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TEACHER

Introduction Conference Recommendations

TEACHER Project

This document is the output of the Introduction Conference organized in Travnik on 18th and 19th May, 2017. Set of recommendations for Bosnia and Herzegovina Higher Education Institutions on what to innovate in Preschool Education Curricula.

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Title of the project: Introducing competence – based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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INTRODUCTION

Project is financed through Erasmus+ Programme KA2 (Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education) by European Commission.

Motivation behind proposed action lies in necessity to modernize study programs in preschool teachers' education in Bosnia and Herzegovina through needs assessment and partners' capacities. Action is based on the belief that quality education starts with quality teachers. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Higher Education Institutions offer first cycle study program or module in the field of preschool teacher education. Even though teachers education in educational systems in the Western Balkans gained importance in previous years and is undergoing reforms, preschool teachers education is somewhat neglected. Sector faces numerous challenges in aligning study programs to EHEA and fails to introduce necessary novelties in terms of competences, teaching methodology and practical learning. Sector is characterized by heterogeneous curricula and substantial differences in teaching methodology and training. Although in the past years students' interest in these programs is steady, the number of qualified teaching staff is tremendously declining, a trend in particularly apparent in natural sciences, i.e. math, IT.

The project builds on cantonal recommendations for pre-school education as presented in comprehensive comparative research study on Quality of Preschool Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011) as it particularly fosters quality of teaching staff.

Development of preschool education in Bosnia and Herzegovina has begun in 2003 by adopting the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Strategic Direction for Development of Preschool Upbringing and Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is adopted in 2005 and the Framework Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007 which, among other things, provides for mandatory attendance at preschool programs for children in the year before starting school. Many laws, regulations and other documents on strengthening preschool education are adopted. However, the reality in the field in Bosnia and Herzegovina is different. After nine years of national strategy implementation, progress in the development of preschool education and coverage of children is not significant.

Awareness of preschool education for overall socio-economic growth is small. Access to and quality of preschool programs is conditioned by the financial power of parents.

Specific concern for development of preschool education is responsibility of municipalities and other local government units.

With the intent to move closer to the essence of pedagogical activity that today implies the need for the reflexivity of practitioners, we take the first steps in comparing and aligning with the developed societies and the ways in which future educators are formed without jeopardizing what we recognize as good, specifically, authentic and sustainable.

ABOUT PROJECT:

Project proposal working title: Introducing competence-based preschool teacher education curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina (TEACHER)

Type of projects: Joint projects – curriculum development // National project

National priority: Teacher training and education science

Duration: 36 months (Oct 2016 – Oct 2019)

Focus: This project focuses on the **innovation and modernization of first cycle academic studies** in preschool teacher education in BH **through introducing competence-based curricula**. It strives to identify what competences are needed at the labour market and are necessary to be introduced in the curricula and accordingly modernize the study courses and their learning outcomes. In addition, the project tends to improve interactive teaching methodology and transversal skills of teaching staff necessary for modern day preschool education in the European context.

This project primarily targets teaching staff from partner institutions and their students. In a broader sense, the project results will benefit the **higher education** as well as the **preschool, early childhood education and care (ECEC) sectors**.

The project responds to the need to harmonize and modernize the heterogeneous preschool teacher education curricula and to decrease substantial differences in teaching methodology and training.

Objectives include:

- O.1. **innovating of preschool teacher education study programs** through introduction of competence-based curricula
- O.2. certifying of high quality changes introduced in the curricula through **accreditation/licencing process**
- O.3. **modernizing of teaching methodology** through teacher training

O.4. **improving transversal skills** of teachers through training of trainers (ToT sessions) and spill-over sessions

O.5. modernizing of technical and didactical teaching/learning **equipment** for better students training

Expected results include:

R.1: Up to 12 preschool teacher education curricula in BH innovated and accredited/licenced

R.2: Teaching methodology and practices in preschool teacher education modernized

R.3: Transversal skills of teaching staff improved

R.4: Technical and didactical fit-out of HEIs delivering preschool teacher education in BH improved

R.5: Inter-university cooperation strengthened beyond the lifetime of the project

Structure: The project is divided into 8 work packages:

