schools, and to increased investments in ERP. Such measures would facilitate curricula which could help to make learning content more relevant to rural needs. Furthermore, salary and non salary incentives for teachers should be explored, including specific training for rural teachers, and the adoption of more active teaching/learning methods in rural schools.

This study addresses the problems affecting ERP in Croatia and describes their relative importance. It clearly suggests the need to promptly address these problems as part of an overall rural development strategy.