



The Forum for Freedom in Education was founded on December 21, 1992.  
The year 2025 marked its 33rd year of dedicated work.

The year was marked by an intensive programmatic surge, the strengthening of partnerships, and the continuation of close cooperation with schools, alongside a transition in the association's leadership. After four years, Executive Director Ana Munivrana was succeeded by Mario Bajkuša, while Jelena Perak took over the role of Development and Programs Director.

A key direction for the future was established with the adoption of Strategy 2030. The organisation comprises nine employees and a network of 20 external experts.

## Thematic Areas

### QUALITY

The year was characterised by the strengthening of the professional community



of school leaders - principals and teachers - who are systematically developing a positive, inclusive, and democratic culture within their schools.

Twenty principals completed the "Academy for Principals", building capacities for strategic

planning, educational leadership, and trust-building, becoming torchbearers for a culture of dialogue within their staff.

**"This training helped me see my role more clearly, not just as a decision-maker, but as someone who creates space for participation and trust."**

Over 100 teachers transformed their teaching by completing the "Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking" program. Moving away from lecture-based teaching, they adopted interactive methods to change classroom dynamics and encourage students' critical thinking.

**"The training didn't just stay in the realm of theory, I changed the way I work in the classroom as early as the following week."**

### WELL-BEING

The foundation of activities in this area included mediation, peer violence prevention, mental health strengthening, and building partnerships between schools, parents, and the local community.

Through the "We Can Work It Out" program, 28 schools from Zagreb, Koprivnica-Križevci, and Virovitica-Podravina counties were successfully included in non-violent conflict resolution training.

Over 140 educators were



empowered with concrete tools for mediation and violence prevention through highly-rated professional training sessions.

**“I feel enriched by this experience and will remember this training as one of the most interesting and useful I have ever had the opportunity to attend.”**

Over 300 students developed assertive communication and empathy skills through practical workshops on the non-violent resolution of misunderstandings.

**“Now I know how to say that something bothers me without offending others.”**

The 7th School Mediation Conference in Zagreb brought together over 80 experts to promote student safety and a culture of non-violence.

The “Support Schools IV” project, conducted in cooperation with UNICEF, covered 97 schools and over 35,000 students to strengthen their resilience and mental health.

A support system for disadvantaged students was established through intensive networking of principals and professional associates from five counties.

Preparations began for the international project “Joyful Minds,” which will introduce humour as an innovative tool for preserving mental health.

## INCLUSIVITY

Foundations were laid for transforming schools into drivers of change by developing concrete tools for building a comprehensive, inclusive school culture.

The 15th anniversary edition of the “Colour the World!” (Oboji svijet!) contest successfully promoted inclusivity in 126 schools across Croatia through 255



submitted student works.

**“If I could say something to the whole world, I wouldn’t shout. I would just whisper: do not be afraid of what is different.”**

The creative expression of children and youth was transformed into a powerful tool for raising awareness of the importance of accepting diversity and recognising others’ pain.

As part of the SIRIUS 3.0 project, the “Sirius Watch Report” was developed and presented to relevant institutions, mapping successful inclusive policy practices in Croatia.

International cooperation through study trips and conferences in Bulgaria and Brussels further enriched the organisation’s competencies in inclusive education.

Twenty educators from all across Croatia were empowered to integrate students of migrant origin through workshops and an exchange of experiences with the German education system, thanks to cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

**“What I would highlight as particularly relevant for me personally is the supportive atmosphere, mutual understanding, and the joint effort to reach concrete solutions.”**

The “Together” project strengthened the communication resilience of educators in 10 additional Zagreb schools in cooperation with parents.

Continuity of support for school-parent partnerships was ensured by launching the new project “Together in Learning,” supported by the relevant Ministry.

The three-year international project ARISE was launched, bringing together over 70 experts at a national conference on reducing educational inequalities in its initial phase.

