



## **Planning and Implementing in Pre-Primary Classes According to Kosovo Curriculum Framework- Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

*The pre-primary grade Core Curriculum of Kosovo is a document designed in 2012 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo. This document provides help on implementing the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, which was approved by the government in 2011. As a new approach in education this document represents a new challenge for teachers of preschool education. Kosovo is constantly working to reform the education system in order to improve the quality and responds the demands of the 21st century.*

*The Core Curricula is structured and then built based on a system of six key competences. The aim of this study is to analyze the first impact of this document in the pre-primary classes, seven curriculum areas that are very different from the other curriculum the teacher has used so far.*

*The qualitative research of this study has been done and supported by participation of four teachers. It was developed a questionnaire with substantive questions about how they are using the Core Curriculum and the impacts of integration of curricular fields in children's play. For better analysis of data is also developed a cycle of observations into four pre-primary classes.*

*Data Analysis concluded that the process of implementation of the Core Curriculum has given a first impact in the way how the teacher organizes the curriculum, prepares the material, starts the process of observation, evaluates children's work which is very different compared with the past curriculum.*

### **1. Introduction**

Successive reforms and continuous changes since the postwar period (1999) until now have made the education system in Kosovo to develop and strive to be current on the trends of global development of education. With the help of UNICEF in Kosovo (2001) there has been designed "New Kosovo Curriculum Framework" on the basis of which, it was also defined the development path of pre-university education in Kosovo. In 2006, for the first time in Kosovo, it was approved The Curriculum of Preschool Education (3-6 years old), which was the first curriculum to be approved after the ending of the war of 1999, by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo. However, this curriculum does not respond to the demands of the time and its replacement has gradually started with the new documents which are aligned with the vision and the aim of education development at the country level.

Kosovo is constantly working to reform the education system in order to improve the quality and responds of the 21st century. This process of changes has included the entire education system starting from the central level to the student in class. Kosovo Curriculum Framework is the basic document in the education field which was approved by the government in 2011. Kosovo Curriculum Framework is "Based in Competences" which means that is based in the declarations of what the students will be able to do after finishing a studying course with the Kosovo Curriculum. Before 2002, the curriculum for the schools of Kosovo was 'Based in the Subject'. The content of curriculum Based in the Subject is determined by what the society and the educational experts consider that students should know before they finish school. [5]. The passing from the Curriculum based in content to another Curriculum based in competences [2] represents a challenge for the entire education system. The State Curriculum (Kosovo Curriculum Framework) will clearly define the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which society and the educational experts deem necessary for all the citizens of



the Republic of Kosovo. In the Curriculum Framework, key competences will be reflected through learning outcomes, to be achieved progressively and consistently by all students upon completion of secondary school. In the Core Curriculum, major powers will be reflected through a system of Essential Learning Outcomes (REN), to be achieved by all students in different periods of schooling. [2] Commencing from the preschool level onwards.

The transition process from a built system in the field of education in another system is very challenging even developed countries which have a very supportive infrastructure better than developing countries, as well as Kosovo. Currently the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is piloting the Core Curriculum. This phase will be a determinant of aid and development road through which will pass all Kosovar society.

With the implementation of the Core Curriculum, especially in the pre-primary education, the challenges are significant, because it represents a very different approach from the way it worked as Preschool Curriculum based on preliminary (Preschool Curriculum 3-6 years old 2006). While preschool teachers are used to describe the general objectives and those specific from Preschool Curriculum 3-6 years old (2006) and adaptation to learning activities, according to the Curriculum Framework learning outcomes defines as "Statements describing what they need to know, believe, value and be able to do "[5] statements which describe and measure more accurately the activity that children will develop. The focus in the specific elements of this new approach is the main purpose of this paper.

## 2. Methodology

This paper is based on the hypothesis that: the use of the core curriculum at the preschool level presents a new challenge for teachers at this level and if implemented as designed presents a very advanced teaching considering the current conditions in the schools of Kosovo. To validate the hypothesis and to give an answer to the problem raised, there is a questionnaire with a total built 10 questions which had an open end. It is also organized an observation cycle in four pre-primary classes.

Questionnaires are distributed to the teachers who working in preschool classes in primary school where being piloting the Core Curriculum. Participation was voluntary and in the study had participated four teachers; participants were also assured that their anonymity will be guaranteed.

To verify the reliability of the data is organized another observation cycle in four preprimary classes. Conditions under which the observation took place were the real conditions in which learning took place every day. Observational tabs were used to identify these same indicators as the questions that were asked the teachers.

The qualitative data which are derived through this research can serve as a gauge of the first impacts that this document had, at the same time we can identify strengths and weaknesses during the process of piloting in order to be taken appropriate decisions regarding the problems in order for them to be eliminated or mitigated.

## 3. Data Sets and Analysis

Collection and analysis of data has been done in two phases. The first phase deals with the analysis of the questionnaires and the second phase is concerned with the analysis of the observation files. Common findings will form the stable data to which the findings will be given.

