

Montenegro

Country Overview

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Country name

Montenegro

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Introduction

The literature view of nationally-based strategic documents of preschool education in Montenegro indicates that professionals and institutions are still working on promoting the importance of early childhood education and care (ECEC), improvement of infrastructure of preschool institutions and increasing the rate of enrolment children, in addition to improvement of inclusive strategies for Roma and Egyptian children, as well as children with special needs. Professionals in preschool institutions still do not have appropriate measuring instruments for the assessment of social and emotional skills (SES) of preschool children, and there are no intervention programmes exclusively directed to social and emotional learning (SEL). The prevention and intervention programmes are related to the implementation of different projects and actions (coordination by UNICEF), and are available as a part of the existing Resource centres for education and training.

Development

Preschool education in Montenegro is a unique educational system, which provides care for children and support for parents. The realisation of preschool education includes public and private preschool institutions united in a network of preschool institutions. In 2019/2020 Montenegro has 21 public and 30 private preschool institutions with a total enrolment of 28.080 children from 0 to 6 years of age. The total enrolment rate of preschool children for Montenegro in 2019/2020 was about 52%. Although it has increased and is higher than countries of this region, it is still lower than the European targets and goals (95%). Therefore, one of the main priorities in the future is to increase the coverage of children and improve the capacity of preschool institutions (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Montenegro, 2020).

Early childhood intervention programmes in Montenegro are related to the organisation of support for children with special needs. Early intervention programmes are implemented by the Resource centres for educating and training of children and adults with special needs. These early intervention programmes aim to stimulate all areas of development while reducing any difficulties that may arise. There were no evidence-based studies, or other relevant materials related to the evaluation of these programmes found. The intervention programmes include inclusiveness programmes for Roma and Egyptian children, as well as children with special needs. In 2017, Montenegro made recommendations for providing adequate conditions in all preschool institutions, so that every child has access to a preschool education under equal conditions, and in accordance with the recommended standards (Protector of human rights and freedoms of Montenegro, 2018). The information about specific intervention programmes and practices related to social and emotional skills, and learning of preschool children were not found.

Assessment

Currently, there is no systematic or evidence-based research related to evaluation of the programmes for social and emotional skills at the national or local level. However, handbooks for teachers developed as a part of the 'My Values and Virtues' project include materials with specific guidelines for SEL as a part of each subject in primary or secondary schools, but not for preschoolers. The implementation of these or similar programmes and their evaluation through scientific and evidence-based form have not been found.

Intervention

One of the projects related to social and emotional skills learning in Montenegro is the 'My Values and Virtues' programme of the Bureau for Education, with support from UNICEF. This programme has been applied in Montenegrin primary schools since 2015, in general secondary schools since 2017, and in vocational schools since 2018. This project is the response of the educational system to the growing global demands to offer young people a balanced set of the skills (cognitive, social and emotional) that are required for further schooling and careers. This project includes a set of materials for teachers, reports and workshops at the primary and secondary school level.

Related to preschool education there are no systematic and evidence based programmes of SES learning directed to preschool aged children at the national level and for outgoing projects. Most of the initiatives and goals for future periods related to preschool education include action for increasing enrolment rate in preschool institutions, improvement of spatial capacities and competence of teachers as well as inclusion for all children.

References

- Protector of human rights and freedoms of Montenegro (2018). Report of Mental health of children in Montenegro. Podgorica, Protector of human rights and freedoms of Montenegro.
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Montenegro (2020). Early and preschool educational strategy in Montenegro 2021-2025.

Citation

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