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Modern Concepts and Trends in the Preschool Curriculum Development in Montenegro

Extended summary

The recent intensification of the preschool education reform in Montenegro calls for a serious reconsideration of its starting points, as well as of the attitudes regarding the development of teaching contents and their replacement with a broader concept of the curriculum. Given that there are different definitions of the concept, types, and theories – of the curriculum in general – a comparative analysis was carried out, through a historical and contemporary prism, with the preschool education curriculum currently in force in Montenegro. In their consideration of different classifications, pedagogical experts in Montenegro point out several possible classifications, and many types of the curricula. They also often emphasise that the open curriculum is the most suitable type for the early and pre-school education. Namely, it is generally believed that this type of curriculum gives the best results and meets the needs of the children, and that, as such, it should be flexible, open, developed simultaneously with its implementation, and catering for the individual differences among children, their abilities, the specificities of the preschool groups and institutions, as well as protecting the rights and needs of all children. Children should be in the environment that can offer them the best incentives for their further development and provide them with opportunities to learn naturally and in accordance with their family upbringing. However, the preschool curriculum design largely depends on the theoretical assumptions and many other factors such as the preschool teachers' professional training, the level of interest and cooperation of all educational actors, their open-mindedness readiness to take action, as well as the recommendations of the government and local communities.

The paper presents and analyses the trends, strategies and projects supported by the state of Montenegro within the framework of the curricula reform and the preschool educa-

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tion in general. In recent years, the preschool education in Montenegro has been continually improved, and the most important feature of this process is that the curricula have been developed that not only fit the local context and cater for the local needs, but also match the specific features of the concepts implemented in the developed countries around the world. The results of the research indicate that the transformation of the preschool education curriculum in Montenegro is characterised by a modern concept of the institutional structure and the purpose of the preschool institutions. In this concept, preschool institutions are viewed as a wider living space, a community within a specific and concrete cultural and social context, while the focus of the preschool education is on the humanistic and holistic approaches to the development of all children and their inclusion in the preschool educational system. Such general orientation has many similarities, including the contextual ones in terms of the concept of the curricula, with the curricula developed in Great Britain, Sweden, New Zealand, Reggio Emilia in Italy, and, closer to home, in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. While it is very important to rely on these concepts in creating the curricula in Montenegro, it is even more important to continually question their starting points, aims, methods and content. These analyses are relevant in the framework of the entire context or the types and interconnectedness of the curricula in the educational system in Montenegro.

Keywords: curriculum, preschool education, Montenegro.

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