WP.1 Development of curricula modernization framework in line with labor market needs
(assessing what competences are needed at the labor market, developing joint modernization framework)

WP.2 Modernization of curricula(developing institutional modernization plans and their implementation, workshops with and study visits to EU partners, guiding provided by EU partners)

WP.3 Modernization of teaching methodology (needs assessment, training sessions, developing student practice manual)

WP.4 Improvement of transversal skills of teachers(needs assessment, training sessions, developing training manual)

WP.5 Accreditation/licensing & enrollment of students (preparing of documentation, accreditation/licensing processes, enrolling of students, guest lectures by EU partner staff, purchasing of equipment)

WP.6. Dissemination and exploitation of project results

WP.7 Quality assurance and monitoring

WP.8 Project Management

WP1 SHORT OVERVIEW

WP1 PREPARATION / INCEPTION

Inception work package is about preparation of project teams for successful kick off meeting. Within this WP, different project teams will be constituted (Steering Committee Meeting, Quality Assurance and Monitoring Committee, Local curricula modernization teams, teams that will be responsible for analysis, guidelines and handbooks etc.), Baseline study and Stakeholder analysis will be carried out and Introduction conference with stakeholders organized.

Within the WP1 package, all project partners have formed project teams who have assumed the responsibility and obligation to conduct basic research and analyze the collected data of interest groups. In addition, they have participated in the Introduction conference where they presented the Situation Analysis in Preschool Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the implementation of the activities for the realization of the first part of the project, the choice of stakeholders and preparation for the Introduction Conference, we should, with the cooperation and support of state institutions and institutions for early and pre-school education, It is necessary to improve institutional co-operation with state bodies.

At the Introduction Conference we would particularly emphasize the Curriculum analysis by colleagues from the University of Zagreb. The analysis provided concrete suggestions for the Curriculum supplement and innovation, which will be implemented in the foreseeable future. Project partners actively participated in the presentation as well as the students who expressed their opinions about the study and their suggestions for improving it. Students had the opportunity to hear the experiences and opinions of colleagues from other universities. The participation of the Company of FBiH Preschool Institutions (CJEU) is praiseworthy, but further activities should intensify co-operation with them in order to gain feedback from the practice.

INTRODUCTION CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Introduction Conference is the last WP1 activity that, apart from the project partners, assembled all stakeholders in the Early Childhood Education and Care sector from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Students from BH partner institutions, who were also present at the Conference, had an opportunity to express their thoughts on and expectations of the Early Childhood Education and Care study programmes. This document is the output of the Introduction Conference organized in Travnik on 18th and 19th of May, 2017 and represents the common conclusion of all BH partner institutions.

“Early childhood educators are being asked to have deeper understandings of child development and early education issues; provide richer educational experiences for all children, including those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged; engage children of varying abilities and backgrounds; connect with a diverse array of families; **Therefore we need to implement a curriculum that would focus on ‘innovative pedagogical approaches’ and promote professionalism in early childhood across all layers of the professional system, including practice, management, qualification and training, and research.**

Such approaches might include, or reflect at some level:

- An interactive approach to facilitating and extending children’s learning in a specific social, cultural or physical context
- Approach that promotes learning and development in the areas of social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive.
- An approach whose implementation might strengthen the capacity of teachers, practitioners or caregivers

