

Exploring the Potentials of Child-centred Approach to Education in Culturally Diverse Societies

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AIMS OF THE PRESENTATION

Child-centred approach generally and in education specifically

The situation in Slovenia and the challenges we are facing for achieving a more child-centred and inclusive education for migrant children

STARTING POINTS

Education: one of the most powerful tools for stimulating social inclusion of migrant children

Schools and their curricula contribute to acquiring knowledge, developing understanding and skills, positive attitudes and values.

CHILDREN IN THE CENTRE

Both literally and figuratively, **children** in modern and postmodern societies **are now heard and seen**

(Bromstrom, 2012)

- changing views of children and their **place in society & educators' views about children and childhood**
- United Nations **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**
 - the right to develop to the fullest
 - the right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

CHILDREN IN THE CENTRE

perceptions of children in societies and education:

1) children seen as being **competent and with agency**

- New childhood paradigm, children as social actors, studying children in their own right
- Children as creators of their own lives and societies they live in, having their own culture.
- Children as *beings* (already social actors with agency) and not *becomings* (yet to become adults)

2) educators have to take **children's perspective** into consideration

- how adults and society understand children and their lives and
- how children experience and describe their lives

3) in **educational practice and research**

educators and researchers must give children influence and see them as **active participants**

- children have to be included
- children as experts in their own lives
- researchers: consider how to give children voice and possibility to participate

CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH IN EDUCATION

- the **child at the centre** of the schooling process
- focus on students and their learning process
- focus **on the needs of the learners** and their capacity **to initiate their own learning** by choosing activities that interest them
- learners **allowed to work in ways that are compatible with their own learning** styles

CHILD-CENTRED LEARNING

- 1) knowledge-centred
- 2) learner-centred
- 3) assessment-centred
- 4) community-centred

CHILD-CENTRED LEARNING

Knowledge-centred learning

students developing their knowledge to facilitate it in new contexts in open-ended challenges: **problem-solving, creative and critical thinking.**

Learner-centered environment

students as **co-creators in the learning process**, as individuals with ideas and issues that deserve attention and consideration

Assessment-centred learning environments

provide **opportunities for feedback and improvement throughout evaluation** and judgment at the end of the learning process

Community-centered learning

individuals as a **member of wider community** that facilitates purposeful interactions among learners to promote and sustain learning and communication.

The added value of child-centred approach: developing the responsibilities of children themselves as community members

CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH TO EDUCATION AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

- 1) strives to discover **children's abilities, passions and skills through questioning, problem solving, independent thinking, innovation and creativity.**
- 2) it encourages the children to **cooperate with each other and communicate** in search for answers - **enhances communication skills and active learning while & boosts collaboration with peers and provides** caring and supportive learning environment
- 3) approach that **builds on children's skills and agency** and allows them to work together as a group on goals that cannot be accomplished individually.
- 4) a way of **guiding children to accept differences and commonalities** between themselves and respect for each other

CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH TO EDUCATION AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

Child- centred approach in education:

- strategy for building **cohesive and inclusive societies** on a wider societal level
- building **migrants' skills and capacities**, which is indispensable for their **inclusion in society and peer groups**

THE SITUATION IN SLOVENIA

- On the one hand, ideals of **child-centredness** - tolerance, equality, and cooperative social relationships are more and more emphasized, but on the other hand, **monolingualistic & monocultural norms prevail** in schools – in school settings, organisation of school activities, teaching
- The issues of multiculturalism and the inclusion of migrant children have been more relevant since the 1990s - no overall programme for educators to work with migrant children.

Proposal to work with migrant children in the field of preschool, primary and secondary education (2018)

THE SITUATION IN SLOVENIA – NEED FOR CHANGES

- Teachers **would need to be more competent and have more knowledge in this field.**
 - Research – teachers lacking skills in **interculturality and competences** for work with migrant children.
 - Teachers lacking skills of recognising children as **active participants** in education process
- changing curricula for students of education & pedagogy in order to develop **competences for working with migrant children**, including the possibility for practical training with migrant children already during their studies

THE SITUATION IN SLOVENIA – NEED FOR CHANGES

- education in the field of more **active participation of children in the whole pedagogic process and therefore a more child-centred approach.**

Recent evaluation of work in Slovenian schools:

Need for training of educators on concrete pedagogic practices, as many educators do not see the relevance of more actively including children in the pedagogic process . Still very teacher-centred approach.

THE SITUATION IN SLOVENIA – NEED FOR CHANGES

- Training of teachers **regarding social inclusion and establishing better cooperation between children.** Creating opportunities to connect and get to know the students in the classroom is of key importance, but also working on **better cooperation with school staff, parents** in the local community.
- On the level of **each school:** working on positive climate and attitudes towards multiculturalism, both with students and professionals.

While on the **level of primary schools**, these issues are tackled to some extent, on the **secondary level** it does practically not exist. Also research among educators and students show that they have more negative attitudes towards migrants and multiculturalism issues.

THE SITUATION IN SLOVENIA – NEED FOR CHANGES

THANK YOU!