

MIGRANT CRISIS AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION. THE CASE OF SERBIA

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INTRODUCTION

- From the **spring of 2016**, the migrant crisis also enveloped Serbia, which found itself on refugee routes to a desired new life.
- Refugees, most often from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Ghana and Libya, including a significant number of school age children, although they do **not consider Serbia their final destination**, remain in Serbia and stay in a number of state housing centers.
- Since **mid 2017**, competent state institutions have sought to organize the **inclusion of the migrant population of school age into the education system**.

MIGRANT CRISIS AND MIGRANT EDUCATION IN SERBIA

- There were dilemmas about the **approach applied to the inclusion in the educational system** of Serbia.
- Having in mind the many theoretical views and experiences of other countries,
- **the holistic support** is the most appropriate, by which students are perceived as students with complex educational, social and emotional needs.
- Such support **points to different types of support** and how to understand support

SERBIAN ANSWER

- According to reactions from European officials, **Serbia has responded** to this issue in a very **responsible way**
- in **cooperation** with a number of relevant **institutions and organizations,**
- **respecting international laws** and nurturing the values of a **humane and tolerant society,**
- and striving for **as many school age children** from migrant populations **as possible** to get **included in the regular** course of teaching.

- The positions of Serbia are in line with modern European political values towards migrants:
- they are based on the **fight against racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination, on principles of openness and unity**, values which form the basis of the European union and democracies of the West.
- On the topic of educational needs of children of refugees, **the importance of language needs as primary issues in the integration process** is prominent.

LANGUAGE NEEDS AND SUPPORT IN MIGRANT EDUCATION

- **language learning is a decisive factor** in the prospects of migrants **for a successful reintegration**, a path leading to **self-fulfillment and achieving social and economic balance**.
- **The success of students** is in direct relation with **the quality of the academic language** (Short & Spanos, 1989, Cummins 1991, DiPerna & Eliot 1999).

LANGUAGE ISSUES

- Language issues in this area **are defined**, inter alia, through problems related to language teaching,
- **the English language** as a specific lingua franca, which most migrants **bring in their educational baggage**.
- English can serve to accomplish **first communication**, and in preparation for any final choice that migrants will steer them to other areas of Europe;
- **and the national language** of the receiving country, Serbian as a foreign language, **for equal and active participation in educational processes**.

SERBIAN EXPERIENCES AND SITUATION

- we emphasize that **Serbia has significant experience** in helping children and youth, **refugees from the former Yugoslav territories**, during the nineties' wars.
- Furthermore, we also consider that the establishment of feasible and comprehensive school approaches in Serbia can be hampered by the **very limited autonomy of schools, the lack of donations to schools, the largely incompetent leadership of schools, the reduced number of school psychologists and pedagogues.**

EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

- The analysis of international, European strategies and good practices for the education of children and youth of migrants, shows that should not be deprived **complex holistic approaches** to implementation.
- **Holistic support** implies a **comprehensive, very complex school model that reflects the real needs of the migrant population** (Kornhall, 2016).

- Students, asylum seekers, are viewed as **students with numerous, complex needs** of the **educational, social and emotional** type, and this attitude is reflected in the **support system** whose **main goal** is to contribute to the **social inclusion, well-being and development of the students involved**.
- **Learning the language** (English and the host country language) is seen as a **means to enhance the students' ability to achieve in a school context**, to follow the **curriculum** and to be **included as equal members of society**.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

- Are of a universal character and include:
- language teaching
- avoidance of segregation
- parental involvement
- capacity building and support for young people.

CRITERIA OF LANGUAGE NEEDS

Criteria related to **language needs** include:

- **equal access** to high quality education
- **psychological and educational support**
- teaching and learning of **migrant languages,**
- **languages of education,** and **other languages,**
- **intercultural, cross curricular education** and
- pre-service and in-service **teacher training** and continuous education.

THE FRAMEWORK OF PROGRAM OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT

- The document "**From Serbian as a Foreign Language to Serbian as the Language of Environment and Education**" has been compiled:
- The Framework Of Program Of Language Support (FPLS), was created by **the team of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade** - prof. dr Julijana Vučo, prof. dr Jelena Filipović, prof. dr Vesna Krajišnik, doc. dr Ljiljana Đuric, Ms. Nikica Strižak, Ms. Mina Suknović.
- in support of persons who need to acquire **basic communicative competence of the Serbian language** - Level A1 of the Common European Framework - needs and possibilities, master the basics of the Serbian language as **the language of education** (FPLS, 2017, 4).