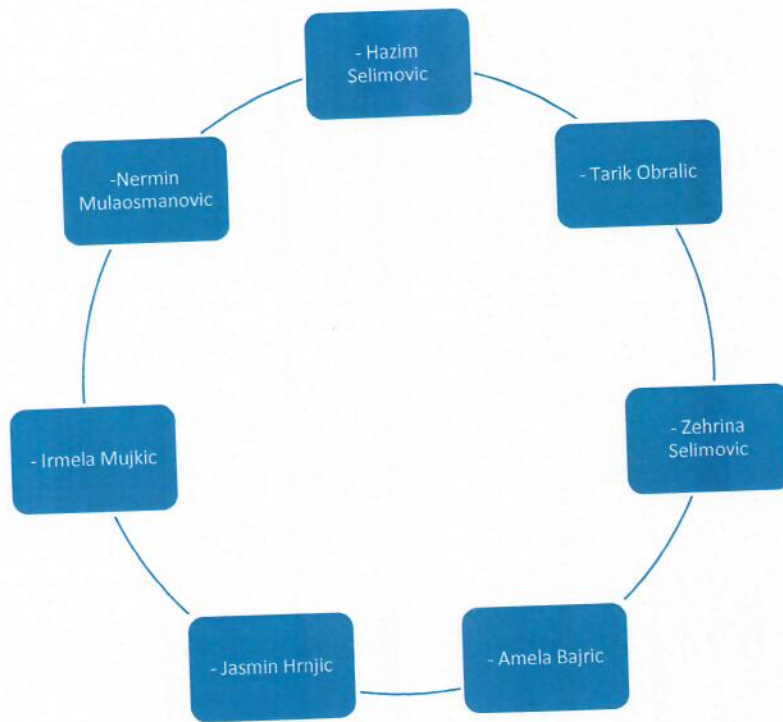
However, innovation of Curriculum should be based on the following recommendations:

1. Ensure the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems through the introduction of more practical teaching. To start with this activity from the second year of study
2. Increase the quality of teaching to a higher level through professional and methodical training of teachers and assistants;
3. Adjust the Curriculum to the requirements of the labor market,
4. Promote the competence of educators through various activities at the faculty and the wider local community
5. To incorporate activities into the Curriculum to enable the development of open and flexible approaches to learning through workshops at methodical times
6. Creating an environment conducive to learning in preschool educational institutions; visits to kindergartens and participation in various cultural and public events of kindergartens
7. Provide the contemporary teaching resources necessary for teaching, which are related to the process of work, ie teaching in the field of methodical practice.
8. Provide students with simulated space for performing practical lessons in simulated conditions
9. Give greater emphasis to student practice in the third and fourth year of study, which implies the use of acquired knowledge.
10. Include courses: play and skill, talent, work with children with special needs, child psychology, partnerships of families and kindergartens, curriculum development
11. Low correlation between subject content needs to be increased
12. Provide interpersonal approaches through common themes in subjects where there is a potential for studying from the perspective of different scientific fields.
13. More elective courses based on the generic competences needed for educators in the modern age.
14. Ensure that the Curriculum is more interactive

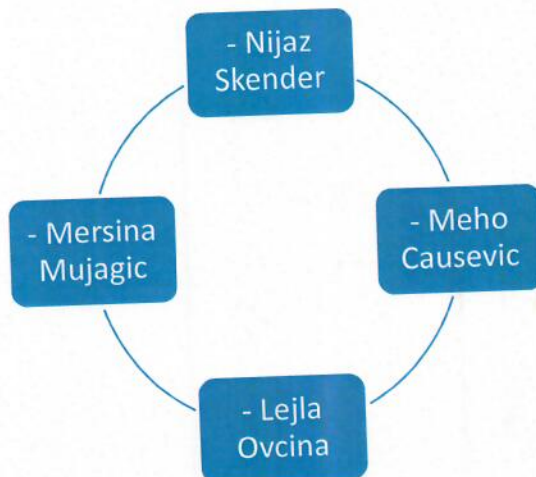
15. Provide a process-development approach to Curriculum planning
16. Ensure the monitoring and evaluation process and be part of a regular self-evaluation process
17. Formative and summative evaluations of the implementation of the new curriculum should include feedback
18. During the monitoring and evaluation process, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the methodological basis of this process is based on the collection of quantitative and qualitative data.
19. Establish clear and functional mechanisms for cooperation with social partners at local and cantonal level, ie with local authorities and potential employers / schools, to ensure a satisfactory level of commitment.
20. Ensure that every new outcome in the new Curriculum is further elaborated through sub-levels, recommendations for achievement and descriptions of the level of adoption through student achievement, thereby increasing clarity and affecting the objectivation of the assessment.”

PROJECT EXPERT TEAMS

UNIVERSITY OF TRAVNIK



UNIVERSITY OF BIHAC



HERZEGOVINA UNIVERSITY



INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY OF BANJA LUKA



UNIVERSITY OF TUZLA



UNIVERSITY OF MOSTAR