### 3.1. Analysis of questionnaires

From the analysis of the questionnaires can assume that the training time for preparing teachers to use of Core Curriculum has been insufficient. According to the teachers of preschool education Core Curriculum varies widely from Preschool Education Curriculum 3-6 years (2006). These changes are presented by teachers who participate in research and are as a result of their perception of changes in



the field of preschool education based on curriculum changes. Several changes are also shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: Comparison of Preschool Education Curriculum 3-6 years (2006) the Core Curriculum (2012)*

| Preschool Education Curriculum 3-6 years (2006)              | Core Curriculum (2012)  |
|--|---|
| Based on learning objectives                                 | Learning based on competences   |
| General objectives   | Learning outcomes are measurable and specific                                       |
| Five curricular areas  | Seven curricular areas  |
| Learning based on the content                                | Based on the construction of the learning process                                   |
| Planning is based on the annual work                         | Planning is based on the child's needs  |
| Does not require the preparation of the learning environment | Requires the preparation of the learning environment                                |
| Summary assessment   | The use of various forms of formative assessment, diagnostic, summary, motivational |
| -  | Is based on continuous observation  |
| Various material used for development activities             | Promote the use of various materials for the development of activities              |
| There is integration between the fields                      | Be coherent integration between the fields  |

In table 1 we can see several substantive changes which will be elaborated below. The transition from learning with objectives to learning based on competences, it is required from the teachers to have a good preparation in the methodological aspect as also for the content. Although teachers have attended training for this, each teacher has mentioned that they have difficulties in constructing learning outcomes, but the work is facilitated by a better cooperation with colleagues.

Six key-competencies which the child is expected to achieve during the entire pre-university education system and update them for the benefit of his own development are presented in Table 2:

*Table 2: Key competencies according to Kosovo Curriculum Framework [4]*

| Key competencies envisaged for the pre- university education system in Kosovo |
|---|
| Communication and expression competence                                       |
| Thinking competence   |
| Learning competence   |
| Life, work- and environment related competence                                |
| Personal competence   |
| Civic competence  |

Therefore the process of planning construction so that students could gradually achieve these competences is the construction of learning outcomes concretely. In the Preschool Curriculum 3-6 years old (2006), the objectives were known and the teacher wasn't required to write them, and now the teacher should plan and write over the learning outcomes. As for the teachers, this has been noticed to be quite challenging and often tiring. The main aim of all the activities and games that take place in preschool level has to do with the development of these competencies among children.



Therefore is very important the method of planning and organizing activities, because in the end the teacher should know what competence are developed.

The differences in content and in the manner of organizing the Preschool Education put the teachers of this level in front of a big challenge. Teachers should prepare extremely hard in order to face the changes of times. Changing the content areas presents another new element which certainly that requires more commitment and work by teachers. For better illustration we present in Table 3 changes in the content areas.

*Table 3: Comparison of Curriculum areas in both curriculums [3] [4]*

| Curriculum areas in Preschool Education Curriculum 3-6 years (2006) | Curriculum areas Core Curriculum (2012) |
|---|---|
| Physical education and health                                       | Language and Communication              |
| Native language   | Arts                                    |
| Artistic Education  | Mathematics                             |
| Mathematics   | Sciences                                |
| Knowing yourself and the world                                      | Society and the Environment             |
|   | Health and Well-being                   |
|   | Life and Work                           |

New ways of planning and construction of activities require more time from educators, field integration and transition from one activity to another depending on the needs of the child requires additional training for teachers in order for this to be realized in the context of child development in harmonious order. Educators in their answers responded that they do not have the potential that in all activities to have a good correlation between subjects and it is not always possible to attain completely to fulfill the child's curiosity on the certain matters. The use of different methods of work as work projects and other forms where children are in the role of researchers will help teachers for a better integration of subject fields.

Observation and assessment of children's achievement as innovation is quite challenging for teachers. Teachers responded that they use different cards assessment to measure achievement of children. Observation cards are not standardized by the state, teachers use the cards of observation depending on what they see more appropriate. Core curriculum provides for the use of various forms of assessment, teachers say that they are making ongoing efforts to implement various forms of assessment, but at this stage have not yet managed to crystallize all forms of assessment. If the teacher planning well and learning outcomes are clearly presented, teachers say that it is easier to assess child's achievement. At this stage they have begun the use of formative and diagnostic assessment with a limited number of children.

### **3.2. Analysis of observation**

Observation is conducted in the usual working conditions. The researcher's position was not central and soothing for children. This does not cause obstacles in the normal development of the learning process.

The main purpose of the observation was to identify elements that help implement the Core Curriculum and elements that need to be improved in order to full implementation of Core Curriculum. Space in the class is the first element which is immediately noticeable. Classroom space did not accomplish the child's needs for mobility; furniture arrangement should change with the aim of creating a larger space for movement and motor activities. The lack of water within the class limits in certain cases restrict the child's needs for the realization of the activities that have to do with science or art.

Prepared for oriented activities by the teacher can be described as positive because in most cases they use songs, games, stimulant activity, with the aim of creating a child's relationship with the topic of the day.

The big problem in all preschool grades was the length of staying in school. Children's stay at preschool classes only two hours for a day, this is a very short time. This short time does not create much space for comfort in realization of activities. In all cases, the observation time was insufficient to complete with the activities. In one case the teacher interrupted the work of the child with the condition that he would continue the following day, this because they were 10 minutes past the given time. The respect for the individual pace of development of the child in some cases is impossible because of the short time of children staying in preschool.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Training of teachers for the implementation of the Core Curriculum should last longer because the time of 40 hours is not enough for all teachers. Gradual passing of information and maximal concretization of them, before the teachers start with its implementation in the classroom it represents a precondition for a stable teaching and consistent with the requirements of the Kosovo Curriculum Framework.

Core Curriculum has got major requirements, meanwhile the time of the child staying in preschool within schools is too short, which could directly affect the delivery of the child opportunities to learn and create new experiences.

Teachers working as a group could be a positive element in the process of planning for the fact that it has created an opportunity to exchange experiences and to build common experiences. Work remains to be done in the process of planning and expansion of activities in accordance with the requirements of Core Curriculum. But what is even more positive and worth mentioning is the internal motivation of teachers to change the daily practice of child play and to intervene in their improvement.

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