## DEMOCRACY

The project “Law in Everyday Life” was awarded the prestigious European Innovative Teaching Award (EITA) as an example of excellence in rule-of-law education.

An intensive 60-hour training for 80 teachers in Zagreb was successfully completed for the implementation of the extracurricular activity “Community of Active Citizens” (ZAG).

**“The workshops we went through during the training are directly applicable to working with children.”**

The 35th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia was marked by the publication of the manual “How to Talk to Students About the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia,” containing four detailed lesson plans aimed at making the state’s fundamental legal act accessible and understandable to primary and secondary school students.

Successful cooperation with the academic community continued through joint work with the Faculty of Law in Rijeka on promoting legal literacy in schools.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Through the implementation of two key projects, the capacities of teachers and students were strengthened to better understand the unbreakable link between environmental challenges, social justice, and active citizenship.

Through the “Ecoality” project, 76 teachers adopted transformative learning methods and an interdisciplinary approach to climate and gender justice topics.

**“It was particularly significant for me to understand the connection between climate justice and social equality, and to recognise how intertwined climate change and human rights are. Personally, it inspired me to continue developing a more sustainable lifestyle and to contribute more actively to the community through education and personal engagement.”**

Over 1,600 students participated in school workshops exploring the link between local environmental problems and global processes while developing empathy and responsibility.

Five youth groups developed their own local community action initiatives, while individuals participated in international and domestic volunteer camps in Madagascar and Veli Lošinj.

The “Lead for Ecojustice” project laid the groundwork for developing authentic school initiatives that directly apply environmental principles.

Five school teams improved their competencies for transforming school culture through awareness of resource consumption reduction and mastering the concept of planetary boundaries.

An innovative self-assessment tool was developed, allowing educators to systematically plan steps toward a more environmentally just school culture.

A permanent knowledge base in the Croatian language was built through the publication of four professional publications serving as practical resources for future school activities.

Empowered school staff have



begun implementing their own environmental projects, ensuring the practical application of acquired knowledge in daily work.

## Finance and Operations

The organisation achieved a positive financial balance with a significant increase in fundraising activities. The number of project applications rose by 37.5% (from 24 to 33). There were 48 business cooperation proposals, primarily directed toward schools for prevention programs. New competency models and job systemisations were introduced.

## Visibility

The website had 142,930 views (+50%). Facebook reach hit 273,195 users (three times the 2024 figure). A WhatsApp channel was launched for direct communication.

Nine professional publications/manuals were published in Croatian and English.

## Advocacy and Resilience

The Forum remained active in numerous national and international networks (NEPC, CROSOL, GOOD Initiative). A special focus was placed on resilience in crisis situations through cooperation with UNICEF, strengthening staff capacities to respond to emergencies in education.

## Projects, partners, and donors

Title	Partner/Donor
Academy for School Principals	UNICEF Croatia
Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking	Fee-based
Joyful Minds	Erasmus+
Schools of Support IV: Learning for Resilience, Inclusion and Mental Health	UNICEF Croatia
We Can Work It Out	Ministry of Science, Education and Youth
We Can Work It Out: Support for School Prevention Programmes	City of Zagreb
School Prevention Programmes	Primary and Secondary Schools of the Republic of Croatia
Sirius 3.0: Impactful and Sustainable Policy Change for Migrant Education	EU
Working with Children of Migrant Background	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
ARISE: Empowering Schools for Equitable and Inclusive Education	UniCredit Foundation
Learning Together	Ministry of Demography and Immigration
Together: School–Parent Partnership	City of Zagreb
Paint the World! – Colours of Equality	City of Zagreb
Training Teachers for the Implementation of ACC	City of Zagreb
Ecoality: Youth and Local Community for Climate and Gender Justice	EU, DEAR Programme
Lead for Ecojustice	EU, Erasmus+ Programme

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Student artwork from the “Colour the World!” competition was used in this report. In addition, quotes from educators as well as children and young people—participants in Forum’s activities—were used and are marked in green.

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