

Romania

Country Overview

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Country name

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Introduction

In 2008, The Ministrul Educației și Cercetării in Romania provided a curriculum for kindergartens where they mention social and emotional education as an essential element and an important part of the integrated early childhood education. Four of the topics suggested by the curriculum fit perfectly into the tasks of developing social and emotional competence: (1) Who am I? Who are we?; (2) How do we express our emotions?; (3) Who plans and organises and how?; (4) What do I want to be? What do I want to be like?.

In the kindergartens, the focus of the programme is on children's activities so that different personal competencies and skills are developed. The education in kindergartens is also divided into a two-level curriculum. The initial level is the socialisation stage, which lasts from 3 to 5 years of age, and is followed by the second, advanced level. The advanced level corresponds to the preschool stage, which consists of large groups and preschool classes respectively. At the advanced level, the basic skills are: preparing children for school life; laying the foundations for reading and writing; attention; developing imagination and creativity; motivation to learn.

As recently as February 2022, the NGO, Association for Values in Education (AVE) put forth the efforts to develop social and emotional competencies in formal education. To do so, AVE launched the pilot programme HumanKind. Through this programme, teachers will be trained on how to support the students SEL development.

Development

The operationalized tasks for the topics suggested by the curriculum of the Romanian Kindergarten include requirements related to improvements and development of the social and emotional competences. For example: development of children's self-esteem, developing self-knowledge, forming social relationships and interactions, expressing thoughts and feelings through language and arts.

The deficiency of the curriculum for the above-mentioned tasks is that it suggests the traditional daily and weekly themes for their implementation and does not recommend a methodological solution. The main problem seems to be that the systematic development of social and emotional skills does not appear in the training of the kindergarten teachers, thus they do not have sufficient theoretical background on the subject. However, in the last 5 years, there seems to be a change in this field as well, and the Teachers' House (Casa Corpului Didactic) training offers training related to this subject for professionals.

The different courses focus on either the teacher personality development or on methodologically developing the SEL.

Assessment

The prevention and intervention programmes listed below also focus on the assessment, making an effort to measure the impact of their own efforts.

SELF KIT (SELFKIT, 2017), (Social Emotional Learning Facilitator Kit)

One of the most interesting intervention and prevention programmes is called SELF KIT: Strategies for Improving Children's Socio-Emotional Competencies, developed by researchers Adrian Opre, Ramona Buzgar, Oana Ghimbulut, Mirela Calbaza-Ormenisan of the Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.

"Designed by a team of cognitive-behavioural psychologists, pedagogues, and teachers with practical experience in school and kindergarten, the program takes into consideration the following outlines: (1) respects the ontogenetic stages of development, (2) is based on the psychological development characteristics of children, (3) follows the structure of the Romanian educational curriculum, (4) reflects the specificity of Romanian culture." (Adrian Opre R. B.-O., SELF KIT Program: Strategies for Improving Children' Socio-Emotional Competencies, 2011).

Bábjáték, mesefeldolgozással (Péter Lilla, 2014) (Fairy tale processing program with marionettes).

The role of tales in facilitating moral judgement and cooperation ability in preschool children. For the Hungarian minority children in Romania, researchers Lilla Péter and Éva Veres developed a fairy tale processing programme with marionettes, aiming to develop the SEL competencies with the focus on cooperation skills and moral judgements.

Their results demonstrate the efficiency of their research experiment that the interactive learning of tales could facilitate the development of moral judgement and cooperation ability of preschool children.

DIFER (Oktatási Hivatal, 2021) (Diagnostic Development Test System) see more about the DIFER by the Hungarian national overview.

The DIFER Test is used, and is very popular within the Romanian-Hungarian minority. Hungarian researchers from Transylvania are inspired by the different researches from Hungary, conducting some research about the Hungarian DIFER Program and its adaptation in the Romanian-Hungarian educational context.

Intervention

Currently, there are no prevention and intervention programmes developed or adopted at the national level to develop social and emotional skills and abilities. However, there is an evidence-based prevention and intervention programme named SELF KIT (SELFKIT, 2017) which follows the Romanian curriculum and is implemented locally in kindergartens.

Romania has made an attempt to implement the emotive behavioural therapy (REBT) program (Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, 2019). The following programmes have been utilised in Romania:

Rational stories for children (Adrian Opre, 2013);

Developing Emotional Intelligence through Rational Emotive Behavioural Education (Adrian Opre R. B.O., SELF KIT PROGRAM: Strategies For Improving Children Socio-Emotional Competencies, 2011);

You can do it! Education (Michael E. Bernard, 2017);

The effects were not as was hoped since many of the stories were not well understood by the children because of the different cultural background. Due to these problems, the next step is to develop and implement new programmes that are capable of providing for these defects (Adrian Opre, 2013).

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