THE FOUNDATIONS

- By setting the foundations of their scope, the authors of the FPLS consider that **the knowledge of language**, especially the **language of education**, is the **key factor to success in learning and in professional life** which these sensitive groups are often ostricized from. (see Short & Spanos, 1989, Cummins 1991, DiPerna & Eliot 1999).
- This very complex initiative is based **participatory action research** with **integrative cooperation of teachers** with experience with migrant children and other sensitive social groups in Serbia (Romani children in particular).

THE FRAMEWORK

ОД СРПСКОГ КАО СТРАНОГ ЈЕЗИКА ДО СРПСКОГ КАО ЈЕЗИКА ОКРУЖЕЊА И ОБРАЗОВАЊА: ОКВИР ПРОГРАМА ЈЕЗИЧКЕ ПОДРШКЕ

ОД СРПСКОГ КАО СТРАНОГ ЈЕЗИКА ДО СРПСКОГ КАО ЈЕЗИКА ОКРУЖЕЊА И ОБРАЗОВАЊА: ОКВИР ПРОГРАМА ЈЕЗИЧКЕ ПОДРШКЕ



ОД СРПСКОГ КАО СТРАНОГ ЈЕЗИКА
ДО СРПСКОГ КАО ЈЕЗИКА
ОКРУЖЕЊА И ОБРАЗОВАЊА:
ОКВИР ПРОГРАМА
ЈЕЗИЧКЕ ПОДРШКЕ



Ministarstvo
Obrazovanja, Nauke
i Tehnološkog Razvoja



Centar za obrazovanje
i nauku
Ustavna Agencija Republike



THE LANGUAGE SUPPORT

- **Language support** is understood as an **integral part of a general educational support** aimed at enabling the development of **communicative competences** needed in the integration process (**relational and cognitive** and mediation which both involve language mediation, Coste & Cavalli, 2015: 28), **plurilingual education with elements of translanguaging**, based on a **developmental bilingual model of plurilingual education** (Roberts, 1995) in which language support is provided in **specifically tailored language classes** but also within **all other subjects** (cross curricular language support), targeting both **BICS and CALP** (Cummins, 2008).

- Special emphasis placed on **learning outcomes**, which are not in any way correlated to those of native speakers, but rather **on the content of communicative interactions, meaning and academic adequacy** (including translanguaging).
- Both **speaking and writing should mediate different languages, scripts and cultures** present in the experiences in both migrant and local children and their teachers.
- **CLIL** is one of the **main instruments** of such knowledge construction within a general socio-cognitive approach, which places **the student in the center of the educational process**.

MODULES

- The manual is designed in **three age-defined modules**, based on the CEFR descriptors for the A1 level:
- **age 6-10,**
- **age 10-15,**
- **age 15 and above**
- this module could also be further expanded in order to satisfy the communicative needs of migrants in the process of **integration into the labor market**

- The document put the **emphasis on evaluation: language education and language support** become an integral part of the **Educational portfolio** which should include **relevant information regarding ALL languages and intercultural experiences**,
- thus opening the space for their **formal recognition within the educational system**.
- The manual also includes **didactic and methodological guidelines and sample classroom preparations and activities**, which could help less experienced teachers.

CONCLUSION

- **The education of migrants**, who found themselves in the Republic of Serbia due to the **migrant crisis** since the spring of 2015, began in September of 2017.
- For the purpose of regular education of **migrant children (and adults) of different ages** and provenances
- after initial hesitation and seeking adequate political, educational and pedagogical response, as well as the form of language support, the document "**From Serbian as a Foreign Language to Serbian as Language of Environment and Education: Framework of Program of Language Support** " was produced.

THE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

- The language education offered by this document is **based on the democratic principles of tolerance and respect for the other,**
- **on recognized European principles of multilingualism and multiculturalism,**
- **on a holistic approach and a combined method that assumes that**
- **the teaching of the language of education takes place in Serbian as a foreign language**
- **and in the teaching of non-language subjects,**

- **translanguage skills,**
- principles of **communicative teaching of Serbian as a foreign language,**
- **integrated teaching of Serbian as a foreign language and content.**
- The language basis for migrant education is directed towards **the goal of promoting the cultural and linguistic identity of migrants,** which, according to theoretical knowledge and previous experience, is undoubtedly **the most reliable path leading to a harmonious life in the new community.**

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